



# News Release

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## **Service and Binational Team Draft Path to Recover Jaguar**

*Service seeks comments and information ensuring effective plan that employs best available science*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the binational Jaguar Recovery Team have completed a draft recovery plan for the jaguar. The draft plan sets goals for improving the species' status through its entire 19-country range and provides a framework for achieving recovery. The draft plan focuses on the cat's northwestern population in Mexico and the southwestern United States – setting more precise goals and site-specific conservation actions whereby that population can most effectively rebound and contribute to the entire species' recovery.

The jaguar recovery plan will allow agencies and organizations, particularly in the U.S. and Mexico, to align their efforts to make meaningful advances in sustaining and improving the status of this iconic species. The binational recovery team has not prescribed jaguar reintroductions in the U.S., but focuses on efforts to sustain habitat, eliminate poaching and improve social acceptance of the jaguar to accommodate jaguars that disperse into the U.S.

“We’re grateful for the recovery team’s scientific expertise and thoughtful vision for protecting Americas’ largest cat,” said Steve Spangle, the Service’s Arizona Field Supervisor. “We recognize the significant challenges of recovery planning for an elusive species with such an expansive, international range and are requesting comments and additional information.”

Since 1996, as many as seven individual jaguars have been documented in the U.S. Based on the available information, these U.S. detections have been of male jaguars in southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. These jaguars are believed to be coming from the nearest core area and breeding population, which is approximately 130 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border in Sonora.

The draft 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. The plan recognizes that countries within the PARU will be the principal contributors to jaguar recovery. The Service will continue to promote jaguar recovery throughout the range of the jaguar, as it has in the past. However, the draft plan focuses on the NRU because this is where the Service has the most jurisdiction and has an established working relationship for issues of mutual concern with Mexico.

“The Service and binational Jaguar Recovery Team acknowledge the significant contribution Mexico has made to the conservation of jaguars,” said Spangle. “And because a major portion of the NRU is within Mexico, and since that country is already implementing its own recovery plan for the jaguar, we will coordinate with Mexico as they continue as a leader in jaguar recovery.”

Recovery plans are not regulatory, but provide a framework for the recovery of a species so that protection under the Act is no longer necessary. A recovery plan includes scientific information about the species and provides criteria and actions necessary for us to be able to remove it from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

Loss of habitat, direct killing of jaguars, 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 habitat (including core and connective areas) and populations will be critical to jaguar recovery. We anticipate that it will take a minimum of 50 years to recover the jaguar.

To achieve delisting, viable jaguar populations should 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. These protections are needed and must remain in place after delisting to ensure the long-term viability of the species.

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’s 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 universities and stakeholders in Mexico and the U.S. Additionally, the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group and the [Wildlife Conservation Society](#) contributed substantially to technical aspects of the draft plan.

Comments on the plan and additional information are sought through March 20, 2017. The Draft 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. Comments can be sent to this address or by email to: [Jaguar\\_Recovery@fws.gov](mailto:Jaguar_Recovery@fws.gov).

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