

**Volunteers needed to help monitor wolf population in the state**  
***Wolf tracking training sessions and ecology courses set***

MADISON - People interested in volunteering to locate timber wolves and other forest carnivores in the coming year and help keep count on the elusive animals can learn how to track wolves during a series of upcoming training sessions.

In Wisconsin wolves are a protected wild animal under state law, and continue to be an endangered species under federal law, but may be delisted by end of 2011. The State will be required to conduct intense monitoring of the wolf population for the next 5 years after delisting.

Volunteer trackers are assigned survey blocks in forest portions of northern and central Wisconsin, and are asked to conduct three or more surveys in their assigned block each winter. Data they gather can be compiled with those of other volunteers to aid Department of Natural Resources biologists in evaluating wolf populations.

Wolf and Carnivore Tracker Training sessions are scheduled:

- **Nov. 5, Ashland, Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, Highway 2 & G, west of Ashland**
- **Dec. 3, Babcock, Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center, 1 mile north of Highway 173 along County Road X**
- **Dec. 10-11, Tomahawk, Wildlife Tracking with Dr. James Halfpenny, Treehaven UW-SP Field Station on Pickerel Creek Road off County A.**

Training sessions run at Ashland, and Babcock will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Applicants should register as soon as possible because space is limited. There is a small fee for the classes. Training run at Treehaven near Tomahawk will be held on December 10-11 will be by world renowned tracker, Dr. James Halfpenny. Cost of the workshop has yet to be determined.

Details about the [volunteer tracking program](#) and the [wolf ecology and tracking training sessions](#) are available on the Department of Natural Resources Web site.

In late winter 2011 DNR biologists counted 782-824 wolves in the state, including 751 or more outside Indian reservations. During 2010, 35 wolves live-trapped and radio-collared. Throughout 2010 91 wolves were radio tracked by Wisconsin DNR pilots, including wolves captured and collared in previous years. Normally about one-third of the state packs are monitored by radio-telemetry, the remaining packs are monitored by DNR and volunteer trackers.

In 2011, 137 volunteer trackers surveyed 86, 200-square-mile survey blocks covering 8232 miles of snow-covered roads and trails. Volunteers averaged 4.1 surveys per block, covering 95.7 miles, conducting 15.4 hours of tracking per block, and detected over 430 different wolves.

“With the continued spread of the state wolf population and reduced funding for surveys, the volunteer carnivore tracking program is critical for us to obtain accurate counts of the state wolf population,” said Adrian Wydeven, DNR mammal ecologist who coordinates the state wolf program. “Despite changes in federal listings these surveys will continue to be important for long-term conservation of wolves and other forest carnivores in Wisconsin.”

Volunteers are also helpful in other ways, Wydeven said. Last fall, several volunteers conducted hunter outreach in the field and made contacts with deer hunters across several northern counties. During the spring volunteers helped with wolf trapping, radio collaring, donations of radio collars, and howl surveys as well as staffing educational booths at sport shows and other events.

Training sessions will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please try to register at least 2 weeks before each session.

Volunteers are also strongly encouraged to take a wolf ecology course if they have not done so already, and biologists recommend taking the ecology course before signing up for track training workshops. Wolf ecology courses will be offered next year on the following dates at the locations listed.

**Jan. 14-15, Tomahawk** - Treehaven, cost \$102-\$150 (includes meals; opt. lodging), contact Treehaven at [treehaven@uwsp.edu](mailto:treehaven@uwsp.edu)

- **Jan. 21-22, Babcock** - Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center, Babcock, \$80 (includes 2 meals & dorm lodging). Contact [britt.searles@wisconsin.gov](mailto:britt.searles@wisconsin.gov)
- **Feb. 18-19, Babcock** - Sandhill Outdoor Skills Center, cost \$80 (includes 2 meals & dorm lodging), contact [britt.searles@wisconsin.gov](mailto:britt.searles@wisconsin.gov)
- **Feb. 25-26, Tomahawk** - Treehaven, cost \$102-\$150 (includes meals; opt. lodging), contact Treehaven at [treehaven@uwsp.edu](mailto:treehaven@uwsp.edu)

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