



*There is no scientific or biological justification to hunt or trap wolves for sport.*

# The facts about wolves in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

In 2016, legislators ignored scientific evidence and the will of Michigan voters to pass a law authorizing a trophy hunting and commercial trapping season on our state's wolves, if their federal protections are removed.

Just because we *can* kill wolves doesn't mean we *should*. Wolves play a vital role in the ecosystem, strengthen deer populations, have cultural and intrinsic value, and create jobs and support businesses through ecotourism.

### Wolves pose little risk to humans.

Shy but curious, wolves venture close if drawn by human feeding of deer—but still don't threaten or harm humans. On January 4, 2021, wolves in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota lost their protections under the federal Endangered Species Act. This decision is pending litigation, but no matter their legal status, wolves can be legally killed if they are even *perceived* to be a human threat.

### Effective livestock protection resources are readily available.

In 2020, only six of the U.P.'s 900 livestock farms had conflicts with wolves, similar to recent years. The Michigan DNR provides ranchers with effective livestock protection resources such as fencing and guard animals. Livestock owners are compensated for confirmed and even suspected missing animals taken by wolves, which remain extremely low compared to other mortalities caused by weather, disease, and birthing problems. Scientific studies have amply demonstrated, though, that indiscriminate killing of wolves by trophy hunting and trapping not only does not mitigate livestock conflicts, but could even make those few problems worse by dispersing packs, sending inexperienced juvenile wolves out on their own.

### Michigan DNR wolf population estimates:

In 2011: 687

In 2013: 658

In 2014: 636

In 2015: 618

In 2018: 662

In 2020: 695

*...spread over 16,400 square miles of U.P. habitat.*

*Michigan's wolf population has remained stable for 10 years.*

### Weather—not the wolf—affects U.P. deer persistence.

The U.P. has harsh winters, making deer survival difficult. Research shows that wolves target those that are easiest to catch: the sick and weak, thereby strengthening the deer herd. These deer are least desired by hunters and least likely to survive winter. And the Michigan DNR has reminded deer hunters that habitat improvement yields better results than blaming natural predators. The U.P. supports sufficient deer numbers for both wolves and human hunters.

### Wolves provide economic and ecological benefits.

Research suggests that wolves may limit the spread of diseases like CWD. There is compelling scientific evidence of top-down trophic effects generated by wolves because they alter deer movements, allowing for forest and habitat regeneration. Wolves also provide economic benefits to communities by drawing wildlife watchers, a rapidly growing industry.



61% of the deaths of Michigan's radio-collared wolves were caused by humans.

For more information, contact the National Wolfwatcher Coalition at [info@wolfwatcher.org](mailto:info@wolfwatcher.org)

