

WOLVES FACT SHEET

INTRODUCTION

After being listed for decades on the Endangered Species Act (ESA), populations of gray wolves have recovered beyond expectations resulting in demonstrable declines in other wildlife populations, changes to big-game species behavior and continued losses to farmers, ranchers and sportsmen. As of 2017, there were nearly 6,000 gray wolves in the U.S., exceeding population targets by as much as 300 percent. To address this issue, the United States Congress and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have taken actions to return management authority of gray wolves to the states.

Despite the wolves' continued recovery, radical animal-rights activists and fringe environmentalists are currently working to reinstate federal authority over gray wolves throughout much of its native range and beyond.

State agencies are fully qualified and best positioned to responsibly manage wolf populations in accordance with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Resuming state management for recovered wildlife species is the only way to maintain sustainable populations and provide for the predator, the prey and people's needs.

BACKGROUND

On April 14, 2011, Congress approved legislation reinstating the Fish and Wildlife Service decision to remove wolves from the endangered species list in Montana, Idaho,

Washington, Oregon and Utah. In 2012 legislation was again passed supporting the USFWS' move to delist gray wolves in Wyoming and any state within the Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment upon agreement with the Secretary of the Interior to authorize state management.

Acting on this Congressional support, between 2011 and 2012 the USFWS delisted the gray wolf from the ESA, declaring the population recovered and no longer threatened, in the Western Great Lakes region (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan) and the Northern Rocky Mountains region (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and eastern portions of Washington and Oregon.)

Due to the litigious efforts of radical animal rights groups, the USFWS was ordered to relist the wolf in Wyoming and the Western Great Lakes on Feb. 20, 2015.

Following years of court battles, in August of 2017, the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reinstated the federal regulations, ruling that the Interior Department, "failed to reasonably analyze or consider two significant aspects of the rule - the impacts of partial delisting and of historical range loss on the already-listed species."

In response to the judicial actions, Congress is taking steps to again delist the wolf, shifting management back to the state level, and to prohibit judicial review. Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN-7), introduced H.R. 424, the Gray Wolf State Management Act of 2017, which requires the Department



of the Interior to reissue two rules that removed protections under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 for the gray wolf populations located in Wyoming and the western Great Lakes (all of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, as well as portions of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio). In addition, this bill prohibits judicial review of the reissued rules. This bill has been approved by the House Committee on Natural Resources. A similar bill is pending in the Senate, where Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) has introduced S. 164. Language has been incorporated into other legislation as well. For example, Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) introduced S.1514, the Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation (HELP) for Wildlife Act, which includes a provision to delist the gray wolf in Wyoming and the Great Lakes. Similar provisions are found in Rep. Jeff Duncan's (R-SC-3) SHARE Act, H. 3668.

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NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

The success of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation relies upon sportsmen's ability to participate in the regulated and ethical harvest of game species. Additionally, hunting has proven to be the most efficient and cost-effective means of wildlife-population control. To that end, states must have the ability to conduct regulated hunting and trapping as a wildlife-management tool for wolves as they successfully do for other species.

In addition, states have the authority to sustain wolf populations and protect the other wildlife and livestock that are vital to the economic wellbeing of communities throughout

the wolves' range. Without state-administered management, wolves will expand uncontrolled and continue to disrupt conservation efforts as well as private land, farming and ranching interests.

Despite the unfounded claims by animal-rights organizations and factions of the radical environmental community, there is no credible scientific evidence that regulated hunting poses a threat to wolf populations in any state. Regulated hunting has never led to a species being endangered or becoming extinct.

To the contrary, hunters are America's original conservationists. Since the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (also known as the

Pittman-Robertson Act) was passed in 1937, some \$19 billion¹ has been collected from the federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition and awarded to the states for conservation efforts helping to rebuild the population of numerous species and significantly extending their ranges.

CONCLUSION

The federal government's decision to remove the gray wolf from the list of threatened and endangered species will allow for the long-term sustainability of the species while concurrently ensuring the protection of farmers, ranchers, sportsmen and the benefits they provide to rural communities throughout America.

ⁱ "Secretary Zinke Announces Distribution of \$1.1 Billion to State Wildlife Agencies," June 13, 2017, <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-zinke-announces-distribution-11-billion-state-wildlife-agencies>

