



Western Gray Squirrel Annual Report and Working Group Update

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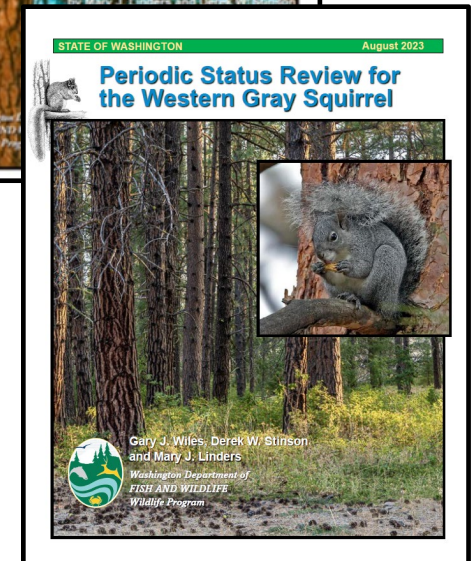
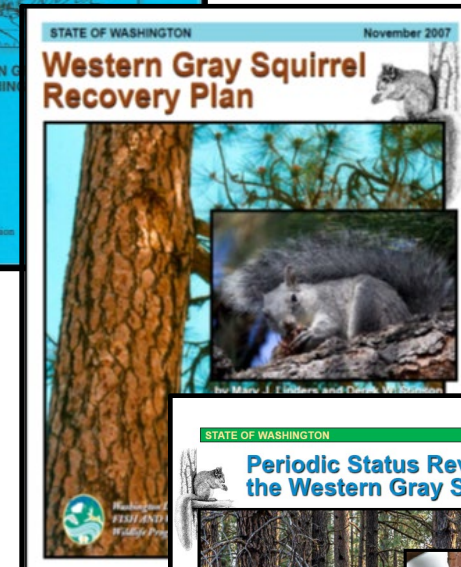
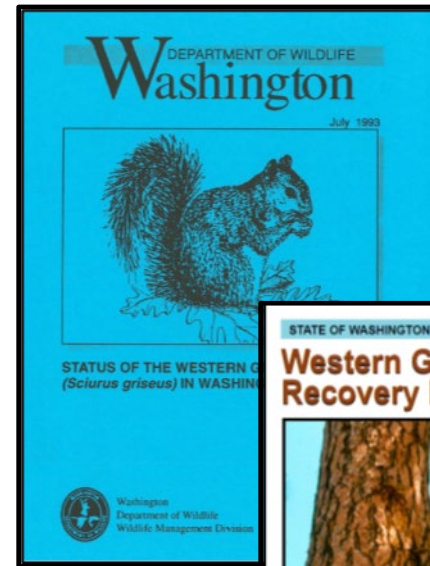
Listing History

State

- Threatened since 1993
- Recovery plan 2007
- Periodic Status Reviews
- WDFW Recommended Uplisting
- State Endangered December 28, 2023

Federal

- Not warranted 2004



The WGS inhabits transitional forests of Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and mature Oregon white oak.



Photo by Sándor F. Tóth



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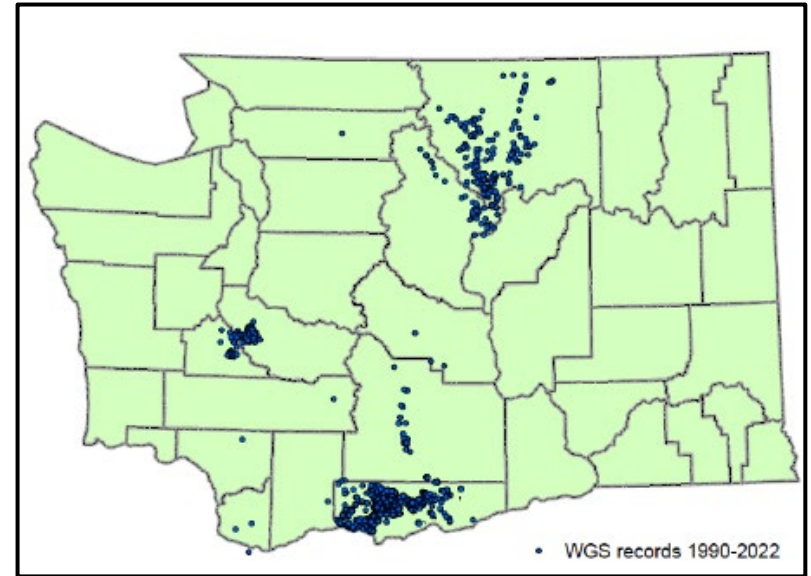
In Washington state, the species occurs in three primary areas:

1. Oak and conifer forests of Klickitat and southern Yakima counties;
2. Low to mid-elevation dry conifer forests in Okanogan and Chelan counties; and
3. Oak and conifer forests on Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Pierce and Thurston counties.



Key threats to western gray squirrel

1. Habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation
2. Small population size and isolation
3. Disease – Mange and Tularemia
4. Road mortality



Summary of FPA/Ns that triggered a WGS “hit” from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023:

- 51 FPA/Ns were identified as potentially being associated with WGS.
- Of these, 50 were in Klickitat County, and one in Skamania, county.
- All were associated with large/industrial landowners.
- 24 permits were issued for even-age harvests totaling 1,668 ac.
- 27 permits were issued for uneven-age harvests totaling 3,488 ac.
- 15 applications detected WGS nests



15 landowners implemented one of the following conservation measures:

- Clearcut with nest tree retention and buffers
- Clearcut with nest tree retention, buffers, and arboreal connectivity
- Clearcut with nest tree retention only
- Thinning for oak release
- Thinning while maintaining arboreal connectivity
- Thinning with oak tree retention
- Thinning with nest tree retention
- Thinning, nest tree buffers, oak retention, fire risk reduction

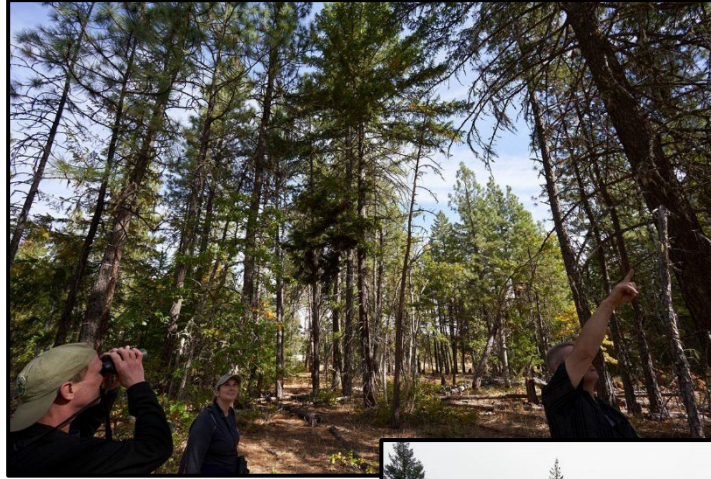


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Research and Conservation Efforts

Habitat Change Since 1993

1. Estimate change in Primary habitat since listing (1993)
2. Estimate the relative contribution of different agents of change

Occupancy

1. Occupancy surveys allow monitoring of species that are difficult to count
2. 0.39% for the Puget Trough
3. 0.27% North Cascades – Okanagan
4. 0.44% South Cascades – Klickitat

Spatial Habitat Prioritization Model

1. Economists from UW
2. Maximize habitat restoration
3. Identify priority land parcels for targeted conservation efforts
4. Aid in developing incentives for landowners adopting WGS habitat restoration recommendations.

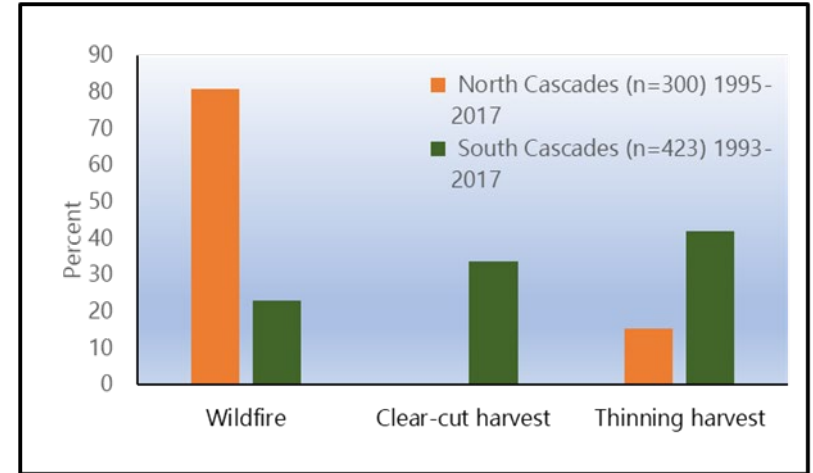


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Working Group Update

Landowner outreach

- April 15 – 17 Lupine, LLC, Columbia Land trust, private landowners
- July 15 – Outreach to Friends of the White Salmon
- July 16 – In-person meeting with large landowners
- October 14-16 Okanagan WGS Methow to Loomis



WGS Working group

25 people expressed an interest, and we selected 11 with expertise in science, policy, forest operations, and conservation

- Constituents

- Conservation organizations
- Tribal
- Industry
- DNR
- WDFW



- First meeting - December

- Charter – Goals, objectives, and rules of conduct
- Future meetings
- Field trips





Questions