

29 January 2015

Dear Senator () or Representative ():

On behalf of Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies (WFHS), I am writing to urge you to OPPOSE any legislation to remove gray wolves from the protection of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)!

Wisconsin Federated Humane Societies is a statewide organization that represents humane societies and animal rescues all over Wisconsin. Currently, our membership includes 46 shelters and rescues in every part of the state, working together to promote and advance the humane care of *all* animals – in nature, as well as in the home.

Gray wolves are highly intelligent and social animals, and WFHS agrees with the majority of Wisconsinites who feel that wolves have their place in our state's ecological balance. We find the practice of hunting wolves for their heads and fur repugnant, seemingly more an act of hatred, fear, and domination than "sport" or "management."

Wisconsin wolves are suffering from exceptionally cruel hunting and trapping methods including leg-hold traps, cable snares, baiting, electronic calls, and packs of dogs—up to six hunting dogs on a single wolf. More than 520 wolves have been killed in the state's three hunting seasons, with nearly 70 percent of them taken in steel-jawed leg-hold traps. Trapped wolves struggle and suffer until the trapper returns to kill them – often for hours. Many other unsuspecting animals find themselves ensnared in these painful and deadly traps, also (including the occasional pet dog out for a stroll with its owner).

Wisconsin is the only state in the country in which dogs have been allowed to track and trail wolves (with nearly unrestrained in-the-wild training of these dogs). In the hunt, and during training, GPS- equipped hounds are routinely sent to pursue wolves, often out of sight of, and miles away from, the actual hunters -- definitely out of their control. We have read documented accounts of the results of wolf/dog conflicts, with dogs grievously injured, terribly maimed, and horribly killed. We have also heard from hikers, bird-watchers, property-owners, and even mainstream hunters who see this type of "hunting" and "training" as a year-round threat to both private property rights and safe use and enjoyment of public lands by everyone.

In some cases, livestock depredation is a legitimate concern. However, these numbers are relatively small, and the previous Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wolf Management Plan contained effective measures for "controlling nuisance wolves and reimbursing landowners for losses caused by wolves" without the use of hunting.

Congress was very far-sighted when it passed the Endangered Species Act, and including the gray wolf under its protection has returned the species from the brink of extinction. However, recovery of the gray wolf population is still at risk, and the methods by which wolves are hunted in Wisconsin put many other animals and humans at risk, too. PLEASE oppose any legislation to remove gray wolves from the ESA!