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Service and Binational Team Complete ESA Recovery Plan for America's Largest Wild Cat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the binational Jaguar Recovery Team have completed the final Endangered Species Act (ESA) [recovery plan](#) for the jaguar, currently listed under the Act at endangered. The plan provides a recovery framework and goals for improving the species' status throughout its entire 19-country range while focusing on the jaguar populations in northwestern Mexico and the southwestern United States.

The final recovery plan describes two large jaguar recovery units – the Pan-American Recovery Unit (PARU) where jaguars occupy habitat from eastern Mexico to northern Argentina, and the Northwestern Recovery Unit (NRU) extending from Colima State in western Mexico to the U.S. Southwest. More than 99 percent of the jaguar's range is in Central and South America, so the plan recognizes that countries within the PARU will be the principal contributors to its recovery. The Service will continue to promote jaguar recovery throughout the range of the jaguar, including [continued funding](#) support.

The Service has established strong working relationships with state and local partners, conservation groups and the Mexican government. The binational recovery team has not prescribed jaguar reintroductions in the United States but calls for focusing efforts on sustaining potential habitat. In addition, the plan calls for establishing at least two borderland dispersal corridors for jaguars' continued movement through remote, rugged habitat between the countries, eliminating poaching, and improving social acceptance of the jaguar to accommodate their return to the United States.

“The binational recovery team’s scientific expertise in protecting the jaguar has been invaluable,” said Amy Lueders, the Service’s Southwest Regional Director. “We recognize the challenges involved in conserving and recovering a species with such an expansive international range, and the team has laid out a comprehensive plan with goals that are achievable and realistic. We look forward to continuing to work with our diverse partners on this effort within and outside the United States.”

Loss of habitat, direct killing of the cats, and depletion of prey are the primary factors contributing to the jaguar's current status and decreasing population trend. Due to past

habitat loss, it is unlikely that jaguars will be fully self-sustaining throughout their entire historical range. However, conservation of key jaguar populations and habitat -- including core breeding and connective areas -- will be critical to jaguar recovery.

Since 1996, seven individual male jaguars have been documented in the United States, all in southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. These jaguars are believed to have come from the nearest core area and breeding population, approximately 130 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border in Sonora.

Across the jaguar's primary range in Latin America, the Service is actively working with countries and local partners to protect and recover the cat. Conservation efforts include providing incentives for protecting jaguar habitat and prey, education campaigns addressing misinformation and fears, and providing landowners with strategies for co-existing with jaguars.

Recovery plans are not regulatory but provide a framework for recovery of a species so protection under the ESA is no longer necessary. This recovery plan includes scientific information about the species and provides recovery criteria, conservation actions necessary for its recovery and delisting from the ESA and estimates of the time and cost to carry out the measures needed to achieve the plan's goal.

To achieve delisting, viable jaguar populations must be secured throughout their range. This will require protecting jaguar habitat quality and connectivity; providing incentives to protect jaguars and their habitat; reducing human-caused mortality of jaguars, particularly retaliatory killing due to livestock depredation; improving, enacting and/or enforcing effective laws that regulate illegal killing of jaguars, jaguar prey and habitat loss; securing adequate funding to implement recovery actions; and maintaining and developing partnerships in the Americas, particularly in Mexico. Once recovery is achieved and the jaguar is delisted, the states manage the species to ensure its long-term viability.

The binational Jaguar Recovery Team includes representatives of CONANP (National Commission of Protected Areas in Mexico), CEDES (Commission of Ecology and Sustainable Development of the State of Sonora), U.S. Department of Agriculture APHIS Wildlife Services and U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Border Patrol, Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Tohono O'odham Nation, Altar Valley Conservation Alliance, Malpai Borderlands Group, Naturalia, Panthera and several ranchers, landowners, stakeholders and universities in Mexico and the United States. Additionally, the Conservation Planning Specialist Group and the [Wildlife Conservation Society](#) contributed substantially to technical aspects of the recovery plan.

The Jaguar Recovery Plan is available at:

<https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Jaguar.htm> or by request from Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Office, 9828 North 31st Avenue, #C3, Phoenix, AZ 85051-2517; phone 602/242-0210.

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