

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Government Shrugs as Wild Jaguars Disappear from the United States**

TUCSON, *Arizona* – With the recent death of the last known wild jaguar in the U.S., the Arizona-based Jaguar Habitat Campaign today called on the U.S. Department of the Interior and state officials to restore the species for future generations of Americans.

Campaign director Tony Povilitis asked Interior Secretary Kenneth Salazar and Larry Voyles, head of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, to commit their agencies to the same kind of effort being made to recover other endangered wildlife such as the California condor and the black-footed ferret. Jaguars historically roamed from the southern United States to South America. Today they face extinction in most areas, including the southwestern US and Mexico.

The letters of appeal come on the heels of the widely publicized death of an Arizona jaguar known as Macho B. The animal had to be euthanized days after being caught in a snare trap set by state game officials for research purposes.

“In my lifetime, at least 11 jaguars have been killed in Arizona, and others in nearby Mexico. It’s due time our public wildlife agencies demonstrate new leadership by collaborating on jaguar recovery work,” Povilitis said. On March 30, 2009, the U.S. District Court of Arizona ruled that Interior’s US Fish & Wildlife Service must uphold the US Endangered Species Act by reconsidering its earlier position not to prepare a formal Recovery Plan for the jaguar.

While recovery plans are standard for animals on the US list of endangered species, government attorneys unsuccessfully argued against the measure since most of the species occurs outside of the United States. “But many endangered species in this same situation either have recovery plans or are being considered for one. For example, the northern Aplomado falcon, a bird mainly of Mexico and Central America, has long had an active recovery program with reintroductions to habitats here in the United States,” the Campaign said.

The Campaign also asked Mr. Voyles to withdraw his agency’s draft policy called a Jaguar Conservation Assessment for Arizona, New Mexico, and Northern Mexico. “The document is a tragically misguided attempt by some in your agency to establish a state policy opposing jaguar recovery,” the letter said.

Public review of that policy ends this Friday. “There is a real danger it could be finalized, unless Mr. Voyles directly intervenes”, said Andrea Gaines, a board member of the Jaguar Campaign. “That would be tragic for Arizona and for the nation. We cannot stand by idly and let the American jaguar vanish.”

The letters of appeal are being sent also to the Governors of Arizona and New Mexico, and to members of Congress.

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*The Jaguar Habitat Campaign is a project of Life Net Nature, a non-profit research and conservation organization working in the Southwest, Hawaii, and South America. For more information on Life Net, visit [www.lifenetnature.org](http://www.lifenetnature.org). Its jaguar campaign can be reached at: <http://jaguarhabitatusa.wordpress.org>*