

The zoo stands up for wolves. You should, too

Celebrate International Wolf Day by signing petition to protect wolves



SEATTLE — Last January, gray wolves were removed from federal protections under the Endangered Species Act, turning management of the recovering species over to states' control. This delisting has already led to fatal consequences for wolf populations around the U.S. Several states are allowing hunting quotas well above what scientists recommend as sustainable, threatening to reverse the success of recovery and even potentially putting local populations back under threat of extinction. As the world celebrates **International Wolf Day**, Woodland Park Zoo invites you to join us and [sign this petition](#), urging our nation's leaders to immediately restore federal protection for wolves.

Washington state's recovering wolf population is currently protected under state law, and hunting or killing a wolf is illegal. According to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, at the end of 2020, 132 known wolves in 24 known packs were living in Washington – recovering, but not recovered.

"Wolves provide extraordinary balance to our ecosystems, and they have the right to the wild just like all things living in the U.S.," said Living Northwest Program Director Robert Long, PhD. "Sadly, in some western states, wolves have become the victim of politics as well as bullets. Misinformation about established science and management practices have no role in species recovery efforts. But the good news is that we can do something about it. Federal protections must be reinstituted now to ensure these smart, family-oriented and resourceful animals have a chance at survival."

Woodland Park Zoo's mission is to save wildlife and inspire everyone to make conservation a priority in their lives. Thanks to the Living Northwest Program, the zoo is a regional conservation leader, working with other state agencies to protect and promote complete, functional, and secure populations of the species that call this place home — including the gray wolf.

As an apex predator, gray wolves play a significant role in ecosystems by regulating prey and helping to shape the natural communities where they live. Unfortunately, large carnivore populations are at risk (many being reduced to small and isolated populations), ultimately increasing the threat of extinction. Continuing to focus on recovery and coexistence is the key to saving this native species and ensuring its survival for generations to come.

In April, the zoo publicly shared its new policy statement regarding the gray wolf:

Wolves are a classic example of both a recovery species and a coexistence species in Washington state. Woodland Park Zoo supports the recovery of wolves across Washington

state as part of our natural biological community and bio-cultural heritage. The zoo advocates for science-based decision-making and peaceful coexistence among people and wildlife. The zoo believes lethal removal of wolves should only occur as a last resort when all science-based mitigation measures are exhausted. The zoo is committed to our long partnership with the state's wildlife agency and will continue to work collaboratively through open communication and transparency.

By signing this petition, you are joining zoos and conservation organizations across America who are asking the government to protect gray wolves once more. Visit actionnetwork.org/petitions/restore-protection-for-wolves-now to learn more and make your voice heard.

About wolves

The gray wolf once roamed much of North America, with the exception of the Southeastern United States, which was home to the red wolf. With the wolf's extermination across a large extent of its range over the last century, and its recovery in a number of places in recent years, the effects wolves can have on ecosystems are being seen in real time.

Wolves were once common across the entire state of Washington, but they were heavily hunted and declined rapidly in the latter half of the 1800s. They were essentially driven to extinction in the state by 1930, and weren't confirmed to exist again in Washington until some 70 years later, in the early 2000s.

Since the turn of the millennium, wolves have slowly but steadily been increasing in Washington. The first documented breeding in a wolf pack in Washington was confirmed in 2008. At the end of 2019, there were an estimated 145 wolves in 26 packs in Washington. Five of those packs totaling 37 wolves are managed by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; the rest are managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

For more information on Woodland Park Zoo, visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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