

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release December 3, 1974

McGarvey 202/343-5634

STATUS OF ENDANGERED TIMBER WOLF UNDER REVIEW

A review of the status of the eastern timber wolf in Minnesota to determine if it should be removed from the Endangered Species List has been initiated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in response to a request from the State of Minnesota.

The public is invited to submit any factual data it wishes on the subject. Comments should be addressed to Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. All comments received through December 23, 1974, will be considered.

The 1973 Endangered Species Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to review an animal's status if a petitioner presents sufficient evidence to warrant such a review.

The Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources of the State of Minnesota, has requested the Fish and Wildlife Service to exclude Minnesota from the range over which the eastern timber wolf is considered endangered. He included evidence concerning wolf habitat conditions, wolf population, wolf health and disease, and existing legal and biological regulatory mechanisms in the State of Minnesota.

The law requires the Secretary of the Interior to make the final determination about whether an animal is threatened or endangered. The Secretary may not alter the status of the wolf on the endangered species

(over)

list unless he publishes in the Federal Register first a proposed rule-making and later a summary of all comments and recommendations received by him which relate to the action he takes regarding the wolf's status.

His decision will be based on the best scientific and commercial data brought forth by this review plus consultation with the State of Minnesota and interested members of the public.

Three possibilities exist for the wolf in Minnesota: it could be found to still qualify for listing as an endangered species; it could be found to qualify for listing as a threatened species; or, it could be found to qualify for neither of the above lists.

If it is found still to be endangered, it would continue to receive complete Federal protection. No wolves could be taken except for scientific or propagation purposes.

If it is found to be a threatened species and listed as such, Federal protective regulations tailored to the specific conservation needs of the wolf would be issued. These could allow selective taking of wolves in certain areas for other than scientific or propagation purposes.

If the wolf is found to be neither endangered nor threatened, it would be regulated solely by the State of Minnesota.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expects to publish in the Federal Register a proposed rulemaking on the wolf's status shortly after the 30-day public comment period expires on December 23. Any such proposal would then be subject to a 60-day comment period before it becomes effective. If any person feels he may be adversely affected by the proposal, he may file his objections with the Secretary of the Interior and request a public hearing on the proposal.

X X X