

MYTH: Hunting wolves is like hunting deer, pheasants, fish, etc.

FACT: Unlike deer and other species hunted in Minnesota, wolves live in social packs and depend on each other for survival. The social structure of the pack determines their reproduction. All members of the pack are essential to raise the one litter per year. The average pack size in Minnesota is 3.6 wolves. Killing a wolf endangers other wolves by disrupting their pack.

MYTH: Wolves are responsible for the decline in the moose and deer populations.

FACT: Wolves and moose have coexisted for thousands of years. Moose are in decline in places where there are no wolves (New Hampshire) and moose are on the rise where there are wolves (Isle Royale). Studies and experts point to climate change, parasites, and disease as causes for the decline in moose. Deer numbers were at their highest when wolves were at their highest numbers in the early 2000s. As a predator, the wolf kills the weakest/ unhealthiest member of the deer population.

Preliminary studies show that wolves disperse deer that spread the brain worm to moose. Thus, when wolves are on the landscape, they help slow the spread of brain worm to moose by moving deer away from moose.

MYTH: Wolf hunting and trapping decreases wolf-livestock conflicts.

FACT: Wolf hunting and trapping causes unpredictable effects on wolf-livestock conflicts, including increases in conflicts. The killing of wolves, either in a hunt or for livestock conflict causes unstable packs and leads to more wolf deaths and more packs of younger wolves. A scientific study by Washington State University published in Dec. 2014 found that killing wolves resulted in an increase in predations on livestock by wolves the following year. Nonlethal methods, such as the use of guard animals and carcass removal, can effectively reduce wolf-livestock conflicts.

MYTH: Wolf-livestock conflicts are very high in Minnesota.

FACT: Wolf-livestock conflicts are low in Minnesota. In 2023, there were 116 verified complaints of wolves. Out of this, 243 wolves were killed in response by USDA Wildlife Services. The 10-year average is 88 verified complaints per year, with 179 wolves killed each year in response. This is likely more than 10-15% of the entire Minnesota wolf population. Existing state and federal funds are in place to compensate farmers for losses.

MYTH: Holding a wolf hunt will stop or reduce illegal wolf killing.

FACT: With legal wolf killing, comes more illegal and secret wolf killing. Government agents cannot control wolf killing. Minnesota's wolf population is currently below the levels prior to Minnesota's three consecutive wolf hunts in 2012-2015. Estimates show pack sizes are the smallest ever measured. The wolf hunts may have likely increased wolf killing that continues today even under federal protections.

MYTH: Wolves receive enough protections and are doing just fine.

FACT: As of January 2022, Minnesota wolves are back on the federal Endangered Species List due to states not providing enough protections. Wolves are still recovering from nearly going extinct. Wolf killing is not controllable, and causes so many other wolf deaths, it cannot be used to maintain a "stable" population without risking a collapse. Today's DNR estimated wolf population is even lower than before the 2012-2015 wolf hunting seasons.

MYTH: The MN's DNR wolf population estimates are precise.

FACT: For years the DNR has reported the wolf population as a precise number and that it is "stable"; however, their methods are not sensitive enough to detect changes to the wolf population that could be harmful to their future. The real population number could be anywhere in a wide range.

MYTH: Snares and traps are foolproof ways to hunt wolves and other animals.

FACT: Leg-hold traps are metal jawed devices that painfully snap shut around the wolf's lower leg. They commonly trap unintended animals, including moose, bald eagles, and domestic dogs. Snares are a wire loop that act like a noose to choke or immobilize animals. Wolves' thick neck muscles often prevent their suffocation; instead, they suffer painful brain bleeds. 66% of Minnesota voters oppose the use of traps and snares to hunt wolves.

MYTH: Minnesotans want a wolf hunt.

FACT: Minnesotans value wolves and do not want them hunted. Prior to the first wolf hunt in 2012, 79 percent of DNR survey respondents said "no" to wolf hunting.

MYTH: Wolves are dangerous to people and pets.

FACT: Wolves naturally fear humans and tend to shy away from human contact. There have been only two wolf related human deaths in North America in the past 100 years. Wolves are territorial and naturally compete with dogs. However, wolves naturally fear humans and generally will not approach pets in the presence of humans.