

General Public Survey of Michigan Residents' Attitudes Towards Wolves: Work in Progress

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What Does Sociology Have to Say About Wolves and Their Future?



“The greatest future challenge may be to decide, as a society, where wolves will be protected and tolerated and where they will not, and the methods by which this balance between humans and wolves will be achieved.”

Mech, L.D.1996. “A New Era for Carnivore Conservation.” Wildlife Society Bulletin (24): 397-401.



Study's Main Objectives

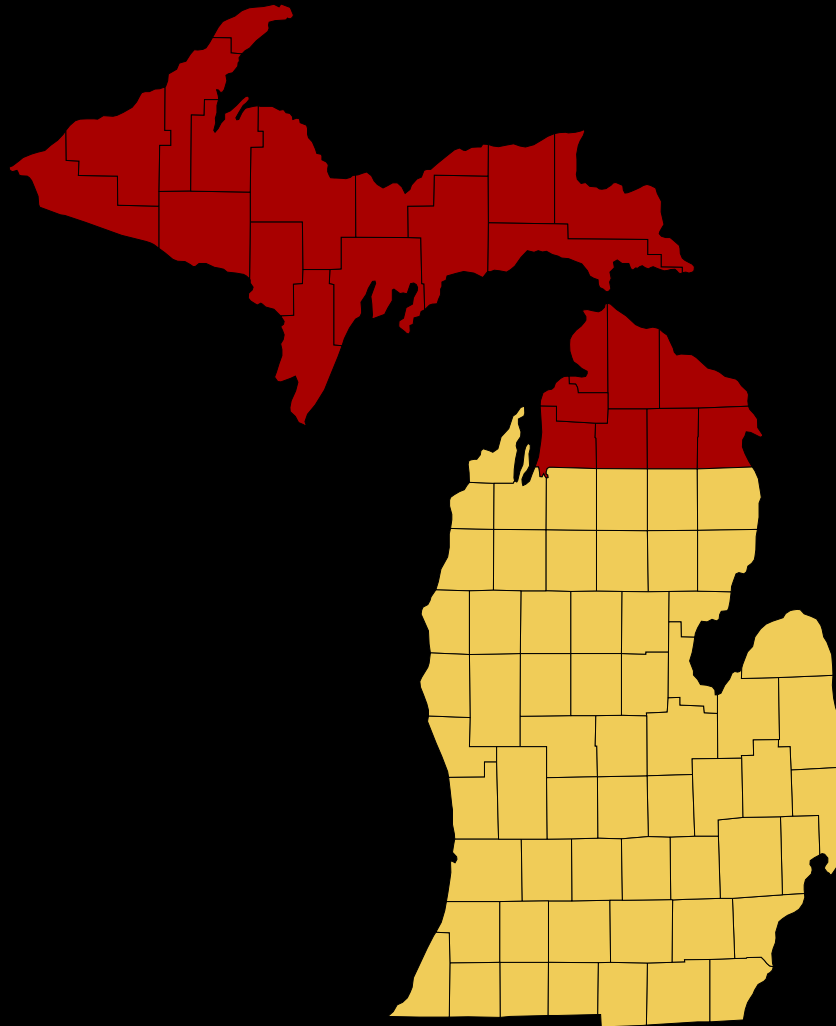
1. What are residents' reasons for supporting and opposing wolves in Michigan?
2. How do residents want wolves managed in the future?
3. Are residents willing to fund wolf research, monitoring, and management?

STUDY DESIGN

- Survey of residents living in areas where wolves are either known or likely to exist.
 - Representative sample of each of the 15 counties of the UP and the 8 most northern counties of the LP
 - Research population comprises only about 5% of Michigan's total population.
 - Decision to survey only residents in these counties based on :
 1. prior research indicating substantially higher interest levels in areas where wolves actually exist
 2. greater relevancy of wolf recovery and their future

Research Population

(all counties north of 45th parallel)



METHODOLOGY

Using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing system (CATI)

- questions were pretested by surveying 40 Ottawa County residents
- includes both randomly drawn land-line and cell phone numbers
- each interview lasts 10-12 minutes
- began calling Tuesday, July 5 and will continue until 1,000 interviews are completed
- 1.5% sampling error
- thus far, response rate has been excellent

Preliminary Findings (based on 390 surveys)

Approval of having wolves in Michigan

Strongly Approve	38%
Somewhat Approve	33%
Somewhat Disapprove	9%
Strongly Disapprove	18%
Undecided	2%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Reasons why we should have wolves in MI

(% very or somewhat important)

Wolves could benefit MI ecosystem	70%
Wolves have a right to exist in MI	73%
People appreciate wolves and want them to exist	68%
People want to view, hear, photograph, study wolves	68%
Future generations could benefit if there are wolves	66%
Wolves had a historic presence in MI & should be here now.	66%
Wolves could become another game species in MI	50%
Wolves could increase tourism in MI	43%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Reasons why we should reduce the number of wolves in areas of Michigan

(% very or somewhat important)

Number of farm animals lost due to wolf depredation	89%
Concern for human safety caused by wolf sightings	82%
Number of pets attacked by wolves	82%
Hunters harvesting fewer deer because of wolves	71%
Number of hunting dogs lost to wolves	65%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Support/Opposition to using Michigan tax dollars to compensate owners who have lost _____ to wolves

	<u>Livestock</u>	<u>Hunting Dogs</u>	<u>Pets</u>
Strongly Support	35%	17%	23%
Somewhat Support	32%	20%	23%
Neither support nor oppose .	1%	4%	3%
Somewhat Oppose	15%	20%	18%
Strongly Opposed	17%	39%	31%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Support/Opposition to using Michigan tax dollars to help farmers implement non-lethal measures to protect livestock from wolves

Strongly Support	20%
Somewhat Support	30%
Neither support nor oppose .	3%
Somewhat Oppose	20%
Strongly Opposed	27%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Support/Oppose funding future wolf monitoring and management by expanding the types of sporting goods taxed to fund wildlife restoration

Support	54%
Oppose	39%
Undecided	7%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Support/Oppose designating a Michigan license plate for funding wolf monitoring and management

Support	64%
Oppose	32%
Undecided	4%

If DNR determines that wolves are a problem in an area, support/oppose the following management responses

	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>
Leave wolves alone	27%	71%	2%
Allow farmers to kill wolves on their property that are causing the loss.....	86%	12%	2%
Allow a controlled hunt for wolves to lower their overall population in that area	77%	21%	2%
Have DNR designated personnel trap and relocate wolves	68%	29%	3%
Have DNR designated personnel kill wolves	61%	25%	4%
Use fertility control to limit wolf population size and reduce risk of loss	52%	44%	4%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Agree/Disagree that most effective way to avoid wolf problems is to educate the public on how to live with wolves

Strongly Agree	47%
Somewhat Agree	22%
Neither agree nor disagree .	1%
Somewhat Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	20%
Undecided	1%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Agree/Disagree that MI should designate wolves as a game species and create a recreational hunting season for wolves

Strongly Agree	39%
Somewhat Agree	23%
Neither agree nor disagree .	11%
Somewhat Disagree	26%
Strongly Disagree	0%
Undecided	1%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 160 respondents)

**If wolves were to become a designated
game species in MI, would you buy a license
to hunt them?**

(asked only of hunters)

YES 32%

NO 63%

Not Sure .. 5%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

About how many wolves exist in the entire state of Michigan?

fewer than 500	18%
500 – 1,500	43%
1500 – 5,000	29%
more than 5,000	9%
Don't Know	1%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

Have you ever seen a wolf in the wild?

YES 60%

NO 38%

Not Sure 2%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

**How confidently can you distinguish a
coyote from a wolf?**

Very Confident	64%
Confident	18%
Somewhat Confident	15%
Not at all Confident	2%
Not Sure	1%

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

(based on 390 interviews)

How afraid are you of wolves?

Very Afraid	19%
Afraid	9%
Somewhat Afraid	32%
Not at all Afraid	38%
Not Sure	2%