

A UW researcher has multiple concerns about the plight of the gray wolf on Wisconsin's landscape.

For 15 years, Adrian Treves, environmental studies associate professor, has studied the ecology of the carnivore's interactions with people and has surveyed Wisconsin residents on wolf policy and management.

Treves predicts Wisconsin's wolf hunts, at their current levels, are not sustainable.

More than 250 gray wolves are expected to be slain in the state's upcoming second annual wolf hunt season, which starts on October 15.

Treves says that number represents "a little more than 30% of the late winter wolf count," which means Wisconsin has the highest or second highest wolf quota on ~~the~~ record in North America. Treves calls it an undeniably "aggressive wolf hunt."

Treves says there is a high likelihood that by April 2015, the wolf hunt will have to be closed due to such a steep decline in the wolf population. That decline may result in the gray wolf being re-listed in Wisconsin as a threatened and endangered species by 2016. He also warns that there's real risk that the wolf population could be driven so low that it cannot recover, and the federal government would "have to step in, again, under emergency relisting rules of The Endangered Species Act."

It's an interesting finding, given the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced plans earlier this summer to lift the gray wolf from the threatened and endangered species list throughout the country. That's already happened in Wisconsin, even as pro-wolf groups try to overturn the decision to delist the gray wolf.

Treves – along with colleagues at Michigan Tech and Ohio State University – coauthored a scientific criticism of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plan. Can I suggest a little rewrite here? The Fish and Wildlife Service claims tolerance for wolves is higher within current wolf range. That is simply contradicted by the data and they failed to cite over 100 scientific studies. In general, the U.S. public supports the gray wolf's recovery in adequate environments and tolerance is lower within current wolf range.

Back at the state level, Treves drew from his area of expertise and this week is releasing public opinion results on the state's first wolf hunt, held last year.

Treves says not only are the state's wolf hunt practices not sustainable, they also contradict public opinion.

The report found a five to seven percent increase in people opposing particular ways of hunting wolves. According to Treves, a majority of the Wisconsin public outside of wolf range do not support the current wolf-hunting designrules. In general, the public supports the gray wolf's recovery in adequate environments. See quote by Hogberg in the press release.

Adrian Treves Today, 11:12 AM Added Text
Adrian Treves Today, 11:10 AM Deleted: the
Adrian Treves Today, 11:16 AM Added Text
Adrian Treves Today, 10:45 AM (it sounds as if I was not drawing from it above :) How about replace with "and colleagues"
Adrian Treves Today, 10:48 AM Added Text
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Adrian Treves Today, 10:48 AM Added Text
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But Treves says public opinion is not carrying the weight it should. Instead, he says the proposal to eliminate federal protection for wolves seemis “politically motivated” and “excessive,” while contradicting scientific evidence.

UW environmental studies researcher Adrian Treves and Masters candidate Jamie Hogberg will be sharing the results of their public opinion survey on Wisconsin wolf policy with a DNR advisory committee tomorrow (Thursday) in Wausau.

The public can weigh in on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to remove the gray wolf from the national threatened and endangered species list – deadline Sept 11, 2013.

http://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2013/pdf/Gray_Wolf_Comment_Period_Bulletin.pdf