

WOLF DAY | 2023



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Overview of Wolf Day 2023:

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

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



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.**



INFO MN Wolf Population Estimates

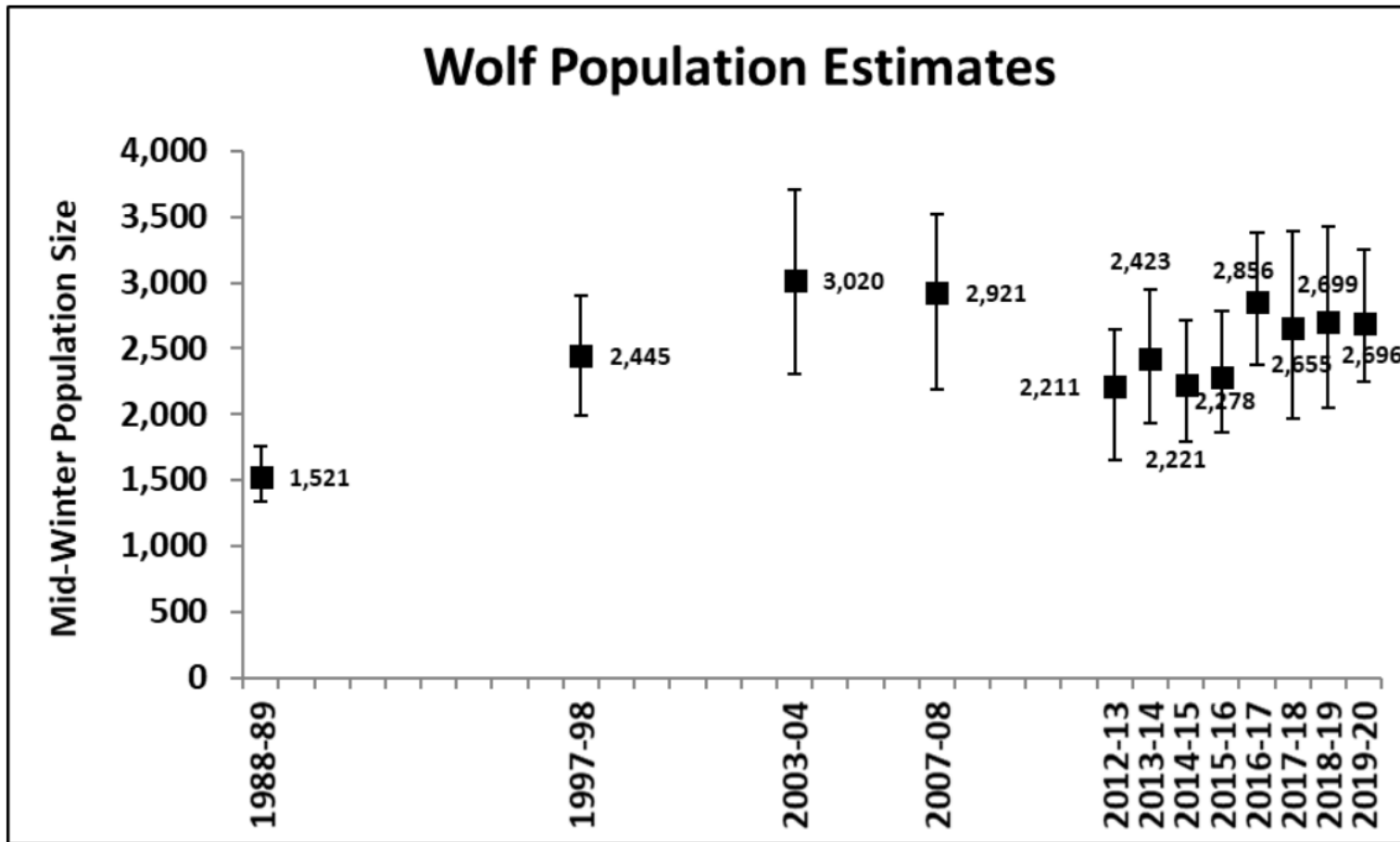


Figure 5. Wolf population estimates from periodic standardized surveys in Minnesota from winter 1988-89 to 2019-20.

INFO: MN Wolf Pack Size

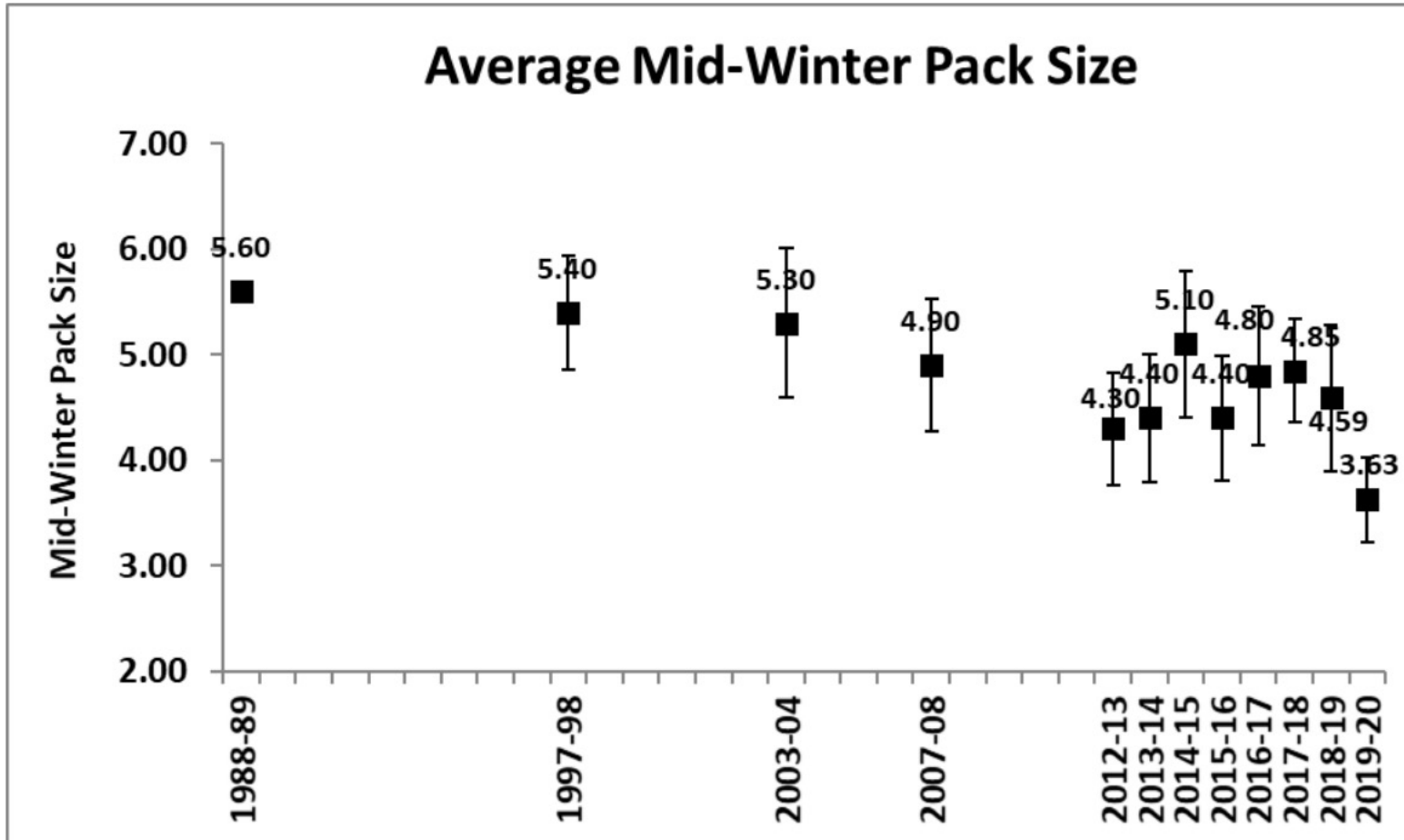


Figure 3. Average mid-winter pack size for radio-marked wolf packs in Minnesota from winter 1988-89 to 2019-20.

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: 2012 to 2015



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 farmers for wolf-livestock conflicts
In 2020, 221 wolves killed for 83 cows and calves.



News:

AS OF FEBRUARY 10, 2022

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

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 2022 Wolf Plan because Minnesota wolves are constantly on the brink of being killed the moment federal protections are lifted.



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.



Wolves are already illegally killed despite their protections.

2022 DNR Wolf Plan just released:



The newly approved 2022 MN DNR wolf plan contains wolf hunting and trapping and states a goal of continuing a “stable” wolf population.

Howling For Wolves considers this goal and wolf hunting as harmful to Minnesota’s wolves, as a “stable” population is NOT necessarily a healthy population. The methods used by the MN DNR to count wolves are not sensitive enough to detect problems with the population’s health and survivability into the future. Wolves are still recovering from nearly going extinct. The population should be able to grow as it can where conflicts are preventable and tolerable with no artificially predetermined “stable” number. The current “number” of wolves in Minnesota is fewer than in the mid- 2000s, before three wolf hunting and trapping seasons!

Overview of the 2023 Legislative Session:

- Long session – January through May
- 1/3 of legislators are brand new
- Democrat "trifecta" – Senate, House, Gov
- Focus largely on budget, back at the Capitol (less virtual) meetings.

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 of January 2022), existing Minnesota law authorizes the MN DNR to hold a recreational hunting and trapping season on wolves when protections are removed.

Illegal wolf killing already happens, even with federation protections. With legal wolf killing comes more illegal killing. A hunt will endanger them and encourages more killing and cannot be controlled. Killing one wolf can decimate the entire pack; “additive mortality.”

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

- In 2017, a grant program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture passed into law and now reimburses farmers and ranchers for equipment, guard animals, and other related costs of working to prevent wolf-livestock conflicts.
- This ongoing grant program has earned the support of the agricultural community and made Minnesota eligible for additional federal dollars.

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 2021, there were 86 verified complaints of wolves at 76 sites in the state. Out of this, 72 calves/cattle were verified to be killed by wolves on farms in Minnesota. In response, 152 wolves were baited and killed by USDA Wildlife Services. 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.

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