

# LANGUISHING SPECIES: NORTHEAST

## NORTHEASTERN GRAY WOLF



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**A**lthough the focus of wolf recovery has been in the West and the Great Lakes region, adequate habitat and prey-base exists for wolves within the 26-million-acre Northern Forest, which encompasses much of New England and parts of New York and which was once part of the animal's range. Wolves already are coming from Canada into parts of that region. Experts have documented the accidental killing of endangered northeastern gray wolves in Maine. Presumably they came into New England from southern Quebec, where several wolves have been killed on roads since 1998. As recent as spring 2006, a wolf was killed in Quebec on a highway that probably serves as a travel corridor for wolves dispersing into the United States.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, however, has no plan to initiate or fund active wolf recovery in the Northeast. Instead, the Service is restricting its northeastern wolf activity to monitoring wolves found in the region. Even this monitoring is handled by non-Fish and Wildlife Service staff. Challenged with budget cuts, staff shortages, the remote northern location of wolf sightings and strict time limits for responding to reports

of wolves, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the state agencies are relying on National Wildlife Federation staff and trained tracking volunteers to take the lead in following up on wolf sightings.

The National Wildlife Federation gains the most valuable information about wolf movement by involving citizens living in and around communities identified as key locations for re-colonizing wolves, such as Pittsburg, New Hampshire, and Rangely and Statton, Maine. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife agencies have helped the National Wildlife Federation to develop a rapid-response project for speedy follow up on wolf sightings. Tracking surveys also are certain to be major factors in the eventual success of wolf recovery in the Northeast. "Ideally the Service should be applying the full power of its professional biologists to wolf recovery, but the money to allow the Service to do this simply isn't there," says Peggy Struhsacker, wolf project leader at the National Wildlife Federation. "Certainly private individuals can never undertake reintroduction, a necessary part of wolf recovery in the Northeast."