



THE WILD TIMES

A newsletter of the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society Volume 2003:03 December 2003

WOLF - not just another four letter word **Answers to frequently asked questions about wolf management in Idaho**

By Steve Nadeau – Statewide Large Carnivore Program Coordinator, Idaho Dept. Fish & Game

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) reintroduced fifteen wolves into Idaho in 1995. At that time, the Idaho Legislature strictly limited Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) involvement with wolves and wolf recovery. The USFWS proceeded with recovery and contracted with the Nez Perce Tribe to implement wolf management in Idaho. In 1996, an additional 20 wolves were reintroduced. Since that time, the number of wolves in Idaho has increased, and in 2003, we have approximately 380 wolves, 22 breeding pairs and nearly 40 packs well distributed from the Canadian border south to I 84.

In April, 2003, Governor Dirk Kempthorne, Fish and Game Director Steve Huffaker, and the Idaho Legislature negotiated and passed a bill into law that allows the State to participate in wolf management. The bill, H0294 (for text version of links, see box on page 2), allows IDFG to assist the Governor's Office of Species Conservation (OSC) in implementing the State of Idaho's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, as well as participate in wolf management with the USFWS and the Nez Perce Tribe. Wolves are still listed as threatened and as an "experimental non-essential population" in central Idaho, and therefore are under management authority of the Federal Government. Idaho cannot conduct management that is not in coordination with and under the authority of the USFWS while wolves are still federally listed. Federal management of wolves in Idaho remains essentially the same even though they have been reclassified. The only difference is that IDFG may now legally participate in management activities.

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What does down-listing mean?

Wolves reached the Federal biological recovery goal in December 2002, that is "30 breeding pairs of wolves well distributed throughout the 3 states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming for 3 consecutive years". Recently, the USFWS has reclassified or down-listed wolves from endangered to threatened in north Idaho and northern Montana, and everywhere within the western Distinct Population Segment (DPS) (see Down-listing Rule, PDF file). This change does nothing to change wolf management in Idaho except in the upper Panhandle region north of Interstate 90. The next step is delisting wolves in the western DPS. The DPS includes Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, Northern Utah and Northern Colorado, Nevada and California. A recovered population in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming means the entire western DPS has achieved recovery.

When will the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service de-list wolves?

Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) the USFWS will de-list wolves when the combined policies of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming provide an "adequate regulatory mechanism" to govern wolf management. To be "adequate" means to assure that if the states took over management, the wolves will be protected and maintained as a viable population sufficiently distributed among the 3 states. The USFWS interprets the ESA to mean that the 3 states have to provide wolf management plans and establish state laws that satisfactorily provide these protections. Currently, the 3 states of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming have completed their plans. *(Continued on page 2)*

Wolves continued from page 1

All 3 plans were peer reviewed by the scientific community and the USFWS is proceeding with delisting. Delisting was expected to occur by December 2004, but will likely be delayed by legal challenges.

What does state management mean for wolves?

The state wolf plan requires that a minimum of 15 packs of wolves be maintained in Idaho. Currently Idaho has 40 packs well distributed across the state. The state has begun training and is coordinating with the USFWS, the Nez Perce Tribe, and Wildlife Services to transition into the primary management role. Once de-listed, wolves will likely be managed similar to black bears and mountain lions. The state will propose hunting wolves to provide opportunity for harvest of wolves, as well as to attempt to reduce problems with livestock and to maintain a balance between wolves and their prey. However, wolves will be managed at a level that allows a harvestable surplus, which will be higher than the minimum required for delisting.

What will the other agencies be doing?

Once wolves are de-listed, the USFWS will be monitoring wolf management in the 3 states for 5 years. The states will be required to verify and report wolf pack activity. Wildlife Services will be the primary agency responsible for wolf depredations. They will be working closely with IDFG and livestock operators to assure wolf problems are minimized. The Nez Perce Tribe and the State are in negotiations and hope to sign a memorandum of

understanding that would outline a significant role in wolf related activities for the Tribe in north central Idaho, as well as provide the Tribe with a wolf harvest agreement. Land management agencies like the Forest Service and BLM will be responsible for their regular land management duties, but IDFG will request their assistance in monitoring and management of wolves.

The Idaho Fish and Game Website

The IDFG website has wolf management information and links to other agency reports and wolf data across the Northern Rocky Mountains. Additionally, the website has a wolf report form that can be used to report wolf observations. The form will automatically be forwarded to wolf biologists, and will be summarized in a database. Public and professional reporting of wolves will be necessary for long-term monitoring of wolves in Idaho.

Internet links for Idaho wolf management information:

H0294 = www3.state.id.us/oasis/2003/H0294.html

Wolf Conservation and Management Plan =
www2.state.id.us/fishgame/info/mgmtplans/wolf_plan.pdf

Downlisting Rule = www2.state.id.us/fishgame/info/programsinfo/wolves/downlisting.pdf

IDFG Wolf Web Page = www2.state.id.us/fishgame/info/programsinfo/wolves/wolf.htm

Speakers invited for 40th annual meeting

ICTWS officers have been working diligently to invite unique guest speakers for the March 4-5, 2004, annual meeting in Moscow. Jack Ward Thomas will present the keynote speech. Terry Grosz, will speak at the Thursday night banquet.

Thomas is well known as the former chief of the U.S. Forest Service and is currently teaching at the University of Montana leading the Boone and Crockett Wildlife Conservation Program. Thomas received his B.S. ('57) from Texas A&M, M.S. ('69) from West Virginia University, and Ph.D. ('73) from

the University of Massachusetts. Thomas's plenary speech will include the history and future of wildlife management that will precede a panel discussion on the same topic.

Grosz received his B.S. ('64) and M.S. ('66) from Humboldt State College and was a conservation officer for California Fish and Game for 5 years. He then worked as a special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service until 1998. Grosz has won several awards for his work including the Conservation Achievement Award for (*Continued on page 2*)

Speakers continued from page 2

Law Enforcement from the National Wildlife Federation in 1995. A 2 hour television special presenting stories from his books "Wildlife Wars" airs January 6, 2004, on Animal Planet at 10 p.m. Eastern time and could possibly become a series. Grosz is donating 3 sets of pre-signed books for the auction and will also have copies available for purchase. Grosz's banquet presentation will focus on comparing old vs. new ways of protecting wildlife from an enforcement perspective. He will show descriptive slides stressing what wildlife law enforcement is truly about. Grosz will end with the importance of enforcement in wildlife management.

Reserve your hotel room

Those attending the 2004 annual meeting in Moscow (March 4-5) can reserve rooms at the University Inn Best Western by calling **208-882-0550**. Single room rates for queen sized beds are \$59.50, king size \$64.50. Rates are \$64.50 for two or more people for queen size beds, \$69.50 for king size.

**SEE *Wildlife Wars* on ANIMAL PLANET
10 p.m. Eastern, January 6, 2004**

Nominations needed for annual awards

ICTWS has 2 awards to recognize individuals or groups for their contributions to wildlife in Idaho.

The **Professional Wildlifer Award** is intended to honor any member of the Idaho Chapter TWS who has made long-term, outstanding contributions within the state of Idaho to: the general areas of wildlife conservation, management, science, or conservation education; the wildlife profession; or to a specific area of endeavor, species, community, ecosystem, or region. Any person who has made such noteworthy contributions is eligible for nomination for a Professional Wildlifer Award.

The **Special Recognition Award** is intended to honor any person or group who has made an outstanding contribution within the state of Idaho to: the general areas of wildlife conservation, management, science, or conservation education; the wildlife profession; or to a specific area of endeavor, species, community, ecosystem, or region. Any person or group who has made such a noteworthy contribution within the last 3 years is eligible for nomination for a Special Recognition Award.

Any Chapter member may submit a nomination for a Professional Wildlifer Award or Special Recognition Award. When submitting nominations, please specify which award. A single nominee cannot be submitted for both awards. Each nomination should include the following information: (1) full name, present position, current address and telephone number of the nominee; (2) name, address, and telephone number of the nominator; (3) a clear and concise statement justifying the nomination, including the specific details of the outstanding accomplishments (Professional Wildlifer Award) or the specific nature, time, and place of the outstanding accomplishments (Special Recognition Award); and (4) the signature of the nominator. Two or 3 letters in support of the nominee from other professionals will aid in decisions.

**Mail Awards Nominations
to:**

Dr. Charles Harris
Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
600 South Walnut Street
Boise, Idaho 83707

208-287-2747

charris@idfg.state.id.us

Nominations must be received by **10 February 2004**. Nominees not selected to receive the award must be re-nominated for consideration in future years. Please take a moment to consider the accomplishments of your friends, colleagues, and wildlife conservation groups and submit a nomination. No nominations were submitted last year.

Theme set for 2004 meeting, agenda in draft form

The 2004 annual meeting (March 4 – 5, Moscow) will be ICTWS' 40th anniversary so a natural for the theme is learning from the past and looking toward the future to better understand, conserve, and manage our wildlife resources. The meeting will combine papers from invited prominent wildlife researchers,

Thursday, March 4, 2004

Plenary Speaker – Jack Ward Thomas

Panel Discussion: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

A panel of national policy, prominent scientists, and advocates answer questions from a moderator regarding how wildlife management has changed in the last 40 years.

Panel Discussion: 40 Year Perspective on Idaho Wildlife and Management

Invited Papers: Enforcement Then and Now

Speakers will provide an historical perspective of how enforcement techniques, laws, training, and tools have changed over the last 40 years.

Business Meeting

Social Hour/Banquet/Silent Auction/Awards

Guest Speaker – Terry Grosz

managers, and enforcement agents as well as panel discussions. The following is a draft agenda from the chapter officers organizing the meeting. Members and students are encouraged to provide posters which will be accessible to the attendees throughout the meeting.

Friday, March 5, 2004

Invited Papers: Wildlife Education - History and Future

This session will address past education emphasis, where education is now, and where it is going. Papers will show how education is trying to meet the demands of employers and what they need and will need.

Invited Papers: Management/Research Tools and Technology – Historical and Future Perspectives

Big Horn Sheep Symposium

Invited Papers: Current Research on topics yet to be selected

Best Student/Professional Paper Awards

Announcement of 2005 annual meeting

New officers to be elected, nominations requested

ICTWS members are encouraged to seek the executive positions for the chapter. The offices are held for 2 years. Those interested in a position should send a brief biography and a statement to Anna Owsiak, ICTWS – Andrus WMA, 4187 Highway 71, Cambridge, Idaho, 83610. aowsiak@idfg.state.id.us

The statement should include what qualities the applicant will bring to the position. These will be printed in the next newsletter along with ballots. Results of the vote will be announced at the annual meeting in March.



IDAHO CHAPTER TWS OFFICERS



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USFWS reviewing petitions to list greater sage-grouse as endangered species

Provided by Pacific Region and Mountain-Prairie Region, External Affairs Office, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a court ordered deadline of January 2, 2004, to issue a "90-day finding" on petitions to list the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act. The 90-day finding is the first step in a public process to consider whether the listing of the species under the Act is warranted. A negative 90-day finding would mean that the petitions and other material already available to the Service do not contain substantial information indicating that listing the species may be warranted.

Such a finding would end the evaluation process. A positive 90-day finding would mean substantial information exists to indicate that listing may be warranted. Such a finding would trigger a more comprehensive status review of the species (12-month finding). If a status review occurs it would be completed by October 2004, and would include an opportunity for the public to provide relevant data or other information.

At the end of the review, the Service would make a finding that listing is either "not warranted," "warranted but precluded by higher listing actions," or "warranted." A "warranted" finding would trigger publication of a proposed rule to list the species, with an invitation for public comment on the proposal. A "warranted but precluded" finding would make the species a "candidate" for listing; candidates receive no formal protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The on-going evaluation by the Service addresses three petitions regarding the species and will result in a single finding for all three petitions. One petition, which is the subject of the court order, seeks to list the eastern subspecies of the greater sage-grouse, and the other two petitions seek to list the entire species throughout its range. Although an eastern and a western subspecies were recognized for several years,

recent genetic studies and other information led the Service to formally conclude there is no basis for distinguishing between the subspecies. The Service made this determination in a 90-day finding on the western subspecies in 2002. Therefore, the Service is combining the three petitions. The petitioners contend that factors such as urbanization, agricultural conversion, certain livestock management practices, energy and mineral development, wildfire, and invasions of non-native plants have fragmented and degraded sagebrush habitat, contributing to the decline of the greater sage-grouse and threatening its continued existence.



Greater sage-grouse

The greater sage-grouse is found in open sagebrush plains in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, eastern California, Nevada, Utah, western Colorado, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The greater sage-grouse also occurs in Canada, where it is listed as endangered under their Species At Risk Act.

Due to concern about the greater sage-grouse, State wildlife agencies have been working together on a conservation assessment of the species and its habitat. The Service and several other Federal agencies have provided funding for this coordinated State effort.

If the Service finds that the petitions present substantial information that the petitioned action may be warranted (a positive 90-day finding) then a 12-month status review would be initiated. The States' conservation assessment of the species, expected to be completed by May 15, 2004, would be considered by the Service if a 12-month status review was initiated. The Service would also consider State greater sage-grouse management plans that are currently under development, as well as management direction and activities involving Federal, State, Tribal, and private lands. The Service's web site explaining the endangered species program is: <http://endangered.fws.gov/>

Pre-Registration Form – 2004 ICTWS Annual Meeting

IDAHO CHAPTER
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
University Inn Best Western
Moscow, Idaho 3 - 5 March 2004

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (B) _____ (H) _____

E-mail: _____

Employer: _____

Annual Meeting Registration Cost Total - Thursday -Friday, March 4 - 5, 2004
Early Registration -post-marked on or before February 20, 2004 includes personalized nametags.

Member \$ 59.00 _____ Student \$ 45.00 _____

Late Registration--after February 20, 2004

Member \$ 70.00 _____ Student \$ 55.00 _____

Membership Dues

Idaho Chapter \$ 10.00 _____ Northwest Section \$ 5.00 _____

Nongame Workshop – Wednesday 3 March 2004 (Free)

Will you be attending the Idaho Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (a.m.)? Yes ___ No ___

Will you be attending the Idaho Bat Working Group meeting (p.m.)? Yes ___ No ___

Social/Auction/Awards

Do you plan to attend the Thursday evening social/auction/awards (included in registration)? Yes ___ No ___

Are you bringing a guest? If so, add an additional \$ 25.00/person _____

Indicate the number of meals for you and your guests among these: Beef (NY strip loin) ___, Chicken (stuffed Normandy) ___, Salmon ___

Total Amount Paid \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: **Idaho Chapter, TWS.** Sorry, NO purchase orders or credit cards will be accepted. Please mail your registration form with payment to:

Michelle Commons, Treasurer, Idaho Chapter TWS, 3101 S. Powerline Road, Nampa, ID, 83686.

The Last Page...

Classic Leopold



“We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes – something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.”



Aldo Leopold – 1949