



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region



IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/R6/ARD/ES

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Dear Tribal Leaders and Department Heads:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has published a proposal to list the Mexican wolf as an endangered subspecies in the Southwest and delist gray wolves elsewhere. The Service is offering federally-recognized Indian tribes the option to consult on a government-to-government basis regarding the proposed action (available at <http://www.fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery>).

The Service evaluated the classification status of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) currently listed in the contiguous United States and Mexico under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Based on our evaluation, we are proposing to remove the gray wolf from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife but to maintain endangered status for the Mexican wolf by listing it as a subspecies (*Canis lupus baileyi*) (78 FR 35664; published on June 13, 2013).

We propose these actions because the best available scientific and commercial information indicates that the currently listed entity is not a valid species under the ESA and that the Mexican wolf (*C. l. baileyi*) is an endangered subspecies. In addition, we recognize recent taxonomic information indicating that the gray wolf subspecies, *Canis lupus lycaon*, which occurs in southeastern Canada and historically occurred in the northeastern United States and portions of the upper Midwest (eastern and western Great Lakes regions) United States, should be recognized as a separate species, *Canis lycaon*. This proposed rule also constitutes the completion of a status review for gray wolves in the Pacific Northwest initiated on May 5, 2011.

If you have questions about the proposal or would like to provide comments, please send them by email to Mike Jimenez, Gray Wolf Recovery Program at mike_jimenez@fws.gov or by phone (307) 330-5631. Should you feel that formal government-to-government consultation is necessary, please contact Ivy Allen, Regional Native American Liaison at ivy_allen@fws.gov or by phone at (303) 236-4575.

Sincerely,

Mike Thabault

Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services

*****This communication is being sent only through email as a blind courtesy copy to:**

Tribal Leader, Tribal Fish, Wildlife and Parks Director, Tribal Environmental Director, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Cultural Resources Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Directors