

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

TOP PRIORITY: Remove wolf hunting and trapping from state law to protect wild wolves for future generations

MN HOUSE STATUS: Spring, 2023 MN House voted 69-57 to prohibit wolf hunting. (All Democrats in support plus Republican Myers.)

MN SENATE STATUS: April 11, 2024: Amendment on Senate floor to the Senate Environment Policy Omnibus Bill introduced by Senator Mary Kunesh. Senate vote to prohibit wolf hunting did not pass 30-35.

- All Democrats voted to prohibit wolf hunting except Senators Hauschild, Frenz, Latz, Kupec, Hoffman. Republican Sen. Abeler voted to support wolves.
- All Republicans voted against prohibiting wolf hunting. Republican Sen. Housley didn't vote/ was absent.

While the wolf goes back and forth on the federal Endangered Species List (and is currently on it as "threatened," as of January 2022), existing Minnesota law authorizes the MN DNR to hold recreational hunting and trapping seasons on wolves. Current state law is permissive: the DNR "commissioner **may** prescribe open seasons and restrictions for taking wolves."

When Minnesota gray wolves lost federal protections in 2012, the state legislature and MN DNR hastily enacted a trophy hunting and trapping season without any information and under great pressure from hunters and trappers. The MN DNR did not perform a baseline population survey before the first of three consecutive wolf hunts after 35 years of protection.

Legal and illegal wolf killing already happens, even with federation protections. A peer reviewed study shows MN's wolf hunts greatly increased illegal wolf killing for years after the hunts ended. A hunt will further endanger wolves and encourages more killing that cannot be controlled. Killing one wolf can decimate the entire pack; "additive mortality."

PRIORITY: Require permission to leave traps on private land

House File 945: Fisher, Becker-Finn, Curran, Liz Lee, Freiberg

STATUS: Heard in MN House Environment Committee on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. Rep. Fischer moved that HF 945 be laid over for possible inclusion in the Environment omnibus bill.

If approved, Minnesota will be the 23rd state that requires trappers obtain written or verbal permission to set traps on someone else's property. Currently, Minnesota law allows trapping on private property without the landowner's permission. Only agricultural land or land adequately posted with "no trespassing" signs are exempt from trapping access. If signs are missing or not seen, traps can be set legally without the property owner's knowledge or permission. Wisconsin has required permission to hunt and trap on private land since 1995.

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

STATUS: Approved by the legislature and included in the Governor's two-year budget passed last year in 2023.

In 2017, an ongoing grant program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture passed into law and reimburses farmers and ranchers for equipment, guard animals, and other related costs to prevent wolf-livestock conflicts. This grant program has made Minnesota eligible for additional federal dollars. Nonlethal conflict prevention methods include guard animals, fencing, shelters, lights, and carcass removal, and have been shown to reduce wolf-livestock conflicts.