



HOWLING<sup>FOR</sup>WOLVES<sup>®</sup>

## BACKGROUND

HOWLING FOR WOLVES IS A MINNESOTA-BASED WOLF ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION THAT FORMED IN 2012 TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE WILD WOLF TO FOSTER TOLERANCE AND TO ENSURE THE WOLF'S LONG-TERM SURVIVAL. HOWLING FOR WOLVES OPPOSES RECREATIONAL WOLF HUNTING AND TRAPPING AND ALL WILDLIFE SNARING. WE CURRENTLY SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF FEDERAL PROTECTIONS FOR THE WOLF BY THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT.

### **Wolves play a unique role and are important in Minnesota.**

- Minnesota is home to the largest and only original wolf population that never went extinct in the lower 48 states.
- Wolves are a critical part of our ecosystem for other wildlife whose habitat depends on the wolf for vegetation growth.
- 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) online survey showed 79 percent said “no” to wolf hunting.
- There is significant economic value in protecting wolves in Minnesota. A 1996 study showed the economic boost from wolves was \$33 million per year just for Ely, Minnesota. Further, a 2011 United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) report highlights Minnesotans spent \$621 million on wildlife viewing. The wolf offers Minnesota an opportunity to distinguish our state as a home to a truly wild wilderness.
- For many Minnesota Native American tribes, the wolf holds a sacred cultural role. Several tribes have forbidden wolf hunting on their lands, established wolf sanctuaries, and find killing wolves hurtful and disrespectful.
- When wolf protections are reduced, more illegal wolf killing occurs. Scientific studies show that with legal wolf killing comes more illegal, hidden wolf killing.

Recreational wolf trophy hunting began in Minnesota in 2012 due to politics, not smart wolf strategies. A five-year moratorium on the wolf hunt was recklessly removed by the state legislature without even a baseline population survey. The outdated MN Wolf Plan (2001) was not followed, except for the very heavy wolf killing throughout the state. This Wolf Plan is no longer considered relevant and is in process of a revision.

Today, Minnesota wolves have federal Endangered Species Act protections and there is no wolf hunt – thanks to efforts by Minnesotans and people throughout the country. On January 10, 2022, a federal court returned the gray wolf in the Great Lakes region (which includes Minnesota and Wisconsin) to the Endangered Species List. Wolves in Minnesota are listed as “threatened” and lethal options are still available to farmers for wolf-livestock conflicts.

Because recreational wolf trophy hunting and trapping seasons remain in state law, Minnesota wolves are constantly on the brink of being killed as trophies the moment federal protections are lifted. This risk is ever-present, as anti-wolf groups continue to appeal the federal court ruling and pressure Congress to remove the wolf's protections on the Endangered Species List.