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The legal take of wolves is intended to ameliorate present conflict between the wolf and human interests. Such conflict would hinder conservation efforts and thus work against the long-term welfare of the wolf. A legal take is considered the only practical means by which depredations can be handled and the current problems relieved. 

DATE: This rule becomes effective on April 10, 1978.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Reclassification of the Gray Wolf in the United States and Mexico, with Determination of Critical Habitat in Michigan and Minnesota

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Service issues a final rulemaking which provides for the reclassification of the gray wolf in the United States and Mexico, and for the determination of critical habitat for species of gray wolf in Michigan and Minnesota. The reclassification is considered to accurately express the current status of the gray wolf, based solely on an evaluation of the best available biological data. The special regulations being established in Minnesota are deemed necessary and advisable to provide for the future well-being of the species. Although an increased legal take of wolves commit-
covering both native and foreign species, as published on July 14, 1977 (42 FR 36420-36431). Examination of this list may give the impression that C. L. irremotus and C. L. lycaon are considered Endangered over their entire ranges, including Canadian areas. This rulemaking clearly indicates that the gray wolf is listed everywhere to the south of the Canadian border, but nowhere to the north.

Most current interest in the gray wolf centers on the eastern timber wolf, especially in Minnesota. As delineated by recent systematic sources, the original range of the subspecies C. L. lycaon included most of the region from Georgia to Maine, and between the Atlantic and the Great Plains. At present, however, the only substantial gray wolf population remaining in this region is in northern Minnesota. There also is a group on Isle Royale in Lake Superior, and possibly a few scattered individuals in northern Michigan and Wisconsin.

The eastern timber wolf was listed as Endangered in 1967, at a time when no Threatened category had been established by Federal legislation. For the last decade the wolf continued to survive in northern Minnesota, and it became apparent that the species was not in immediate danger of being extirpated in the State. Numbers have fluctuated, but seem to have increased in some areas, and there has been an overall increase in range. Some wolves have entered areas with relatively extensive human settlement and made depredations on domestic animals. Many people have expressed concern about such depredations, and about the possibility that wolves could be detrimental to some deer herds in Minnesota, which have been undergoing a general decline because of several factors including habitat deterioration.

In a letter dated October 4, 1974, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources petitioned the Service to exclude Minnesota from the range over which the eastern timber wolf is considered Endangered. In response, the Service issued a notice of review in the Federal Register of November 31, 1974 (49 FR 49877). Extensive public comment was received on this notice, mainly opposition from persons who were concerned that removal of the wolf from Endangered status would subject the species to excessive killing by man. Some support for delisting the wolf came from individuals who felt that the continued total protection of the Endangered classification would result in serious depredations by the wolf on livestock and game.

Further measures by the Service with respect to the Endangered and Threatened species. On June 9, 1977 (42 FR 29527-29553), the Service issued a proposed rulemaking on the gray wolf; this final rulemaking does not differ substantially from the proposal.

### SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

In response to the proposed rulemaking of June 9, 1977, the Governments of the following States sent letters expressing support or no opposition: Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. In addition, responses, but no comments, were received from the Governments of Alabama, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Missouri, and North Carolina.

The Governor of Minnesota stated that the wolf in Minnesota should be classified neither as Endangered nor Threatened. He indicated that the proposal did not give sufficient reason for maintaining the species as Threatened, and that the regulations would not allow for adequate control of depredating wolves. The Service recognizes that there is disagreement regarding the application of the Threatened category, but now considers that the rationale given in the proposal, and repeated below, does justify this classification. The Service also considers that the proposed control provisions are all that can be supported on the basis of currently available data. The situation, however, will be closely monitored, and any modifications that seem warranted will be proposed.

The Governor also made the following recommendation (addressing the wolf in Minnesota): Critical Habitat should be restricted to the northeastern part of the State; zone 3 "should not be designated as a sanctuary", because much of it is poor prairie and thus poor deer habitat, and because it is surrounded by livestock country; no taking of wolves should be allowed in zone 2; should be expressed in simpler language so that citizens would know the location of the "sanctuary", zones 4 and 5 should be combined into one zone; and reporting of the taking of depredating wolves should be done quarterly, rather than within 5 days. In June 1977 the State pointed out that the proposal did not make it clear that neither the proposed nor final regulations use the term "sanctuary". The regulations actually will reduce the area of total protection for the wolf in Minnesota from the entire State to only zone 1 in the northeastern corner. In all other parts of the State, depredating wolves may be taken under the conditions set forth in the regulations. The Critical Habitat zones being established are not the same as the "sanctuary", and apply only to actions of Federal agencies affecting habitat conditions.

Except for zone 1, depredating wolves may be taken within Critical Habitat. The Service considers that both zones 2 and 3, as well as the area surrounding zone 3, should be open to such taking. The Critical Habitat boundaries were recommended by authorities who have many years of field experience with wolves in this region, and the Service thinks these boundaries, except for the slight modifications indicated, should be the same as proposed. The boundaries will apply annually, rather than quarterly, because of the importance of knowing the rate, location, and circumstances of the taking of wolves.

The Secretary of State of Minnesota sent a copy of a resolution passed by the State Legislature and approved by the Governor. The resolution called for complete declassification of the wolf in Minnesota, and cited the following reasons: the wolf population had reached carrying capacity in many areas and was expanding into areas "not heretofore inhabited"; hardship was resulting from wolf depredations; the State had adequate resources and authority to effectively manage the wolf, and the Legislature believed it best for the State to have the exclusive control of its resident wolf population. Only the first of these reasons is relevant to the factors that may legally be considered in determining the classification of a species under the Endangered Species Act. And, while it is recognized that the wolf may recently have increased its range in Minnesota, it is not entirely correct to say that the involved areas were "not heretofore inhabited", because at one time the wolf occupied the entire State. It is also probable that the wolf population has reached carrying capacity in some parts of Minnesota, but these areas represent a comparatively small portion of the total range of the species, and population density alone will not assure long-term welfare. The depredation problem is being dealt with under this rulemaking.

Expressions of objection to the proposal also were received from a number of other parties in Minnesota, including the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners, the Itasca County
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Board of Commissioners, the City of Littlefork, the City of International Falls, the Sheriff of Roseau County, and State Senator Rick Lund. In addition, State Representative Irv Anderson sent a detailed statement commenting negatively on the proposal. Much of this statement is devoted to the background of the situation, and to comparison with other Federal activities. Mr. Anderson indicated even a Threatened classification was unjustifiable for the wolf in Minnesota, although he went on to mention a potential conflict between the species and economic development in one area, and to suggest the possibility of the wolf becoming Endangered because of human attitudes. In any event, the Service stands by its original reasoning, as repeated below, for considering the wolf to be a Threatened species in Minnesota. Mr. Anderson also stated that the proposed special regulations were inadequate, because taking of wolves would not be allowed until after depredations had occurred, and then only by government agents. In practice, however, most taking of problem wolves has always been done by trappers who respond to complaints. Under the rulemaking, both State and Federal agents would be available for such action. It might be added here, for the information of all parties who recommended total declassification or more liberal taking regulations in Minnesota, that the Service could not take such measures, even if it wanted to, without first making an entirely new proposal and allowing a new period of public comment.

The U.S. Forest Service supported the reclassification and Critical Habitat designation, but requested assurance that biological subspecies would continue to be maintained and dealt with as separate entities. The Fish and Wildlife Service can give this assurance. The Forest Service also made a number of management recommendations, which will be considered at appropriate times.

The National Park Service also favored continued recognition of the different wolf subspecies, and in general supported the proposal. The Park Service, however, recommended enlargement of the Critical Habitat designation in Minnesota, to include all of Voyageurs National Park and some adjacent lands. Recent studies have indicated that several packs of wolves in the Park depend partly on habitat not included in the proposed Critical Habitat. The National Forest Service has decided to follow this recommendation, and the delineation of zones given below reflects the changes called for by the Park Service. Approximately 13 square miles in Voyageurs National Park, and about 13 square miles outside of the Park have been added to zone 1. A reduction of about eight square miles in the size of zone 2 also has been made, based on new information provided by the Minnesota Department of Fish and Wildlife Service, in Twin Cities, Minn.

Representative Abner J. Mikva of Illinois opposed the proposal, stating that the wolf should continue to be listed in Minnesota, and that the Service should not give in to pressure for reclassification from a small interest group. The Service, however, does not consider that it is giving in, but rather that an accurate classification and proper regulations are being established.

The Defenders of Wildlife sent a detailed statement on the proposal, which was said to be endorsed by three other conservation organizations: Fund for Animals, The Humane Society of the United States, and Let Live. Most of the statement consisted of quotations from previous comments, which the Service will consider, but which are not directly related to preparation of this rulemaking. In addition, the statement expressed opposition to the separation of wolves as a species for legal purposes, and warned that such a measure might set a precedent for pressure to make exceptions for other species in particular political areas. The Service understands this point, but, in the case of the wolf, considers that there is adequate legal basis for the rulemaking in section 3(11) of the Endangered Species Act; and sufficient biological basis in the long-established and striking difference between the status of the wolf in Minnesota and all other areas south of the Canadian border.

The Environmental Defense Fund "cautiously" supported the proposal, but issued a number of warnings of possible problems, which the Service will consider. The Service does strongly disagree with the contention that the reclassification proposal was taken primarily on pressure from agricultural and political interests, rather than biological factors. The Service considers that the status of the wolf in Minnesota is accurately expressed by a Threatened classification, and that had this category been available in 1967 the eastern timber wolf probably would have been so listed. Also, the special regulations allowing some take of depredating wolves should not be viewed as a vindication of past illegal killing. These regulations express recognition of the need to deal with an active current problem. The Service will continue to enforce the regulations to the limit of its ability, and will not tolerate any taking of wolves beyond that authorized.

The Fur and Trapping Ethics organization indicated opposition to reclassification in Minnesota, and suggested that instead of allowing the take of depredating wolves by special regulation, the Service should permit such take under the provisions of section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act. The Fur and Trapping Ethics organization sent a detailed statement indicating that the proposed zones, as listed as Endangered in Minnesota, but at present the Service sees no justification for prohibiting participation by personnel of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The following organizations within the Monitor Consortium expressed opposition to reclassification in Minnesota: The International Primate Protection League; Fund for Animals, Inc.; Let Live; Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central Atlantic States; Comitee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk; International Fund for Animal Welfare—U.S.A.; American Littoral Society, American Littoral Society, Chesapeake Chapter; Environmental Policy Center; Society for Animal Protective Legislation; Washington Humane Society; and Friends of the Earth. These organizations thought that the Minnesota wolf population should not be separated from that of the rest of the lower United States, but should be viewed as a tiny and Endangered remnant of a former wide-ranging species. The Service can understand this position, but considers that no matter how the Minnesota population is viewed, it, by itself, is more properly classified as Threatened. These respondents also suggested that by allowing take of depredating wolves, the Service would be giving in to poachers who are killing wolves illegally. Such is not the case; the take is being authorized because it is the most practical means of dealing with a current problem, and will not be detrimental to the overall Minnesota wolf population. Another comment was that the Critical Habitat designation should be made permanent. The Service considers that the proposed zones, as based on the recommendations of experienced field personnel, are all that can be justified by presently available data.

The National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation supported the proposed rulemaking, but
It is the intention of the Service, however, to list any naturally present wolf to the south of Canada (except Minnesota) as Endangered, in order to prevent abuse of the term "species" to be considered as one "species", and the gray wolf group in Minnesota is being considered as another "species".

Section 4(a) of the Act states that the Secretary of the Interior may determine a "species" to be Endangered or Threatened because of any of five factors. These factors, and their application to the gray wolf in Minnesota, and to the gray wolf in the other 48 conterminous States of the United States and in Mexico, are listed below.

1. The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range.

The gray wolf once had a range that included most of Mexico and the 48 conterminous States of the United States. The species now occurs in only a small fraction of this range, and is very rare in most places where it does exist. In the lower 48 conterminous States, the wolf probably is present in only Washington, Idaho, and possibly a few in northern Montana, northern Minnesota, and northern Wisconsin. The only major population of the gray wolf remaining anywhere in the 48 conterminous States is in northern Minnesota. This population, while small compared to the original numbers and range of the gray wolf in the lower 48 States, has not itself undergone a significant decline since about 1900. Indeed, within the last decade there appears to have been a numerical increase in some areas, and an overall range increase. The relatively remote primary habitat of the population,
which is composed in large part of protected public lands, along with the continuity of the population with other populations in Canada, has contributed to the survival of the wolf in Minnesota. There appear to be no serious problems that could result in the immediate extirpation of the species in this area, and thus the population would not need to be endangered as defined by the Act. On the other hand, the Minnesota population does represent the last significant element of a species that once occupied a vastly larger range in the lower 48 States, and long-term trends may be working against the wolf. To quote the Recovery Plan, “FUTURE circumstances are unpredictable and those that now exist could change drastically. For example, widespread industrialization, mineral exploitation, and general development could threaten much of the wolf’s remaining range, making regulation increasingly significant to the wolf’s management. Additional roads, power lines, mines and tourist facilities could further carve up much of northern Minnesota. This would disrupt the natural repopulation of depleted areas by wolves and promote higher human densities which would compete with wolves for their wild prey.” Moreover, in recent years there has been a decline in deer, the main prey species, in parts of the primary range of the wolf. This decline has resulted primarily from forest maturation and severe winter weather. Wolf numbers have declined accordingly in some of these areas. In contrast, wolves have increased in their peripheral range where they are more likely to come into conflict with human interests and thus stimulate action against them. These various problems would seem to warrant the maintenance of a Threatened classification for the wolf in Minnesota.

2. Overutilization for commercial, sporting, scientific, or educational purposes.—Direct killing by man, including large-scale commercial and sport taking, has been the major direct factor in the decline of wolves in the conterminous United States and Mexico. Wolves are shot, especially when they appear in settled areas that are not part of their regular range. Illegal killing is a problem in Minnesota and other areas where the wolf still occurs.

3. Disease or predation.—Not applicable.

4. The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms.—There are still some places in the lower 48 States, such as Washington and North Dakota, where wolves may occur and where they are not under Federal protection. Moreover, because of the confusing taxonomy of wolf subspecies, and because wolves may wander across recognized subspecific boundaries, difficult law enforcement problems may arise. In Minnesota, wolves are totally protected under the Act, but this total protection may actually be working against the species. By prohibiting the killing of wolves, even those that may be attacking livestock and pets, current regulations may be creating an adverse public attitude toward the whole species.

5. Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.—None in addition to those discussed above.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires Federal agencies, and only Federal agencies, to insure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them do not jeopardize the continued existence of Endangered or Threatened species, or adversely affect the Critical Habitat of such species. The Recovery Plan has established zones 1, 2, and 3 in Minnesota, as “critical areas” of the wolf. These areas provide the space for normal growth and movement of established pack units and would supply sufficient food and cover for the assured survival of the species. The Service considers that these areas qualify as Critical Habitat, pursuant to Section 7, and that Federal agencies should evaluate their actions affecting these areas relative to the welfare of the wolf.

EFFECTS OF THE RULEMAKING

With respect to the gray wolf in the 48 conterminous States of the United States, in Minnesota, and in Mexico, all provisions of section 9(a)(1) of the Act, as implemented by 50 CFR 17.21 will apply. These provisions, in part, will make it illegal for any person to take, import or export, ship in interstate commerce in the course of a commercial activity, or sell or offer for sale in interstate or foreign commerce any wolf. It also will be illegal to possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, or ship any such wildlife which was illegally taken. Certain exceptions apply to agents of the Service and State conservation agencies. Permits for scientific purposes or for the enhancement of propagation or survival are available in accordance with 50 CFR 17.22. Economic hardship permits are available under 50 CFR 17.23. For practical purposes these measures already are in effect since nearly all wolves that regularly occur in the region in question are currently listed as Endangered. The rulemaking will extend Endangered status to those few wolves that may be in the region that are not already listed, and would simplify law enforcement and conservation measures.

With respect to the gray wolf in Minnesota, which is listed as Threatened, a special rule is promulgated which is analogous to those of 50 CFR 17.31, and an additional provision for depredation control. The prohibitions of 50 CFR 17.31 are essentially the same as those for Endangered species, except that “any wolf sport may be attacked livestock and pets, current regulations may be creating an adverse public attitude toward the whole species. The Act of 1973 requires Federal agencies, and only Federal agencies, to insure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them do not jeopardize the continued existence of Endangered or Threatened species, or adversely affect the Critical Habitat of such species. The Recovery Plan has established zones 1, 2, and 3 in Minnesota, as “critical areas” of the wolf. These areas provide the space for normal growth and movement of established pack units and would supply sufficient food and cover for the assured survival of the species. The Service considers that these areas qualify as Critical Habitat, pursuant to Section 7, and that Federal agencies should evaluate their actions affecting these areas relative to the welfare of the wolf.

The provisions for predator control states that wolves may be taken by authorized Federal or State employees in zones 2, 3, 4, and 5, if such wolves commit significant depredations on lawfully present domestic animals. Few, if any, of these wolves will be taken in zones 2 and 3 which have practically no livestock, and nearly all will be taken in zone 4. Essentially then, the wolf population in zones 1, 2, and 3 will not be affected by the depredation control activity. The population in zone 4 might be held below biological potential, but would continue to exist in reasonable numbers. The control of depredating wolves in zone 4 will reduce conflicts with human interests and create a more favorable public attitude that would be of overall benefit to the wolf.

The effects of Critical Habitat determination involve Federal agencies. In accordance with section 7 of the Act, such agencies, and only such agencies, are required to insure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them do not adversely affect the Critical Habitat of Endangered or Threatened species. The designation of Critical habitat for the gray wolf in Minnesota, as delineated below, points out areas where this responsibility will apply. This will not automatically prohibit any particular actions, and it is not the responsibility of Federal actions involving the areas in question would not be expected to be detrimental to the wolf. For more information, please consult the “Guidelines to Assist Federal Agencies in Complying with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973,” as prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service.
2. Section 17.40 is amended by adding the following paragraph (d):

§ 17.40 Special rules—mammals.

(d) Gray wolf (Canis lupus) in Minnesota.—(1) Zones. For purposes of these regulations, the State of Minnesota is divided into the following five zones.

ZONE 1—4,488 SQUARE MILES

Beginning at the point of intersection of United States and Canadian boundaries in Section 22, Township 71 North, Range 22 West, in Rainy Lake, then proceeding along the west side of Sections 22, 27, and 24 in said Township and Sections 10, 13, 15, and 18 in said Township and Sections 10, 11, 12 and 13 in said Township; then south along the shore of Coffee Creek to the junction with County Route 53; thence southeasterly along State Highway 53; thence southeasterly along State Highway 53 to the junction with County Route 765; thence easterly along County Route 765 to the junction with Kabegama Lake in Ash River Bay; thence along the south boundary of Section 23 in Township 69 North, Range 19 West, to the junction with the Moose River; thence southeasterly along the Moose River to Moose Lake; thence along the western shore of Moose Lake to the river between Moose Lake and Long Lake; thence along the said river to Long Lake; thence along the north shore of Long Lake to the junction on the east side of Long Lake in Murry City; thence southeasterly along Forest Road 203; thence southeasterly along Forest Road 305 to the junction with County Route 16; thence easterly along County Route 16 to the junction with County Route 569; thence north along County Route 569 to the junction with County Route 565; thence in a northerly direction along County Route 565 to the junction with County Route 460; thence in a westerly direction along County Route 460 to the junction with County Route 408; thence in a northerly direction along County Route 408 to the junction with the Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific Railroad; thence in a northerly direction along the Whiteface River to the end of Section 17.40(d).

ZONE 2—1,856 SQUARE MILES

Beginning at the intersection of the Erie Mine Co. Railroad and State Highway 1 (Murry City); thence southeasterly along State Highway 1 to the junction with County Road 4; thence southeasterly along County Road 4 to the junction with County Route 4; thence southeasterly along County Route 4 to the junction with County Route 4; thence southeasterly along County Route 4 to the junction with State Highway 1; thence southeasterly along State Highway 1 to the junction with the Minnesota-Vermont 1969.}

The primary author of this rulemaking is Ronald M. Nowak, Office of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (202/348-7814).

REGULATIONS PROMULGATION

Accordingly, Part 17, Subparts B, D, and I, Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, are amended as set forth below.

1. Section 17.11 is amended by deleting the Mexican wolf (Canis lupus baileyi), northern Rocky Mountain wolf (Canis lupus irremotus), eastern timber wolf (Canis lupus lycaon), and Texas gray wolf (Canis lupus montana) from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants, and by adding the gray wolf (Canis lupus) to the List as indicated below:

17.11 Endangered and threatened wildlife.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Common name</th>
<th>Scientific name</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Known distribution</th>
<th>Portion of range where threatened or endangered</th>
<th>Status when listed</th>
<th>Special rules</th>
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<td>United States (48 conterminous States, other than Minnesota), Mexico</td>
<td>Canis lupus</td>
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ZONE 3—3,501 SQUARE MILES

Beginning at the junction of State Highway 11 and State Highway 55; thence southeasterly along State Highway 69 to the junction with State Highway 1; thence westerly along State Highway 1 to the junction with State Highway 72; thence north along State Highway 72 to the junction with an un-numbered township road beginning in the northeast corner of Section 25, Township 155 North, Range 31 West; thence westerly along the said road for approximately seven (7) miles to the junction with SPR 95 and continuing west through the southern boundary of Sections 36 through 31, Township 155 North, Range 33 West, through Sections 36 through 31, Township 155 North, Range 34 West, through Sections 36 through 31, Township 155 North, Range 35 West, through Sections 36 and 33, Township 155 North, Range 36 West to the junction with State Highway 89; thence northwesterly along State Highway 89 to the junction with County Route 44; thence northerly along County Route 44 to the junction with County Route 704; thence northerly along County 704 to the junction with SPR 49; thence northerly along SPR 49 to the junction with SPR 57; thence easterly along SPR 87 to the junction with SPR 49; thence south along SPR 63 to the junction with SPR 70; thence easterly along SPR 70 to the junction with County Route 16; thence easterly along County Route 16 to the junction with State Highway 72; thence south on State Highway 72 to the junction with State Highway 21; thence south on State Highway 21 to the point of beginning of Zone 2 at the junction of the Erie Railroad Tracks and State Highway 1.

ZONE 4—20,883 SQUARE MILES

Excluding Zones 1, 2 and 3, all that part of Minnesota north and east of a line beginning on State Trunk Highway 18; thence westerly along Highway 18 to State Trunk Highway 16; thence northerly on Highway 65 to State Trunk Highway 210; thence westerly along Highway 210 to State Trunk Highway 6; thence northerly on State Trunk Highway 6 to Emily; thence westerly along County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 1, Crow Wing County, to CSAH 2, Cass County; thence westerly along CSAH 2 to Pine River; thence northwesterly along State Trunk Highway 371 to Backus; thence westerly along State Trunk Highway 87 to U.S. Highway 71; thence northerly along U.S. 71 to State Trunk Highway 200; thence northwesterly along Highway 200 to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 2, Clearwater County; thence northerly along CSAH 2 to Shevlin; thence along U.S. Highway 2 to Bagley; thence northerly along State Trunk Highway 92 to Gully; thence northerly along CSAH 2, Polk County, to CSAH 27, Pennington County; thence along CSAH 27 to State Trunk Highway 1; thence northerly on Highway 1 to CSAH 25, Pennington County; thence northerly along CSAH 25 to CSAH 54, Marshall County, thence northerly along CSAH 54 to Grygla; thence west and northerly along Highway 69 to Roseau; thence northerly along State Trunk Highway 310 to the Canadian border.

ZONE 5—54,803 SQUARE MILES

All that part of Minnesota south and west of the line described as the south and west border of Zone 4.
REGULATORY ZONES FOR GRAY WOLF IN MINNESOTA

(ZONES 1, 2, and 3 are CRITICAL HABITAT)

Zone Sizes (square miles)

Zone 1: 4,488
Zone 2: 1,856
Zone 3: 3,501
Zone 4: 20,883
Zone 5: 54,603
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(2) Prohibitions. The following prohibitions apply to the gray wolf in Minnesota.

(a) Any person may take a gray wolf in Minnesota in defense of his own life or the lives of others.

(b) Any employee or agent of the Service, any other Federal land management agency, or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, who is designated by his agency for such purposes, may, when acting in the course of his official duties, take a gray wolf in Minnesota without a permit if such action is necessary to:

(1) Aid a sick, injured, or orphaned specimen; or

(2) Dispose of a dead specimen; or

(3) Salvage a dead specimen which may be useful for scientific study.

(4) Furthermore, such designated employees or agents of the Service or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may take a gray wolf without a permit in Minnesota if such action is necessary to remove from zone 2, 3, 4, or 5, as delineated in paragraph (d)(3)(i), a gray wolf committing significant depredations on lawfully present domestic animals, but only if the taking is done in a humane manner.

(c) Any taking pursuant to paragraph (d)(2)(i)(A) and (B) of this section must be reported in writing to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Law Enforcement, P.O. Box 19183, Washington, D.C. 20036, within 5 days. The specimen may only be retained, disposed of, or salvaged in accordance with directions from the Service.

(d) Any employee or agent of the Service or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources when operating under a Cooperative Agreement with the Service in accordance with section 6(c) of the Act, who is designated by his agency for such purposes, may, when acting in the course of his official duties, take a gray wolf in Minnesota without a permit if such action is necessary:

(1) To aid a sick, injured, or orphaned specimen; or

(2) To dispose of a dead specimen; or

(3) To salvage a dead specimen which may be useful for scientific study.

(4) Furthermore, such designated employees or agents of the Service or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may take a gray wolf without a permit in Minnesota within 5 days. The specimen may only be retained, disposed of, or salvaged in accordance with directions from the Service.

(e) Any employee or agent of the Service or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources when operating under a Cooperative Agreement with the Service in accordance with section 6(c) of the Act, who is designated by his agency for such purposes, may, when acting in the course of his official duties, take a gray wolf in Minnesota to carry out scientific research or conservation programs.

(f) Unlawfully taken wolves. No person may possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, or ship, by any means whatsoever, a gray wolf taken unlawfully in Minnesota.

(g) Import or export. Except as may be authorized by a permit issued under §17.32, no person may import or export any Minnesota gray wolf.

(h) Commercial transactions. Except as may be authorized by a permit issued under §17.32, no person may deliver, receive, carry, transport, ship, sell, or offer to sell in interstate or foreign commerce, by any means whatsoever, and in the course of a commercial activity, any Minnesota gray wolf.

(3) Permits. All permits available under §17.32 (General Permits—Threatened wildlife) are available with regard to the gray wolf in Minnesota.

All the terms and provisions of §17.32 apply to such permits issued under the authority of this paragraph (d)(3).

3. Section 17.95 is amended by adding the following Critical Habitat description after the Critical Habitat description for the Morro Bay kangaroo rat:

§17.95 Critical habitat—fish and wildlife.

(a) Mammals.

(b) Gray Wolf

(Michigan, Isle Royale National Park, Michigan. Areas of land, water, and airspace in Beltrami, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Roseau, and St. Louis Counties, with boundaries (4th and 5th Principal meridians) identical to those of zones 1, 2, and 3, as delineated in 50 CFR 17.40(d)(1).

Note—The Service has determined that this document does not contain a major action requiring preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under Executive Order 11948 and OMB Circular A-107.


LYNN A. GREENWALT,
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

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