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Environment

1:02 PM TUE OCTOBER 22, 2013

Wolf Hunters Bring In 95 Wolves In First Seven Days Of Season

By [CHUCK QUIRMBACH \(/PEOPLE/CHUCK-QUIRMBACH\)](#)



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Credit Douglas Smith, National Park Service (CC-BY) /

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File: A pack of gray wolves.

Update: On Tuesday morning, the DNR announced that the harvest count is up to 95 wolves killed in the first seven days of the season. It also announced that hunting zone 2, which covers an expanse of northeastern Wisconsin, will close on Wednesday at 3 p.m.

Wildlife experts say they're surprised to see how fast wolf hunters are harvesting animals thus far in the wolf hunting and trapping season.

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The Department of Natural Resources said that as of Monday morning, 85 gray wolves had been harvested in just the first six days of the wolf season. Fifty-six wolves had been caught in leg traps, then killed. Hunters shot 28 with guns, and one with a bow and arrow.

UW-Madison environmental studies professor Adrian Treves says it's surprising that hunters got to 85 much faster than during last year's season. "I'm guessing hunters are, maybe, learning how to get wolves, or there are more hunters out there, or both."

Treves remains concerned the DNR has set a quota of 251 wolves this year, saying that may threaten the sustainability of the Wisconsin wolf population.

The fast march to 85 has also caught the eye of retired DNR wildlife biologist Dick Thiel. He says if the pace continues, there may be no need to allow hunters to use dogs to hunt wolves. Dogs are banned until December 2nd anyway, and Thiel would prefer they stay on the sidelines. "It's not only cruel to use hunting hounds – because you will get fights between wolves and hounds, and that's inevitable – but it is probably, given what's going on right now ... somewhat unnecessary."

A top DNR official, Kurt Thiede, says it's difficult to say whether the higher rate of harvest is an anomaly or whether it could become the norm. Thiede says the most important thing is the DNR's ability to close a hunting zone to harvest once that zone's quota is met.

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"somewhat unnecessary" there's the understatement of the year! They reached their quota early last year, they are doing horrible damage to a population that was just recently removed from the Endangered Species List, yeah, I'd say it's all "somewhat unnecessary"!!!

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