Gray Wolves \((\text{Canis lupus})\) in the Midwestern United States
Range of the gray wolf

Historic
Source: USFWS

1974
Source: USFWS

2010
Source: IUCN 2010
Are gray wolves endangered?

Source: USFWS
Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment

Status of wolves in the portions of states within the DPS:

North Dakota and Iowa—furbearer, closed season

South Dakota—protected wildlife, no season

Illinois—threatened

Indiana and Ohio—extirpated, no protection

In the portions of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio outside the boundaries of the DPS, gray wolves are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Source: USFWS
Confirmations in Illinois

1. Marshall County, 2002
2. Lake County, 2005
3. Pike County, 2005
4. Jo Daviess County, 2008
5. Kane County, 2009
6. Jo Daviess County, 2011
7. Jo Daviess County, 2011

Is there another wolf in Illinois?

February 06, 2008 at 09:46 AM

The Illinois River has attracted a wolf before.

And now Chicago Sun-Times outdoor writer Dale Bowman reports that there may be another wolf sighting along the Illinois River.
How many wolves are there?

As of 2010-11:

**Minnesota** = 2,921 (2012-13 harvest quota = 400)

**Wisconsin** = 782 (2012-13 harvest quota = 201)

**Michigan** = 687, 16 on Isle Royale (protected, nongame species)

**Total** = 4,406

**Northern Rocky Mountain Distinct Population Segment** (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming) = 1,654

**Arizona and New Mexico** = 50

- Hunted in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming
- Endangered in Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and New Mexico
- Utah and Colorado...

**Total population of continental U.S.** = 6,110
Wolf basics

- Live in packs comprised of a breeding (alpha) pair, their offspring, and other non-breeding adults
- Individuals can mate by 2-3 years old and past 10 years old
- Pups cared for by the entire pack
- At 1-2 years old, wolves may disperse in search of a mate or territory (most by 3)
- Wolves may disperse as far as 600 miles... sometimes as far as 1,000 miles (adults/juveniles, males/females)
- Travel as many as 30-50 miles in a day to hunt
- Packs are territorial; territory size ranges from 50-1,004 mi² (130-2,600 km²)
1,402 miles in ~7 months!
Wolf basics

- Habitat
  - Wilderness?
  - Urban areas?
- Prey base
- Wolf impact on prey
  - Elimination?
  - Selective predation
  - Local effects on deer hunting
- Trophic cascades
  - Ungulates
  - Coyotes
  - Other animals

Figure credit: Prugh et al. 2009
Wolf or coyote?

How to recognize a gray wolf

**GRAY WOLF**
- Color: light gray to black
- Dimensions: 2.5 feet tall, 5-6 feet long
- Broad snout
- Round ears

**COYOTE**
- Color: light gray/brown
- Dimensions: 1.5 feet tall, 4 feet long
- Narrow snout
- Tall pointed ears

80-120 pounds
Paw size: 4" x 5"

20-50 pounds
Paw size: 2" x 2.5"

Wolves are protected by federal law under the Endangered Species Act.
Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Front Tracks

Hind Tracks

Tracks from field drawings by David Moskowitz
Making sense of scat

WOLF

Usually >1 in diameter

COYOTE

Usually <1 in diameter

DOMESTIC DOG
# Livestock depredation, 1976 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Fowl</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1,556</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13,350</td>
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<td><strong>Wisconsin</strong></td>
<td>225</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>308</td>
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<td><strong>Michigan</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,823</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Minnesota</strong></td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>33.5</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<td><strong>Michigan</strong></td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Farms affected:** 0.9% in Minnesota, 1% in Wisconsin, <1% in Michigan

Dog depredation

- 340 dogs killed and 134 injured in Great Lakes region (1974-2006, avg. 15.8/year)
- MN had the most depredation events overall
- WI had more than MN from 2001 – 2006 (compensation for hunting dogs)
- WI: 85% of attacks during hunting/training vs. 38% on pet dogs
- Most MN attacks occurred near homes, most WI/MI attacks occurred while/training (baiting)
- Small percentage of packs depredate dogs

Recognizing wolf depredation

- Canine tooth punctures
- Hemorrhaging on the depredated carcass
- Evisceration
- “Messier” than a felid kill
- Presence of wolf tracks/scat
Attacks on humans

- Rabid wolves; habituation/attraction
- Don’t run, but act aggressively stepping toward the wolf and yelling or clapping your hands if it tries to approach.
- Do not turn your back toward an aggressive wolf, but continue to stare directly at it. If you are with a companion and more than one wolf is present, place yourselves back to back and slowly move away from the wolves.
- Retreat slowly while facing the wolf and act aggressively.
- Stand your ground if a wolf attacks you and fight with any means possible (use sticks, rocks, ski poles, fishing rods or whatever you can find).
- Use air horns or other noisemakers.
- Use bear spray or firearms if necessary.
- Climb a tree if necessary; wolves cannot climb trees.
People have different perspectives.
A WOLF IS, well, a wolf. And wolves are a valuable wildlife resource for Montana. In fact, wolves attract 150,000 visitors to our region annually. They help improve the health of elk herds and habitat. And most residents say wolves are an important part of life in the West. Let’s manage wolves responsibly based on sound science, not empty rhetoric.

SUPPORT SCIENCE-BASED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT • Visit westernwolves.org