

LANGUISHING SPECIES: NORTHWEST

IDAHO GROUND SQUIRREL

The Idaho ground squirrel is divided into two species, the northern and the southern. The southern Idaho ground squirrel is a candidate for federal listing. In 2000, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the northern subspecies as threatened.

The northern Idaho ground squirrel inhabits mountain meadows and grasslands above 3,000 feet in elevation in west-central Idaho's Adams and Valley counties. As of 2006, its recovery status remained unknown. Biologists have recorded some new population sites, and the animal seems to be responding well to habitat restoration at some locations, but no comprehensive monitoring has been done to determine the current population trend.

Funding from all government sources for northern Idaho ground squirrel recovery nationwide ranks the species at 206 out of 1,311 species, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fiscal year 2004 report (the most recent available) to Congress, *Federal and State Endangered and Threatened Species Expenditures*.^{*} Total recovery funding for the animal from all government sources that year was about \$226,000, with \$93,000 coming from the Service.



^{*} The U.S. Fish and Wildlife *Federal and State Endangered and Threatened Species Expenditures* report incorporates subjective estimates provided by regulated entities without any independent verification and without effort to segregate Endangered Species Act expenditures from other related expenditures. However, for most listed species, no other funding data is available.

WHAT ABOUT SALMON?

What was once the greatest salmon fishery in the world is now but a shadow of its former self. Twenty-seven species of salmon and steelhead are listed as endangered or threatened. The federal government's plan to recover the species has proven woefully inadequate.

The federal government has already spent nearly \$5 billion on so-called recovery measures that have not yet recovered the fish and it intends to spend another \$6 billion over the next ten years. This wasted money is only adding to the federal deficit while simply removing the four Lower Snake River dams would be a one-time cost of \$1 billion.

In the case of salmon, it is not a lack of funds that is the problem. It is funding the wrong solution.