



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Summary of Minnesota DNR Wolf Management Plan February 2001

Under the direction of the wolf management bill passed by the 2000 Minnesota Legislature and signed into law by Governor Ventura, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, developed a wolf management plan with the goal of **ensuring the long-term survival of the wolf in Minnesota while resolving conflicts between wolves and humans.**

**Management Zones.** Minnesota is divided into Zone A and Zone B. Zone A is identical to Wolf Management Zones 1-4 in the 1992 *Federal Recovery Plan for the Eastern Timber Wolf* and is roughly the northeastern one-third of the State. It is estimated that 83 percent of Minnesota's wolves are in Zone A. Zone B is identical to Wolf Management Zone 5 in the 1992 Federal Recovery Plan and includes about 64 percent of the State.

**Taking of Wolves.** The taking or harassing of gray wolves in Minnesota is allowed as follows. Taking of wolves in any other manner is a gross misdemeanor.

1. **In defense of human life** - Wolves may be taken by any person anywhere in the State in defense of the person's own life or the life of another person.
2. **Harassment to discourage wolves from contact or association with people or domestic animals** - Wolves may be harassed anywhere in the State if they are within 500 yards of people, buildings, dogs, livestock, or other domestic animals. Wolves may not be purposely attracted, tracked, or searched out in order to harass them. Injurious harassment is prohibited.
3. **To eliminate immediate threat to livestock, guard animals, or domestic animals and pets** - Wolves may be shot or destroyed anywhere in the State by the owner or the owner's agent if the wolf is in the act of stalking, attacking, or killing livestock, guard animals, or domestic animals and pets (in the case of a pet, the wolf may be taken only by the owner of the pet and the pet must have been under the supervision of the owner.) Livestock or guard animals must be on property owned, leased, or occupied by the owner of the animals. Following such taking of a wolf as a result of threats to livestock or guard animals, the county extension agent shall recommend livestock best management practices that may prevent future depredations; carrying out those practices is voluntary.
4. **To protect animals in Zone B** - Wolves may be taken in Zone B at any time to protect a person's livestock, domestic animals, or pets by (1) shooting them on land owned, leased, or managed by the person or by (2) employing a certified predator control trapper, who may trap wolves on such land, or within one mile of such land with the permission of the landowner.
5. **In Depredation Control Areas** - If wolf depredation (mortalities) on livestock, domestic animals, or pets is verified and if the owner requests wolf control, the DNR Commissioner

shall open a predator control area, not exceeding a one-mile radius, around the depredation site. Taking of wolves in the depredation control area must be done by state-certified predator controllers and only with the permission of the landowner. Predator controllers (except USDA Wildlife Services personnel) will be paid \$150 by the State for each wolf taken.

- C In **Zone A** - The depredation control area is open for up to 60 days and can only be reopened if additional wolf depredation is verified.
- C In **Zone B** - Verified wolf depredation (mortalities) of livestock, domestic animals, or pets within the previous five years can open a predator control area for up to 214 days. The owner can request reopening the area in subsequent years if still within five years of the verified depredation.

**Reporting Wolf Takings.** All takings of gray wolves, except as done by certified predator controllers, must be reported to a conservation officer as soon as practicable, but no later than 48 hours, and all evidence must be protected.

**Compensation.** The owner of livestock killed by a wolf, or livestock so injured by a wolf that they must be destroyed, will be compensated at the fair market value of the animal(s).

**Cooperative Agreement with U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services.** DNR will develop an agreement for USDA Wildlife Services to continue their control program to trap and remove problem wolves, to conduct training for state predator controllers and investigating agents, to develop a wolf depredation handbook, and to perform other functions.

**Public Hunting or Trapping.** There will be no open season for the trapping or hunting of gray wolves for five years following the Federal delisting of the gray wolf, and then only after public comment.

**Population Management.** Wolves will be allowed to continue to naturally expand their range within the state. The minimum statewide winter population goal is 1600 wolves; there is no maximum goal. The DNR will take the appropriate actions to remedy the situation if the wolf population falls below the minimum goal. Other than removing (1) wolves that threaten human life, (2) depredating wolves, or (3) potentially depredating wolves in Zone B, the Management Plan contains no actions that will limit the State's wolf population.

**Habitat Management.** The Management Plan does not guarantee the implementation of specific habitat management activities aimed at preserving wolf habitat. Rather, it indicates that by providing habitat and other management to maintain adequate populations of wolf prey species (white-tailed deer and moose) the DNR will also be providing for the needs of wolves in the State.

**Wolf Monitoring.** A comprehensive statewide estimate of wolf distribution and abundance will be completed in the first and fifth years following Federal delisting of the wolf; similar estimates subsequently will be made at five-year intervals. Annual changes in distribution and abundance will be monitored by continued review of wolf depredation complaints, data from autumn scent station surveys and winter furbearer track surveys, and observations from field personnel from all natural resource agencies within the State. Monitoring activities will include the use of

computer modeling to predict wolf population trends, as well as analysis of biological samples from captured wolves, necropsies of dead wolves, and analysis of wolf scats.

**Hybrid and Captive Wolves.** Wolf-dog hybrids may not be released into the wild. Captive wolves may not be released without a permit from the DNR.

**Plan Review.** The Minnesota DNR will periodically convene an advisory group to evaluate the Management Plan's implementation and impacts. The advisory group will include, but will not be limited to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Michigan DNR, Wisconsin DNR, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, 1854 Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Wildlife Services, U.S. Forest Service, and wolf researchers.

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**This summary was developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3, Division of Endangered Species, Ft. Snelling, MN, with the assistance of the Bloomington, Minnesota, Ecological Services Field Office.**