

The Reintroduction of the Mexican Gray Wolf:

The habitat of the Mexican gray wolf is historically in northern Mexico, with a very small amount of its range in the southwest of the United States. In the 1970's the population of this species of wolf began to decrease, and in 1976 it was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. In 1998, the federal government began the process of reintroducing wolves into Arizona and New Mexico. (Miller, 2016) The first reintroduction by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) included 11 wolves, and as of 2014 there was upward of one hundred wolves within the designated recovery sites in southern Arizona and New Mexico. However, the method utilized by the federal government to reintroduce the Mexican gray wolf has caused harm to our local stakeholders and has failed to conserve the species in a genuine and productive way. This is yet another example of why federal overreach and mismanagement under the ESA must be resisted.

The wolves that are reintroduced are effectively domesticated, thus creating significant challenges to their survival. Despite efforts to prepare these wolves to be reintroduced into the wild, they lack the skills and characteristics that allowed their ancestors to survive as a wild population. These wolves do not know how to hunt wild game and they frequently attack cattle. Because such behavior results in the wolf being put down or removed from the habitat, cattle depredation results in negative consequences for wolf populations. Additionally, the wolves still depend on the USFWS to provide them with beef logs for food near areas that human and livestock occupy. Subsequently, they are extremely inclined to frequent these areas. Efforts have been made to discourage wolves from attacking cattle but these efforts were minimal and ineffective. The federal government has failed to reintroduce the wolf in a way that allows it to thrive independently from humans, and it has resulted in harm to the wolves they are trying to preserve. Moreover, the population of reintroduced has very little genetic diversity, so their population is incredibly weak genetically due to inbreeding. (Miller, 2016) These wolves are domesticated, weak, and not proficient in hunting. They hardly resemble the species that once thrived in northern Mexico.

These wolves cause great harm to ranchers who share their habitat. In New Mexico, the wolf was released into the Gila National Forest. This section of land contains 100 cattle grazing allotments. (Miller, 2016) This location that was selected to support the wolf's reintroduction is densely populated by cattle. Because of the wolf's domestic nature and food source provided by the USFWS near human developments, the wolf is not inclined to keep a healthy distance from areas of land that humans and cattle occupy. This federal mismanagement and ineffective recovery plan has caused ranchers to frequently lose cattle to wolf depredation, but they are barred from taking any action to protect their livelihood. Although ranchers are compensated for cattle loss in such instances, the process to prove the attack and receive compensation is complex and time consuming. It also does not take into account cattle that have gone missing as a result of a wolf attack, or compensate for the incredibly costly decrease in cattle reproduction rates. Ranchers lose large amounts of revenue and ultimately, the compensation does very little (if anything at all) to make up for the harm the wolf causes.

The federal government is still making efforts to reintroduce wolves, and thus imposes harmful regulations on our private land owners. The case of the Mexican gray wolf is yet another powerful example of the way the federal government uses the ESA to take state's power and impose heavy-handed regulations on private land. The result of this mismanagement has shown the federal government to be outrageously ineffective in its efforts to preserve the wolf and promote the wellbeing of its citizens. The conservation methods utilized have severely harmed local agriculture and done little to preserve the species of wolf in a genuine way. PAN cherishes wildlife, like the wolf, that has contributed so greatly to our rich heritage in New Mexico. However, we promote recovery plans under the ESA that are well researched and optimal for both the wildlife and local stakeholders. We are accomplishing this by sponsoring sound research which informs legislation that protects New Mexicans from a government that is encroaching on our rights. To do this successfully we need your help. Join us by becoming a member on our website, donating, and sharing our page as we continue to educate New Mexicans on our efforts to defend their liberties.

Resources:

Associated Press. (2016, April). New Mexico to sue feds over plan to release more gray wolves into the wild | Fox News. Retrieved June 24, 2016, from <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/04/21/new-mexico-to-sue-feds-over-plan-to-release-more-gray-wolves-into-wild.html>

Miller, E. (2016, June). Cornered: Mexican wolf management to appease livestock producers may run out the clock on recovery. Retrieved June 23, 2016, from <http://www.sfreporter.com/santafe/article-12108-cornered.html>