

APRIL 12, 2016

American Voters Oppose Delisting Greater Yellowstone Area Grizzly Bears from Endangered Species Act Protections

Voters also strongly oppose opening up trophy hunts on these majestic animals by a 3-to-1 margin.
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates

A new national poll shows that the majority of voters oppose the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service \(FWS\) proposal](#) to remove grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from the list of federally threatened and endangered species (55 percent oppose and 26 percent support).

Majorities across all demographics, party affiliations and geographic regions of the United States oppose the March 3 proposed delisting by FWS, which would hand over management of GYE grizzly bears to Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, states that have signaled they will open up trophy hunting seasons on bears. The FWS estimates that around 700 grizzly bears live in the GYE and that there may be as few as 800 to 1,000 in the entire lower 48 states, in contrast to the 50,000 grizzly bears historical estimates suggest once roamed North America.

The poll showed that more than two thirds of Americans oppose opening up a trophy hunting season on grizzly bears in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming (68 percent oppose to 20 percent support); a similar two-thirds majority supports the idea of a 5-year moratorium on trophy hunting to ensure the full recovery of the grizzly bear population (67 percent support to 20 percent oppose).

The poll also shows that an even larger majority of American voters (80 percent to 11 percent) oppose allowing state managers to use certain inhumane and unsporting trophy hunt methods, like hounding—where packs of radio-collared dogs chase bears into trees—and baiting, where piles of rotten and junk foods are used to lure bears in for an easy kill.

Nicole Paquette, vice president of wildlife protection of The Humane Society of the United States said: “These polling results demonstrate that most Americans believe Yellowstone’s grizzly bears should not be killed for trophies. Not only is there no scientific

justification for this premature proposal, there is no public appetite. Grizzly bears are far from recovered and face a range of threats including the loss of critical food sources like white bark pine. We don't want trophy hunting added to that list of threats."

"The prospect of a hunt is especially troubling, but we were pleased to see that even 50 percent of hunters nationwide oppose delisting of grizzlies, compared to only 33 percent who support it," said Kent Nelson, executive director for Wyoming Wildlife Advocates. "It's also gratifying to see that a full 62 percent of hunters support a five-year moratorium on delisting, while just 33 percent do not support it. This is telling."

The HSUS and WWA have urged the FWS to reject the proposal, and are encouraging supporters to [submit comments](#) by May 10 asking the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to maintain ESA protections.

The poll, conducted by Remington Research Group on behalf of The HSUS and WWA from April 7 through April 9, 2016, surveyed 3,087 voter participants. The survey was weighted to match expected turnout demographics for the 2016 General Election, with margin of error plus or minus 2.2 percent with a 95 percent level of confidence.

Questions:

Q: The grizzly bears of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are found in the Yellowstone and Grand Teton areas, situated on the borders of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, and are considered the most famous bears in the world. Each year millions of tourists travel to the parks from all over the world for the chance to see these animals. Do you agree or disagree that grizzly bears are a valuable part of the Yellowstone area?

Agree: 81%
Disagree: 9%
Undecided: 10%

Q: What is your opinion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Favorable: 54%
Unfavorable: 17%
No opinion: 29%

Q: Grizzly bears once ranged from northern Mexico to Alaska—perhaps as many as 50,000 in the lower 48. In 1975, after decades of being driven to near extinction due to habitat loss and hunting, grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem were granted federal protections under the Endangered Species Act. Currently, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population is roughly 2% of its historic range, and the bears are still vulnerable due to a host of threats, including habitat loss and loss of food sources. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed to delist Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bears from the Endangered Species Act. Do you support or oppose removing federal Endangered Species Act protections?

Support: 26%
Oppose: 55%
Undecided: 19%

Q: If the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removes Endangered Species Act protections from grizzly bears who live in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, management of these bears will revert to Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. These wildlife managers have already stated they intend to open trophy hunting seasons as early as 2017. Do you support or oppose opening up trophy hunts on Yellowstone area grizzly bears?

Support: 20%
Oppose: 68%
Undecided: 12%

Q: Should Yellowstone's grizzly bears lose their Endangered Species Act protections, management of these animals revert to Idaho, Montana and Wyoming who have stated they will open up a trophy hunting season. Do you agree or disagree that there should be at least a 5-year moratorium on trophy hunting to ensure that the population is fully recovered?

Agree: 67%
Disagree: 20%
Undecided: 13%

Q: Once delisted, it is possible that state managers could allow Yellowstone area grizzly bears to be hunted by the following methods - hounding—where participants release packs of radio-collared dogs to chase bears into trees—and baiting, where piles of rotten and junk foods are placed in a certain location to lure bears for an easy kill at point blank range. Do you support or oppose allowing trophy hunters to use these methods to kill Yellowstone area grizzly bears?

Support: 11%
Oppose: 80%

Undecided: 9%

Q: Do you identify as a hunter?

Yes: 27%

No: 73%

Q: Do you identify as an angler?

Yes: 34%

No: 66%

Q: Do you identify as a wildlife viewer?

Yes: 78%

No: 22%

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