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Calif. official advises against listing gray wolf

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A top California wildlife official said the gray wolf should not receive endangered species protections in the state.

Chuck Bonham, the director of the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, said Wednesday that the scientific evidence suggests some protections are needed for the gray wolf, but not a listing on the endangered species list, The San Francisco Chronicle reported (<http://bit.ly/1nXlpWp>).

Bonham, who was speaking at the California Fish and Game Commission meeting, said his decision was reached after a yearlong department study spurred by conservationists, who filed a petition seeking protections after a lone gray wolf wandered into California from Oregon.

Officials say that wolf, called OR-7, is the first known to have entered the state in 90 years.

It has since returned to Oregon but has made a few short jaunts back into California territory.

Bonham said he did not reach the decision easily.

"It's possible I may lose friends over this, which is why I ask everyone to read the documents before passing judgment."

He is recommending the gray wolf be listed as a species of special concern and that a prohibition be placed on killing of gray wolves in California. He said he would consider an endangered listing again at a later date.

"Wolves deserve a chance to recover in California, so it's disappointing to see the Department of Fish and Wildlife's recommendation against protections," said Amaroq Weiss of the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups that petitioned to have it listed.