

Endangered species rebounds in California a century after being wiped out

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All on its own, an endangered species is making a fierce comeback in California, newly published state wildlife data show.

The state's gray [wolf](#) population doubled in one fell swoop with 30 pups born across five of the seven packs this spring, bringing the total number of [wolves](#) to more than 60, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's quarterly report shows.

That's the most significant increase in the state's gray wolf population in a century—since the last wolf was shot in 1924, SFGATE reported.

Conservation organizations emphasized the number of new pups as a huge win for the rebounding species.

The Center for Biological Diversity called it "inspiring"—especially because the wolves made their way back into California and established packs on their own, rather than being reintroduced by wildlife agencies, the organization said in a news release.

It happened in late 2011 when a radio-collared wolf known as OR-7 ventured away from his pack in northeast Oregon and landed in California, the organization said. OR-7's daughter went on to become a "founding member" of the Yowlumni pack, the state's southernmost pack in Tulare County.

That pack produced seven of the 30 pups this year, according to Fish and Wildlife's report.

"Seeing wolves return to the places this magnificent species once called home and have these adorable new pups is as inspiring as it gets," said Amaroq Weiss, the center's senior wolf advocate. "At least five California packs have now created families. That's a testament to the visionary power and strong enforcement of the federal and state [endangered species](#) acts."

The five packs that produced pups this year consist of two breeding

adults, several yearlings from last year's litters and now the new [pups](#) born this spring, the organization said. Smaller groups of wolves, also known as lone wolves, were seen in Tehama and Plumas counties, and the organization says officials are studying wolves spotted recently in Modoc County.

The comeback doesn't come without controversy. The Fish and Wildlife report shows several of the [packs](#) preyed on livestock during the reporting period from April to June.

A manager at a ranch where wolves killed several calves told SFGATE that livestock producers feel helpless, especially because the wolves are protected under both state and federal laws.

"Our hands are tied," she told the outlet. "We've been invaded."

But for wildlife advocates, it's a strong start for the rebounding species, Weiss said.

"I'm overjoyed that California now has an estimated 65 wolves in the state," she said. "It's a great start, but we've got more work to do. California wolves need to keep their strong state and federal protections if they're going to fully recover and thrive here."

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