Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

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WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

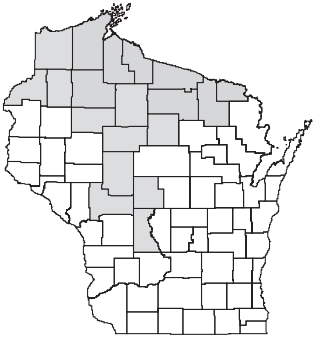
Timber Wolf

(Canis lupus)

Federal Status: Endangered
State Status: Endangered

Description: The timber wolf, or gray wolf, looks somewhat like a large dog but has a narrow chest, longer legs, and larger feet than most dogs. Its coat is colored a mixture of gray, brown, tan, and black, with a light cream color on the underside. Wolves in Wisconsin normally weigh 50-100 pounds, about two or more times the size of a coyote. Wolf and coyote tracks normally follow in straight lines, with the hind foot stepping into the track of the front

foot. Dog tracks normally do not overlap and have a more zigzag pattern. Wolf tracks are usually 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 inches compared to less than 2.7 inches for coyotes.

Habitat: Wolf packs occur in heavily forested areas where few people live and where there are few roads. Such conditions occur most commonly in the mixed deciduous and coniferous forests of northern Wisconsin. Wolves also are expanding their range into parts of west central Wisconsin.

Forestry Considerations: Maintaining low, active road densities (including logging roads) of less than 1 mile of road per square mile of land, benefits wolves. Gating logging roads after the timber harvest, or using winter-only roads, would reduce disturbance. Harvesting activities should be avoided within 1/2 mile of an active den from March through July, and no tree cutting should occur within 110 yards (5 chains) of active dens.