



**CNN** POWERED BY Google **in /US**

SEARCH

HOME WORLD U.S. POLITICS CRIME ENTERTAINMENT HEALTH TECH VIDEO LIVE SPORTS BUSINESS IMPACT

SPORTS TIME.COM

Hot Topics » Tropical weather • The Economy • Black In America • Work/Life Balance • Weather Forecast » International Edition

updated 4:03 a.m. EDT, Tue September 30, 2008

## Gray wolf returns to endangered species list

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Ruling bars the Great Lakes s
- Wildlife officials in the three s
- Wolf occupies about 5 percer

[Next Article in U.S. »](#)

TEXT SIZE - +

**TRAVERSE CITY, Michigan (AP)** -- A federal court Monday overturned the Bush administration's decision to remove gray wolves in the western Great Lakes region from the endangered species list.



AP PHOTO

A U.S. District judge has returned the gray wolf to the federal endangered list.

U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman in Washington sided with environmental groups that accused the government of misreading the law last year when it lifted protections for about 4,000 wolves in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

It was the second setback in a week for the administration's campaign to return management authority to state officials in the two regions where the wolf has rebounded after being driven to the brink of extinction in the lower 48 states.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 23 asked a judge in Montana to return gray wolves in the Northern Rockies to the endangered list, reversing a proposal to drop them earlier this year. That followed the judge's order in July barring plans for public wolf hunts in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

"The Bush administration's repeated attempts to push the limits of the Endangered Species Act have been decidedly rejected by the courts," said Amy Atwood, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity.

The biggest practical effect of Friedman's ruling is to nullify newly established state policies allowing people in the Great Lakes area to kill wolves attacking livestock or pets. It also bars the states from permitting hunting or trapping of wolves, although none had done so.

### Don't Miss

- [Polar bears resort to cannibalism as Arctic ice](#)

"In our judgment, this is an animal that deserves protection," said Howard Goldman, central states regional director for The Humane Society of the United States. "It has taken so long for their numbers to

## CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

ANSWER ROBIN MEADE'S QUESTION & YOU COULD WIN HER NEW BOOK AND A TRIP TO MEET HER!

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION




 **PRINT**

 Powered by 

# Wolf hunting now legal but still controversial

- Story Highlights
- Environmentalists, animal rights groups protest decision
- Ranchers say it might help save their flocks
- Montana district court judge is considering injunction
- There are 1,600 wolves in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming; 330 may be killed

From Amanda Moyer  
CNN

**(CNN)** -- For the first time in decades, the hunting of the gray wolf is legal again in the United States. And that's a good thing for ranchers like Cindy Siddoway of Terreton, Idaho, whose sheep are threatened every day by wolves.

"We have worked very hard to protect what we have, and it's not very successful," she said. "It is devastating for us to put all of the money and the time and the genetics and work to produce a great product and then just have it half-eaten and left to die."

But wolf hunting isn't popular with everybody. It has become a controversy in Idaho, where the hunt began Tuesday, and in Montana, where it is scheduled to start September 15.

Environmental and animal rights groups are upset by a federal decision this year to remove gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains from the endangered species list, a move that opened the door to permitting the hunts.

They are seeking an injunction in U.S. District Court in Montana to stop the hunts. Judge Donald Molloy is reviewing the case, and it's unclear when he will rule.

After their population dwindled in the Rockies last century, in part because of practices like trapping, gray wolves were put on the endangered species list.

But the population has rebounded, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [delisted](#) the animals and determined that the populations would be healthy enough for hunts to be permitted in Idaho and Montana, which manage the wolf populations.

There are also gray wolves in Wyoming, but hunts are not permitted there because of the state's weak wildlife management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said.

Opponents of the hunt say the population is not large and healthy enough to allow hunting.

Melanie Stein, a [Sierra Club](#) spokeswoman, said that the wolf populations "are just on the cusp of recovery and that we are almost there." But she says the hunts represent "a step backward and away from recovery" of the wolf populations.

Defenders of Wildlife, one of several groups urging the court to stop the hunt, detailed the ecological role of the wolves on its Web site.

"In what is known as the cascade effect, wolves are exerting influence over a multitude of species within the park's ecosystem. Elk, wary of the reintroduced top predator, have altered their grazing behavior.

"With less grazing pressure from elk, streambed vegetation such as willow and aspen is regenerating after decades of overbrowsing. As the trees are restored, they create better habitat for native birds and fish, beaver and other species."

Siddoway doesn't think the hunt will make much of a difference right now because it is hard to kill the animals. But the wolf attacks

take their toll.

For example, the wolves will kill Great Pyrenees guard dogs used to protect the herds. When that happens, "then we're open to prey from bears and everything else," Siddoway said.

"We know that it's a problem, and we want to make sure ranchers can continue on with their livelihood," Stein said. "But there has to be some co-existence between wolves and other species."

Currently, ranchers and farmers can legally shoot a wolf they see attacking their livestock, said Ed Bangs, wolf recovery coordinator with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

There are also tools used to counter wolf attacks without hunting, he said. They include scare tactics, like shooting firecrackers out of a shotgun, or proper fencing.

"All that stuff works for a little while in some instances for a short period of time and in some situations can be helpful. But it isn't the silver bullet for wolf depredation," he said.

He said these techniques work "in conjunction with killing wolves."

There are state and private programs compensating ranchers who lose livestock because of attacks, but the money represents only part of what the livestock and the time dealing with the problem is worth.

"The ranchers got the short end of the stick," Bangs said.

Officials say that up to 330 wolves in the states of [Idaho](#) and Montana may be killed during this public hunt. In Idaho, the limit is 220 wolves, and in [Montana](#), it would be 75. Members of the Nez Perce tribe in Idaho can kill up to 35 wolves.

Ed Mitchell, spokesman for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, said three wolves have been taken in Idaho since the hunting season began.

There are more than 1,600 gray wolves in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

But Siddoway says "there will never be enough" for environmental groups to agree to the hunts.

CNN's Joe Sterling contributed to this report.

**All About**[Endangered Species](#) • [Idaho](#) • [Montana](#) • [Sierra Club](#)

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/09/03/wolf.hunt/index.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© 2008 Cable News Network

**shrinks**

recover, we've got to be very careful before removing any protections from them."

Jason Holm, spokesman for the Fish and Wildlife Service, said its attorneys were studying the ruling to determine the next step.

"We are disappointed," he said. "The service and our partners worked toward recovery of the gray wolf in the western Great Lakes for more than three decades" and considered the population "robust enough that it no longer needed Endangered Species Act protection."

The wolf occupies only about 5 percent of its historical range, which once took in most of the continental U.S.

But the animal has recovered steadily in the western Great Lakes region since the late 1970s, migrating from [Minnesota](#) into Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Surveys this year turned up 2,921 wolves in Minnesota, at least 537 in Wisconsin and 520 in Michigan.

In a lawsuit challenging the Fish and Wildlife Service's 2007 decision, The Humane Society and several other groups claimed the government had acted illegally by designating Great Lakes wolves as a "distinct population segment" that could be bumped from the endangered list without regard to the species' nationwide standing.

Friedman said it was unclear whether the 1973 [Endangered Species Act](#) permits such a move. He ordered the agency to provide a better explanation of its interpretation and respond to concerns that its policy could undermine the goal of protecting the wolf. In the meantime, he returned the wolf to the federal endangered list.

"Little confusion or inefficiency will result from reinstating a regulatory regime that was in place from 1978 to 2007, particularly given the fact that state and federal wolf management authorities have been working in tandem for years," the judge said in his opinion.

But wildlife officials in the three states said the ruling would be disruptive.

"A lot of things are unknown right now," said Brian Roell, wolf coordinator for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. "This really takes away our ability to implement our management plan."

Wisconsin will revoke permits it had issued to seven farmers allowing them to shoot wolves attacking livestock, natural resources spokeswoman Laurel Steffes said.

Until the lawsuit is resolved, state officials said they probably would seek federal permits allowing non-lethal methods to deal with wolves that continually harass livestock.

"We hope it can be resolved and we can get an answer from the Fish and Wildlife Service about what the next steps will be," said Dan Stark, spokesman for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

[E-mail to a friend](#)  | [Mixx it](#) | [Share](#)

Copyright 2008 The [Associated Press](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

**All About** [Minnesota](#) • [Endangered Species](#)



IV

1

2

3

4

PLANET  
IN PERIL

updated 9:22 p.m. EDT, Fri July 18, 2008

## Gray wolves back in protected column

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Protections reinstated for wol
- Wolves taken off endangered
- Judge says federal governme
- Decision halts plans by three

[Next Article in U.S. »](#)

TEXT SIZE  

**BILLINGS, Montana (AP)** -- A federal judge has restored endangered species protections for gray wolves in the Northern Rockies, derailing plans by three states to hold public wolf hunts this fall.



AP PHOTO

A judge has restored the protections for gray wolves in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho.

U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy granted a preliminary injunction late Friday restoring the protections for the wolves in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Molloy will eventually decide whether the injunction should be permanent.

The region has an estimated 2,000 gray wolves. They were removed from the endangered species list in March, after a decade-long restoration effort.

Environmentalists sued to overturn the decision, arguing wolf numbers would plummet if hunting were allowed. They sought the injunction in the hopes of stopping the hunts and allowing the wolf population to continue expanding.

"There were fall hunts scheduled that would call for perhaps as many as 500 wolves to be killed. We're delighted those wolves will be saved," said attorney

Doug Honnold with Earthjustice, who had argued the case before Molloy on behalf of 12 environmental groups.

In his ruling, Molloy said the federal government had not met its standard for wolf recovery, including interbreeding of wolves between the three states to ensure healthy genetics.


"Genetic exchange has not taken place," Molloy wrote in the 40-page decision.

### Don't Miss

- [Will moving endangered species save them?](#)
- [Coral reefs in trouble, scientists warn](#)

Molloy said hunting and state laws allowing the killing of wolves for livestock attacks would likely "eliminate any chance for genetic exchange to occur."

The federal biologist who led the wolf restoration program, Ed Bangs, defended the decision to delist wolves as "a very biologically sound package."

"The hunting of wolves clearly wouldn't endanger threatened wolf populations," Bangs said Friday. "We felt the science was rock solid and that the delisting was warranted." [E-mail to a friend](#)  | [Mixx it](#) | [Share](#)

Copyright 2008 The [Associated Press](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

PLANET IN PERIL

updated 50 minutes ago

# Gray wolf: Still endangered?

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Gray wolves officially no longer
- Environmentalists fear hundreds
- Rancher tells CNN the animals
- Federal Wildlife official: "The

[Next Article in Technology »](#)

READ

VIDEO

PHOTOS

By Dan Simon  
CNN

TEXT SIZE - +

**YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, Montana (CNN)** -- The gray wolf was officially removed from the Endangered Species Act's "threatened" list Friday after three decades -- a decision that has stoked controversy among environmentalists and ranchers.



Federal officials estimate there are 1,500 gray wolves in Yellowstone National Park.

[more photos »](#)

It means the wolves can be shot and killed once they step out of Yellowstone National Park as soon as the affected states establish a hunting season. However, state Fish and Wildlife officials can shoot the animals whenever they deem the wolves to be a problem.

The government delisted the wolves -- which were eliminated from [Yellowstone](#) decades ago before being reintroduced in the 1990s -- because they are now thriving in the park that is dominated by bison, elk and bighorn sheep.

"They're back here in the Northern Rockies; they're back here in Yellowstone," said Doug Smith, a biologist for the National Park Service in Yellowstone.

"That's something to celebrate given their history of human hatred."

But not everyone is happy about the animal being removed from the [endangered list](#). Conservationists believe hundreds of gray wolves straying from Yellowstone in search of prey could soon be killed by hunters and ranchers. [Watch rancher say no wolf is "sacred" »](#)

"We're not ready to pop the champagne corks and have a party," said Doug Honnold, the managing attorney for EarthJustice, a non-profit environmental law firm based in Oakland, California, that has threatened to sue the government.

**Endangered no more?**

"My biggest fear is we're going to go backwards instead of forwards."

- M
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4




debate on  
Yellowstone's gray  
wolves.  
Tonight, 10 ET

[see full schedule »](#)

targets of a massive government extermination campaign.

"It's harder to find an animal more persecuted than wolves. ... We did wolf extermination with a vengeance," said Smith.

But attitudes began to change in the 1980s. Elk and bison populations increased dramatically because there was no natural predator to keep their numbers in check. In 1995, Smith led a team to bring wolves back to the Rocky Mountain landscape. They transplanted dozens of wolves to Yellowstone from Canada.  [See photos of Yellowstone's animals »](#)

The project has been regarded as an overwhelming success.

There are now more than 1,500 wolves across Wyoming, Idaho and Montana, according to the government. That number convinced federal wildlife officials to remove them from the endangered species list.

Federal officials require each of the three states to maintain a population of 100 wolves, meaning a total of 300 wolves across all three states. The states have actually pledged to keep the population higher than that, at a rate of 150 wolves per state.

### Don't Miss

- [Six species under threat in Mexico](#)

"We did a thorough analysis," said Ed Bangs, the wolf recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "The consensus [for recovery] is a population of 300 wolves and 30 breeding pairs."

He added, "The wolf population is fully recovered. We have more wolves than we ever predicted and we have fewer problems than we ever predicted."

EarthJustice says that's not nearly enough to ensure a viable population and they want to stop the delisting. "We're going to have hundreds of wolves die needlessly," said Honnold.

But many ranchers in the region just don't understand the fuss about the animals. They have complained for years that the wolves eat their livestock.

"There's nothing about a wolf that's sacred," said Bruce Malcolm, a cattle rancher and Republican member of Montana's House of Representatives.


He said he's lost nearly two dozen cows to the wolves in recent years. "I would have preferred that they never came here," he said.

If there's a winner with the controversy, it's Yellowstone. The wolves have pushed up attendance by more than a 100,000 visitors per year, according to a park study.

ADVERTISEMENT



Smith, who has dedicated his life to the wolves, is philosophical about the debate.

"No one says living with wolves is easy," said Smith. "Living with wolves is a compromise." [E-mail to a friend](#) 

All About [Endangered Species](#) • [Yellowstone National Park](#)

[SHARE](#) [EMAIL](#) [SAVE](#) [PRINT](#)

► **Sound Off:** Your opinions and comments

5

6

7

8

9

11

mc



A  
C  
A  
W  
Y  
E  
a  
v  
V  
S  
W