

## **2 FEBRUARY 2007**

### **Wolves Moving Off Endangered List**

Early this week, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is removing the western Great Lakes population of gray wolves from the federal list of threatened and endangered species and proposing to remove the northern Rocky Mountain population of gray wolves from the list. The two separate actions are being taken in recognition of the success of gray wolf recovery efforts under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The service's removal of the gray wolf from the endangered and threatened species list applies only to the Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment (DPS). The area includes all of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan as well as parts of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. The agency says about 4,000 wolves live in the three states. The recovery plan identified 1,250 to 1,400 as a population goal for Minnesota. The state's wolf population has been at or above that level since the late 1970s. The Wisconsin/Michigan wolf population has been above 100 since the winter of 1993-94, achieving that numerical goal in the recovery plan.

The final rule will be published in the Federal Register. The rule becomes effective 30 days after publication; until that date, gray wolves remain under the protection of the ESA in the western Great Lakes DPS. The rule and other information about the gray wolf may be found at [www.fws.gov/midwest/wolf](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/wolf).

The wolf population in the northern Rocky Mountains (NRM) has exceeded its recovery goals every year since 2002. Therefore, the FWS is proposing to establish and delist the NRM wolf DPS that will include all of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming as well as the eastern third of Washington and Oregon and a small corner of north-central Utah. The proposal will call for the management of 1,200 wolves in the three states.