

Public Opinions Regarding Wolves and Wolf Management in Wisconsin

Background

A survey of Wisconsinites regarding their opinions on wolves and wolf management in Wisconsin was conducted to support an update to Wisconsin's wolf management plan.

We mailed a questionnaire to 8,750 randomly selected Wisconsin households during 2022. In total, 3,158 returned questionnaires for a response rate of 38%.

The study methods and questionnaire were designed to enable direct comparisons to a survey of Wisconsin households conducted during 2014.

Attitudes toward Wolves

Most Wisconsinites held favorable attitudes and emotions towards wolves. On average, residents living within wolf-range held less favorable views compared to residents living outside of wolf range. However, both wolf-range and non-range residents reported more positive attitudes towards wolves during this study than in a similar survey during 2014.

Experiences with Wolves

Many Wisconsinites reported they had never heard a wolf howl (45%), had never seen wolf tracks (55%), or had never seen a wolf in the wild (61%). Fewer Wisconsinites reported knowing someone who had a wolf attack or harass a domestic animal (15%) or kill a domestic animal (12%). The percent of Wisconsinites who reported encounters with wolves decreased since 2014.

Management Opinions and Preferences

Compared to current wolf abundance and distribution at the time of the study, most desired about the same amount of wolves to occupy about the same amount of the state. Overall, 46% supported hunting and trapping wolves to manage populations, 29% opposed, and 25% were unsure. Support for a hunting and trapping season has declined over time in comparison to the 2014 results.