

Protection sought for California wolf

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Four environmental groups on Monday petitioned the California Fish and Game Commission to protect the gray wolf under the state Endangered Species Act.

Led by the Center for Biological Diversity, the groups say the migration of a wolf from Oregon on Dec. 28 means the species will eventually establish itself in California.

Any wolves that migrate into California are automatically protected by the federal Endangered Species Act. But the groups want California to take charge of a recovery plan because the state endangered species law is stronger and federal officials remain focused on wolf recovery elsewhere.

Other groups behind the petition are Big Wildlife, Environmental Protection Information Center and Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center.

The commission has 90 days to decide if the petition contains enough information to trigger a status review of the species. It then has nine months to conduct the review.

The wolf known as OR7 traveled as far as the outskirts of Susanville in Lassen County. Then it turned north and now lingers near the Oregon border in Siskiyou County.