

Warning Signs of Wolf Depredation

Producers have reported some common signs that could indicate wolves have moved into your area. Signs may include:

- Animals tightly bunched together instead of being spread across the pasture;
- The entire herd or flock is disturbed;
- Sheep become panicked in the presence of herding dogs;
- Presence of wolf sign on the farm;
- Animals refuse to enter certain areas;
- Cattle breaking through otherwise sound pasture fences;
- Drastic changes in herd temperament.
- Missing livestock.

Remember that these livestock behaviors may also be caused by other predators, such as bear, coyote, or free-ranging dogs.

COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS

(in accordance with NR 12.53,12.54)

- **Claimant must contact USDA-WS within 24 hours of the depredation or when first aware of missing animals.**
- **Claimant must be in compliance with carcass disposal requirements of s. 95.50, Stats.**
- **Deer farmers must be in compliance with fencing requirements of ss. 90-20 and 90-21, Stats.**

MISSING CALF COMPENSATION

(in accordance with NR 12.54)

- **The claimant must have tagged all calves within 2 weeks of birth.**
- **The claimant must have records that verify the number of missing calves.**
- **At least one wolf depredation has been verified by USDA-WS within the season.**
- **The claimant agrees to cooperate with any research conducted by WDNR to determine calf mortality due to wolf depredation.**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



<http://dnr.wi.gov>

CONTACTS

To report a depredation:

USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services
Northern Wisconsin
P.O. Box 1064
Rhinelander, WI 54501
1-800-228-1368 (within Wisconsin)
715-369-5221 (out of state)
Fax: 715-369-1257

If there is no answer please leave a message. The answering machine is monitored on a 7-day a week basis.

USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services
Southern and Central Wisconsin
1201 Storbeck Drive
Waupun, WI 53963
1-800-433-0663 (within Wisconsin)
920-324-4514 (out of state)
Fax: 920-324-5367

For information about wolf depredation in Wisconsin or the DNR reimbursement program:

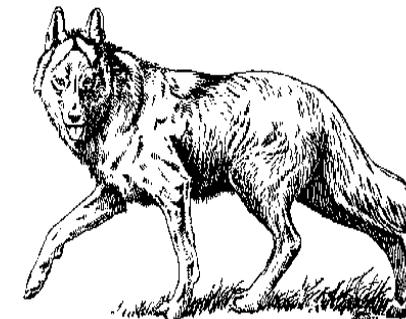
WDNR Bureau of Wildlife Management
Wildlife Damage Program
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53703
608-266-2151

Information for Cattlemen:

Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association
1-877-825-2547

Wolves In Farm Country In Wisconsin

A Guide for Farmers in



Wolf Country

Provided by
Wisconsin Department
of Natural Resources
USDA Wildlife Services
Wisconsin's Cattlemen's
Association

Pub ER-103-00

Wolf Distribution in Wisconsin - Where is the wolf found today?

For many years, the only place gray wolves (also called timber wolves) could be found in the continental United States was the deep forest of northern Minnesota. Today, wolves have recolonized most of the suitable habitat in Wisconsin, and can be found throughout the northern third of the state and in the central forest region. Although wolf populations may fluctuate from year to year it is estimated that over 700 wolves exist in the state. While the rebounding wolf population is an ecological success story, it creates problems and challenges for farmers and ranchers who suffer losses and must find ways to protect livestock from these adaptable predators.

Wolf Depredations

Most reports of wolf depredations on livestock come from the northern third of the state where most wolves occur. However, the roaming tendency of wolves means they can cause livestock losses in almost any rural area of the state.

Wolf depredations on livestock are relatively infrequent in Wisconsin, but have increased as the wolf population has grown. Wolves have killed cattle, sheep, horses, turkeys, dogs, chickens and other domestic animals in Wisconsin. Wolf depredations can cause significant economic loss in local areas. Impacts include depredated livestock, as well as handling problems, stress related injury and disease, and increased time spent monitoring cattle. Black bears, free-ranging dogs, and coyotes also depredate livestock. It is very important to have depredations investigated by a qualified specialist.

Government Assistance

Since 1988 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the US Department of Agriculture - Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) have cooperated to provide assistance to livestock producers experiencing possible wolf

depredations. Under the terms of the cooperative agreement, USDA-WS professionals will investigate wolf complaints, assess losses, make abatement recommendations and conduct direct control activities as appropriate.

In accordance with the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan (approved October, 1999 and updated 2006) Wisconsin producers experiencing verified wolf depredations are eligible for technical assistance and monetary compensation for their losses. Depending on the Federal status of wolves, USDA/WS professionals will discuss options for abating wolf damage. To receive services, it is extremely important for farmers and ranchers to follow specific reporting procedures.

What should I do if I suspect wolves have killed my livestock?

Step 1: Carefully examine the kill site and dead livestock. Be cautious not to trample over animal tracks or disturb the site. A USDA specialist may be able to read subtle clues that you may not recognize. If the examination suggests a wild animal killed your livestock, protect your remaining animals by temporarily moving them to a more secure location, if possible.

Step 2: Preserve the evidence of the suspected wolf kill as much as possible (see box below) and then report the kill. Kills should be reported within 24 hours directly to USDA-WS at 1-800-228-1368 in northern Wisconsin, or 1-800-433-0663 for central and southern Wisconsin complaints.

Step 3: After receiving a report of the incident, a USDA-WS specialist will investigate and determine if wolves killed your livestock. If confirmed, you will be asked to complete an application for state compensation. The report will then be sent to the DNR mammalian ecologist who can be contacted at 715-762-1363.

What can I do to protect my Livestock?

On your property, you have the right to shoot wolves in the act of attacking your livestock or other domestic animals. You must contact your local DNR conservation warden within 24 hours to report the wolf shooting and turn the carcass to the DNR. If you have a history of wolf problems on your land, you may be eligible for a permit to shoot any wolf on your property. Contact your local DNR wildlife biologist to determine if you are eligible for such a permit.

Prevention

The University of Minnesota conducted a study in early 1999 to determine if any livestock management practices could prevent wolf depredation. The study could find no management practices certain to prevent wolf depredation. However, farmers and ranchers have reported a few practices that may help in some cases. These include:

- **Maintaining healthy, well-fed animals.** Wolves typically select the weakest and easiest prey. Healthy animals are more difficult to take. Move lame or sick animals to a safe area when possible.
- **Using guard animals.** Although not always effective, the use of trained guarding dogs may be useful for preventing wolf depredation on sheep. When using guarding dogs for protection from wolves it may be necessary to use more than one dog. Guarding dog effectiveness depends upon many factors, such as pasture and flock size, quality of dog purchased, and producer commitment. Guarding dogs are usually not recommended for cattle protection, because many cattle will not tolerate having dogs nearby.

- **Moving calving or lambing activities closer to the barnyard.** Newborns are easy prey. Some farmers move calving or lambing closer to the barnyard because it allows for more frequent monitoring and early detection of depredation problems.
- **Predator-proof fencing.** Fencing to exclude wolves from contact with livestock can be expensive and is usually not cost-effective. However, fencing may be justified in small pen or barnyard situations, or when protecting extremely high value animals.
- **Proper carcass disposal.** Wolves are known to feed on discarded carcasses, and carcass disposal may reduce the attractiveness of an area to wolves.

Preserving Evidence of a Wolf Depredation

- **Secure the area** from the entry of livestock. Curious animals or upset mothers can destroy evidence quickly.
- **Look for wolf tracks or scat** (droppings). Cover with plywood or weighted cans.
- **Cover livestock carcass** or remains with a tarp and weight securely to keep other animals from scavenging on the carcass.
- **Photograph or video tape** the evidence. It is helpful to put some common object next to the evidence to document size.
- **Do not disturb evidence** until the USDA-WS specialist can investigate the site.
- **Remember to call USDA-WS** immediately after finding a suspected wolf kill.