



News Release

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE COMPLETES DETERMINATION ON JAGUARS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has formalized its determination that a U.S. recovery plan for the endangered jaguar would not advance the conservation of the big cat. The vast majority of jaguars and jaguar habitat lay south of the United States.

Jaguars occur from southern South America to the U.S.-Mexico border area. The United States contains one percent of jaguar habitat. Four male jaguars, thought to originate from a core population 130 miles south of the border, are known to have crossed into New Mexico and Arizona since 1996.

Recovery plans are typically prepared for each plant and animal listed under the Endangered Species Act. They are voluntary, nonbinding documents that identify the threats to a species, lay out recommended actions that reduce or eliminate threats, estimate conservation costs and set goals by which recovery can be measured. Too few jaguars and too little habitat in the United States signify that a recovery plan would have little influence on protecting the jaguar population.

The Service and THE onal Marine Fisheries Service – the two principal federal fish and wildlife management agencies – recognize that there are instances when recovery plans for listed species might not be sensible. Exemptions include species whose ranges extend entirely under the jurisdiction of other countries and when species would not benefit from a recovery plan.

While the Service has determined that a formal U.S. recovery plan does not benefit the jaguar, the agency continues to be committed to its on-the-ground efforts.

The Service protects jaguars within its borders, and works cooperatively with other Latin America countries to conduct research, protect habitat and reduce the killing of jaguars.

The Service has funded jaguar work in Belize, Argentina and Brazil. The Service will continue to fund research in northern Mexico to improve knowledge of jaguar conservation. It supports the Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project to monitor occurrences in Arizona. The Jaguar Conservation Team, an Arizona-led effort, has summarized the current knowledge of U.S.-Mexico borderland jaguars and identified actions to facilitate the presence of jaguars in the U.S. and help them persist here and in Mexico. Various levels of protection and conservation plans for the jaguar are in place in many of the 20 countries through the cat's core range.

The jaguar south of the border was included in the initial list of animals protected under the Endangered Species Act in 1972, but protection was not afforded in the U.S. The oversight was corrected in 1997 when protection was extended to jaguars in the states. The Endangered Species Act protects international species by making it unlawful to possess, sell or import an endangered species (or its parts – such as its pelt) into the United States from another country, without a permit.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

Note: The jaguar recovery plan determination is available at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/> or from the contacts listed above.