

## FWS blasted for attempt to remove protections from gray wolves

By Justin King  
September 7, 2013

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is attempting to remove the protections of the Endangered Species Act from the gray wolf over the objections of conservationists and wolf experts.

The Center for Biological Diversity claims FWS subverted the peer review process and circumvented proper procedures by deciding to break the species into two subspecies without proper scientific scrutiny. The Center claims FWS revived an internal agency publication that had been out of print for twenty years expressly for the purpose of publishing their findings and avoiding proper peer review.

Independent peer review is a requirement before delisting a species under the Endangered Species Act. In this case, FWS contracted an outside firm to conduct

the peer review. When the agency received copies of the scientific panel's resumes, they allegedly sent a letter to the firm requesting some of the scientist be removed. The scientists FWS objected to all signed a letter to the Secretary of the Interior calling into question the scientific basis for the decision to remove protections from the wolves.

The objections are echoed by the American Society of Mammalogists in their letter to the Secretary. The ASM is an international non-profit. The largest and oldest association of its kind said "We look forward to the day when the scientific evidence clearly points to the conclusion that federal protection of the gray wolf under the Endangered Species Act is no longer needed to ensure full recovery of this important apex predator. However, we believe it is premature to declare that that day has arrived."

Under pressure, FWS has extended the comment period for the rule change until October 28, 2013. The Sierra Club has launched a petition to stop the rule change, and Rally for Wolves is staging a protest at the National Mall in Washington, DC today.