

# News Release



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## **Interior Department Removes Northern Rocky Mountain Wolves from Endangered Species List**

The gray wolf population in the Northern Rocky Mountains is thriving and no longer requires the protection of the Endangered Species Act, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett announced today. As a result, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will remove the species from the federal list of threatened and endangered species.

“The wolf population in the Northern Rockies has far exceeded its recovery goal and continues to expand its size and range. States, tribes, conservation groups, federal agencies and citizens of both regions can be proud of their roles in this remarkable conservation success story,” said Scarlett, noting that there are currently more than 1,500 wolves and at least 100 breeding pairs in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

Service-approved state management plans will provide a secure future for the wolf population once Endangered Species Act protections are removed and the states assume full management of wolf populations within their borders. The northern Rocky Mountain DPS includes all of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, as well as the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, and a small part of north-central Utah.

“With hundreds of trained professional managers, educators, wardens and biologists, state wildlife agencies have strong working relationships with local landowners and the ability to manage wolves for the long-term,” said Lyle Laverty, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. “We’re confident the wolf has a secure future in the northern Rocky Mountains and look forward to continuing to work closely with the states as we monitor the wolf population for the next five years.”

The minimum recovery goal for wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains was set at a minimum of 30 breeding pairs (a breeding pair represents a successfully reproducing wolf pack) and a minimum of 300 individual wolves for at least three consecutive years. This goal was achieved in 2002, and the wolf population has expanded in size and range every year since.

“These wolves have shown an impressive ability to breed and expand – they just needed an opportunity to establish themselves in the Rockies. The Service and its partners provided that opportunity, and now it’s time to integrate wolves into the states’ overall wildlife management efforts,” said Service Director H. Dale Hall.

Gray wolves were previously listed as endangered in the lower 48 states, except in Minnesota, where they were listed as threatened. The wolf population in the western Great Lakes was delisted in early 2007. When the delisting of the Rocky Mountain population takes effect 30 days from its publication in the *Federal Register* on February 27th, the Service will oversee the only remaining gray wolf recovery program, for the southwestern U.S. wolf population. The delisting announced today affects only the northern Rocky Mountain population of gray wolves. Gray wolves found outside of the Rocky Mountain and Midwest recovery areas, including the southwest wolf population, remain protected under the Endangered Species Act and are not affected by actions taken today.

For more information on northern Rocky Mountain gray wolves, visit [www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/](http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/)

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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