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<http://jaguarhabitatusa.wordpress.com>

March 9, 2009

Rowan W. Gould, Acting Director
US Fish & Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Subject: Jaguar Research and Conservation
Reply Requested

Dear Mr. Gould:

We ask that the US Fish & Wildlife Service not allow research-related capture of wild jaguars in the U.S. With jaguars as rare as they are, even a low probability of injury or death is unacceptable.

The recent tragic death of a jaguar in Arizona just 12 days after being captured and released points to the need to also prohibit or severely restrict capture of other large carnivores in occupied jaguar habitat. "Macho B" was reportedly caught incidental to the trapping and tagging of mountain lion and black bear.

We are deeply troubled by news reports that the US Fish & Wildlife Service will continue to permit capture of jaguars for study purposes. If this is in fact the case, please provide us with full justification, addressing the following points:

1. The specific information expected from the study of a captured jaguar after its release.
2. An explanation as to precisely how that information will be used to protect and recover the jaguar in the U.S.
3. A comparative evaluation of capture and non-capture methods for obtaining data on rare wild jaguars, including the use of remote trail cameras and detection of jaguar presence through DNA testing of scat.
4. An explanation as to why a capture-related study of rare jaguars justifies risks of injury and death, given what can be obtained from alternative non-capture studies and evaluations.
5. An analysis of the risks of jaguar capture and handling, including an examination of all previous captures, or attempts to capture, jaguars in the U.S. and northern Mexico.

6. An evaluation of the recent jaguar death, and potentially additional deaths of captured jaguars, on prospects for species recovery in the U.S.
7. A justification for allowing capture of endangered jaguars without first preparing a federal jaguar recovery plan to guide research and make efficient use of existing information.
8. An assessment of US Fish & Wildlife Service efforts or plans to protect habitat core areas and connecting landscape linkages for jaguar, based on current evaluations of jaguar habitat in Arizona, New Mexico, and northern Mexico.

We look forward to your kind response to this letter. We attach our recent letter to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar urging a federal recovery plan for jaguar that can determine and guide appropriate conservation research.

Sincerely,

Tony Povilitis

Tony Povilitis, Ph.D.

Cc:

Kenneth L. Salazar
Secretary of Interior
Department of the Interior
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