

WOLVES IN WYOMING

Information collected from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks and Casper Star-Tribune archives.

*Additional wolf facts provided by Ken Mills, a wolf biologist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

1974

Wolves become protected under the 1973 Endangered Species Act.

Officials hold a press conference outside a U.S. Forest Service Sherpa airplane before flying kenneled wolves from Canada to Great Falls, Montana, to go through customs.



LEROY PARKER | WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

1996



● Reintroduced wolf pack
● Natural wolf pack

2000

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finds there are 30 breeding pairs in the tri-state Rocky Mountain recovery area.

Packs are family groups with a male and female breeding pair and their young. Wolves breed once a year. Litter sizes are, on average, between five and seven pups.

2003

State agencies in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming submit conservation and management plans to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

2007

DECEMBER: Fish and Wildlife Service approves Wyoming's wolf management plan, setting into motion a future delisting.

2009

APRIL: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removes wolves from the endangered species list everywhere in the Northern Rocky Mountains but Wyoming.

2010

AUGUST: Judge Molloy rules wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains are a distinct population and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cannot remove one portion from the list but leave another. Wolves return to the endangered species list.

2012

MARCH: Hunters kill 166 wolves in Montana's wolf hunt, and more than 300 in Idaho.

APRIL: The Wyoming Game and Fish Department approves a wolf management plan including a hunting season to begin Oct. 1. The plan goes to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

AUG. 31: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces it will delist wolves in Wyoming, establishing hunting areas in the northwest corner of the state and allowing wolves to be shot on sight everywhere else.

SEPT. 30: The delisting becomes formal.

OCT. 1: Wolf hunting season opens in Wyoming, setting a quota of 52 and selling about 4,500 wolf licenses.

NOV. 13: Four conservation groups file a lawsuit to place wolves back on the endangered species list in Wyoming.

1893-1927

Federal, state and local hunters report killing more than 36,160 wolves in Wyoming.

1943

MAY: A sheepherder kills the last known wolf in Wyoming.

Early 1970s

Wolves are considered eradicated from most of the West.

Wolves howl to talk with each other. "They use it to locate each other across a distance. That's why they're so effective at spreading. As they move to different areas, they howl and locate each other. It's not a hunting strategy, it's purely communication."

1995

JANUARY: Wolf reintroduction begins in Yellowstone National Park. An environmental impact statement lists wolf recovery as 30 breeding pairs counted in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming three years in a row.



Two wolves roam inside an acclimation pen in Yellowstone National Park in early 1995. Acclimation pens were located in remote areas of the park to keep the wolves away from people while they bonded, formed pairs and mated before being released into the park.

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2002

About 43 breeding pairs are counted in the tri-state area, totaling 663 wolves, enough to trigger a proposed delisting.



Radio collars decorated by young students sit ready for wolf reintroduction in January 1995 in Yellowstone National Park.

MARK BRUSSINO | WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

2004

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves management plans for Montana and Idaho, not Wyoming.

2008

MARCH: The Bush administration removes wolves from the endangered species list in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho.

APRIL: At least 10 gray wolves are killed in less than two weeks after the delisting in Wyoming's predator management area.

APRIL: A group of 12 environmental organizations including the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society and Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, files a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeking an injunction against the delisting.

JULY: U.S. District Court Judge Donald Molloy in Montana sides with conservation organizations and issues an injunction against the rule. The Bush administration, he writes, failed to ensure genetic exchange between the three main wolf populations in the three states.

SEPTEMBER: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requests the judge vacate the delisting rule, making it void in all states.

Whether they live in northern Alaska or Wyoming, gray wolves are the same species. Some will vary in size only because of prey base. Wolves feeding mainly on moose, for example, will become larger than those subsisting off of smaller or less accessible game species, Mills said.

2011

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER: Montana and Idaho begin wolf hunts.

OCTOBER: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opens its proposed delisting rule for wolves in Wyoming to public comment.

2013

JAN. 1: Game and Fish reports 42 wolves were killed in the trophy area, and 25 were killed in 2012 in the rest of the state.

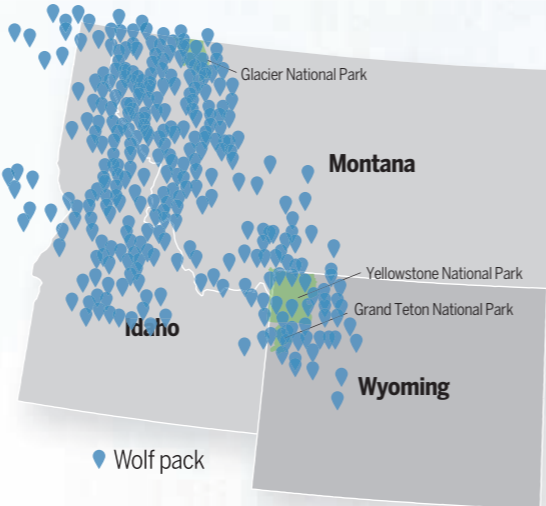
2014

JAN. 1: Game and Fish reports 24 wolves were killed in the trophy zone from a quota of 26, and 39 wolves were killed in the rest of the state.

SEPT. 23: U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson, ruling from a federal court in Washington, D.C., rejects a Wyoming wolf-management plan that had declared wolves unprotected predators that could be shot on sight in most of the state.

2015

FEBRUARY: Lawmakers introduce a bill that would permanently delist wolves in Wyoming.



● Wolf pack

Wolves generally avoid, and rarely attack, humans. There have been no verified attacks on humans in the Northern Rockies since gray wolves were reintroduced 20 years ago. Records show only two people have been killed by wolves in North America.

ILLUSTRATION BY WES WATSON

