

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY REED CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON TAKING OF ENDANGERED EASTERN TIMBER WOLF

Nathaniel Reed, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, today called for a moratorium on the taking of any eastern timber wolves in the States where the animals still exist. The animals are on the list of endangered species of the United States.

"There are only 500-1,000 eastern timber wolves left in the United States," said Reed. "The best course of action would be a moratorium on the taking of all wolves, with the possible exception of those preying on livestock, until a nationwide recovery plan for the wolf is completed." The recovery plan is being prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Endangered Species.

Reed added that, "The wolf management policy agreed to by the Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 headquarters, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Supervisory of Superior National Forest should not be implemented until the recovery plan is finished and we have accumulated more accurate data on that particular wolf population."

Although the policy would probably benefit the Minnesota wolves by raising their status from that of an unprotected predator to that of a managed game animal, it would allow the legal hunting of an endangered species in that State.

This is a situation the Department of the Interior cannot condone, Reed said.

Most of the remaining U.S. eastern timber wolves are in Minnesota, with a scattered few in Wisconsin and Michigan, where they are already fully protected. The recovery plan would attempt to assure maintenance of existing wolf populations, as well as re-establishment of populations in areas of suitable habitat.

Until the recovery plan is fully developed with the States involved and with Canada, which still has a sizable eastern wolf population, a moratorium would allow further study of the animals, their population and movements.

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