

Wolves to come off endangered list within 60 days

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This image provided by the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Department shows a collared gray wolf, part of the Smart Creek trio pack is shown southwest of Drummond, Mont., in the fall of 2009. Legal experts say the Obama administration's support of Congressional action to let hunters target gray wolves in the West will open the door to future attempts by lawmakers to circumvent one of the country's bedrock environmental laws.(AP Photo/Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Department)

(AP) -- Federal wildlife officials say they will take more than 1,300 gray wolves in the Northern Rockies off the endangered species list within 60 days.

An attachment to the budget bill signed into law Friday by President Barack Obama strips protections from wolves in five Western states.



It marks the first time Congress has taken a species off the endangered list.

Idaho and Montana plan public wolf hunts this fall. Hunts last year were canceled after a judge ruled the predators remained at risk.

Protections remain in place for <u>wolves</u> in Wyoming because of its shoot-on-sight law for the predators.

There are no immediate plans to hunt the small wolf populations in Oregon and Washington. No packs have been established in Utah.

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