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News Release



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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE WILL NOT CONDUCT IN-DEPTH REVIEW TO CONSIDER DELISTING THE GRAY WOLF IN NEVADA

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that a petition filed by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) does not meet the criteria to remove the gray wolf from the Federal Endangered Species list in Nevada.

The Service made the determination in response to a petition received in June 2003, from NDOW to delist the gray wolf (*Canis lupis*). Under the Endangered Species Act, the Service is required to review the petition to decide whether it contained substantial scientific information that delisting may be warranted in a process known as a 90-day finding.

A species may be delisted for one of three reasons – extinction, recovery, or original data error. The basis of the NDOW petition is that the historic presence of wolves in Nevada was limited to transient, solitary individuals; Nevada does not contain suitable habitat to support wolf populations; and no viable populations of wolves ever existed in Nevada. Although the petition provided a comprehensive summary of the historic presence of wolves in Nevada, it did not provide substantial information to indicate that gray wolves should be delisted in Nevada.

“We agree with NDOW,” said Bob Williams, Field Supervisor for the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, “wolves may have never been abundant in Nevada. We will continue to seek ways to work with NDOW under our current guidelines to manage any wolves that may enter the State.”

Gray wolves are the largest wild members of the Canidae, or dog family, with adults ranging from 40 to 175 pounds depending upon sex and subspecies. In the northern U.S. Rocky Mountains, adult male gray wolves average just over 100 pounds, while the females weigh slightly less. Wolves’ fur color is frequently a grizzled gray, but it can vary from pure white to coal black. Wolves may appear similar to coyotes and some domestic dog breeds such as the German shepherd or Siberian husky. However, the wolves’ longer legs, larger feet, wider head and snout, and straight tail distinguish them from both coyotes and dogs.

A copy of the finding about the gray wolf is available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada>, or by contacting the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, (775) 861-6300.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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