
THE STATUS OF THE GRIZZLY BEAR IN THE NORTHERN ROCKIES: PROGRESS TOWARD DELISTING?

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Grizzly bears in the Yellowstone Ecosystem have met recovery goals, are recovered, and should be delisted. Successful delisting under requirements of the Endangered Species Act requires meeting recovery goals and requires that adequate regulatory mechanisms be in place post-delisting so that the species will remain recovered. Acceptable mortality management

including some level of sport hunting could be possible if science-based mortality limits to stabilize the population are carefully applied within the core management area post-delisting. Unfortunately, some agency administrators have removed necessary regulatory details about mortality management and wish to limit to limit the time period for application of the regulatory mechanisms that would be used to demonstrate recovery. The same administrators have pushed for managed population decline inside core recovery area after delisting. Managed population decline in the core recovery area is scientifically indefensible for a species like the grizzly with such a low reproductive rate. State administrators also removed any reference in the post-delisting management plan to the important fact that grizzly bears are a conservation-reliant species (Scott et al. 2010; Goble et al. 2012) and will require careful management in perpetuity. Ideologically based erosion of science and necessary regulatory mechanisms puts successful delisting at risk. Such an approach does not serve: 1) the needs of the public who have been partners with the agencies in the achievement of recovery and who desire successful delisting to obtain increased management flexibility outside core areas; or 2) the conservation of grizzly bears who need public support to remain recovered.