

IDAHO FISH AND GAME
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Wolf Delisting Rule Becomes Final

The federal rule that removes gray wolves in Idaho from the endangered species list became final today, Monday, May 4.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's delisting rule affects wolves in Idaho, Montana, parts of Washington, Oregon and Utah. Wolves in Wyoming will remain on the endangered species list.

Idaho has again taken over managing wolves under state law adopted in 2008 and under a wolf population management plan also adopted last year.

"We have to move on and manage them similar to other big game animals," Fish and Game Director Cal Groen said. "This is good news for wolves, elk, rural communities and hunters. I believe this action will help defuse the animosity and anger associated with wolves when we can manage wolves in concert with our other big game species."

Under state law, wolves that are molesting or attacking livestock or domestic animals may be killed by livestock or animal owners without a permit from Fish and Game. But the incident must be reported to the Fish and Game director within 72 hours.

The wolves killed would remain the property of the state. Livestock and domestic animal owners may take all nonlethal steps they deem necessary to protect their property.

A permit must be obtained from Fish and Game to control wolves not molesting or attacking livestock or domestic animals.

Fish and Game would apply the same professional wildlife management practices to wolves that it has applied to all big game species, which all have recovered from low populations during the early 1900s. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission in March set wolf hunting seasons for the fall of 2009.

Seasons will be from September 1 through March 31 in the Lolo and Sawtooth wolf management zones; from September 15 through December 31 in the Selway and Middle Fork zones; and elsewhere from October 1 through December 31.

Commissioners will set harvest quotas in August. Tags are not yet available.

Wolves were all but extirpated in Idaho by the 1930s. They were declared endangered in 1974, and a federal recovery effort brought 35 wolves to central Idaho in 1995 and 1996. Wolf population numbers have grown steadily since then.