



**HOWLING** FOR WOLVES®

# WOLF DAY 2024

**BAN WOLF HUNTING**  
KEEP THE PACKS INTACT

**HOWLING** FOR WOLVES®



### Overview of Wolf Day 2024:

- **Legislative Briefing on the status of wolves,**
- **policy questions,**
- **logistics questions,**
- **lunch**
- **then small group meetings with lawmakers**
- **Optional reception at Lake Monster Brewery**

**HOWLING** FOR WOLVES®

### Why We Fight for the Wolf

Minnesota is home to the **largest and only original wolf population** that never went extinct in the lower 48 states.



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### Why We Fight for the Wolf

**Wolves are critical for a biodiverse ecosystem.**

**Vegetation growth depends on the wolf – which is critical for water and wildlife.**



Unlike deer and other species hunted in Minnesota, **wolves live in packs and depend on each other for survival.**

Human killing of wolves disrupts wolf packs, creating unstable and unpredictable effects such as increased wolf-livestock conflicts.

**Minnesotans value having wolves and want them protected for future generations.** In a 2013 Lake Research Poll, 79 percent of Minnesotans agreed that the wolf is an asset to protect for future generations. A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) survey showed 79 percent said “no” to wolf hunting.



When wolf protections are reduced, **more illegal wolf killing occurs.** Scientific studies show that **with legal wolf killing comes more illegal, hidden wolf killing.**



[nature](#) > [scientific reports](#) > [articles](#) > [article](#)

[Published: 08 July 2023](#)

## Human-caused wolf mortality persists for years after discontinuation of hunting

[Roman Teo Oliynyk](#) 

### Abstract

By the mid-twentieth century, wolves were nearly extinct in the lower 48 states, with a small number surviving in northern Minnesota. After wolves were placed on the endangered species list in 1973, the northern Minnesota wolf population increased and stabilized by the early 2000s. A wolf trophy hunt was introduced in 2012–2014 and then halted by a court order in December 2014. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources collected wolf radiotelemetry data for the years 2004–2019. Statistical analysis showed that wolf mortality remained close to constant from 2004 until the initiation of the hunt, and that mortality doubled with the initiation of the first hunting and trapping season in 2012, remaining at a nearly constant elevated level through 2019. Notably, average annual wolf mortality increased from 21.7% before wolf hunting seasons (10.0% by human causes and 11.7% natural causes) to 43.4% (35.8% by human causes and 7.6% natural causes). The fine-grained statistical trend implies that human-caused mortality increased sharply during the hunting seasons, while natural mortality initially dropped. After the hunt's discontinuation, human-caused mortality remained higher than prior to the hunting seasons throughout the five years of the available after-hunt radiotelemetry data.

| Period            | Survival          | Yearly mortality |       |         | R-days | Wolf deaths by cause |         |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------|---------|--------|----------------------|---------|
|                   |                   | all              | human | natural |        | human                | natural |
| <i>All wolves</i> |                   |                  |       |         |        |                      |         |
| Before            | 0.783 (0.69-0.89) | 21.7%            | 10.0% | 11.7%   | 22373  | 6.92                 | 8.08    |
| During-and-after  | 0.566 (0.48-0.67) | 43.4%            | 35.8% | 7.6%    | 28233  | 36.30                | 7.70    |
| All               | 0.653 (0.59-0.73) | 34.7%            | 25.4% | 9.3%    | 50606  | 43.22                | 15.78   |
| <i>Adult</i>      |                   |                  |       |         |        |                      |         |
| Before            | 0.773 (0.67-0.89) | 22.7%            | 11.3% | 11.3%   | 18440  | 6.50                 | 6.50    |
| During-and-after  | 0.574 (0.48-0.69) | 42.6%            | 33.0% | 9.6%    | 22341  | 26.32                | 7.68    |
| All               | 0.656 (0.58-0.74) | 34.4%            | 24.0% | 10.4%   | 40781  | 32.82                | 14.18   |
| <i>Male</i>       |                   |                  |       |         |        |                      |         |
| Before            | 0.754 (0.61-0.93) | 24.6%            | 14.1% | 10.6%   | 9035   | 4.00                 | 3.00    |
| During-and-after  | 0.583 (0.45-0.76) | 41.7%            | 23.8% | 17.9%   | 10841  | 9.14                 | 6.86    |
| All               | 0.655 (0.55-0.78) | 34.5%            | 19.7% | 14.8%   | 19876  | 13.14                | 9.86    |
| <i>Female</i>     |                   |                  |       |         |        |                      |         |
| Before            | 0.792 (0.66-0.95) | 20.8%            | 8.3%  | 12.5%   | 9405   | 2.40                 | 3.60    |
| During-and-after  | 0.565 (0.43-0.74) | 43.5%            | 41.0% | 2.6%    | 11500  | 16.94                | 1.06    |
| All               | 0.658 (0.56-0.78) | 34.2%            | 27.6% | 6.6%    | 20905  | 19.34                | 4.66    |
| <i>Juvenile</i>   |                   |                  |       |         |        |                      |         |
| Before            | 0.831 (0.64-1.07) | 16.9%            | 0.0%  | 16.9%   | 3933   | 0.00                 | 2.00    |
| During-and-after  | 0.538 (0.37-0.79) | 46.2%            | 46.2% | 0.0%    | 5892   | 10.00                | 0.00    |
| All               | 0.640 (0.50-0.82) | 36.0%            | 30.0% | 6.0%    | 9825   | 10.00                | 2.00    |

**Table 1. Wolf survival and mortality summary.** Wolf hunting seasons always commenced in November of 2012–2014; therefore, all statistics are offset to start on November 1st of each year.

OPINION EXCHANGE

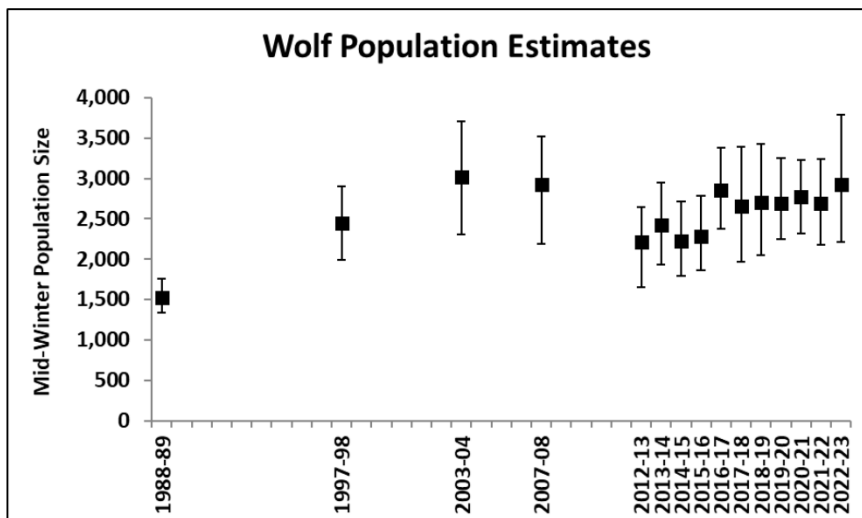
## Counterpoint: Wolf hunting, trapping is unnecessary and very destructive

We know how to deal with wolves if they cause trouble. But we don't know yet how to let the wolves live.

By Maureen Hackett | MARCH 10, 2024 — 6:00PM

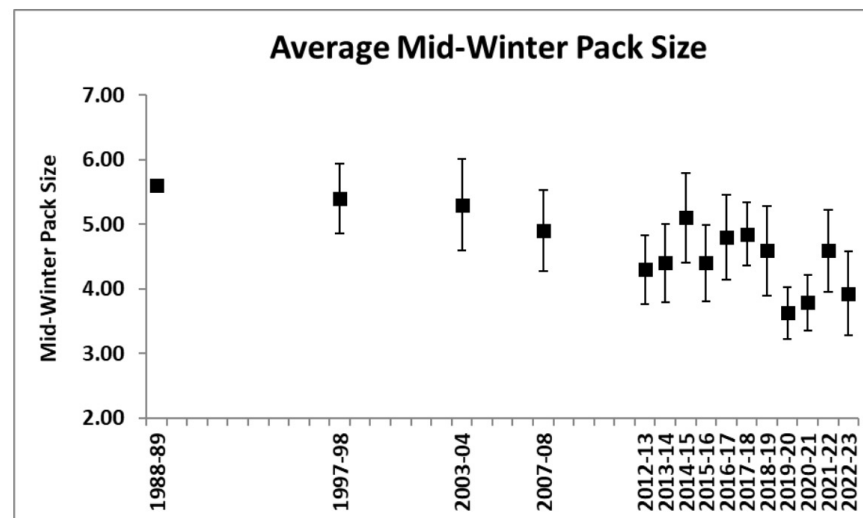


## INFO MN Wolf Population Estimates



MN DNR estimate the 2022-23 midwinter wolf population to be 2,919 wolves. The 90% confidence interval was approximately +/- 800 wolves, specifically 2,215 to 3,790.

## INFO: MN Wolf Pack Size



2022-2023 DNR says: Average winter pack size in 2022-23 was estimated to be 3.93



**History: 2012 to 2015**

Recreational wolf trophy hunting began in Minnesota in 2012 due to politics, not smart wildlife strategies.

3 YEARS OF HUNTS!

(The first hunt occurred without even a baseline population survey after 35 years of federal protections)



**History: 2015-2021**

From 2015 to Jan. 4, 2021, Minnesota wolves were listed as threatened on the federal Endangered Species List.

listed as “threatened” lethal options were still available for wolf-livestock conflicts

In 2020, wolves were delisted and a small group pushed to hunt wolves.



**NOW: 2022 to Current**

*News:*

AS OF FEBRUARY 10, 2022

**WOLVES NOW HAVE  
FEDERAL ENDANGERED  
SPECIES ACT PROTECTIONS  
AND CANNOT BE HUNTED IN  
MINNESOTA AND  
SURROUNDING STATES**

**The Current Status of the Wolf**

TODAY: occupy less than 5% of their historical range  
EACH YEAR: The U.S. Department of Agriculture kills wolves in response to complaints about predation. The number of wolves killed was 200 per year but is now decreasing.



HFW supports removing wolf hunting and trapping seasons from state law and from the MN DNR 2023-32 Wolf Plan.

**Wolves are already legally and illegally killed despite their federal protections.**



**When humans kill a single wolf, it can decimate an entire wolf pack**

The ripple effect from the killing of wolves by humans was less apparent when they die of natural causes.

By Greg Stanley Star Tribune

JANUARY 19, 2023 — 4:10PM

A few miles outside of Voyageurs National Park, a researcher found a female wolf curled up under a tree. The wolf had been shot and killed by a poacher in the spring of 2022.



**New research shows humans impact wolf packs in national parks**

January 17, 2023



Fall 2021 trail camera footage of wolves from the Cranberry Bay Pack in Voyageurs National Park. Credit: Voyageurs Wolf Project.

New research shows how humans are a substantial source of mortality for wolves that live predominantly in national parks — and more importantly, that human-caused mortality triggers instability in wolf packs in national parks.

Published today in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, the study was led by Kira Cassidy, a research associate at Yellowstone National Park, and included co-authors at five national parks and University of Minnesota [Voyageurs Wolf Project](#) researchers Thomas Gable, Joseph Bump and Austin Homkes.

“For gray wolves, the biological unit is the pack or the family. We wanted to focus on the impacts of human-caused mortality to the pack, a finer-scale measure than population size or growth rate,” said Cassidy. “We found the odds a pack persists and reproduces drops with more human-caused mortalities.”

Chances that a pack stayed together to the end of the year was decreased by 27% when one member died of human causes. Whether the pack reproduced was decreased by 22%. When a leader died, chance of the pack making it to the end of the year decreased by 73% and reproduction chances decreased by 49%

**Overview of the 2024 Legislative Session:**

- Shorter session – February through May
- 1/3 of legislators were new last year.
- Election for the MN House members in Nov.
- Democrat “trifecta” – Senate, House, Gov
- Focus on policy and bonding/capital investments

**TOP PRIORITY: Remove wolf hunting and trapping from state law to protect wild wolves for future generations**

While the wolf goes back and forth on the federal Endangered Species List (and is currently on it as “threatened,” as of January 2022), existing Minnesota law authorizes the MN DNR to hold recreational hunting and trapping seasons on wolves. Current state law is permissive: the DNR “commissioner **may** prescribe open seasons and restrictions for taking wolves.”

When Minnesota gray wolves lost federal protections in 2012, the state legislature and MN DNR hastily enacted a trophy hunting and trapping season without any information and under great pressure from hunters and trappers. The MN DNR did not perform a baseline population survey before the first of three consecutive wolf hunts after 35 years of protection.

Legal and Illegal wolf killing already happens, even with federation protections. A peer reviewed study shows MN’s wolf hunts greatly increased illegal wolf killing for years after the hunts ended. A hunt will further endanger wolves and encourages more killing that cannot be controlled. Killing one wolf can decimate the entire pack; “additive mortality.”

**MN HOUSE STATUS:** Spring, 2023 MN House voted 69-57 to prohibit wolf hunting. (All Democrats in support plus Republican Myers.)

**MN SENATE STATUS:** April 11, 2024: Amendment on Senate floor to the Senate Environment Policy Omnibus Bill introduced by Senator Mary Kunesh. Senate vote to prohibit wolf hunting did not pass 30-35.

- All Democrats voted to prohibit wolf hunting except Senators Hauschild, Frenz, Latz, Kupec, Hoffman. Republican Sen. Abeler voted to support wolves.
- All Republicans voted against prohibiting wolf hunting. Republican Sen. Housley didn't vote/ was absent.

**TODAY'S GOALS:** Thank your Rep and Senator for their votes. Gather information from the legislators who did not vote for our bill. See the vote sheet.

## **PRIORITY: Support the MN Dept. of Agriculture's Wolf-Livestock Conflict Prevention Grants, and the overall promotion of nonlethal conflict prevention**

**STATUS:** Approved by the legislature and included in the Governor's two-year budget passed last year in 2023.

In 2017, an ongoing grant program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture passed into law and reimburses farmers and ranchers for equipment, guard animals, and other related costs to prevent wolf-livestock conflicts. This grant program has made Minnesota eligible for additional federal dollars. Nonlethal conflict prevention methods include guard animals, fencing, shelters, lights, and carcass removal, and have been shown to reduce wolf-livestock conflicts.

## **PRIORITY: Require permission to leave traps on private land**

*House File 945: Fisher, Becker-Finn, Curran, Liz Lee, Freiberg*

**STATUS:** Heard in MN House Environment Committee on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. Rep. Fischer moved that HF 945 be laid over for possible inclusion in the Environment omnibus bill.

If approved, Minnesota will be the 23rd state that requires trappers obtain written or verbal permission to set traps on someone else's property. Currently, Minnesota law allows trapping on private property without the landowner's permission. Only agricultural land or land adequately posted with "no trespassing" signs are exempt from trapping access. If signs are missing or not seen, traps can be set legally without the property owner's knowledge or permission. Wisconsin has required permission to hunt and trap on private land since 1995.

## **Nonlethal Methods to Prevent Conflicts Between Livestock & Wolves**

While livestock losses from wolf predation are relatively low in Minnesota, reducing wolf-livestock conflicts is critical to helping Minnesota's livestock producers, wolves, and communities co-exist and thrive.

Due to federal Endangered Species Act protections, it is currently illegal for farmers to harm or kill a wolf in Minnesota and across the Great Lakes region. Instead, in Minnesota, wolves are typically killed by government agents where livestock predation has been confirmed. 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, provided the incident is reported and verified.

In an effort to reduce both the number of predator conflicts with livestock and the number of wolves killed in response, Howling [For](#) Wolves promotes nonlethal methods as an important tool in preventing wolf livestock conflicts.

There are several effective nonlethal methods that help reduce predator conflicts with livestock listed below. Strategic animal husbandry practices combined with nonlethal predator deterrents have been shown to considerably reduce wolf-livestock conflicts.





### Alarm or Scare Devices

Combinations of alarm systems with flashing and/or moving lights and/or sounds are used for the purpose of scaring wolves from areas of livestock activity. Several products already on the market are affordable, easy to use, and have been proven effective.



### Fencing/Fladry

Permanent or portable barriers and fences, sometimes electrified and enhanced with fladry, are effective ways to deter wolves. Fladry is typically a line of rope mounted along a fence line with hanging strips of red nylon flags. The flags frighten predators, making them unwilling to cross the line. Although its effect may decrease over time, this method is particularly helpful during high-risk times of conflict.



### Livestock Protection Animals

Livestock producers have long relied on dogs and other guard animals to protect livestock from predators. In some instances, the mere presence of protection animals keeps wolves away from livestock. In other cases, guard dogs play a more active role by alerting farmers to wolves and other predators in the area.



### Reduce Attractants

Removing diseased, dying, or dead animals or carcasses from areas where they can attract wolves. Like other canines, wolves have a very good sense of smell and can detect prey from miles away.



### Human Presence

Regular human activity in areas where wolves are known to exist, especially during calving/lambing periods, effectively deters wolves. The underlying concept is that wolves tend to avoid humans.



## Meeting with Legislators

### Tips for meetings with legislators:

- **GOAL: resource, + relationship**
- Gather as a group ahead of time, plan 15 min. mtg
- Assign a note taker
- Develop rapport, positive impression
- Brief education and status of the wolf
- Share why you don't support wolf trophy hunting
- Ask what the lawmaker thinks: **exit survey questions**
- Thank them for their time. Picture!



## LESLIE'S LOGISTICS!

- Overview of available materials in folder
- A typical meeting
- Where are these places? MSB and SOB
- Check in with Legislative Asst.
- When's lunch? Plus Homebase in Vault.
- Overview of schedule (Kristen)
- Announce last minute legislator mtg time changes
- Reminder: Exit surveys and thank you cards!
- Post-meeting exit survey to Leslie
- Social media

### 2024 Legislative Meeting EXIT SURVEY

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person met with (Senator/Representative/staff member): \_\_\_\_\_

Did the meeting with your elected official take place? (Circle one option.)      Yes      No

If the meeting did not take place, what was the reason for the meeting cancellation? \_\_\_\_\_

If the meeting did take place, how did the meeting go in your opinion?    ( ) Good    ( ) Okay    ( ) Bad

Tell us below which issues the legislator did or did not support. (Please provide feedback.)

1. Check the voting tally sheet for Senators' votes on April 11, 2024, on amendment A-6 to SF 3631, the Omnibus Environment Policy bill. A yes vote was a vote to prohibit wolf hunting seasons. If you are meeting with a Representative, all Democrats and Republican Rep. Andrew Meyers voted to prohibit wolf hunting. Please thank your Senator and/or your Representative if they voted yes on these amendments. Write their comments here. Do they have concerns?  
  
If you cannot tell based on the voting sheet, ask what the lawmaker thinks about removing the MN state law that allows for wolf hunting and trapping when they lose federal Endangered Species Act/federal protections? Please listen carefully to their concerns and write some of them here.
2. Is the lawmaker aware of the dangers to the wolf population from wolf hunting and trapping?
3. Are they aware of the cruel methods used to kill wolves?
4. Does the lawmaker support funding of wolf-livestock conflict prevention grants for farmers?

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