



## Federal delisting proposal for gray wolves

### *How would wolf delisting affect Utah?*

On March 14, 2019, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed taking the gray wolf off the Endangered Species List throughout the lower 48 states. The USFWS will accept public comment on the proposal until May 14, 2019. Visit [fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery/](https://www.fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery/) before the deadline to submit your comments.

After the public comment period ends, the USFWS will assess the feedback and decide whether to publish or withdraw a final rule. Until that time, wolves in Utah will be managed under current regulations.

Currently, wolves are only delisted in a small portion of northern Utah. **The delisted zone (north of I-80 and east of I-84) highlighted on the map below is the only area where the State of Utah**

**has had authority to manage, capture or kill wolves.**

In the rest of the state, wolves are considered an endangered species and fall under federal control until the USFWS publishes a final delisting rule.



The Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) has long urged the USFWS to delist wolves statewide. DWR leadership, the governor's office and Utah's congressional delegation have repeatedly requested that the federal government transfer all wolf management to the state.

### **How are wolves currently managed in Utah?**

In 2010, the Utah Legislature directed the DWR to prevent any packs of wolves from establishing within the delisted portion of Utah until wolves are delisted statewide (S.B. 36, Wolf Management Act). The law also directed the DWR to request that the USFWS immediately remove any wolves discovered in areas of Utah where they are still listed under the ESA. To comply with S.B. 36, the DWR will prevent wolves from becoming established in the delisted portion of the state.

### **How will wolves be managed after delisting?**

After delisting occurs, the DWR can implement the Utah Wolf Management Plan and manage wolves responsibly, anywhere they occur in the state. The Wolf Management Plan was written by a diverse stakeholder group and first approved by the Wildlife Board in 2005. The plan has since been extended until 2020.

The plan was written to guide management of wolves in Utah during an interim period. That period ranges from the time of statewide delisting until it is determined that wolves have established. (Establishment is defined in the management plan as "at least two breeding pairs of wild wolves successfully raising at least two young for two consecutive years.")

The goal of the plan is to manage, study and conserve wolves that move into Utah, while also:

- Avoiding conflicts with the wildlife management objectives of the Ute Indian Tribe
- Preventing livestock depredation
- Protecting the investment made in wildlife in Utah

During the interim period, any arriving wolves will be studied to determine where they are most likely to settle without conflict. Livestock owners will have options for dealing with wolf depredation and will be fully compensated for losses of livestock to wolves.

### **Are there wolves in Utah?**

Although there have been confirmed wolf sightings over the years — and rare instances of wolf-related livestock depredation — there are no known established packs in Utah. Since wolves were reintroduced in the northern Rocky Mountains in 1995, the DWR has been able to confirm between 10-20 wolves in the state. Each year, our biologists receive many reports of wolf sightings, but most of those are misidentifications of coyotes or domestic dogs. Nearly all confirmed sightings have been of lone, dispersing wolves, and we have been unable to verify any breeding behavior.

If you observe an animal you believe to be a wolf, please call your regional DWR office to report the sighting.

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