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SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEWERS FIND FLAWS IN FEDERAL WOLF DELISTING RULE

Author: [Endangered Species Coalition](#), *Press Release*



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Nearly 1.5 Million Comments Oppose Removing Protections

Washington, D.C. – Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a **scientific peer review** of a proposed rule to remove Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves across the United States. At least one reviewer found the rule failed to follow the best available science, which is required by the Endangered Species Act.

"I found the proposed rule to remove federal protections for gray wolves nationwide did not use the best available science as required by the Endangered Species Act," said Professor Adrian Treves of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at University of Wisconsin–Madison. "In particular, the government overlooked the essential

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challenges posed by human-caused mortality, which is preventing wolf population recovery everywhere one looks.”

“It doesn’t make sense to me that we would be reviewing the evidence at the same time as we review a proposed rule about that evidence – as if the political decision had already been made without waiting for peer reviewers to judge if the government had met the legal standard of best available science,” said Treves. “I recommended the government start with peer review of the science, then and only then decide if wolves are ready for delisting, not the other way around.”

The wolf delisting notice was published in the Federal Register and is open for public comment until mid-July, after which the rule can be finalized by the Trump Administration. So far, nearly [1.5 million comments](#) opposing the rule have been submitted by wildlife groups on behalf of their members.

There were once up to 2 million gray wolves living in North America, but the animals had been driven to near-extinction in the lower 48 states by the early 1900s. After passage of the federal Endangered Species Act in 1973 and protection of the wolf as endangered, federal recovery programs resulted in the rebound of wolf populations in limited parts of the country. Gray wolves returned on their own to the Western Great Lakes region and northwest Montana and were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho, where they have made a successful comeback. However, wolves are still struggling in areas of Oregon and Washington, while only a few have made it to California or the southern Rockies, where substantial areas of suitable habitat exist. Roughly 5,500 wolves currently live in the continental United States – a fraction of the species’ historic numbers.

“Without the protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act, gray wolves would never have recovered in the places where they are now,” said Leda Huta, Executive Director of the Endangered Species Coalition. “By removing protections across the country, the Trump Administration is essentially abandoning all efforts to restore this iconic American species to millions of acres of wild habitat.”

Categories: **endangered species act**

Tags: **wolves, USFWS, Gray Wolves, Adrian Treves, wolf delisting**

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