

Minnesota's wolves are in danger



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to remove federal protections for gray wolves pulls wolves one step closer to the crosshairs of trophy hunters. Two bills before the Minnesota Legislature would prohibit wolf trophy hunting and trapping: Support SF 1144 (Eaton)/HF 1498 (Fischer)

Trophy hunting tears wolf families apart

Wolves once ranged throughout most of the lower 48 states and remain absent from an estimated 70% of currently suitable habitat in the lower 48 states. Wolves still face many threats. Studies show that the death of one animal by trophy hunters can indirectly cause the deaths of other individuals through the loss of dependent offspring or by disrupting pack structure.

Nearly 1,500 wolves were killed by trophy hunters and trappers in the Great Lakes Region the last time they lost their federal protections, include 923 in Minnesota. Many of the wolves killed were pups.

Baseless myths don't justify killing wolves

Scientific research shows that wolves pose little to no risk to people, pets or livestock, yet the same fearmongering, hate and misinformation that led to the extirpation of wolves a hundred years ago still plagues them today.

Fearmongering to the contrary, state, and federal data show that wolves cause very few livestock losses. For example, in 2019, just 1.4% of the farms with beef cattle present in Minnesota's occupied wolf territory experienced any verified conflicts with wolves. Furthermore, studies show that non-lethal deterrents are much more effective than killing wolves at preventing conflicts in the long-term.

Additionally, studies demonstrate that killing wolves will not grow deer or other ungulate populations. Numerous studies demonstrate that predator removal actions

“generally had no effect” in the long-term on ungulate populations because it doesn't address the primary causes of their decline. Additionally, deer numbers in Minnesota remain consistently high, and science demonstrates that wolves make herds stronger and may help mitigate the spread of chronic wasting disease, a fatal neurological illness plaguing deer in Minnesota and other states.

Finally, liberalizing wolf killing will not increase social tolerance for the species. In fact, research shows that allowing trophy hunting of a previously protected species, like wolves, may actually decrease social tolerance, as doing so has been shown to increase incidents of poaching.

Minnesotans value wolves

Not only are wolves vital to keeping our ecosystems healthy and biologically diverse, but they are deeply valued by the majority of Minnesotans. For example, a recent survey found that over two-thirds of residents expressed a positive attitude toward wolves, compared to only 19% that expressed a negative attitude. That same study found that 86% of residents said they would like to see about the same number or more wolves. Additionally, nearly half of residents were opposed to a potential wolf hunting season and 58% were opposed to a wolf trapping season.

As they work to update the state's wolf management plan, officials must listen to sound science and the will of the people, neither of which support a wolf hunting or trapping season.



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