



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INTERIOR DEPARTMENT WITHDRAWS PROPOSAL TO REMOVE
KANGAROOS FROM ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST; CITES RECENT
DECLINES IN AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has withdrawn a proposal to remove three kangaroo species from the U.S. endangered and threatened species list. The proposal was based on a petition from the Australian Government in 1982; its withdrawal was made after more recent data from Australia indicated a substantial drop in kangaroo populations due to widespread drought last year.

Today's action maintains eastern gray, western gray, and red kangaroos as Federally listed "threatened" species. A "threatened" designation indicates that a species faces less severe problems than species listed as "endangered."

Large parts of Australia experienced the worst recorded drought in that country's history in 1982 and 1983. The drought resulted in a decline of 17 percent in red kangaroos and 20 percent in gray kangaroos in New South Wales and South Australia between 1981 and 1983; smaller declines are thought to have occurred in Queensland and Western Australia. The nationwide kangaroo population is now estimated at between 10 and 12 million animals, down from a pre-drought estimate of 19 million.

(over)

Kangaroos, which are considered competitors with domestic livestock in water-short regions of Australia, are culled under management programs developed and regulated by the individual Australian State governments, with proceeds from the sale of hides and meat used to support the management programs. In response to the recent decline in kangaroo numbers, the Australian States have reduced their combined culling quotas by more than 40 percent.

The proposal to remove the three kangaroo species from "threatened" status was published in April 1983, but the Fish and Wildlife Service postponed its decision until now in order to await the results of Australia's latest kangaroo population surveys, which documented the effects of the drought. The drought has now broken and the resilient kangaroo populations appear to be resuming normal breeding.

By continuing to list these kangaroos as "threatened" species, the Service will monitor their status in Australia and could again propose their removal from "threatened" status if their numbers rebound.