

# Wisconsin Bear Hunters' Association: Ask for quick action on Gray Wolf Harvest permanent rule

Posted on Thursday, Jan 20, 2022

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**January 19, 2022** – The Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association (WBHA) today asks for quick action on the Permanent Rule regarding Gray Wolf Harvest Regulations.

The WBHA represents over 3000 Wisconsin families that enjoy the sport of bear hunting. WBHA also represents a large percentage of those who harvest wolves when a wolf season has been allowed to proceed. Unfortunately, WBHA also represents a large percentage of those who have suffered depredations of livestock and pets by wolves.

**WBHA believes that there is no need to change anything from what is in the current Emergency Rule, except for minor changes to comply with current statutes.**

WBHA further believes that the Dane County Circuit Court was incorrect when it ruled that a season could not occur until new permanent rules were promulgated. Section 21 of 2011 Act 169 clearly states: *Notwithstanding section 227.24 (1) (c) and (2) of the statutes, emergency rules promulgated under this paragraph remain in effect until the date on which the permanent rules take effect.*

“The statutes are extremely clear that the emergency rules stay in effect until a permanent rule is put in place. There is absolutely no room for other interpretations,” said WBHA President Carl Schoettel.

“WBHA firmly believes that there should currently be a season underway for wolves in Wisconsin. We believe the Wisconsin DNR should have challenged the Dane

County ruling. We believe that the only explanation for the lack of an appeal of that decision is the clear preservationist attitude of the current leadership of the DNR. Refusing to move forward with a wolf harvest season is an abject dereliction of the agency's duty to manage Wisconsin's wildlife. It is also against the law requiring a season to be held per Stats. Section 29.185 (1m)."

Added Schoettel, "We're not asking for anything new, we're just asking that the law be upheld."

For decades the Wisconsin DNR has followed the North American Model of wildlife management - the most successful Model developed in history for conserving wildlife populations. Under that model, it is clear that a harvest of 10-15% of the estimated population does not impact overall population of the species. Recent experience out West shows that wolf harvests of as much as 30% per annual season has had NO net effect on wolf populations.

So even without attempting to manage wolves to the overwinter goal of 350, without impacting wolf numbers at all, the DNR could easily authorize a season harvest goal of 420 wolves. WBHA previously expressed this number with the DNR when they were setting the season goals back in August.

**WBHA calls upon the Wisconsin DNR to promulgate a permanent rule that is identical to the Emergency Rule, except for minor changes to align the rule with statute.**

**WBHA further calls upon the Wisconsin DNR to immediately appeal the Dane County ruling and proceed with a late winter 2022 wolf season.**

**WBHA further calls upon the Wisconsin DNR to begin following the North American Model when it comes to managing wolves, as they do for other species.**