



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Gray Wolf

Northern Rocky Mountains

Management and Conservation

Gary Kramer / USFWS

Wolf Management and Conservation

Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) populations were deliberately eliminated from the northern Rocky Mountains (NRM) of the northwestern United States by 1930. Naturally dispersing wolves from Canada first denned in Montana in 1986. In 1995 and 1996 wolves from western Canada were reintroduced to central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to accelerate recovery. In December 2009, there were at least 1,706 wolves in 242 packs and in April 2010 another >600 pups were born. Research demonstrates the NRM wolf population has very high genetic diversity as a result of management actions during recovery, and that it will be maintained solely by natural dispersal. Wolves occupy over 110,000² miles in the NRM and suitable habitat (largely forested mountainous public land) appears saturated with resident wolf packs. Wolf restoration initially proceeded with more benefits (public viewing and restoration of ecological processes in natural areas), and fewer problems (livestock and pet depredation and decreases in wild ungulate populations) than predicted.

However, problems have increased since 2002 when the population first exceeded its minimum recovery goal. Between 1987 and 2009, more than 1,301 cattle, 2,854 sheep, 142 dogs, 31 goats, 25 llamas, and 10 horses have been killed by wolves, perhaps 1/8th of the actual wolf-caused damage. Nearly \$2,000,000 has been paid by private and state wolf damage compensation funds. In addition to a wide variety of non-lethal tools, wolves were relocated 117 times and killed >1,259 to reduce conflicts.

On May 4, 2009, the NRM Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of the gray wolf (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, eastern Washington and Oregon, and a small part of south-central Utah) was established and federal protections were removed, except in Wyoming because the

State lacked an adequate wolf management plan. For the first time in the history of the lower 48 states, regulated wolf hunting was allowed in fall 2009 in Montana and Idaho. In 2009, 206 wolves were harvested in addition to the record 270 problem wolves killed for attacking livestock, yet the NRM wolf population increased to record high levels. On August 5, 2010, the Federal District Court in Montana relisted the NRM wolf population. The NRM wolf population has been biologically recovered. We are addressing management challenges, e.g., depredation control willing to work with States and other partners.

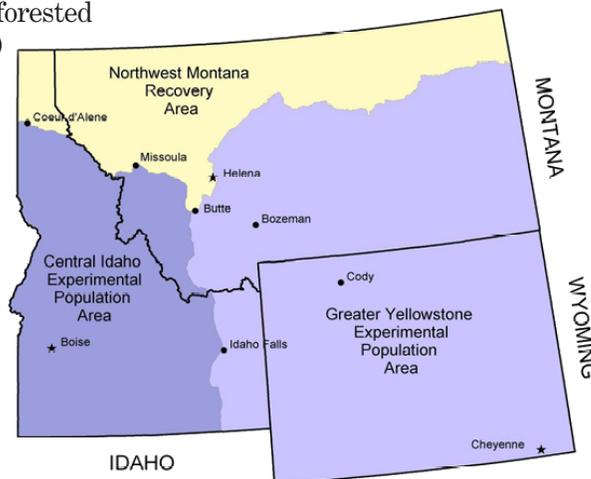
**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 6, NWRS
Ed Bangs, Wolf Recovery Coordinator
ed_bangs@fws.gov
406 / 449 5225 x204**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
PO Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225
303 / 236 4345**

**For State relay service
TTY / Voice: 711**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>**

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NRM gray wolf recovery area / USFWS