

For Immediate Release, October 15, 2012

Contact: Collette Adkins Giese, Center for Biological Diversity, (651) 955-3821
Deb Balzer, Howling for Wolves, (612) 481-1571

Minnesota Supreme Court Asked to Stop Killing of 400 Wolves

MINNEAPOLIS— The Center for Biological Diversity and Howling for Wolves today asked the Minnesota Supreme Court to stop wolf hunting and trapping this fall. The conservation groups seek [review](#) of a Minnesota Court of Appeals [decision](#), issued last week, that denied their motion for a preliminary injunction.

Without a preliminary injunction, the wolf-trapping and hunting season, which is scheduled to begin Nov. 3, will be over before the appellate court considers the merits of the conservation groups' legal challenge to the state's failure to take formal public comment on the hunt. The Court of Appeals refused to stop the hunt, basing its decision on what conservation groups believe is a grave misconception that the state legislature, not the Department of Natural Resources, mandated that the hunt go forward and that therefore the state agency could not be blamed for any harm caused by the hunt.



Gray wolf photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons/Retron. This [photo](#) is available for media use.

“I’m hopeful the Supreme Court will recognize what the Court of Appeals did not — that the shooting and trapping of 400 wolves is an irreversible harm caused by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources,” said Collette Adkins Giese, a Minneapolis-based attorney with the Center. “Rushing to open a hunt this fall, the Department slammed the door on meaningful public participation in a controversial management decision about wolf hunting and trapping. Only by stopping the hunt can we ensure that these state officials follow the law and do their duty to protect our state’s wildlife.”

Minnesota’s wolf-management plan promised that wolves would not be hunted or trapped for five years after the removal of their federal Endangered Species Act protection. But the state’s legislature eliminated that safeguard last summer in a rider attached to a must-pass budget bill. After wolves lost federal protection in January, the Department of Natural Resources issued rules allowing a fall hunt.

But the state agency refused to provide formal public notice and opportunity for comment, instead offering only an online survey. Nearly 80 percent of survey respondents opposed the wolf hunt.

"I share the outrage felt by citizens across the state about the DNR's decision to ignore the public and go forward with this upcoming wolf hunt," said Maureen Hackett, president of Howling for Wolves. "Killing these magnificent and iconic animals for sport is not just cruel, it is bad for Minnesota. This will diminish us as a state and as a community. Gray wolves are a major draw for Minnesota's yearly \$500 million wildlife tourism economy, and they hold deep cultural meanings for many Minnesotans."

Livestock producers have pushed for hunting and trapping to reduce the state's population of about 3,000 wolves. But hunting and trapping may actually increase conflicts between wolves and livestock by disrupting pack dynamics and creating more orphan wolves — lone wolves roaming without families — that are more likely to target domestic animals out of desperation. Proven nonlethal options can be used to safeguard livestock from wolves, including guard dogs, flagging and fencing. Hunting and trapping are premature until state managers better understand the impacts on wolf populations from the legally sanctioned killing of this imperiled species.

Unless the decision of the Court of Appeals is reversed by the Minnesota Supreme Court, wolf hunting and trapping will begin Nov. 3 with the opening of the deer firearms season. The conservation groups' lawsuit over the state's failure to take formal public comment on the hunt is still pending, with a final ruling expected early next year.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 450,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Howling for Wolves was created to be a voice for wild wolves. It aims to educate the public about Minnesota's wolf population and let people know how they can take action to keep wild wolves in a self-sustaining existence. For more information: www.howlingforwolves.org.