

[Scientists Say First Wolf Found Near Yosemite for Century a 'Beacon of Hope' \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/science/scientists-say-first-wolf-found-near-yosemite-for-century-a-beacon-of-hope)

Scientists Say First Wolf Found Near Yosemite for Century a 'Beacon of Hope'

Jason Murdock 11 hrs

A GPS-tracked gray wolf has been branded a "beacon of hope" after traveling far south into California from Oregon, likely in search of a mate.



© Austin Smith Jr./California Department of Fish and Game Photo of OR-93 by Austin Smith Jr., Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

The gray wolf, a nearly two-year-old male called OR-93, has dispersed further south into the state than any of the collared wolves that ventured before it. The wolf reached Mono County, east of Yosemite National Park in the central Sierra Nevada, on February 25.

The Center for Biological Diversity, a non-profit conservation organization, said this is the farthest south a wolf has traveled in California in "modern times."

OR-93 was fitted with a tracking collar in June 2020 after being born in a territory south of Mt. Hood in Oregon and passed into California in late January.

After leaving its birth pack in Oregon, a group known as the White River pack, the wolf was tracked by its collar heading south and arrived in Modoc County, California before swiftly moving into Lassen County and onto the central Sierra Nevada region.

Amaroq Weiss, a biologist and senior West Coast wolf advocate with the Center for Biological Diversity, said the animal's movements were a positive sign.

"We're thrilled to learn this wolf is exploring deep into the Sierra Nevada, since scientists have said all along this is great wolf habitat. He's another beacon of hope, showing that wolves can return and flourish as long as they remain legally protected," she said.

The California Department of Fish and Game said that OR-93 left its pack in search of new territory and/or a mate, which is the behavior of many young wolves.

OR-93 is the 16th gray wolf documented as having traveled into California, which had its population of wolves totally wiped out in the 1920s as part of a government-sponsored and nationwide cull largely conducted on behalf of the U.S. livestock industry.

Previously, wolf OR-54 traveled down as far as Lake Tahoe Basin before returning north. The remainder traveled around or settled in California's northern counties.

That suggested OR-93, the first from the White River pack confirmed as moving south into California, may be the first of its kind to near the Yosemite area in 100 years.

Weiss said in the statement last week: "Given the time of year, we assume OR-93 has traveled such a long way in search of a mate. I hope he can find one."

The Center for Biological Diversity said wolves returned to Oregon and Washington in the 2000s, and another wolf, OR-7, was first documented as reaching California in 2011. At the time, it had been the first wild wolf confirmed in the state in 87 years.

Fewer than a dozen known wolves now live in California. Alongside OR-93, that includes the five-strong Lassen pack and a new pair found in Siskiyou County late last year.

