

Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Legislative Hearing
1324 Longworth House Office Building
September 3, 2025
2:00PM

- **H.R. 2073 (Rep. Newhouse)**, *“Defending our Dams Act”*
- **H.R. 3692 (Rep. Moulton)**, To reauthorize the Young Fisherman’s Development Act.
- **H.R. 4255 (Rep. Gosar)**, *“Enhancing Safety for Animals Act of 2025”*
- **H.R. 4256 (Rep. Min)**, *“Digital Coast Reauthorization Act of 2025”*
- **H.R. 4970 (Rep. LaMalfa)**, *“Orland Project Water Management Act”*

Questions from Rep. Gosar for Mr. Tom Paterson, President-Elect, New Mexico Cattle Growers Association

1. The Endangered Species Act was enacted to further the purposes of migratory bird treaties with Canada and Mexico. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty with Mexico of 1936, Article II (E), killing migratory insectivorous birds is prohibited, except when they become injurious to agriculture and constitute plagues. Does the current Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Plan recognize the terms of this Mexican Treaty predating the Endangered Species Act, including its prohibition of the killing of the protected species, this case the Mexican wolves, except when they become injurious to agriculture?

Response: My understanding is that the Migratory Bird Treaty Act does not apply to the recovery or take of Mexican wolves in the United States under the Endangered Species Act.

2. The mismanagement of the Mexican wolf is another case of NGOs taking the reins and steering the initial intent completely off course. Can you share your experience of how NGOs have hindered progress in recovery, delisting, and delinking?

Response: The consistent demand from Mexican wolf advocates, including from their NGOs, has been for more wolves on the landscape. They have registered little to no concern for the impact wolves have on public safety, for our livelihoods or for other wildlife populations. Their advocacy of using the ever-increasing number of wolves as a platform to remove people from the landscape has been short-sighted and threatens long-term prospects for successful recovery. To the extent they insist on linking regulatory recovery in the U.S. to failed recovery of the species in Mexico, these groups are admitting that wolves will never be delisted in the United States and, as such, the American taxpayer and local stakeholders will be punished indefinitely.

For Mexican wolf recovery to be sustainable long term, local community acceptance of wolves and the means by which to ensure a healthy respect between humans, wolves, and wildlife are crucial. Rather than focus simply on increasing population numbers, existing recovery efforts should pursue meaningful, common-sense management practices that protect local stakeholders as well as this apex predator. To date, those who call themselves “wolf advocates” have opposed

every effort that would create a productive, workable relationship between wolf populations and other species in the ecosystem.

It has become clear that those management practices for apex predators may need to be legislatively directed so both federal and state agencies have clear expectations that are consistent over time. These include giving local stakeholders real assurances that population goal posts will not be moved further to higher numbers and assurances that wolf populations will be controlled through managed breeding, placements, collaring, trapping and lethal removals.

Local stakeholders need management practices in place that deal with habituated wolves, such as through trapping and prompt lethal removal rather than on the non-lethal practices that science shows are not effective in range environments. Local stakeholders also need tools to protect themselves and their livelihoods from wolves. These tools include timely wolf location information, full compensation for damages from wolves, and rational, fair evidence standards to qualify for such compensation.