

2 gray wolves captured and collared in Northern California

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Two members of California's small but rebounding gray wolf population have been located and given tracking collars, bolstering the state's conservation efforts, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife

announced Friday.

The agency says they located and captured the two [wolves](#) on March 17 in Siskiyou County through "intermittent signals" coming off the malfunctioning collar of one [wolf](#). The wolves were given satellite collars, which will transmit regular location updates back to the department.

They were then released back into the wild.

"The capture of these wolves is fantastic since we lost the only functioning satellite collar last summer, and ground capture efforts since then have been unsuccessful," Kent Laudon, wolf specialist and senior environmental scientist for the department, said in a statement. "A lot of people have worked hard to make this happen, and we're excited about the new collars and data."

Collaring the wolves and tracking their movements is a critical part of rehabilitating the diminished population, which were hunted to the point of extinction in the state in the 1920s. Since 2014, [gray wolves](#) have been protected under the California Endangered Species Act, and hunting them is prohibited. The loss of the apex predator has had dramatic impacts throughout the [food chain](#) and has thrown the delicate balance between predators and prey into disarray.

Wolves have slowly returned to California, trotting in from other states. One such wolf, known as OR-93, famously made the journey from western Oregon, crossing freeways and mountain passes until he arrived in Southern California. The odyssey ended tragically, with the wolf fatally struck by a car near Interstate 5 in late 2021. Nevertheless, his epic journey was hailed by wolf advocates, who said it gave them hope the species might one day safely roam wild across the region once again.

One of the wolves captured last week, called OR85, was also from Oregon and had been captured and collared by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in February 2020. Later that year, he made the journey from northeastern Oregon to the northernmost part of California.

Now 4 years old and 98 pounds, OR85 was found alongside a 1-year-old, 97-pound male wolf believed to be from a litter he had in 2021. OR85 mated with a gray female wolf from southwestern Oregon, who gave birth to seven pups in 2021 and eight pups last year.

The rebounding gray wolf numbers have created tension across the West between conservationists, who want to see the population return, and ranchers and farmers, who say their livestock are routinely threatened. The state says it shares information gleaned from the collars with cattle and sheep ranchers to alert them to nearby wolf activity.

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