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Newsletter and Blog

Featuring updates on grizzly bear conservation activities,
and the latest *Grizzly Times* Blog
from [Louisa Willcox and David Mattson, PhD.](#)
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Dear Friends of the Grizzly,

As you undoubtedly have heard, Judge Christensen ordered the US Fish and Wildlife Service to restore protections for the Yellowstone region's grizzlies last week – yahoo!

This comes just in the nick of time, as grizzly bears are dying in droves. This is eerily similar to the circumstances that led to the listing of Yellowstone bears under the Endangered Species Act in 1975, when grizzlies were in freefall and nearly went extinct.

LATEST BLOG:

Grizzly Victory: Yellowstone Bear Trophy Hunt Stopped, As Deaths Skyrocket by Louisa Willcox

This week's blog (which follows below) provides a recap of the rule and what it means.
<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2018/10/04/Grizzly-Victory-Trophy-Hunt-Stopped-But-Bear-Deaths-Skyrocket>

The FWS was called to task for its blatant disregard of law and science in excising Yellowstone's bear population out from all the others, simply to delist this isolated remnant. In failing to analyze the impacts of designating "distinct population segments" (or DPS) on remaining listed populations, the FWS willfully repeated a mistake they had previously made in delisting wolves inhabiting the Great Lakes.

The implications are serious for recovery of all wolf and grizzly bear populations in the contiguous US, especially given the importance of colonizers and dispersers from strong source populations, such as exist in the Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide (NCDE) ecosystems. But the FWS is poised to repeat its egregious errors by aggressively pushing plans to remove ESA protections for grizzlies in the NCDE, which are probably the most vital of all for recovering grizzlies in our most vulnerable grizzly bear populations.

The judge also found that the government had not adequately addressed the threat of genetic isolation. Astonishingly, Judge Christensen found that key scientific papers extensively referenced by the FWS did not support what they had claimed in their delisting rule, as well as in court.

And, the judge found that possible changes in methods for estimating population size could result in state managers conniving to kill hundreds more bears, simply by using different, but convenient, statistical gimcrackery. The FWS can change methods, but it must ensure that management of mortality is prudent and precautionary.

It will take weeks for the dust to settle. Almost certainly, the government will appeal to the 9th Circuit, just as it is appealing now to Congress for reprieve. Meanwhile, bears are not getting a break, even though trophy hunting has been forestalled. As of October 3, a total of 49 grizzlies have been killed this year in Greater Yellowstone - and big game hunting season is far from over. If you include the estimated unknown, unreported deaths, near 80 bears (12% of the population) are dead. Virtually all experts not slaved to financial dependencies on the FWS believe grizzlies may have passed a tipping point.

IN THE NEWS:

- **Ask Your Members of Congress to Support the Endangered Species Act (ESA) - and Oppose The “Grizzly Bear State Management Act”**

Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Cheney (Dick’s daughter) wasted no time in moving to circumvent the Christensen ruling, by introducing legislation that would remove ESA protections for Yellowstone’s grizzlies, and prevent further judicial review. This builds on potentially disastrous proposals now before Congress to gut the ESA. Underscoring how central grizzly bear delisting is to this reactionary agenda, on October 10th the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will host a deceptively-entitled hearing “*From Yellowstone’s Grizzly Bear to the Chesapeake’s Delmarva Fox Squirrel -- Successful State Conservation, Recovery, and Management of Wildlife,*” which is intended as little more than cover for further attacks on the ESA.

PLEASE contact your Senators and Representatives and tell them to support the ESA and oppose all efforts to weaken it, including this terrible Cheney bill! You can find some background here:

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/take-action-3>

- **Montana Barges Ahead to Delist Northern Continental Divide Grizzlies**

Montana seems not to have gotten the memo on Judge Christensen’s ruling, or that delisting the NCDE population requires that the federal government properly address the DPS issue. State officials are plowing ahead with a public comment period until October 26, on a portion of the NCDE Conservation Strategy that will guide grizzly bear management after delisting.

https://www.dailyinterlake.com/local_news/20180928/grizzly_hearing_focuses_on_managing_delisted_bear

Meanwhile, grizzly bear deaths are skyrocketing in the NCDE too, with at least 36 known dead so far. Yet the federal government, not Montana, will make the decision to delist. It is not worthwhile to legitimize this process with written comments, but, a big thank you to all who have engaged in the hearings, where pro-bear forces have largely dominated!

David just gave a great talk on the current status and future prospects of the NCDE grizzly bear population for the Glacier Two Medicine Alliance’s annual gathering in East Glacier,

Montana. This talk gives a sobering picture of what's happening in this ecosystem - in contrast to what you hear from government propagandists.

He calls this population the "Heart of the Grizzly Nation" because of its role as a source of grizzlies for colonizing and sustaining other ecosystems, and as a driver of recovery throughout the Northern Rockies.

***For the bears,
Louisa Willcox and David Mattson***