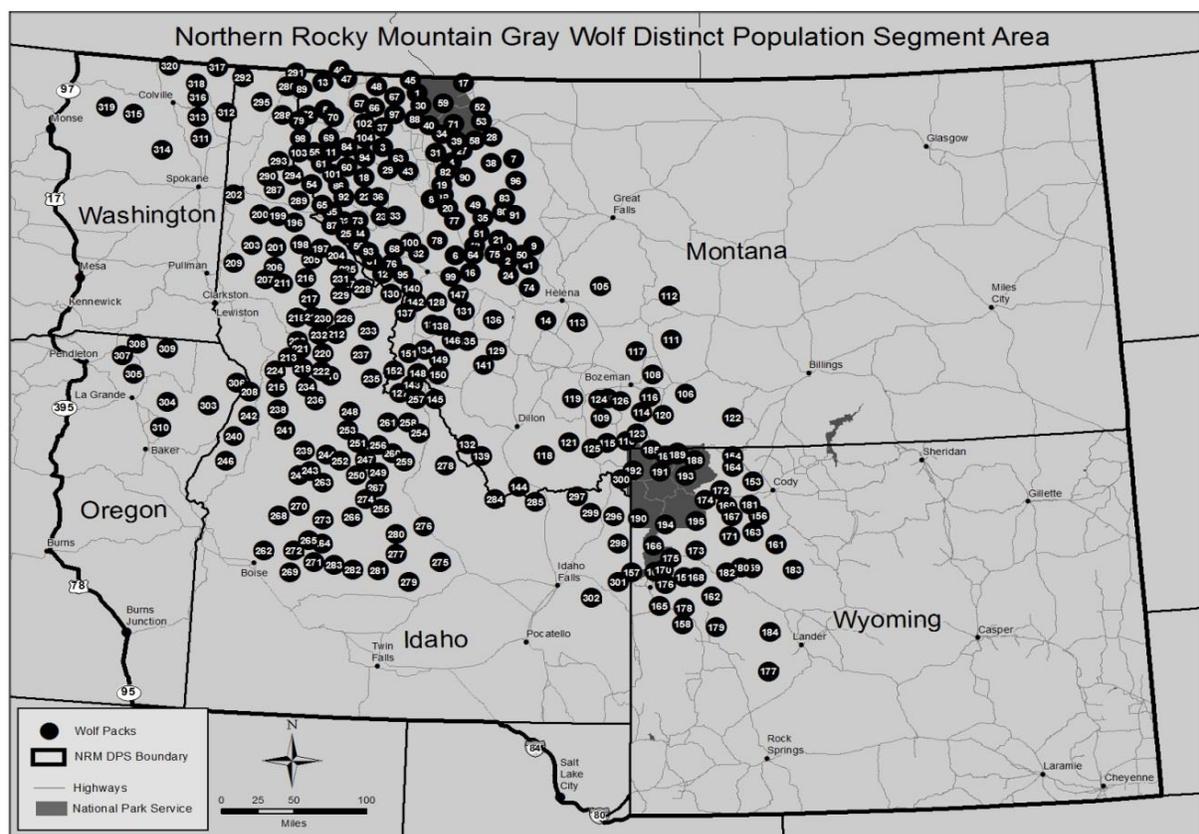


Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Program 2013 Interagency Annual Report

A cooperative effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Nez Perce Tribe, National Park Service, Blackfeet Nation, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Wind River Tribes, Confederated Colville Tribes, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Utah Department of Natural Resources, and USDA Wildlife Services.



This annual report presents information on the status, distribution, and management of the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013.

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Note to Readers:

Gray wolves are no longer federally listed as an endangered species in the Northern Rocky Mountain Distinct Population Segment and are managed under State authority in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and north central Utah. Each state is required by post-delisting rules to submit an annual report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The 2013 Interagency Annual Report is comprised of separate sections from Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, Washington, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northern Rockies Wolf Recovery Program. This report can be viewed at <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov/annualreports.htm> and may be copied and distributed. You can download the Interagency Report in its entirety and cite the Interagency Report as suggested on the cover. Alternatively, you may download a state report or section of the Interagency Report and cite it individually.

Abstract: Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) populations were extirpated from the western United States by the 1930s. Public attitudes towards predators changed and wolves received legal protection with the passage of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973. Subsequently, wolves from Canada occasionally dispersed south and successfully began recolonizing northwest Montana (MT) in 1986. In 1995 and 1996, 66 wolves from southwestern Canada were reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park (YNP; $n=31$) and central Idaho (ID; $n=35$). Recovery goals of an equitably distributed wolf population containing at least 300 wolves and 30 breeding pairs in 3 recovery areas within MT, ID, and Wyoming (WY) for at least 3 consecutive years were reached in 2002. By 2012, the entire Northern Rocky Mountain Distinct Population Segment (NRM DPS) was delisted and wolves were managed under State authority. The 2013 NRM wolf population estimate remained virtually unchanged from 2012 with a minimum population count of $\geq 1,691$ wolves in ≥ 320 packs with ≥ 78 breeding pairs. MT documented ≥ 627 wolves in ≥ 152 packs with ≥ 28 breeding pairs; ID ≥ 659 in ≥ 107 packs with ≥ 20 breeding pairs; WY ≥ 306 wolves in ≥ 43 packs with ≥ 23 breeding pairs; Oregon (OR) ≥ 61 wolves in ≥ 8 packs with ≥ 4 breeding pairs; and Washington (WA) ≥ 38 wolves in ≥ 10 packs with ≥ 3 breeding pairs. No packs were documented in Utah (UT). We recorded the mortalities of 922 wolves in the NRM DPS in 2013. When all forms of human-caused mortality were combined (control, harvest, and other human-caused mortality) 900 wolves were killed in the NRM due to human-causes (~34% of the absolute minimum NRM DPS estimated wolf population) including 332 wolves in MT (~35% of the absolute minimum MT estimated population), 466 wolves in ID (~41% of the absolute minimum ID estimated population), 99 wolves in WY (~24% of the absolute minimum WY estimated population), 1 wolf in OR (~2% of the absolute minimum OR estimated population), and 2 wolves in WA (~5% of the absolute minimum WA estimated population). Total confirmed depredations by wolves in 2013 included 143 cattle, 476 sheep, 6 dogs, 1 horse, 3 ponies, and 3 goats. Private and state agencies paid \$273,548.00 in compensation for wolf-damage to livestock in 2013. Federal, state and Tribal agencies spent approximately \$2,552,128.00 of federal funding for wolf management and research.

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NORTHERN ROCKIES WOLF SUMMARY 2013

Wolf Population: In 2013, the NRM DPS minimum wolf population estimate remained essentially unchanged from 2012. We documented $\geq 1,691$ wolves in ≥ 320 confirmed packs (groups of ≥ 2 wolves with territories inside the NRM DPS that persisted until December 31, 2013). At least 78 packs met the definition of a breeding pair (packs containing ≥ 1 adult male, ≥ 1 adult female, and two or more pups on December 31, 2013). MT recorded ≥ 627 wolves in ≥ 152 packs (including ≥ 28 breeding pairs); ID recorded ≥ 659 wolves in ≥ 107 packs (including ≥ 20 breeding pairs); WY recorded ≥ 306 wolves in ≥ 43 packs (including ≥ 23 breeding pairs); WA recorded ≥ 38 wolves in ≥ 10 packs (including ≥ 3 breeding pairs), and OR recorded ≥ 61 wolves in ≥ 8 packs (including ≥ 4 breeding pairs). No packs were documented in UT. The minimum recovery goal of an equitably distributed wolf population containing at least 300 wolves and 30 breeding pairs in MT, ID, and WY for at least 3 consecutive years (managed to maintain over 150 wolves and 15 breeding pairs in each state) has been exceeded in the NRM DPS since 2002.

Wolf Depredations: Although confirmed depredations result in a comparatively small proportion of all livestock losses in the NRM DPS, wolf damage can be significant to some livestock producers in areas where wolves are present. Total confirmed depredations by wolves in 2013 included 143 cattle, 476 sheep, 6 dogs, 1 horse, 3 ponies, and 3 goats. From 2008 through 2012, an average of 199 cattle depredations occurred each year (ranged=193-214). An average of 397 sheep depredations occurred each year (ranged=162-749). Seventy-one of 369 (~19%) known NRM DPS wolf packs that existed at some point in 2013 were involved in at least 1 confirmed depredation. Of these packs, 51 packs were involved in ≥ 1 cattle depredation, 8 packs were involved in ≥ 1 sheep depredation, 1 pack was involved in ≥ 1 pony depredation, and an additional 11 packs were involved in depredations of >1 livestock species.

Control of Problem Wolves: For strictly comparative purposes, we estimated the absolute minimum number of wolves alive in 2013 by combining the 2013 NRM DPS minimum population estimate of 1,691 wolves with all known mortalities from all causes ($n=922$). This sums to an absolute minimum NRM DPS estimate of 2,613 wolves known to be alive at some point in 2013 (MT=962, ID=1,132, WY=415, WA=40, and OR=64). The absolute minimum estimate was only used to compare relative rates of the various causes of mortality to NRM wolves. In 2013, a total of 202 wolves (~8% of the absolute minimum NRM DPS estimated wolf population) were killed in control actions in the NRM including 75 wolves in MT (~8% of the absolute minimum MT estimated population), 94 wolves in ID (~8% of the absolute minimum ID estimated population), and 33 wolves in WY (~8% of the absolute minimum WY estimated population). No wolves were removed in control actions in WA or OR.

Public Harvest of Wolves: Legal harvest removed 650 wolves (~25% of the absolute minimum NRM DPS estimated wolf population). Two hundred and thirty-one wolves were legally harvested in MT (~24% of the absolute minimum MT estimated wolf population), 356 wolves in ID (~31% of the absolute minimum ID estimated population), 62 wolves in WY (~15% of the absolute minimum WY estimated population), and 1 wolf in WA (~3% of the absolute minimum WA estimated population). No wolves were harvested in OR.

Human-Caused Mortality: When all forms of human-caused mortality were combined (control, harvest, and other human-caused mortality), 900 wolves (~34% of the absolute minimum NRM DPS estimated wolf population) were removed due to human-causes. Three hundred and thirty-two wolves were killed in MT (~35% of the absolute minimum MT estimated population), 466 wolves in ID (~41% of the absolute minimum ID estimated population), 99 wolves in WY (~24% of the absolute minimum WY estimated population), 2 wolves in WA (~5% of the absolute minimum WA estimated population), and 1 wolf in OR (~2% of the absolute minimum OR estimated population).

Total Mortality: We recorded the mortalities of 922 wolves in the NRM DPS (35% of the absolute minimum NRM population) in 2013 from causes including natural, misc. human-caused, unknown, harvest, and control (Table 1). The numbers in parentheses represent the percentage of the absolute minimum estimated wolf population of states and the NRM DPS removed by human-caused mortality.

Table 1. Causes of mortality in the NRM wolf population in 2013.

Area	Natural	Human	Unknown	Harvest	Control	Total Human-caused	Total
MT	1	26	2	231	75	332 (35%)	335
ID	0	16	7	356	94	466 (41%)	473
WY	8	4	2	62	33	99 (24%)	109
OR	2	1	0	0	0	1 (2%)	3
WA	0	1	0	1	0	2 (5%)	2
NRM	11	48	11	650	202	900 (34%)	922

Wolf Population Recovery: By every biological measure the NRM DPS wolf population is fully recovered and remains secure under State management. Resident packs have saturated suitable habitat in the core recovery areas and the population has exceeded recovery goals for 12 consecutive years. Dispersing wolves routinely travel between NRM and Canada and successfully breed, demonstrating that the 3 subpopulations function as a single large NRM meta-population.

Data collected in 2013 describing wolf distribution, numbers, packs, breeding pairs, livestock depredations, compensation, wolf control, impacts on ungulates, and regulated public hunting suggest that the NRM wolf population remained essentially the same as 2012 levels. We expect the wolf population to stabilize at some yet undetermined lower equilibrium based on natural carrying capacity in suitable habitat and human social tolerance.

Post Delisting Monitoring: As the NRM DPS wolf population has grown larger, our minimum population estimates have become less precise. However, after reviewing field methods used by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Idaho Fish and Game, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Wyoming Dept. of Game and Fish to monitor the wolf population in their respective states, the Service is confident that wolves in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming far exceeded recovery goals at the end of 2013, and monitoring methods adequately documented this.

Litigation: On November 13, 2012, Defenders of Wildlife, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, and the Center for Biological Diversity filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the

District of Columbia challenging the Service’s 2012 Wyoming delisting rule (77 FR 55530). On December 7, 2012, the Humane Society of the United States and Fund for Animals also filed suit in the District of Columbia. These two cases were consolidated by the Court. *See Defenders of Wildlife v. Salazar*, 12-cv-1833-ABJ (D.D.C.). The United States, with the support of the State of Wyoming and others, filed briefs defending the 2012 Wyoming delisting rule. As of the date of submitting this annual report, the Court has not issued an opinion resolving the challenges to the 2012 Wyoming delisting rule. Separately, on November 27, 2012, WildEarth Guardians and seven other environmental organizations filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado challenging the Service’s Wyoming delisting rule (77 FR 55530). The case was subsequently transferred to the District of Wyoming, where the plaintiff groups filed a notice dismissing their case. *See WildEarth Guardians v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*, 13-cv-007-ABJ (D. Wyo.)

Wolf Funding: In 2013, \$2,552,128.00 of federal funding was spent by state, federal, and Tribal agencies on wolf monitoring, management, control, and research (Table 2). State and private compensation programs spent \$273,548.00 to compensate livestock producers for dead, injured, or missing livestock (Table 3).

Table 2. Federal money spent on wolves by state, federal, and tribal agencies in 2013.

USFWS Region 1	
USFWS	108,000.00
USDA Wildlife Services	
Idaho W.S.	254,000.00
Oregon W.S.	25,591.00
Washington W.S.	0.00
Idaho (IDFG)	895,000.00
Nez Perce Tribe	244,594.00
Oregon (ODFW)	198,995.00
Washington (WDFW)	167,661.00
Colville Tribe	70,739.00
Subtotal Region 1	1,504,464.00
USFWS Region 6	
USFWS	145,476.00
USDA Wildlife Services	
Montana W.S.	138,548.00
Wyoming W.S.	60,959.00
Montana (MFWP)	537,160.00
Wyoming (WGFD)	25,521.00
Yellowstone National Park	193,000.00
Grand Teton National Park	60,000.00
Wind River Tribes	18,000.00
Subtotal Region 6	1,047,664.00
Total federal money funded	2,552,128.00

Table 3. Compensation paid for dead, injured, or missing livestock (including all state and private funding sources).

Idaho	77,300.00
Montana	94,386.00
Wyoming	96,237.00
Oregon	5,625.00
Washington	0.00
Total compensation	\$273,548.00

Wolf-Livestock Compensation Fund: In 2013, the Service made funding opportunities available to states and Tribes that routinely deal with livestock depredation from wolves. The purpose of the Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Project Grant Program was to prevent depredation of livestock and compensate livestock producers for their losses in the Western Great Lakes (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), Northern Rocky Mountains (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, and Washington), and the Southwest (Arizona and New Mexico). States and Tribes competed for prevention and compensation grants. Qualifying projects included a 50 percent non-federal cost share (Table 4).

Table 4. Wolf-livestock compensation funds awarded to individual NRM states in 2013.

State	Prevention	Compensation	Total state funding
Idaho	50,000.00	80,000.00	130,000.00
Montana	100,000.00	70,000.00	170,000.00
Wyoming	33,750.00		33,750.00
Oregon	51,875.00	11,250.00	63,125.00
Washington	85,722.00	60,000.00	145,722.00
Total Tester Funding	321,347.00	221,250.00	\$542,597.00

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hundreds of people have assisted with wolf recovery efforts over the years and we are indebted to them all. It would be impossible to individually recognize everybody in this report. Please refer to individual state reports to better understand how many people have contributed to wolf recovery in the NRM.

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