

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRAY WOLF CROSSES INTO CALIFORNIA A FIRST IN MORE THAN 85 YEARS CALIFORNIA WOLF CENTER SUGGESTS CO-EXISTENCE

A single gray wolf has crossed the border into California south of Klamath Falls, marking the return of a keystone predator that was eliminated from our state more than 80 years ago. According to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the two and one half year old male, known as OR-7, dispersed from southern Oregon crossing the California state line and into the Siskiyou County wilderness on Wednesday night.

OR-7 left his pack in northeastern Oregon in September, and was confirmed to be in Siskiyou County around noon Wednesday. According to CDFG, a signal from his GPS collar at 6 a.m. Thursday showed that he was several miles south of the California – Oregon border.

Wolves are listed in the state as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.

California is now experiencing an event that has been the fervent wish of many people for decades. This event serves to remind that for some past environmental wrongs, there is the potential for rectification -- and that a species that was reviled as vermin and rendered nearly extinct through a wholesale extermination campaign can return to its rightful place in ecosystems from which it has long been banished. After a 300+ mile trek across Oregon, with a few loping strides, wolf OR-7 has crossed the border into California, in a region of our state that has excellent wolf habitat.

Since he is the first confirmed wild wolf in California since 1924, it's an extraordinarily exciting moment in the natural history of this species and this state. When it comes to their role in the ecosystem, wolves are about as important a player as there can be. Though its return to any location always stirs controversy, due to the myths and folklore surrounding wolves, OR-7 brings with him the opportunity for Californians to learn about and appreciate a once-native species, and that's something to celebrate.

If wolves continue their return to California there is work to be done. The presence of wolves will cause an emotional response, both for and against the species. Stakeholders will need to reduce the emotional component and focus on both the science and conservation of wolves.

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The return of wolves should not be seen as an anti-ranching event. In fact, California has an opportunity to use successful models developed in other states that keeps wolves and livestock alive. Co-existence is possible and the key to success will be bringing stakeholders together and developing proactive activities to ensure the long term survival of wolves and local ranching interests.

Established more than 30 years ago, The California Wolf Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit education, conservation, and research center dedicated to increasing understanding of all North American wildlife by focusing on the role of the gray wolf in ecosystems.

The Center has been tracking the possible return of wolves to California for more than a decade and in the fall of 2001 we address the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors about the possible return of wolves to California.

The California Wolf Center offers educational programs to the general public and dedicated programs called Wolf Encounters for students K - 12. The Center also supports on-site behavioral research as well as field research in wolf behavior, biology, and ecology.

For more information about the California Wolf Center, visit our website at www.californiawolfcenter.org.

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[Photos available to credentialed press upon request.]

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