

IDAHO FISH AND GAME
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Wolf Delisting Rule Published In The Federal Register

The federal rule that would remove gray wolves in Idaho from the endangered species list was published in the Federal Register Thursday, April 2.

The delisting of the northern Rocky Mountain gray wolf population becomes effective May 4, which is 30 days after the publication of the final rule.

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

When delisting becomes official, Idaho would again take 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."

A YouTube video outlining how the agency will manage wolves is available on the Fish and Game YouTube site.

Fish and Game would apply the same professional wildlife management practices to wolves as it has applied to all big game species, which all have recovered from low populations during the early 1900s, he said. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission in March set wolf hunting seasons, contingent on delisting, for the fall 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 would set harvest quotas in August, pending delisting taking effect.

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.