

Wolves Removed from the Federal Endangered Species List

by CORNELIA HUTT

Mammals

- Bat, gray
Myotis grisescens
- Bat, Hawaiian hoary
Lasiurus cinereus semotus
- Bat, Indiana
Myotis sodalis
- Bat, lesser long-nosed
Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuenae
- Bat, little Mariana fruit
Pteropus tokudae
- Bat, Mexican long-nosed
Leptonycteris nivalis
- Bat, Ozark big-eared
Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii ingeni
- Bat, Virginia big-eared
Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii virginianus

- Mouse, Anastasia Island beach
Peromyscus polionotus phasma
- Mouse, Choctawhatchee beach
Peromyscus polionotus allophrys
- Mouse, Key Largo cotton
Peromyscus gossypinus allapaticola
- Mouse, Pacific pocket
Perognathus longimembris pacificus
- Mouse, Perdido Key beach
Peromyscus polionotus trissyllepsis
- Mouse, salt marsh harvest
Reithrodontomys raviventris
- Mouse, St. Andrew beach
Peromyscus polionotus peninsularis
- Ocelot
Leopardus (=Felis) pardalis
- Otter, Northern Sea

- Squirrel, Mount Graham red
Tamiasciurus hudsonicus grahamensis
- Squirrel, northern Idaho ground
Spermophilus brunneus brunneus
- Squirrel, Virginia northern flying
Glaucomys sabrinus fuscus
- Vole, Amargosa
Microtus californicus scirpensis
- Vole, Florida salt marsh
Microtus pennsylvanicus dukecampbelli
- Vole, Hualapai Mexican
Microtus mexicanus hualpaiensis
- Whale, blue
Balaenoptera musculus
- Whale, bowhead
Balaena mysticetus
- Whale, finback
Balaenoptera physalus
- Whale, humpback
Megaptera novaeangliae
- Whale, right
Balaena glacialis (incl. *australis*)
- Whale, Sei
Balaenoptera borealis
- Whale, sperm
Physeter catodon (=macrocephalus)
- Wolf, gray (inside W. Great Lakes
Distinct Population Boundary)
Canis lupus
- Wolf, gray (outside W. Great Lakes
Distinct Population Boundary)
Canis lupus
- Wolf, red
Canis rufus
- Woodrat, Key Largo
Neotoma floridana smalli
- Woodrat, riparian
Neotoma fuscipes

Wolves in the Midwest were removed from the federal endangered species list, according to a January 2007 announcement by Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett. The deputy secretary also proposed removing wolves in the Northern Rockies from the list in about a year, after appropriate legal procedures. Such “delisting” signifies that wolf populations in the affected areas have recovered to the point where they are no longer either endangered or threatened. It ends federal protection of the animals and turns wolf management over to individual states.

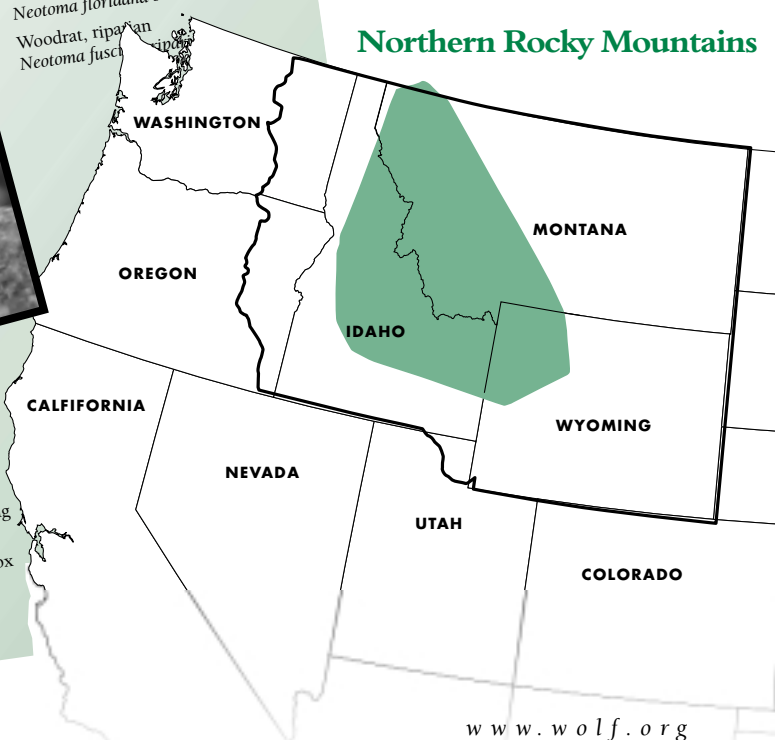
A smart, flexible predator with amazing physical adaptations, the wolf can live almost anywhere; so at one time wolves thrived in a variety of habitats through-



Mike Possis, Wild Thing Photography

- Sheep, bighorn
Ovis canadensis
- Sheep, Sierra Nevada bighorn
Ovis canadensis californiana
- Shrew, Buena Vista Lake ornate
Sorex ornatus relictus
- Squirrel, Carolina northern flying
Glaucomys sabrinus coloratus
- Squirrel, Delmarva Peninsula fox
Sciurus niger cinereus

Northern Rocky Mountains



out Eurasia and North America. But by the middle of the 20th century, these animals had, in the expanding United States, been pushed to landscapes either inaccessible to humans or to regions of little interest to people as they sought to tame the natural world and civilize the savage wilderness. Colonists and settlers in the new nation trapped, shot and poisoned wolves to protect livestock, eradicate the evil they ascribed to the wolf and make money from bounties. Singled out for systematic extermination by the U.S. government, wolves were killed in some of the most brutal ways imaginable. The most effective method was poisoning. When the systematic slaughter on federal lands ended in 1941, few wolves remained in the lower 48 states. Except for remnant populations in the upper Midwest, the wolf had disappeared from the landscape, the victim of ruthless and unrelenting persecution by humans.

But in the last decades of the millennium, wolves rebounded in the lower 48. Despite some fierce opposition to reintroduction and recovery, mainly from livestock growers, the wolf has been successfully restored by the federal government to portions of its former range. Much of the support for the return of the wolf has arisen from urban areas where wolf

restoration has become a symbolic gesture, a determination to right the wrongs of the past, a commitment to the “re-wilding” of America. Thus, when President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act of 1973 into law, the besieged wolf was, for the first time in the long and savage history of this country, afforded legal protection as of August 1974. This “crown jewel” of environmental legislation was applauded by the supporters of a conservation ethic born of new attitudes toward wildlife and wild places.

The wolf restoration effort has succeeded beyond the expectations of many biologists and managers. The Endangered Species Act and the recovery goals it set forth have made that possible along with the efforts of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) officials committed to fulfilling the promise of the recovery plans. The recent delisting of the wolf in the western Great Lakes and the proposed delisting in the Northern Rockies are testimony to the effectiveness of this remarkable piece of legislation and to the implementation process.

Notice of Intent to Sue on Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment Wolf Delisting

On February 12, 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) received a Notice of Intent to sue from the attorney for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Help Our Wolves Live (HOWL), the Minnesota Wolf Alliance and the Animal Protection Institute. The Notice of Intent alleges that:

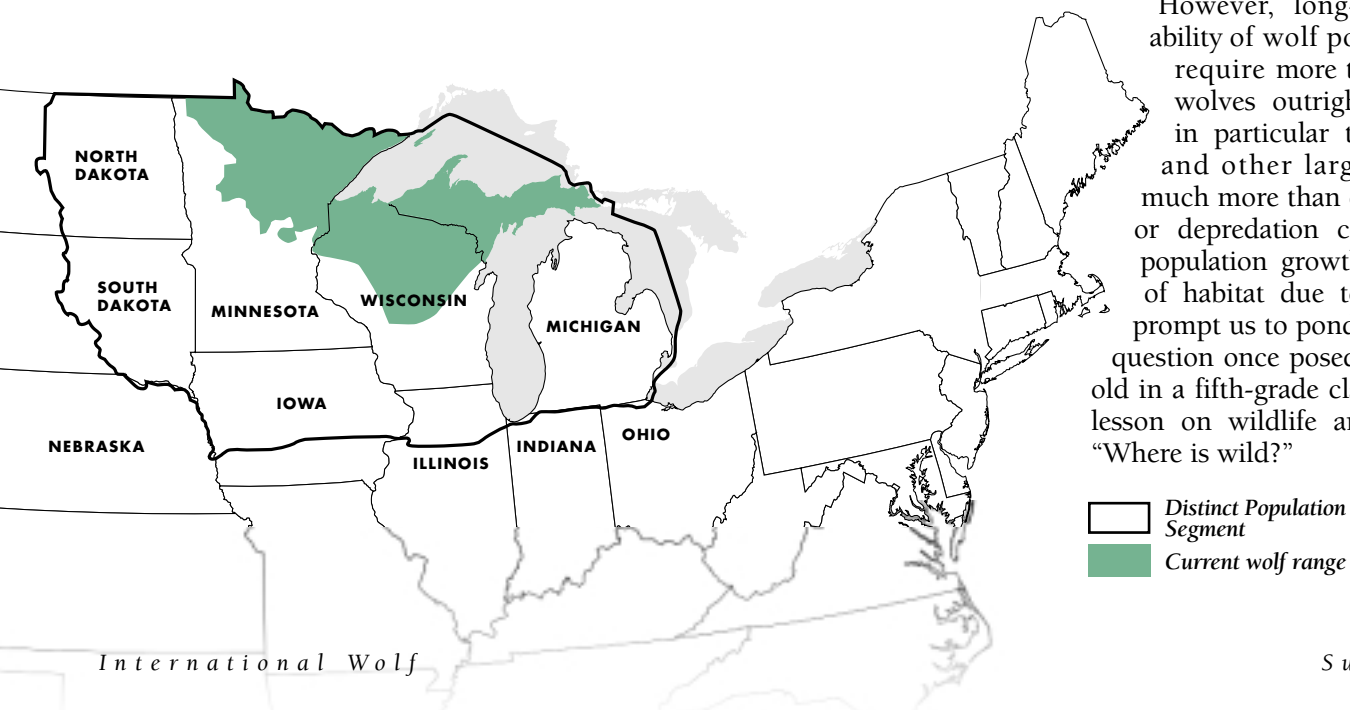
- *The USFWS cannot lawfully designate a Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment (DPS) for delisting purposes as this violates the obligation under the Endangered Species Act to restore a species “throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”*
- *The DPS boundaries are arbitrary and capricious.*
- *The gray wolf does not satisfy the statutory criteria for delisting.*

Check the International Wolf Center Web site (www.wolf.org) for updates on this issue.

Recovery criteria were met years ago, and wolf populations have increased to numbers far higher than required by long-agreed-upon plans. With wolf management the responsibility of the states, it will be up to them to secure a place for wolves in the future.

However, long-term sustainability of wolf populations will require more than not killing wolves outright. Two trends in particular threaten wolves and other large carnivores much more than citizen harvests or depredation control. Human population growth and the loss of habitat due to development prompt us to ponder the ultimate question once posed by a ten-year-old in a fifth-grade classroom after a lesson on wildlife and wild lands: “Where is wild?”

and Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segments



What does all this mean? To further explain the implications of these significant decisions, here is a set of questions and answers:

1. How do we know the states won't exterminate the wolves or cause them to be endangered again?

Wolves will not be exterminated or become endangered again because state management plans ensuring sufficient protection to retain viable populations have been approved by the federal government. The government will monitor wolf management for five years after delisting and can relist and protect wolves quickly again if necessary.

Information about the delisting in the western Great Lakes:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/wolf/2007/delisting/index.htm>

This link includes the following information:

- January 29, 2007, news release: Interior Department Announces Delisting of Western Great Lakes Wolves; Proposed Delisting of Northern Rocky Mountain Wolves
- Summary of the Final Rule to Delist the Gray Wolf Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment
- Questions and Answers about Final Rule to Delist the Gray Wolf Western Great Lakes DPS
- Map of the Gray Wolf Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment
- Wolf Recovery in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan
- Wolf Populations in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan 1973–2006
- Gray Wolf Fact Sheet
- Questions and Answers about Gray Wolf Biology
- Gray Wolf Current Populations and Range in North America

Information about the proposed delisting in the Northern Rockies:

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/SuggestedDPSMapANPR.pdf>

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/>

http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/ANPR_Feb_8_2006.pdf

2. What states that have wolves are affected by the new rulings?

In the Midwest, the states that contain breeding populations of wolves are Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, with some 4,000 wolves in total. In the Northern Rockies, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming host over 1,200 wolves.

3. Can wolves be killed under state management?

Yes, wolves can be killed with various restrictions on numbers taken, depending on the state. Manner and conditions of lethal taking will be prescribed by each state. All states will no doubt allow killing of wolves in response to depredations on livestock, just as was being done under federal protection. In addition, probably each state will eventually manage wolves like they do bears, deer and other wildlife.

4. If wolves will be killed, how will their numbers be maintained?

Wolves are prolific breeders and could almost double their numbers each year if none died or were killed.

5. How will Mexican wolf and red wolf recovery programs be affected by the new ruling?

They will not be affected but will continue as they are now.

6. What about wolves that disperse to neighboring states?

In parts of neighboring states closest to the above states (see map), such wolves would also be subject to state management. Elsewhere, wolves will remain federally protected by the Endangered Species Act. Thus, for example, if a Minnesota wolf heads to western



Isaac Babcock

North Dakota, it would be federally protected there; in eastern North Dakota it would be managed by the state.

7. Does the federal government have plans to reintroduce wolves into any new areas, other than where Mexican wolves and red wolves are being restored?

At this time, the federal government has no such plans.

8. How can individual citizens express their wolf management wishes?

Citizens can express their wishes and opinions by contacting the state legislators in the affected states.

9. Does this mean that the job of the International Wolf Center is now over?

No, the work of the International Wolf Center is not over. The Center advocates for the long-term survival of wolf populations around the world, and there remains much educational and informational work to be done to ensure that the public understands the complexities of maintaining viable populations of wolves in the face of ever-expanding human populations and loss of wild lands. ■

The author wishes to thank Dave Mech for his assistance and for answering the questions in the Q and A section of this article.

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For further information, please visit the International Wolf Center's Web site at www.wolf.org.