

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:
MANAGEMENT OF WOLF CONFLICTS AND DEPREDATING WOLVES IN
WISCONSIN

February 2013

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) program completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on alternatives for reducing gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and wolf-dog hybrid depredation/injury to domestic animals, harassment/threats to domestic animals, and potential threats to human safety from habituated/bold wolves in May 2008 (USDA 2008). The EA provided information on the need for action and evaluated the relative effectiveness and environmental impacts of four alternatives for WS involvement in gray wolf and wolf/dog hybrid damage management when gray wolves were removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and USDA Forest Service (USFS) were cooperators in the preparation of the EA. The Wisconsin Ho-chunk Nation and Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission were consulting agencies in the preparation of the EA¹. Based on analysis in the EA and response to public comments, WS selected Alternative 3 “*Revised Integrated Wolf Damage Management (RIWDM)*” in which WS provides technical assistance and direct control activities to alleviate gray wolf and wolf-dog hybrid damage and conflicts. This supplement provides information on WS’ gray wolf and wolf-dog hybrid management activities and updates the environmental impact analysis in the 2008 EA and FONSI. The USFS Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, WDNR, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Forest County Potawatomi Community and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa were cooperating agencies in the preparation of this Supplement. WS also consulted Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection during the preparation of the Supplement.

On January 27, 2012 wolves were removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species (delisted) returning the management of wolves to the WDNR and Tribes. On April 2, 2012 the Governor of Wisconsin signed into law a public wolf harvest season which began October 15, 2012 (Wydeven et al. 2012). This changed the state classification of Wisconsin wolves from a protected wild animal to a game animal. When the 2008 EA was completed, there were no plans for a wolf harvest and the cumulative impact of licensed harvest on the wolf population was not considered. This supplement includes licensed harvest in the analysis of cumulative impacts of wolf damage management alternatives on the Wisconsin wolf population. This supplement adds to the analysis in the 2008 EA and FONSI and all information and analyses in the 2008 EA remain valid unless otherwise noted below.

¹ The Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of the Lac du Flambeau Reservation of Wisconsin was a consulting agency in the production of an 2006 EA on wolf damage management in Wisconsin and comments and information provided by the tribe on the 2006 EA (USDA 2006) were included in the 2008 EA.

The WS program responds to requests for assistance from individuals, organizations and agencies experiencing damage caused by wildlife. WS is the federal program authorized by Congress and authorized by law to reduce damage caused by wildlife (Act of March 2, 1931, as amended (46 Stat. 1468; 7 U.S.C. 426-426b) and the Act of December 22, 1987 [101 Stat. 1329-331, 7 U.S.C. 426c]). Wildlife damage management is the alleviation of damage or other problems caused by or related to the presence of wildlife, and is recognized as an integral part of wildlife management (The Wildlife Society 1992). The imminent threat of damage or loss of resources is often deemed sufficient for wildlife damage management actions to be initiated (U.S. District Court of Utah 1993).

The current RIWDM program is conducted in cooperation with the WDNR and several Wisconsin Tribes. WS uses and/or recommends the full range of legal, practical and effective nonlethal and lethal methods for preventing or reducing wolf damage while minimizing harmful effects of damage management measures on humans, wolves, other species, and the environment in accordance with the WDNR guidelines for wolf depredation control. Management strategies are developed for individual sites by applying the WS Decision Model (Slate et al. 1992). When appropriate, farm management practices (animal husbandry), frightening devices, and livestock guarding animals are recommended and utilized to reduce wolf damage. In other situations, when the damage situation and landowner practices meet WDNR requirements, wolves may be removed as humanely as possible using foot-hold traps, foot snares, cable restraints, and shooting. Lethal methods are used to reduce damage after practical and appropriate nonlethal methods have been considered and determined to be ineffective or inappropriate in reducing damage to acceptable levels. The most appropriate initial response to a wolf damage problem may be a combination of nonlethal and lethal methods, or there could be instances where application of lethal methods alone would be the most appropriate strategy. Wildlife Services typically provides assistance with problems involving wolf depredation on livestock and pets, harassment of domestic animals and threats to human safety. Wildlife Services is responsible for investigating wolf complaints and categorizing each complaint into one of four determinations (confirmed wolf damage, probable wolf damage, confirmed damage by non-wolf species, unconfirmed damage). Wildlife Services also assists the WDNR and three tribal governments with radio-tagging wolves for population monitoring and other research purposes. All WS wildlife damage management activities are in compliance with applicable state, federal and local laws and regulations including the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR ACTION

Gray Wolf Population in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin wolf population is monitored annually to detect new wolves/packs present on the landscape and to develop an estimate called the mid-winter count of wolves in Wisconsin. This survey is conducted during the period when the wolf population is at its lowest point in the annual cycle. Three methods are used to calculate the mid-winter count: snow tracking by agency professionals, aerial telemetry, and volunteer trackers and public observations of wolves. The Wisconsin Wolf population has increased each year during the period since the EA was

completed to an estimated 815 – 880 wolves in 213 packs with 20 loners during the winter of 2011/2012 (Wydeven et al. 2012; Fig. 1).

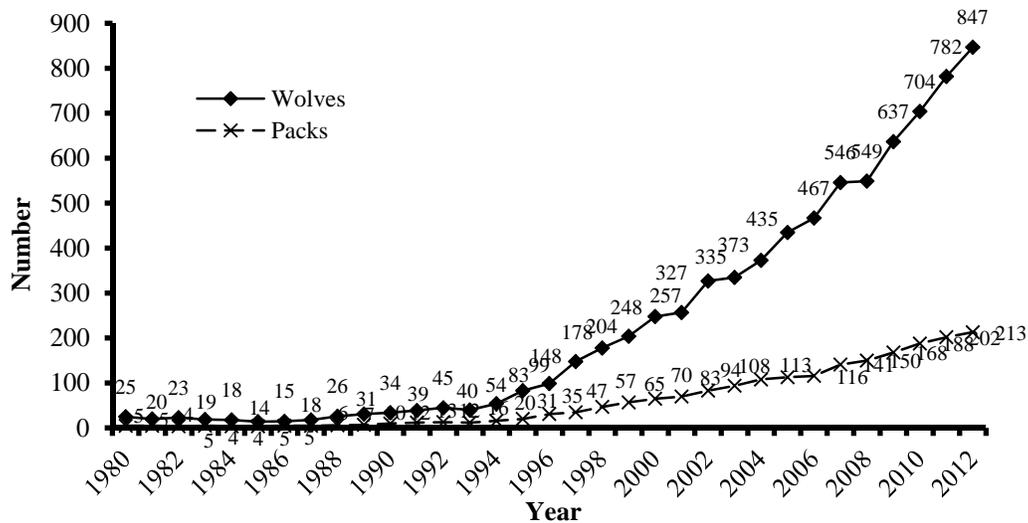


Figure 1. Estimated Wisconsin wolf population 1980-2012 (Wydeven et al. 2012).

Legal Status of Wolves in Wisconsin, 2007 – 2012

The legal status of wolves under the ESA changed several times since the completion of the EA which has resulted in changes in the methods available to address wolf damage and conflicts (Table 1). Most nonlethal methods for wolf damage management have been available throughout this period. However, while wolves were federally protected as an endangered species, lethal methods could only be implemented when wolves posed immediate or non-immediate but demonstrable threats to human safety (50 CFR 17.21(c)(3)(iv)). Once wolves were removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species, lethal methods could be used to address other types of wolf damage in accordance with applicable WDNR and tribal guidelines and regulations.

Table 1. Federal ESA Status of Wolves in Wisconsin and availability of wolf damage management techniques, 2007 – 2012.

Year	Federal Status	Management Methods Available	Duration
2007	Endangered	Nonlethal methods with lethal methods only used to protect human safety	January 1 – March 11
2007 - 2008	Delisted	Nonlethal methods with lethal methods if authorized by WDNR or tribes	March 12, 2007 – September 28, 2008
2008-2009	Endangered	Nonlethal methods, with lethal methods only used to protect human safety	September 29, 2008 – May 4, 2009
2009	Delisted	Nonlethal methods with lethal methods if authorized by WDNR or tribes	May 4 – June 2, 2009

Year	Federal Status	Management Methods Available	Duration
2009-2012	Endangered	Nonlethal methods, with lethal methods only used to protect human safety	June 2, 2009 – February 28, 2012
2012	Delisted	Nonlethal methods with lethal methods if authorized by WDNR or tribes	February 28 – present

Comparison of the May 24, 2007 “Guidelines for Conducting Depredation Control on Wolves in Wisconsin Following Federal Delisting” and the January 1, 2013 “Guidelines for Conducting Depredation Control on Wolves in Wisconsin Following Federal Delisting, 2013 -2014.”

All WS wolf damage management (WDM) activities are conducted in accordance with the WDNR guidelines for conducting depredation control on wolves (WDNR 2007a, 2013). In the 2008 EA, WS environmental impacts analysis was based on the provisions allowed within the May 24, 2007 “Guidelines for Conducting Depredation Control on Wolves in Wisconsin Following Federal Delisting.” The guidelines were updated by the WDNR on January 1, 2013 (Appendix A). WS has reviewed the guidelines for substantive changes which could impact WS actions and the analysis of environmental impacts of management alternatives. Changes which could change environmental impacts of WS actions are identified and addressed in the section on Environmental Impacts below.

The 2013 guidelines (Appendix A) have the following changes and /or additions from the 2007 which are relevant to WS wolf damage management actions:

Definitions – the addition of “landowner” and “unconfirmed depredation”.

I. REACTIVE DEPREDATION CONTROL GUIDELINES,

- A. 1), f) addition
- A. 9) b) amended
- A. 11) j) addition
- A. 12) Wolf Carcass Disposition Resulting from Depredation Management – addition
- B. 1) Wolves in the act of attacking domestic animals – amended and addition of b)

II. PROACTIVE DEPREDATION CONTROLS

- B. 1) Landowner wolf control by permit – amended and additions
- C. Public Hunter/ Trapper Access - addition

Wolf Damage and Conflicts

The number of farms in Wisconsin with verified livestock depredations has ranged from 29 to 47 farms per year between 2007 and 2012 (Table 2). The mean number of farms with livestock depredations per year between 2003 and 2006 is 21 compared to 35 farms between 2007 and 2012. Trends in the number of livestock depredations increased in 2010 and 2011 when only non-lethal abatement could be used to resolve livestock depredations (Table 2).

Table 2. Verified Livestock Depredations by Wolves, 2007-2012.

Resource Depredated (killed/injured)	Year					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Cattle	36	43	38	70	71	49
Sheep	6	1	3	6	19	1
Horses	4	0	3	0	1	0
Fowl	0	2	0	0	2	9
Captive cervids	0	1	0	6	2	1
Other livestock	0	3	0	1	12	3
Dogs/not hunting	7	6	7	13	8	3
Dogs/hunting	15	22	27	23	20	8
Farms/Depredations	30	30	29	47	40	35

Summary of WS Wolf Damage Management Activities

For information prior to 2007 please review the 2008 EA. During 2007-2012, requests for WS assistance with wolf damage ranged from 167-223 requests per year (Table 3). Of these, 79 – 125 requests were classified as being probable or confirmed wolf damage, respectively, and the remainder of the complaints were classified as either unconfirmed or confirmed as non-wolf incidents. From January 1, through December 31, 2012, WS investigated 190 wolf complaints of which 99 were classified as probable or confirmed wolf damage. Figure 2 provides an example of the type and distribution of wolf damage and conflicts that can occur in Wisconsin.

Table 3. Summary of requests for WS assistance with wolf damage management.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Requests for Assistance with wolf damage	167	175	223	183	190
Requests that were probable or confirmed wolf damage (% of all requests)	82 (49%)	79 (45%)	125 (56%)	111 (61%)	99 (52%)
Requests where lethal methods were used to reduce damage (% of all requests that were confirmed or probable damage)	33 (40%)	14 (17%)	8 (6%)	3 (3%)	43 (43%)
Number of wolves captured to reduce wolf damage	39	10	20	5	57
Number of wolves euthanized to reduce wolf damage	39	10	14	4	57
Proportion of wolf population euthanized by WS during damage management actions.	7.1%	1.6%	1.9%	0.5%	6.7%

When wolves are federally delisted, the WDNR can issue shooting permits to domestic animal owners that suffer wolf depredations, and landowners near sites with confirmed or probable depredations can receive permits if they own domestic animals vulnerable to depredation (Appendix A). Landowners can shoot wolves that are in the act of attacking domestic animals

without a permit under Wisconsin Administrative Code NR10.02². Under permits or authority of NR10.02, there have been 3, 4, 1, and 17 wolves killed by landowners/occupants in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2012 (Jan. – Oct.), respectively. During 2010 and 2011 no permits were issued by the WDNR and the authority to take wolves under NR10.02 was void.

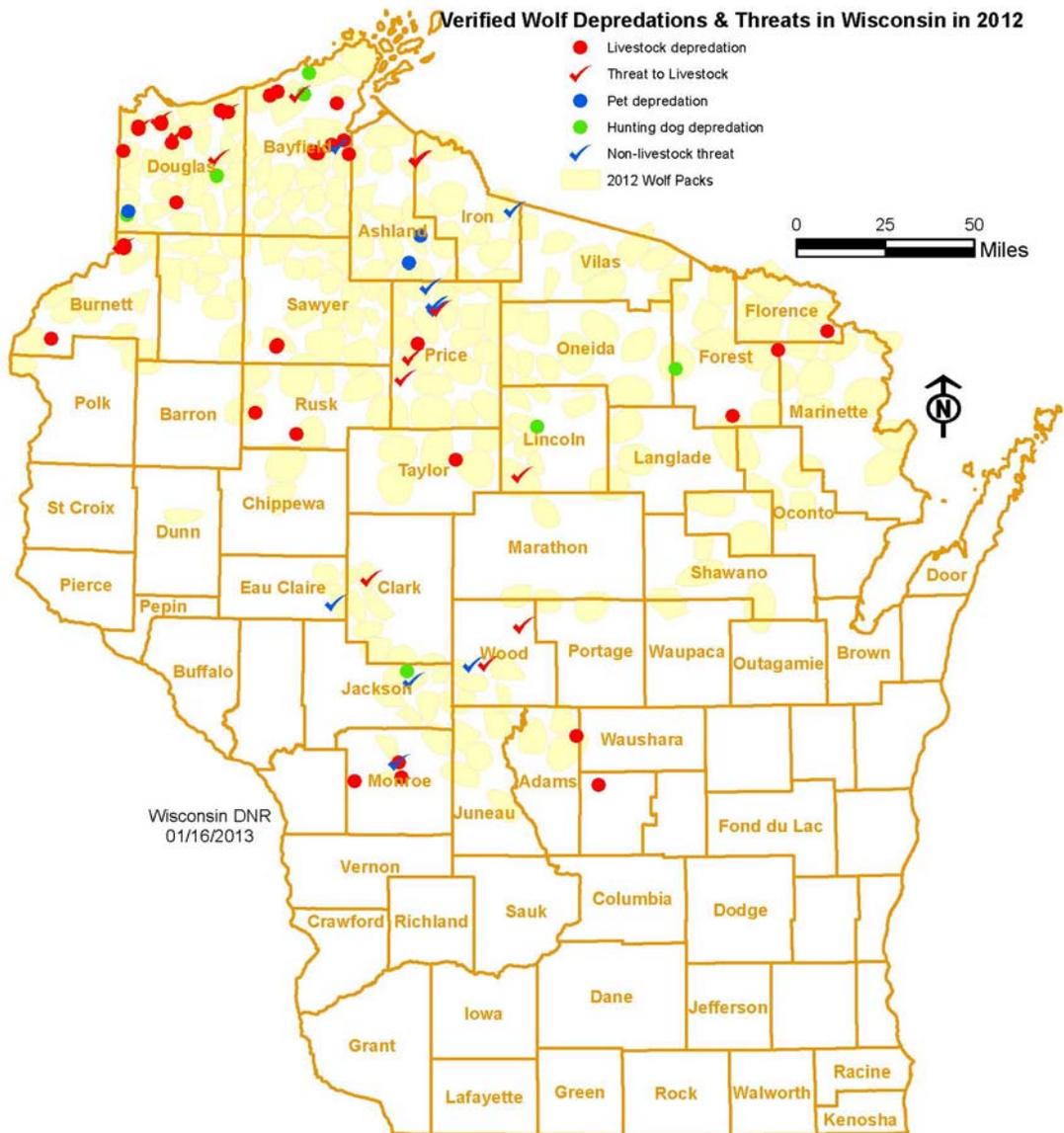


Figure 2. Wolf damage and threats to livestock, pets and human safety verified by WS in 2012.

² WAC NR 10.02(1)b. On private land, the landowner, lessee or occupant of the land, or any other person with permission of the landowner, lessee or occupant may shoot and kill any gray wolf or cougar in the act of killing, wounding or biting a domestic animal. Shootings shall be reported within 24 hours to a department conservation warden. The carcass of the wolf or cougar shall be turned over to the department.

Development of the Wolf Harvest Season Framework

Shortly after wolves were delisted, the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate passed legislation that was signed into law by the Governor, becoming ACT 169 which designated wolves as a state game species and established a hunting/trapping season for wolves in Wisconsin (Wydeven et al. 2012). The 2012 wolf hunting/trapping season will run from October 15 through February 28. The harvest quota is 201 wolves and is distributed across six different wolf harvest zones (WDNR 2012a). Harvest quotas range from 20% of the mid-winter count in zones containing primary wolf habitat to 40% in zones with moderate wolf habitat to 75% of the mid-winter count in zones with marginal wolf habitat. The Chippewa Tribes in the ceded territory have declared 85 wolves of the 201 harvest quota (half the quota in the ceded territory). Thus, excluding the Chippewa Tribes' declaration, the harvest quota is 116. For this season, the WDNR used an estimated hunter success rate of 10% for permit allocation. Therefore, 1,160 permits were available to applicants. Individuals applied for wolf harvest permits on from August 1 through September 7, 2012. Permits were issued based on a preference point system and a random drawing (in 2012 all permits were issued randomly). There were 20,272 applicants for the 1,160 harvest permits. The WDNR's objective for this harvest season is to begin to reduce the wolf population (WDNR 2012b). The WDNR anticipates that this harvest level will begin to lower the wolf population closer to the wolf management goal of 350 wolves, but will not cause a rapid and drastic decline of the wolf population (WDNR 2012b).

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Under the selected alternative, wolf management would be conducted on private, federal, state, tribal, county, and municipal lands in Wisconsin with the permission of the appropriate land owner/manager. Most WDM activities would continue to be conducted on private land. WDM activities would only be conducted on public land if that land was within the damage management perimeter around the site of a verified depredation event on private land, inside designated Proactive Control Areas (does not include USFS Wilderness Areas; Appendix A), in the unlikely instance that a wolf preys on livestock legally present on public lands³, or in the rare instance that a wolf is exhibiting behavior that poses a threat to human safety. Consultation would occur between the WDNR, WS, the GLIFWC (if in ceded territory), and the appropriate public land manager prior to conducting WDM on public land.

It is more likely that wolf trapping and radio-collaring for wolf population monitoring and research would be conducted on public land (state, county and national forest lands). The public lands where wolf trapping for the purpose of radio-collaring and population monitoring has been conducted include the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest, as well as county forest, WDNR and industrial forest lands open to public access.

WS would notify GLIFWC if it plans to conduct wolf damage management activities in the ceded territories. Additionally, for tribes requesting notification, WS would contact the tribe if a

³ WS is aware of a limited number of instances where livestock is or has been allowed to graze on State and county land.

wolf complaint is within six miles of tribal lands and would attempt to co-investigate. If a complaint is verified, WS would consult with the tribe on WDM activities.

CONSISTENCY

Wildlife damage management activities conducted in Wisconsin are consistent with Work Plans, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and policies of WS, the tribes, WDNR, Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and USFS. In addition, WS has completed ESA Section 7 Consultations with the USFWS for wildlife damage management activities. WS has also consulted with the WDNR regarding risks to state-listed threatened and endangered species.

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended (16 USC 1451-1464, Chapter 33; P.L. 92-583, October 27, 1972; 86 Stat. 1280) requires that federal actions be conducted in a manner consistent with the federally approved state Coastal Zone Management Plans. Wildlife Services has determined that the proposed action would not affect coastal resources and would, by default, be consistent with the State's Coastal Zone Management Program. When preparing a 2006 EA on management of wolf damage and conflicts in Wisconsin while wolves were federally-listed as an endangered species, WS made a similar determination. At that time the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program concurred with the conclusion that wolf damage management is unlikely to have a significant impact on the coastal zone. WS has concluded that this determination remains valid for ongoing and proposed wolf damage management actions.

MONITORING

The Wisconsin WS program annually gives the WDNR data on the take of wolves and non-target animals to help ensure the cumulative impact of WS actions do not adversely impact the viability of state wolf or non-target species populations. WS is also a contributing member of the WDNR wolf science advisory committee. WS monitors program activities to determine if the analyses and determinations in the EA adequately address current and anticipated future program activities.

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

All federally recognized Native American Tribes in Wisconsin and the GLIFWC received an invitation to participate in the preparation of the 2008 EA, either as a cooperating or consulting agency. The Wisconsin Ho-Chunk Nation and GLIFWC chose to participate as consulting agencies. All Wisconsin Tribes received notice of the availability of the EA for public comment and the Decision/FONSI. Wisconsin WS also invited the GLIFWC and all federally-recognized tribes to participate in the preparation of this Supplement. The GLIFWC, Forest County Potawatomi Community, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians accepted the invitation to participate in the preparation of this supplement.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The draft EA was made available for public comment on February 20, 2008 and the comment period closed on March 24, 2008. The draft EA was made available to the public through a “Notice of Availability” (NOA) published in the *Wisconsin State Journal* and on the WS website http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/nepa.shtml, and through direct mailings of the NOA to interested parties.

WS received 9 letters in response to the invitation for public involvement. Issues and concerns from these letters were included in the pre-decisional EA. All comments received on the pre-decisional EA were reviewed for issues and concerns prior to reaching a Decision. These letters and notices are maintained in the administrative file located at the Wisconsin WS State Office, 732 Lois Dr., Sun Prairie, WI 53590.

The EA, the 2008 Decision/FONSI, and this new 2012 supplement are being made available for public review and comment through a legal notice in the *Wisconsin State Journal* and by direct mailing to agencies, organizations, and individuals with probable interest in the proposed program. All documents are also available for review on the WS website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/nepa.shtml. Public notification procedures are in compliance with WS NEPA implementation procedures published in the *Federal Register* March 21, 2007 (Vol. 72, No. 54: 13237-13238). New issues or alternatives raised during the comment period will be fully considered to determine whether the EA should be revisited and, if appropriate, revised. The comment period for this supplement is open until March 15, 2013.

MAJOR ISSUES

Several issues of importance to wolf damage management were identified based on earlier EAs on wolf damage management in Wisconsin and in discussions with cooperating and consulting agencies and the Tribes during preparation of the 2008 EA. These issues were used in the analysis and comparison of management alternatives:

- 1) Effects on wolf populations in Wisconsin
- 2) Effects on non-target species populations, including threatened and endangered (T&E) species
- 3) Effects on public safety and pet health and safety
- 4) Humaneness of methods to be used
- 5) Sociological issues including impacts on aesthetic values

Objectives for Wisconsin WS Wolf Damage Management

In addition to the issues that were analyzed in detail, Wisconsin WS and the consulting agencies developed three objectives to help evaluate the effectiveness of the RIWDM program:

- Respond to 100% of requests for wolf damage management assistance within 48 hours (investigate complaints within 48 hours).
- No significant adverse effects on the statewide wolf population or non-target species populations.⁴
- Contribute to understanding, ecology, biology and health of the Wisconsin wolf population.

METHODS EMPLOYEED OR RECOMMENDED FOR WOLF DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

Appendix B of the 2008 EA provides descriptions of methods including lethal and non-lethal techniques/tools that could be used to address wolf conflicts. An additional method that was mentioned during planning for this supplement, diversionary feeding, was not discussed in Appendix B. Diversionary feeding is the placement of road-killed native prey carcasses intended to reduce predation on livestock or other ungulates. Diversionary feeding in some experiments appeared to reduce the rate of wolf and grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) predation on moose (*Alces alces*) and caribou (*Rangifer taranadus*) calves in Alaska but the authors of the study concluded the process is time consuming and expensive (National Research Council 1997). Diversionary feeding stations would need to be maintained during the period of time livestock are vulnerable to wolf depredation. Cluff and Murray (2003) suggested diversionary feeding may not work if predator survival is enhanced or predator immigration increases into the area. Diversionary feeding is used within the Mexican gray wolf recovery area in Arizona and New Mexico in attempts to reduce depredation on livestock and to supplement a pack or remnant of a pack in feeding young of the year when extenuating circumstances (such as a death of one of the adults) reduce their own ability to do so (Mexican Wolf Recovery Program 2011). Several concerns need to be addressed relative to use of this method in Wisconsin including the efficacy, logistics and costs of diversionary feeding in areas with wolf populations as large as Wisconsin's. Concerns pertaining to deer carcass movement and Chronic Wasting Disease must also be addressed. Given these concerns, additional research needs to be conducted before this method could be adopted for operational use by the WS program.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL

Four alternatives were developed by the multi-agency team to address the issues identified above (see "Major Issues" section). Eleven additional alternatives were considered but not analyzed in detail in the 2008 EA. Reasons for not considering the alternatives in detail remain as discussed in the EA. The following is a summary of the management alternatives considered in the EA.

⁴ For purposes of this EA, a significant impact on wildlife population would be an impact which jeopardizes the viability of the state wolf population as identified in the WDNR Wolf Management Plan approved by the USFWS.

Alternative 1 - Nonlethal WDM Only

Under this alternative, WS would only provide materials and advice for nonlethal damage management. Nonlethal methods used and recommended by WS would include but are not limited to animal husbandry practices, installation of fencing, electronic guards, fladry, aversive conditioning, nonlethal projectiles, and use of livestock guarding animals. Wildlife Services would still investigate complaints to determine if complainants meet criteria for wolf damage compensation, and could assist the WDNR with radio-collaring wolves for monitoring the Wisconsin wolf population. WS could live-capture wolf-dog hybrids, but the animals would have to be taken to the WDNR which would probably euthanize the animals unless the animal had an identifying marker that enabled its return to an owner. The WDNR intends to implement all facets of its wolf management policy (WDNR 2008) and the WDNR or a designated agent would still have the authority to conduct lethal WDM similar to Alternative 3. The WDNR could also establish Proactive Control Areas (Appendix A) and issue landowners or other designated agents permits to trap and shoot wolves when depredation on domestic animals has been verified. However, the decision making process for the establishment of Proactive Control Areas would occur without involvement by WS.

Alternative 2 - Integrated WDM

In the 2008 EA, Alternative 2 was a continuation of the existing WDM program selected in WS' March 13, 2007 FONSI on Wolf Damage and Conflict Management in Wisconsin (USDA 2007) and was the "No Action Alternative" (i.e., no change from current conditions; CEQ 1981). Under this alternative WS would have continued to use an integrated WDM approach to reduce wolf conflicts and damage in accordance with the policies and procedures of the 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan (WWMP), and 2005 Wisconsin guidelines for conducting depredation control on wolves in Wisconsin while federally-listed as threatened or endangered (WDNR 2005). However, this alternative was not selected in the 2007 Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact and no longer represents the ongoing WS WDM program. Additionally, the WDNR has updated the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan (WDNR 2007a) and guidelines for conducting depredation control on wolves (WDNR 2013). Consequently, this alternative represents a series of conditions which no longer exist and will not be analyzed further in this Supplement

Alternative 3 – Revised Integrated WDM (No Action/Proposed Action)

This is the proposed alternative for implementing WDM in Wisconsin. This alternative is a continuation of the existing WDM program in Wisconsin. WS would use an integrated WDM strategy in accordance with the WDNR 2013 guidelines for conducting depredation control on wolves in Wisconsin (WDNR 2013). The No Action alternative serves as the baseline against which the impacts of management alternatives can be compared and can be defined as being the continuation of current management practices (CEQ 1981).

The RIWDM strategy would encompass the range of legal, practical and effective methods to prevent or reduce damage and conserve the wolf population while minimizing harmful effects of damage management measures on humans, wolves, other wildlife species, domestic animals, and the environment. Under this action, WS would provide technical assistance and operational wolf damage management using nonlethal and lethal management methods selected after applying the WS Decision Model (Slate et al. 1992). Wildlife Services would be able to assist with wolf research, wolf population monitoring and removal of wolf dog hybrids. Lethal methods would

be used to reduce damage after practical and appropriate nonlethal methods have been considered and determined to be ineffective or inappropriate in reducing damage to acceptable levels. In some instances, the most appropriate initial response to a wolf damage problem could involve concurrent use of a combination of nonlethal and lethal methods, or there could be instances where application of lethal methods alone would be the most appropriate strategy (e.g., some instances of risk to human safety from aggressive wolves or situations where the landowner has already implemented practical and effective nonlethal methods prior to contacting WS and is still experiencing damage problems). Lethal methods could include shooting, calling and shooting, cable restraints, and euthanasia of wolves live-captured in foot-hold traps, cable restraints or other live-capture devices. Lethal methods would only be used if the wolf population outside Native American reservations remains above 250 individuals.

The WWMP (WDNR 1999, 2007*b*) requires the producer/owner to sign a depredation management plan (farm plan) for the property which includes damage abatement recommendations prior to the use of lethal WDM methods to resolve livestock depredation complaints. The cooperators are also required to agree to (sign) the plan prior to receiving financial assistance with supplies for nonlethal WDM and before any operational WDM can be conducted. Individuals and agencies with wolf damage and/or concerns about wolves would receive technical assistance in the form of instructional sessions, demonstrations, loaning of equipment, and information on the availability and use of nonlethal and lethal methods. In determining the damage management strategy, preference would be given to nonlethal methods when they are deemed practical and effective. Nonlethal methods used by landowners could include, but would not be limited to, changes in farm management practices and pet care/supervision, proper carcass disposal, frightening devices, exclusion, guarding animals, habitat modification, and behavior modification of problem wolves. Nonlethal methods used operationally by WS may include foot-hold traps and cable restraints with “stops” (used to live capture wolves for attaching radio collars, and collars used to activate frightening devices; Olson & Tischaefer 2004), frightening devices and aversive conditioning (e.g., with modified dog training collars) and nonlethal projectiles. Aversive conditioning, nonlethal projectiles and other experimental damage management techniques would only be used by WS after consultation with the WDNR and tribes as appropriate.

Under this alternative, the distance from wolf depredation sites where WDM could be conducted would vary depending on the Wolf Management Zone. The WDNR, in consultation with the tribes, land owners/managers, WS and GLIFWC, as appropriate, could also alter the area where WDM may be conducted on a case-by-case basis if there is evidence available that delineates the pack’s territory and available information indicated that members of non-depredating packs would not be impacted.

The WDNR would implement WDM practices in addition to WS actions, consistent with the WDM guidelines (WDNR 2013; Appendix A). For example, the WDNR may issue Reactive WDM (RWDM) and Pro-active WDM (PWDM) permits to trap or shoot wolves to landowners (or their designated agents) that have domestic animals at risk of wolf depredation. Reactive Depredation controls are intended to remove specific individual wolves that have depredated on domestic animals on private land shortly after depredations have occurred. Permittees may only trap and shoot wolves on their own property. Permits for RWDM would be limited to landowners 1 mile from the depredations site. Pro-active depredation controls are intended to

reduce abundance of wolves in pack areas with historical or previous verified depredations on livestock or pets near homes on private land. PWDM would include control actions conducted a year or two after verified depredations on a farm when the depredating pack continues to occur nearby, and control actions in response to imminent threats of depredation to domestic animals. Permits for PWDM could be issued to any landowner within the Proactive Control Area (See Appendix A for details). WS would also be involved in the decision making process for the establishment of Proactive Control Areas.

Most WDM conducted by WS would be on private lands; however, some WDM could also be conducted on public lands. The WDM on public land would primarily be in areas where the damage management area around a wolf damage site on private lands includes public land. Trapping would usually be limited to 1 mile from depredation sites in Zones 1 and 2, 5 miles from depredation sites in Zone 3, and there are no distance restrictions in Zone 4. However, if information exists for the home range of the depredating pack, the trapping distance may be extended in Zones 1 and 2 to encompass more of the wolf packs territory. Wolf trapping and radio-collaring for wolf population monitoring and research would usually be conducted on public land. WS WDM would only be conducted on public lands after notification of the land manager and consult. Signs would be posted at public access points to areas where foot-hold traps or cable restraints are to be used.

The removal of wolf-dog hybrids that appear to be living in the wild and are unmarked could be conducted in any Wolf Management Zone regardless of depredation history. Wolf-dog hybrids that are marked will be held in captivity until the owner can be identified or euthanized after 14 days if no owner can be located.

Alternative 4 - No Federal WDM in Wisconsin

If this alternative is selected, WS would not provide any assistance with wolf damage and conflict management in Wisconsin. All requests for WDM would be referred to the WDNR or the tribes as appropriate. The WDNR has stated that it intends to implement the WWMP (WDNR 1999, 2007b) and Wisconsin Wolf Damage Management Guidelines (WDNR 2013) in a manner similar to Alternative 3 with or without assistance from WS. If permitted by the USFS, WDNR could work within the expanded damage management perimeters on National Forest lands adjacent to depredation sites.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following section provides a summary of environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the WS wolf damage management program since the completion of the 2008 EA (2008- 2012). It also includes an analysis of potential impacts that could result from implementing the preferred alternative in conjunction with the wolf harvest season.

Effects on wolf populations

Impacts of the Current WDM program. In the 2008 EA, intentional take of wolves for WDM including landowner removals was estimated to fall within a range from 8 – 20% (range 68 – 169

wolves for 2012) of the mid-winter count (USDA 2008). Unintentional take of wolves for WDM (e.g., wolves that die while affixing radio-collars for non-lethal abatement or monitoring purposes) was estimated to be 1% of the mid-winter count. Seventy-four wolves were removed for WDM by all sources in 2012 (8.7% of the 2011/2012 mid-winter count). Seventeen wolves have been killed under provisions of shooting permits or NR10.02, and WS has removed 57 wolves. Lethal control of wolves has been allowed for varied durations since April 2003; however, lethal controls were authorized for the majority of the wolf damage season in 2003-2005, 2007, 2008, and 2012. During these years, WS and landowner actions resulted in the removal of 5.1, 6.4, 7.4, 7.3, 7.8, and 8.7% of the mid-winter wolf population. Landowner removals were first authorized in 2007. Two wolves have unintentionally died since 2008 while conducting WDM activities (While affixing radio-collars for non-lethal abatement or monitoring purposes). Based on this information, all take of wolves for WDM has been within parameters predicted and analyzed in the 2008 EA.

Future impacts of the WDM program. Data from other states with wolf harvest seasons provides an indication of the impact a licensed wolf harvest may have on the need for lethal WDM in Wisconsin. Montana and Idaho have had public harvests of wolves in 2009/2010, 2011/2012, and thus far in 2012. There was not a 2010/2011 harvest season in either state. At the beginning of 2009 the minimum count of wolves in Montana was 500. During 2009, 120 wolves (24% of the minimum count) were removed for conflict management and 75 wolves (15% of the minimum count) were harvested. At the beginning of 2010 the minimum count was 525 wolves, an increase of 5% from the previous year despite the previous seasons WDM take and licensed hunt. In 2010, 139 wolves (26% of the minimum count) were removed for conflict management. At the beginning of 2011 the minimum count increased by 6.7% to 566 wolves. Controls for depredating wolves dropped to 64 or 11% of the minimum count and 166 wolves (29%) were harvested during the 2011/2012 season. The minimum count increased by 15% to 653 wolves at the beginning of 2012 (all data taken from: Hanauska-Brown et al. 2012). Thus far in 2012 the Montana WS program has removed 107 wolves. Data do not indicate a clear relationship between licensed harvest and wolf removals for damage management, although take for WDM does not appear to have increased as a result of licensed harvest. However, the occurrence of a harvest season, as conducted in Montana, does not appear to have resulted in a decline in the wolf population.

On 1 January 2009, the Idaho Department of Game (IDFG) and Fish and the Nez Perce Tribe estimated the minimum count of wolves was 849 in Idaho. One hundred eighty-eight (188) wolves were harvested during the 2009/2010 season (IDFG and Nez Pierce Tribe, 2012). This represents a harvest of 22% of the pre-hunt estimated population. The 2010 wolf population estimate was (777 wolves). There was no recreational harvest during the 2010/2011 season. Three-hundred seventy-nine (379) wolves were harvested during the 2011/2012 season (49% of the 2011 pre-hunt population was harvested). At end of 2011, the minimum count of wolves in Idaho was estimated at 746. Since the harvest continued into 2012, it will not be known what the total impact of harvesting 49% of a wolf population will be until the 2012 population estimate is completed. However, available population data would appear to indicate that cumulative impacts have resulted in a reduction in the wolf population in Idaho. The number of wolves removed and the percent of the pre-hunt population removed by agency controls for livestock protection also appears to have decreased from 105 (12%), 75 (8.8%), 39 (5.0%), to 55 (7.3%) in FY 09, FY10, FY11 and FY12, respectively (Todd Grimm, IDWS, State Director, personal

communication). These data indicate that recreational harvest may reduce the number of wolves removed under agency controls.

Wolf conflicts in Wisconsin have been strongly correlated with the growth and recovery of the wolf population in this region, and increased significantly after the mid-winter count exceeded 350 wolves (Ruid et al. 2009). If the objective of reducing the Wisconsin wolf population is achieved, to some extent, we anticipate that the rate of wolf conflicts will also be reduced. The wolf harvest season is not expected to result in increased depredations. We predict that the proportion of the population taken for WDM by all sources will be similar to or slightly lower than levels which have occurred since 2003 (less than 10% of the mid-winter wolf population estimate). Therefore, WS is reducing the anticipated cumulative take of wolves for WDM predicted in the 2008 EA to range between 6 – 14% (mid-point 10.0%) of the mid-winter count. This includes agency controls and landowner removals. Unintentional take of wolves for WDM will remain less than 1% of the mid-winter count. Thus, we anticipate between 7 – 15% (mid-point 11.0%) of the mid-winter wolf population may be removed for WDM. Wolf population trends for the period when this type of wolf removal was conducted for WDM (Fig. 1) indicate that this rate of removal will not have a negative effect on the overall Wisconsin wolf population in the absence of a licensed harvest.

One of the WDNR's objectives for the first hunting and trapping season for wolves is to begin reducing the wolf population (WDNR 2012*b*). The WDNR completed an analysis of the potential cumulative impacts from all sources of human mortality and sustainable mortality rates for wolf populations utilizing the mid-winter population as the base for calculations (WDNR 2012*b*). They concluded that depredation mortality (both WS and landowner authorities) could be 10% of the mid-winter population, mortality from harvest will be 24% (assumes all 201 wolves are harvested in 2012/2013), vehicle collisions 3-4%, and illegal mortality 9-19%. The cumulative effect of all sources of human-caused mortality, if there is no compensation among causes, would be 46 – 57% of the midwinter population (WDNR 2012*b*).

Several authors have reviewed the potential impacts of human-caused mortality on wolf populations (Fuller et al. 2003, Creel and Rotella 2010, Gude et al. 2012, WDNR 2012*b*). Fuller et al. (2003) reported some populations can sustain 29 - 35% human-caused mortality before population declines occur. Others report populations can sustain much higher rates of human-caused mortality (Mech (1970) – wolf population declines when harvest exceeds 50%; Gasaway et al. 1983 - wolf population declines with harvest of 42-61%). Adams et al. (2008) concluded wolf populations can sustain up to 29% human-caused mortality. Creel and Rotella (2010) assessed the results of other studies and determined those wolf populations' sustained human caused mortalities up to 24.5%. Given that the proposed level of harvest in 2012/2013 is in excess of levels studies deem to be sustainable, the cumulative impact of all wolf removals is anticipated to reduce the state wolf population. However, the reductions would not be of sufficient magnitude to reduce the state population below the established management objective of 350 wolves outside Native American reservations.

Ongoing annual population monitoring and annual adjustments to harvest levels will be used to maintain the population near the state management objectives. As a further precaution, in the unlikely event that the wolf population dips to 250 animals, all harvest and lethal WDM would be discontinued. A population of 250 wolves, although low, is in excess of the level defined as

the target recovery goal in the federal wolf recovery plan (USFWS 1992, 2003). The federal plan required that at least two viable wolf populations must exist within the eastern United States and that one of the populations must exist outside of Minnesota and Isle Royale. The federal recovery plan provided two alternatives for reestablishing this second viable wolf population. If the wolf population was more than 100 miles from the Minnesota population, it had to contain 200 wolves for at least 5 consecutive years (USFWS 2003). If the wolf population was less than 100 miles of the Minnesota population, it had to contain at least 100 wolves for at least 5 consecutive years (USFWS 2003).

As noted in the 2008 EA, if WS were to choose to discontinue WDM in Wisconsin, the WDNR would find an alternate means of assisting Wisconsin citizens with wolf damage management. Impacts on the wolf population would be similar to or slightly greater than the program offered by WS depending on the experience of the individuals conducting WDM. Consequently, WS involvement in WDM would result in little to no change in the cumulative impacts on the wolf population in Wisconsin. Based on the above information, we conclude that the proposed action will reduce but will not have a significant adverse impact (i.e., jeopardize) on the viability of the Wisconsin wolf population.

Effects on public and pet safety

The risk assessment from USDA (1997 Revised, Appendix P) determined that the human health and safety risks from WS' wildlife damage management activities are low. The greatest risks to human health and safety from WS' use of chemical and mechanical methods (immobilization and euthanasia drugs, shooting, trapping) are incurred by the WS Specialists who use these methods. All WS Specialists that use immobilizing/euthanasia drugs must attend an approved wildlife capture/immobilizing course that provides instruction on proper capture techniques and safety procedures (WS Directive 2.430). New WS Specialists also receive additional training by working with experienced employees before they are allowed to work on their own.

There are two ways in which WS' WDM actions may affect human health and safety: 1) the methods used by WS may pose a risk to people or pets; and 2) WDM activities can reduce risks to human and pet safety from wolves. No WS specialist reported any injuries to themselves during the period of 2008 – 2012 while implementing WDM. There were four dogs captured in 2008, three in 2009, and one in 2012 by WS while implementing WDM. All dogs were released. In 2009, a person was bitten while releasing a dog from a trap set by WS. The individual required medical attention. This situation was investigated by a WS supervisor and determined all trapping methodologies, posting of signs, and other SOP's had been followed correctly.

WS provided assistance in response to all incidents of wolf depredation to domestic pets. Having an integrated approach to resolve conflicts is likely to reduce the risk that wolves may pose to humans and pets. If no control program is available the risks to humans and pets would presumably increase, although the WDNR has stated they would develop a WDM program in the absence of WS. These individuals may not be as trained and experienced as WS staff and the risk to pets could be higher than if WS is involved in WDM.

The addition of a licensed harvest season will not impact the risks to human safety from WS methods. As noted in the section on population impacts above, the addition of a licensed harvest season may reduce conflicts with wolves including requests for assistance with reduction of threats to humans and pets from bold or habituated wolves. The level of risk to human and pet health from implementing WDM methods remains within parameters analyzed in the 2008 EA.

Humaneness of methods to be used

The methods available to WS for WDM have not changed since the 2008 EA was completed and analysis of the humaneness of alternatives remains as presented in the EA. The development of wolf harvest season and the minor modifications between the 2007 and 2013 “Guidelines for Conducting Depredation Control” will not alter the effects of this issue. Traps and cable restraints set to capture wolves are checked every day. Traps are set with pan-tension devices to avoid capturing non-target species and cable restraints incorporate a “stop” to prevent the capture of smaller non-target species and prevent restraints from killing captured wolves. Cable restraints are placed in locations where there is no risk of a captured animal becoming entangled in vegetation/fences and accidentally strangling while in the device. Traps are equipped with offset, laminated, and smooth jaw surfaces to minimize injury of captured animals. WS commonly recommends the incorporation of livestock guarding animals into farm management practices to help deter wolf depredations. WS personnel are trained in the safe and effective use of immobilizing agents to release non-target animals that cannot be released with physical restraint and to safely immobilize wolves for research and nonlethal depredation management practices. When lethal removal is used to resolve damage problems, live-captured wolves are killed as humanely as possible through use of gunshot to the head or euthanasia drugs.

WS will continue to cooperate with NWRC, WDNR and others on research activities designed to improve efficacy of nonlethal methods, minimize the capture of non-target animals and/or reduce stress/trauma to captured wolves. WS would also continue to cooperate with various research entities to determine the health status of wolves in Wisconsin. WS is cooperating with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the WDNR to develop best management practices for trapping wolves.

Impacts to stakeholders, including aesthetics of wildlife

Human relationships with wildlife and philosophical attitudes pertaining to WDM remain as analyzed in the 2008 EA. Wolves have a high intrinsic value to some individuals, including those who enjoy hearing wolves and seeing wolves and wolf sign in the wild. WS seldom removes entire wolf packs, which might temporarily diminish opportunities for enjoying wolves in a local area. As noted above, WS WDM activities did not result in a reduction in the Wisconsin wolf population, so, although there may be localized reductions in opportunities to view and enjoy wolves, overall opportunities in the state have not been diminished by WS actions. Additionally, WS WDM actions typically occur on private lands in fragmented habitats that are not readily open to the public which further diminishes the potential for adverse impacts on opportunities to enjoy wolves.

The WDNR management plan for wolves would reduce the state wolf population and associated opportunities to view and enjoy wolves. The state has noted that it would implement its own WDM program in the absence of WS (See analysis of Alternative 4 in the 2008 EA). Consequently, the reduction in the state wolf population would occur with or without a WDM program by WS and WS selection of this alternative will not impact the environmental status quo relative to impacts on aesthetic enjoyment of wolves. Based on this analysis, WS involvement in WDM will not have a significant impact on (e.g., result in a change in) cumulative impacts on aesthetic enjoyment of wolves.

Effects on non-target species populations, including threatened and endangered species

Wisconsin WS uses the WS Decision Model (Slate et al. 1992) to select the most effective and selective methods for each wolf damage management situation. WS Specialists are trained in the safe and proper use of the most selective and effective tools for reducing conflicts with wolves. All foothold traps are equipped with pan tension devices to exclude smaller non-target animals. Cable restraints are equipped with “stops” to prevent the device from restraining smaller non-target species and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Wisconsin WS biologists review scientific literature, collaborate with other wolf biologists/specialists, and routinely attend wolf symposiums to keep up to date on new techniques and methods that may improve trap selectivity. WS will utilize new techniques if they are developed and become available for use. To ensure that damage management efforts target the correct species, WS scrutinizes every complaint received and only documents a complaint as a verified wolf conflict if sufficient evidence is present (Ruid et al. 2009).

Despite WS’ efforts, some non-target take does occur (Table 4). WS did not capture any state or federally-listed threatened or endangered species while conducting WDM activities, except for gray wolves in 2009 - 2011. These captures were conducted within provisions of 50 CFR 17.21(c)(3)(iv) and in consultation with the USFWS and WDNR. Since the development of the 2008 EA, four additional species have been added to the state list of threatened and endangered species (WDNR 2011). The big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and Eastern pipistrelle (*Perimyotis subflavus*) were added to the Wisconsin list of threatened and endangered species on 1 June 2011. The RIWDM program will have no effect on any of these species.

The WDNR is proposing to add the following species to the Wisconsin threatened and endangered Species list; Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*), Kirtland’s Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*), hairy-necked tiger beetle (*Cicindela hirticollis*), Ottoe skipper (*Hesperia ottoe*), Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), fawnsfoot (*Truncilla donaciformis*), A prairie leafhopper (*Attenuipyga vanduzeei*), and an Issid planthopper (*Fitchiella robertsonii*). The RIWDM program will have no effect on any of these species.

Since the EA was completed, the federal status of two mussels has changed: the sheepnose mussel (*Plethobasus cyphus*), and Spectaclecase (*Cumberlandia monodonta*) were moved from candidate to endangered status. The snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquerta*) has been added as an

endangered species. The RIWDM program will have no effect on aquatic organisms or ecosystems.

The Poweshiek skipperling (*Oarisma poweshiek*) has been designated as a candidate for federal listing. The Poweshiek skipperling is a small butterfly that currently inhabits high-quality tallgrass prairie in Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin and prairie fens in Michigan. The RIWDM program will not result in take of this species or alteration of its habitat, so it will have no effect on the Poweshiek skipperling.

Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) were removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species in 2007, but they still have the protection of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) Protection Act. WS is continuing to implement provisions for the protection of Bald Eagles from the EA to reduce the risk of accidental eagle take. Since 2008, one Bald Eagle was captured while implementing the RIWDM program. The Eagle was released on-site apparently unharmed. The capture was investigated by WS supervisors and all SOP's were being adhered to. The take was reported to the WDNR and the USFWS Ecological Services. This level of impact would not adversely impact the state Bald Eagle population.

From 2008 – 2012, 16 non-target species were captured while implementing WDM. Lethal take occurred for nine of the 16 species. Six of the nine species that had lethal take were only taken during one of the five years since the EA was completed and take was limited to 1 or two animals per year. For a species which is not state or federally-listed as threatened or endangered, this level of take will not adversely impact the species population. WS conducted a more detailed impact analysis of the remaining four species. Two Eastern wild turkeys were euthanized while implementing WDM during this reporting period. In comparison, during the 2011 spring turkey season, 40,133 turkeys were harvested (Dhuey et al. 2011). WS maximum annual unintentional take of Eastern wild turkeys was 0.002% of the 2011 spring recreational harvest. The number of raccoons taken while implementing WDM ranged from 0 to 8 raccoons per year. During the 2010/2011 trapping/hunting season there were 128,385 raccoons harvested (Dhuey and Olson 2011). WS maximum annual unintentional take was 0.01% of the 2010/2011 recreational raccoon harvest. The number of skunks taken while implementing WDM ranged from 0 to 8 skunks per year. During the 2010/2011 trapping/hunting season there were 8,761 skunks harvested in Wisconsin (Dhuey and Olson 2011). WS maximum annual unintentional take is 0.06% of the 2010/2011 recreational skunk harvest. Similarly, the maximum annual unintentional take of white-tailed deer was also low (0.004%) relative to 2011 licensed harvest (348,524, Dhuey et al. 2012). WS take of these species is inconsequential when compared to regulated harvest, and did not have a significant cumulative impact on skunk, deer, raccoon or wild turkey populations. Impacts of the RIWDM program on non-target and T/E species remain within the scope of the analysis in the 2008 EA. Implementation of the state licensed wolf season is not anticipated to result in a change in the impact of the RIWDM program on nontarget species.

Table 4. Non-target take while implementing RIWDM, 2008 – 2012.

Species	Calendar Year				
	2008 (Killed/Freed)	2009 (Killed/Freed)	2010 (Killed/Freed)	2011 (Killed/Freed)	2012 (Killed/Freed)
American crow (<i>Corvus Brachyrhynchos</i>)	0/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Badger (<i>Taxidea taxus</i>)	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/1
Bald Eagle	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1
Black bear (<i>Ursus americanus</i>)	0/5	1/2	0/0	0/1	0/4
Bobcat (<i>Lynx rufus</i>)	0/3	0/0	0/3	0/1	1/7
Common raven (<i>Corvus corax</i>)	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/1
Coyote (<i>Canis latrans</i>)	0/5	0/4	0/5	0/9	2/5
Eastern Wild Turkey (<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>)	0/1	0/0	1/0	0/0	1/0
Opossum (<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>)	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0
Porcupine (<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>)	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/0
Raccoon (<i>Procyon lotor</i>)	1/9	0/5	0/2	0/0	8/5
Red Fox (<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>)	1/5	0/1	0/2	0/0	1/0
Sandhill crane (<i>Grus canadensis</i>)	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0
Skunk (<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>)	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	8/0
White-tailed deer (<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>)	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	4/2
Dogs, Feral, Free-ranging	0/4	0/3	0/0	0/0	0/1

OBJECTIVES ANALYSIS

Objective 1) Respond to 100% of requests for wolf damage management assistance within 48 hours (investigate complaints within 48 hours): Both District Offices in Wisconsin maintain a 1-800 telephone number that is monitored constantly during the work week and checked periodically during the weekend and holidays to insure complainants are contacted within 24 hours of calling WS and complaints are investigated within 48 hours. Assistance may entail a telephone call or a site investigation. Wisconsin WS Specialists involved in wolf damage management routinely work 7 days per week and respond to requests for assistance during weekends. Nearly all complaints are investigated within several hours of receiving them. However, on several occasions, complaints were not investigated within 48 hours because

landowners were unable to meet WS staff promptly. Based on this information, WS has met its commitment to provide and/or offer assistance within 48 hours of receiving a complaint.

Objective 2) No significant adverse effects on the statewide wolf population or non-target species populations: During the period since the EA was completed, WS' removals of depredating wolves have not had a significant cumulative adverse impact on the wolf population. For purposes of this EA, a significant impact on the wolf population would be an impact which jeopardizes the viability of the state wolf population as defined in the WDNR Wolf Management Plan approved by the USFWS. Review of the cumulative impacts of WS actions on the wolf population indicate that cumulative impacts may result in a decline in the state wolf population, but that the reductions would be consistent with WDNR wolf population management objectives. Safeguards established to protect the wolf population including annual monitoring and discontinuing use of lethal methods if the state wolf population outside Native American Reservations is at or below 250 wolves.

Objective 3) Contribute to understanding, ecology, biology and health of the Wisconsin wolf population: WS personnel routinely attend meetings to discuss and present facts on wolf damage management and inform stakeholders and government agencies about WDM. WS participates in educational functions to discuss WDM and present facts concerning wolf biology and ecology. WS collects biological specimens for the WDNR and other research organizations to augment wolf health monitoring programs and assists the WDNR with wolf population monitoring. Based on this information, WS met objective 3.

SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

No significant cumulative environmental impacts have resulted from implementation of the RIWDM program. Based on analysis in the 2008 EA and this supplement, the future implementation of Alternative 3 will not result in substantial cumulative adverse impacts on the wolf population which significantly jeopardize the stability of the wolf population. It is anticipated that the rate of removals of wolves for WDM will remain proportional to the wolf population and could decline slightly due to take by recreational harvest. WS has decreased the anticipated rate of wolf removals for WDM from 8 – 20% to 6 – 14% of the mid-winter wolf count. WS will not conduct any removal activities in excess of 14% of the midwinter wolf population estimate without revision of this analysis pursuant to the NEPA and prior consultation and approval from the WDNR and WI Tribes as appropriate. Unintentional take of wolves for WDM will remain below 1% of the mid-winter count.

Based on the 2008 EA and this supplement, the issue of the humaneness of methods used remains as analyzed in the 2008 EA. The risks to human and pet safety remain very low from implementing Alternative 3, and this alternative has the greatest potential to reduce risks to human and pet safety from wolves. Risks to human safety from the remaining alternatives will be similar to or slightly greater than Alternative 3 depending upon the training and experience of the individuals conducting wolf damage management when WS assistance is limited or unavailable.

Impacts of the RIWDM program on stakeholders including aesthetics was within the scope of the analysis. Potentially fewer wolves would be available for viewing by the public due to the development of a public harvest; however, the decision to develop a public harvest for wolves in Wisconsin was made by the WDNR and cannot be changed by WS or through the analysis in this EA. The WDNR (and Wisconsin Tribes where applicable) are responsible for the management of wildlife in Wisconsin.

Risks to non-target and T/E species from implementation of the RIWDM program are expected to continue to be very low and remain as analyzed in the 2008 EA. WS expects to continue to be able to successfully meet wolf damage management objectives established in the 2008 EA with the RIWDM program.

The focus of the Wisconsin WS program is to resolve wildlife conflicts. WS is a non-regulatory agency and does not develop or amend laws, statutes, or codes pertaining to state managed wildlife species. WS is considered a partner and collaborator with many different entities associated with state managed species. WS only works in this capacity by invitation and thus follows the plans and policies provided by the lead entity. As stated previously and detailed in the 2008 EA, the WDNR would continue to conduct wolf damage management activities in the absence of WS.

APPENDIX A:

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING DEPREDAATION CONTROL ON WOLVES IN WISCONSIN FOLLOWING FEDERAL DELISTING

By the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Guidelines for 2013 - 2014

January 1, 2013

The gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) was listed as Endangered by the federal government in 1974, and listed as Endangered by the State of Wisconsin in 1975. The State of Wisconsin reclassified wolves to threatened status in 1999, and August 1, 2004 the gray wolf was removed from the threatened species list, and classified as a protected wild animal. Wolves were designated state game species effective April 17, 2012.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service federally reclassified wolves in Wisconsin as Threatened on April 1, 2003, but a district court decision on wolf reclassification in Oregon on January 31, 2005, caused wolves to be relisted as endangered. Wolves were initially, removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened species on March 12, 2007. Wolves went through a series of relisting and delisting, and were delisted again on January 27, 2012.

The 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan prescribes wolf management in the state following federal and state delisting. The goal of wolf management will be to maintain a healthy and viable population in the state, while responding quickly to wolf attacks on domestic animals, allow landowners flexible tools to deal with wolf problems, and reduce losses of domestic animals. The following guidelines were developed by the Wisconsin Wolf Science Committee to determine appropriate depredation control actions that are consistent with the 1999 Wolf Plan, and 2007 Wolf Plan Update. These guidelines are intended for dealing with wolf depredation to domestic animals. **Wolves that show any demonstrable threat to human safety would be dispatched by DNR, WS, other government agents, or local law enforcement officers.**

This document is intended solely as guidance and does not constitute any mandatory requirements except where requirements are referenced in statute or administrative rule. This guidance does not establish or affect legal rights or obligations, and is not finally determinative of any of the issues addressed. This guidance cannot be relied upon and does not create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the State of Wisconsin or the Department of Natural Resources. These guidelines will be reviewed annually with scientists and stakeholders, and will be revised as necessary.

Authority—Authority to control and manage problem wolves in Wisconsin will be held by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Wisconsin DNR authorizes USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (WS) to act as agents of the DNR, and consult with Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), tribal agents on Indian reservations, and other federal, state and tribal agents.

Definitions

Abatement—Techniques for reducing risk of depredation, e.g., creating exclusions, establishing barriers, or using scare devices.

Aversive Conditioning—Conditioning of animals to eliminate undesired behavior by associating such behavior with a disagreeable stimulus.

Chronic Farm—Farm with verified wolf depredation in 2 or more years in the past 5 year-period.

Control—Attempt to capture or shoot problem wolves, and may include translocating, placing in captivity for study or research, euthanizing, or dispatching.

Depredation—Refers to predation on domestic animals resulting in death or injury.

Depredation Site—Location where depredation has occurred. On private land this includes contiguous property under the same ownership or lease of the affected landowner or lessee.

Dispatch—Actions that humanely kill an animal in field situations.

Domestic Animal— (ATCP 10.02) The following animals are considered domestic animals under s. 169.01 (7), Stats., and are not considered wild animals:

- (1) Livestock. (2) Poultry.
- (3) Farm-raised game birds, except farm-raised game birds that have been released to the wild.
- (4) Ratites.
- (5) Farm-raised fish, except fish that have been released to waters of the state
- (6) Foxes, fitch, nutria, marten, fisher, mink, chinchilla, rabbit or caracul that are born, bred and raised in captivity and are not endangered or threatened species. (7) Pet birds.
- (8) Animals of any species that has been domesticated by humans.

Euthanize—Humane killing of an animal.

Guard Animal—Use of one species of domestic animal to provide predator protection for another species of domestic animal, and may include guarding dogs, llamas, donkeys, and other animals. Guarding dogs are dogs specifically bred for the protection of

livestock, and have historically been used for this purpose; specific breeds include Maremma, Shar Planinetz, Anatolian shepherd, Komondor, Great Pyrenees, Akbash, and various crosses of these breeds.

Landowner--- For the purpose of these guidelines, landowner refers to the owner of private land, but also includes lessees or legal occupants of specific parcels of private land.

Livestock--- means the following farm animals: bison and other bovine animals, sheep, goats, swine, farm-raised deer, equine animals, poultry, ratites, llamas, alpacas, captive game animals, guard animal for livestock and farm-raised fish.

Maximum Take for Proactive Controls—The maximum number of wolves that could be removed by proactive control activities by government agents and land owner permits.

Proactive Depredation Controls—Depredation controls intended to reduce abundance of wolves in pack areas with historical or previous verified depredations on livestock or pets near homes on private land. Proactive controls would include control actions conducted a year or two after verified depredations on a farm when the depredating pack continues to occur nearby, and control actions in response to imminent threats of depredation to domestic animals.

Proactive Control Area—Area of land where proactive control on wolves would occur and would generally represent the area occupied by a wolf pack or group that has caused depredations on two or more farms or residential areas or one or more chronic farms.

Reactive Depredation Controls—Depredation controls intended to remove specific individual wolves that have depredated on domestic animals on private land shortly after depredations have occurred.

Significant Loss—The verified killing or maiming of one or more domestic animals by wolves where the imminent threat of attacks on additional domestic animals is probable. For poultry or other small animals, loss of \$250 or likely to exceed \$250 would be considered a significant loss.

Verified Depredation—Depredation verified by USDA-WS or DNR, and defined either as **Confirmed**, clear evidence that one or more wolves were responsible, or **Probable**, sign strongly suggesting that one or more wolves were responsible.

Unconfirmed Depredation – Any report of a depredation that cannot be defined as either Confirmed wolf or Probable wolf as determined by USDA-WS or DNR.

I. REACTIVE DEPREDATION CONTROL GUIDELINES A.

Government Reactive Wolf Depredation Management

The goal of reactive wolf depredation controls by government agents is to quickly

respond to wolf depredations soon after they occur and attempt to target specific individual wolves that have injured or killed domestic animals on farms or near people's homes. Lethal controls can occur anywhere in the state as long as the wolf population remains above 250 wolves outside of Indian reservations.

1) Use of Aversive Conditioning or Other Non-Lethal Methods----

- a) Where appropriate, WS will offer suitable non-lethal alternatives.
- b) Upon the first verification of depredation by wolves, a depredation management plan will be made for the farm, which will include recommended suitable non-lethal methods and other practices that may reduce depredation on the farm. A signed plan will be required before any control actions can proceed on the farm.
- c) If cost effective abatement is feasible, cost-shared abatements will be offered by DNR if funds are available; DNR and WS will jointly determine suitable practices. Funds for abatement practices may also be available from private organizations as well.
- d) A depredation management plan would be developed on farms before cost-share abatements are offered; DNR and USDA-WS will develop the plan in consultation with county and state agriculture specialists.
- e) Experimental non-lethal abatement measures, such as the use of shock collars, will be done by either the DNR or WS after consultation; control trapping will normally not be conducted in areas where experimental abatement measures are being conducted.
- f) Under s. NR12.64(1)(b)4 Wis Adm. Code, individuals seeking assistance for wolf damages must comply with any reasonable abatement recommended by the DNR or USDA-WS.

2) Verifications Necessary to Begin Wolf Control —

- a) Control may begin in any zone after one significant loss during the current year (except as provided below under 9b).

3) Determination to Begin Wolf Control —

- a) On private land outside of Indian reservations or negotiated buffer zones around reservations, WS determines when trapping will begin, and will notify the local DNR wildlife biologist or other DNR representative.
- b) On public lands, WS, the local DNR wildlife biologist, and the manager of the public land, will determine if trapping will occur on such land. In the ceded Chippewa Territory, consultation will occur with GLIFWC before conducting control work on public land.
- c) On private lands within Indian reservations, and any area surrounding the reservation negotiated between tribes and state, WS and DNR will consult with the tribe before trapping and dispatching of wolves. WS will attempt to co-investigate wolf complaints with designated tribal representatives.
- d) On tribal lands, wolves will only be trapped by WS if requested by the tribe.

4) Maximum Distance Trapping Will Occur From Livestock and Pet Depredation Site:

- a) Trap up to 1.0 mile from a depredation site within Wolf Management Zones 1 & 2 or a designated greater distance through consultation with DNR (see proactive controls below).
- b) Trap up to 5.0 miles from a depredation site within Wolf Management Zone 3,
- c) Trap anywhere that depredating wolves occur in Wolf Management Zone 4.

5) Duration of Trapping at a Depredation Site---

- a) WS will use its discretion to determine trapping effort needed to effectively resolve depredation problems and will generally trap up to 10 to 15 days for first time depredation, and up to 21 days for chronic farms. Trapping efforts may be extended if additional verified depredations occur.

6) Treatment of Special Sex/Age Group---

- a) No special age and sex consideration will be made except on a case by case basis based on consultation with WS and DNR.

7) Treatment of Radio-Collared or Tagged Wolves---

- a) Radio-collared or tagged wolves will be treated as any other depredating wolf (dispatch or translocate as appropriate), except as noted in 7b.
- b) Consultations on radio-collared or tagged depredating wolves will be made with tribal officials when such wolves are clearly from an Indian reservation or negotiated buffer zones when trapping within 6 miles of any reservation.

8) Capture of Dogs or Wolf-Dog Hybrids---

- a) Dogs caught at depredation sites will be turned over to town chairman, dog owner, animal shelter, or released on site.
- b) Wolf-dog hybrids that appear to be living in the wild and caught at depredation sites will be dispatched by WS or DNR if no collar or other identifying mark occurs on the animal.
- c) Wolf-dog hybrids that are marked will be held in captivity until the owner can be contacted, or dispatched after 14 days if no owner is found. The owner of a dog is liable for the full amount of damages caused by a dog injuring or causing injury to a person, domestic animal or property (WI Statue 174.02).

9) Wolf Control for Depredation to Dogs----

- a) Control could be conducted on wolves killing dogs that are leashed, confined, or under the owner's control on the owner's land if there is likeliness of additional depredation. b) No reactive control trapping would be conducted on wolves killing dogs that are free-roaming, roaming at large, hunting, or training on public lands, and all other lands open to public hunting, and on private land when used for hunting or training to hunt wild animals in wild land areas not near a residence.
- c) Other abatement or aversive conditioning will be considered on public lands where depredation occurs on dogs or other domestic animals.

- d) Guard animals would be treated as other domestic animals for verification and control purposes.

10) Wolf Control on Deer Farms, Wild Fur Farms, Bird Hunting Preserves and permitted Hound Dog Training Enclosures.

- a) Wolf control may be conducted within a registered deer farm enclosure using the guidelines listed above if the fence is in compliance with s. 90.20 or 90.21, Stats., minimum standards. If the enclosure contains farm-raised white-tailed deer, the owner shall also hold a valid DNR fence inspection certificate for the fence. Wolf control may be conducted within a hound dog training enclosure which meets the minimum requirements of NR 17.045, Wis. Adm. Code and the owner holds a valid permit for the enclosure.
Note: ATCP 10.01(62) defines "Livestock" to include farm-raised deer and farm-raised game birds (domestic animals)
- b) Normally, trapping would only be allowed within the fenced area of the deer farm or hound dog training enclosure, unless unusual circumstances make it necessary to trap up to 100 yards beyond the fence. Trapping outside fence areas would only be considered following additional consultation among WS, DNR, and adjacent landowners.
- c) Wolf control would not normally be conducted for depredation on free roaming game on a licensed bird hunting preserve or wild fur farm. A wild fur farm license is not issued for enclosed lands, and all fur-bearing animals on a licensed wild fur farm are considered free-roaming wild animals and not captive wild animals until they have been trapped by the licensee.
- d) Wolf control for depredation on other captive wild animals which are all required to be maintained within enclosures to prevent the animals escape and other animals from entering, should be handled in the same manner as a depredation which occurs on livestock or other domestic animals.

11) Information Sharing-----

- a) DNR will share radio locations of wolves with USDA-WS.
- b) DNR will notify landowners and publish information of wolf depredation problems on the DNR's Website and through local news releases when appropriate.
- c) DNR will share information with tribes on wolves that travel onto Indian reservation lands.
- d) DNR will develop publications and educational materials on wolf depredation focused toward specific organizations or groups most affected by wolf depredation.
- e) DNR will provide press releases to explain lethal and non-lethal forms of control. f) DNR will provide timely response to depredations with news releases.
- g) DNR will cooperate with USDA-WS and other organizations to test and research nonlethal methods of control, including methods of exclusion and aversive conditioning; results of such research will be published in scientific reports and in popular media.
- h) DNR will cooperate with USDA-WS and others to conduct cooperative research on wolf/livestock relationships and will attempt to determine means of preventing wolf

depredation on pets and livestock and share this information with affected landowners and the public.

- i) DNR will provide GLIFWC and Tribes, when appropriate, information pertaining to verified wolf complaints and wolf complaint project reports.
- j) Upon request, DNR will provide the public with a list of properties open to wolf hunting/trapping as required by s. NR 12.64(1)(b)2., Wis. Adm. Code.

12) Wolf Carcass Disposition Resulting from Depredation Management

- a) All carcasses in good condition will be retained and transferred to a DNR or WS freezer for storage. These carcasses will be used to fill requests for educational, cultural or scientific purposes. Carcasses in good condition, not used for educational, cultural or scientific purposes would be made available and transferred to DNR for training and/or research purposes.
- b) A designated DNR representative will coordinate the donation of wolf carcasses.
- c) Carcasses not suitable for donation or other use may be left or disposed of in the field, either discarded or buried on the property where they were killed or recovered-. Carcasses that cannot be disposed on the property were found should be disposed of in accordance with solid waste disposal regulations.
- d) WS will record initial disposition location on the field necropsy form.
- e) As appropriate, the local DNR LE contact will be notified regarding the field disposal of wolf carcasses.

B. Landowner Reactive Controls

The goal of landowner reactive controls is to allow people to defend their domestic animals on their land at the time of a wolf attack.

1) Wolves in the act of attacking domestic animals

- a) Under s.19.25(a), Wis. Adm. Code, on private land, the landowner, lessee or occupant of the land, or any other person with permission of the landowner, lessee or occupant may shoot and kill any gray wolf in the act of killing, wounding or biting a domestic animal. Shootings shall be reported within 24 hours to a department conservation warden. The carcass of the wolf shall be turned over to the department.
- b) For all wolves shot under the authority of s. 19.25(a), Wis. Adm. Code, the following information should be collected and reported to the DNR Carnivore Biologist and Wildlife Damage Specialist:
 - date of shooting or kill
 - sex and age of wolf
 - GPS coordinates where the wolf was shot (if available)
 - Wolf harvest and management zones where wolf was shot
 - Location/disposition of wolf carcass

II. PROACTIVE DEPREDAATION CONTROLS

A. Government Proactive Depredation Controls

The goal of proactive control by government agents would be to reduce the risk of depredation to domestic animals in areas where previous depredations have been verified by lowering the abundance of wolf packs or wolf groups that have been involved in these depredations.

- 1) **Use of Aversive Conditioning or Other Non-Lethal Methods**----Where appropriate, WS will offer suitable non-lethal alternatives (See I., A., 1 above)
- 2) **Wolf population levels that would allow proactive controls.**
 - a.) In Zone 4 proactive controls can be considered if the statewide wolf population exceeds 250 outside of Indian reservations.
 - b.) In Zones 1-3, proactive controls can be considered if the statewide wolf population exceeds 350 outside of Indian reservations.
- 3) **Determination of maximum take for proactive controls.**
 - a.) In Zone 4 no maximum take will be set as long as the state wolf population exceeds 250 wolves outside of Indian reservations, the state delisting goal.
 - b.) In Zones 1-3, maximum take would be the amount of wolves above the population goal of 350 wolves outside of Indian reservations. In most years total take is not likely to exceed 50 wolves. In spring as a new survey is completed maximum take would be re-set for the next 12 month period. If other mortality factors become more important to wolves in the future, these may be incorporated into designation of maximum take by the Department.
- 4) **Designation of Proactive Control areas**
 - a.) Proactive control areas will be designated by USDA-WS district supervisors, DNR Carnivore Biologist, DNR Wildlife Damage Specialist, local DNR wildlife biologist, GLIFWC biologist (if in Chippewa ceded territory), and tribal biologists if within 6 miles or other negotiated buffer area around recognized Indian reservations.
 - b.) Proactive control areas would have at least one chronic farm, or two or more farms that had wolf depredations within the last 2 years within the same pack area.
 - c.) Boundaries of proactive control areas would be determined, using roads, waterways, natural landscape features, and state boundary to designate the control area based on radio tracking, track surveys, and/or local reports of wolf observations.
 - d.) Proactive control areas could consist of a mixture of public and private lands, although generally large blocks of public lands would be avoided as would state parks, state forests, national parks, and wildlife refuges. Permission would be obtained on all lands for controlling wolves.
 - e.) Control areas could be established within any incorporated village or city, if wolves establish in these areas regardless of depredation history.

5) Control Methods for Proactive Controls

- a.) Government agents with USDA-WS and WDNR would control wolves through shooting and trapping.
- b.) Landowners, their agents or persons designated by the landowner as provided under s. NR 12.10(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code, in designated control areas could be issued permits to shoot or trap wolves regardless of depredation history, if they have livestock at risk of wolf depredations, following guidelines listed below under B.

6) Duration of Proactive Controls

- a.) Proactive control actions may continue until a problem wolf pack appears to be eliminated or the maximum take for the state has been achieved.
- b.) Proactive control areas will be established and re-examined annually after new population counts have been completed.

B. Landowner Proactive Controls.

The goal of proactive control by landowner permits would be to reduce the risk of depredation to domestic animals in areas where previous depredations have been verified.

1) Landowner wolf control by permit.

- a. DNR wildlife biologist can issue permits using form 2300-316 (s. NR12.10, Wis. Adm. Code and s. 29.885, Stats.) if one of the following exists:
 - i. At least one verified depredation has occurred within the last 2 years on owned or leased land.
 - ii. A verified depredation has occurred within 1 mile of the applicant's property with vulnerable animals within the current calendar year.
 - iii. A landowner's property exists within a Proactive Control Area created by DNR and the landowner has livestock at risk from wolf depredations (II.A., 4 above).
 - iv. Human safety concern from wolves exists on the property as determined by WS or WDNR.
 - v. Harassment of livestock is occurring and based on the judgment of WS a permit should be issued.
- b. Permits will be valid from the date of issuance through the end of the calendar year unless otherwise restricted on the permit or by the DNR.
- c. The permit may allow the taking of up to as many wolves as are known to exist in the local wolf pack.
- d. Wolves can be shot with firearms that are lawful for hunting big game (deer and bear) in Wisconsin.
- e. Wolves can only be shot or trapped on land under the control of the landowner occupant or lessee of the land and up to two designees. Designees must be listed on the permit. Anyone assisting the permittee must possess a hunting license valid for hunting any species of game with a firearm in Wisconsin.
- f. Trapping is only authorized from December 1 through February 28 to reduce the likelihood of incidental bear captures. Designees must possess a trapping license

valid for trapping in Wisconsin.

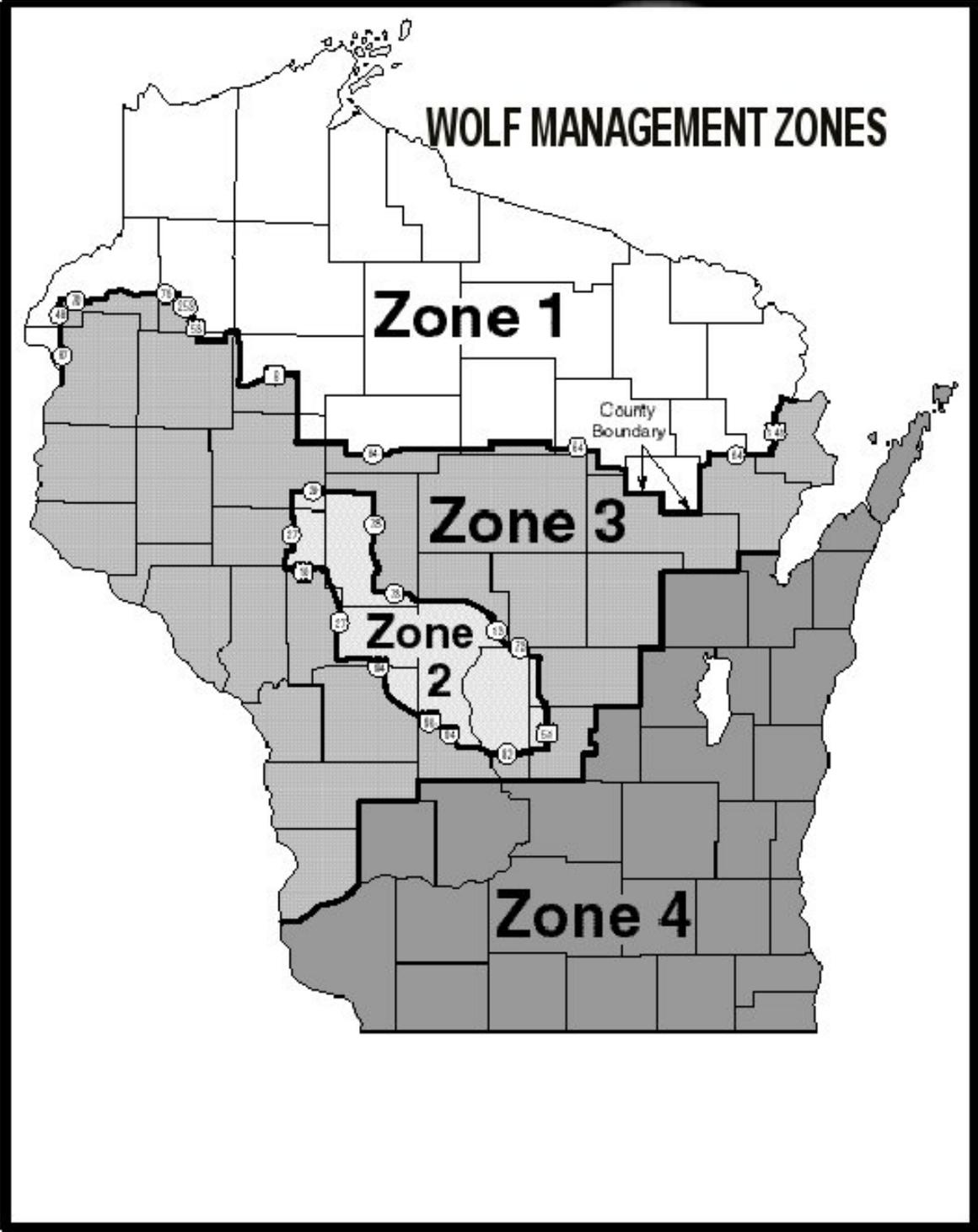
- g. In areas where it is not possible to discharge firearms, non-lethal techniques will be recommended.
- h. All wolves trapped, shot, or injured by the landowner must be reported to the local WDNR conservation warden or wildlife biologist within 24 hours of shooting or capture. The WDNR warden or wildlife biologist should then notify the DNR Carnivore Biologist and Wildlife Damage Specialist of the removal including the following information:
 - date of shooting or kill
 - sex and age of wolf
 - landowner permit number
 - GPS coordinates where the wolf was shot (if available)
 - Wolf harvest and management zones where the wolf was shot
 - Location/disposition of wolf carcass
- i. No wolves may be transported dead or alive to other locations.
- j. All wolves killed under the permit shall be turned over to the WDNR as required in the permit.
- k. Permits can be amended for additional periods, and additional take can be increased if wolf problems persist.
- l. If the maximum take is reached in any wolf harvest or wolf management zone, the department may rescind all landowner permits that have been issued for that zone.
- m. WDNR may add additional conditions as necessary.
- n. Copies of all permits will be sent to the DNR Wildlife Damage Specialist, local warden, and USDA-WS
- o. All other Wisconsin hunting and trapping regulations must be followed.
- p. Trapping activities are discouraged while USDA-WS is actively trapping on the property. If the landowner or their designee(s) are actively trapping while USDA-WS is engaged in trapping activities on those lands, USDA-WS will discontinue their trapping efforts and the landowner will not be eligible for damage compensation.

B. Public Hunter/Trapper Access

On properties where wolf depredations are verified and the claimant is seeking compensation for wolf damages and on properties where the landowner or lessee has been issued a wolf removal permit by the department under the authority of s. 29.889, Stats., s. NR12.64(1)(b)2., Wis. Adm. Code requires that property owners provide access to the public for hunting and trapping wolves during the state wolf hunting/trapping season.

- a) Landowners may not charge any fees for hunting/trapping access or any other activity that includes hunting or trapping wolves.
- b) Landowners must allow a minimum of 2 hunters and/or trappers per 40 acres land suitable for hunting and trapping as determined by department.
- c) Landowners may restrict hunting and trapping access to daylight hours only and may restrict wolf hunters from using dogs when it is otherwise legal to use dogs to pursue wolves if trespass or dogs running at large on adjoining properties in violation of ss. 174.042(1) or 943.13, Stats., is likely to occur.

- d) Hunters/Trappers must notify and meet with the landowner prior to hunting or trapping.
- e) Public access for hunting and trapping is discouraged while USDA-WS is trapping on the property. If the landowner provides public access for hunting or trapping while USDA-WS is engaged in trapping activities on those lands, USDA-WS will discontinue their trapping efforts and the landowner will not be eligible for damage compensation.
- f) Hunters and trappers must follow all wolf hunting and wolf trapping regulations.



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