

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REOPENS
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON 2007 PROPOSAL TO DELIST
NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION OF GRAY WOLVES
UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced it is reopening the public comment period on its proposal to delist the gray wolf in the northern Rocky Mountains. The public will have until November 28, 2008, to submit their comments to the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> or via U.S. mail or hand delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: RIN 1018-Au53; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

Through a notice in the Federal Register scheduled to publish on October 28, 2008, the Service is asking the public to provide comments and any additional information on the 2007 proposal to delist wolves. The Service is seeking additional information on a variety of topics related to the delisting. More details are available in the Federal Register notice which will be posted along with associated materials at the Service's northern Rocky Mountains wolf website: <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>

On July 18, 2008, the U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued an order immediately reinstating Endangered Species Act protections for wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains. In September 2008, the Service requested the court vacate and remand the final delisting rule back to the Service. The court granted the Service's request on October 13, 2008.

At this time, the northern Rocky Mountain population of gray wolves remains under the protection of the Endangered Species Act. The area affected by this ruling includes all of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming and the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon and parts of north-central Utah.

Management of the northern Rocky Mountain population of gray wolves is now governed by the same Endangered Species Act protections that were in effect before wolves were delisted on March 28, 2008.

"The Service is committed to ensuring that wolves thrive in the northern Rocky Mountains and will continue to work with the states and the public to advance the recovery of the species," said Steve Guertin, Regional Director for the Mountain-Prairie Region.

The minimum recovery goal for wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains is 30 breeding pairs and at least 300 wolves for three consecutive years, a goal that was attained in 2002 and has been exceeded every year since. The proposed northern Rocky Mountain population of wolves includes all of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, and a small part of north-central Utah. Gray wolves were previously listed as endangered in the lower 48 states, except in Minnesota, where they were listed as threatened. The wolf population in the Midwest was delisted in early 2007 but that decision was reversed in court in October 2008.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and

their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.