

I am writing to oppose adding wolves to Michigan game species status. Wolves are charismatic species that have the capacity to generate non-consumptive economic value. The reality is, hunting is on the decline across North America. If we want to promote Michigan as a "go to" state for outdoor recreation, we need to embrace the few flagship species of native wildlife that we are lucky to have. People want the opportunity to see a wolf, and many, including myself, would pay for the opportunity for a photo in the wild, and for the experience of watching wolves interact.

As a wildlife biologist, I comprehend human-wildlife conflicts. Michigan has already accommodated farmers by allowing those who have wolf predation issues, to shoot wolves. Despite the fact these allowances are only band-aide fixes for solving a wolf-human conflict, the rules benefit those who want to take lethal action.

There are a multitude of humane and effective ways to mitigate wolf predation on farm animals, from use of appropriate fencing, to the use of specially-trained dogs. These methods, and others, work to modify wolf behavior, versus someone shooting one animal, and then having to repeat the process multiple times as more wolves resume the nuisance behavior of their cohort.

What does a hunting season on wolves do for citizens of Michigan? Hunting wolves as game species will not solve human-wolf conflict. Hunting wolves could critically reduce population size and put wolves back into threatened status. Hunting wolves is not a function of feeding families. Hunting wolves is for "sport only."

Michigan is in the unique position to value wildlife from an economic mindset that fits the needs of those in the 21st century. As a state, and as a nation, it has been shown over and over again that dependence on hunting revenue puts state and federal agencies at grave financial risk. Michigan's lacking DNR funding is a prime example of depending too much on an outdated, utilitarian mindset focused on hunting, when that's not what the majority of citizens want to partake in.

I ask that you keep wolves off of the game list.

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