



Environmental groups ask California to protect gray wolf

By Matt Weiser

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Four environmental groups today petitioned the state to protect the gray wolf under the California Endangered Species Act.

Led by the Center for Biological Diversity, the groups argue that the December migration of a wolf into California from Oregon means the return of wolves to the state is inevitable.

Though any wolves that migrate into California are automatically protected by the federal Endangered Species Act, the groups believe California should take charge of a recovery plan because the state endangered species law is stronger and federal officials are focused on wolf recovery in Rocky Mountain states.

“The time is now because we have one wolf in California, and I just think it’s very likely there’s going to be more wolves in California in the near future,” said Noah Greenwald, endangered species director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

Other groups behind the petition are Big Wildlife, Environmental Protection Information Center, and Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center.

The California Fish and Game Commission will have 90 days to determine if the petition contains enough information to trigger a status review of the species. It will then have nine months to complete that review.

The wolf known as OR7 entered California on Dec. 28 and traveled as far as the outskirts of Susanville in Lassen County. More recently, it turned north and has lingered near the Oregon border in Siskiyou County.

Though considered eliminated from California since the late 1930s, the gray wolf has never been listed under the state endangered species law, which was passed in 1984.