

# Preface

In this book, we document and evaluate the recovery of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) in the Great Lakes region of the United States. The Great Lakes region is unique in that it was the only portion of the lower 48 states where wolves were never completely extirpated. This region also contains the area where many of the first modern concepts of wolf conservation and research were developed. Early proponents of wolf conservation such as Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson, and Durward Allen lived and worked in the region. The longest ongoing research on wolf–prey relations (see Vucetich and Peterson, Chap. 3) and the first use of radio telemetry for studying wolves (see Mech, Chap. 2) occurred in the Great Lakes region.

The Great Lakes region is the first place in the United States where “Endangered” wolf populations recovered. All three states (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan) developed ecologically and socially sound wolf conservation plans, and the federal government delisted the population of wolves in these states from the United States list of endangered and threatened species on March 12, 2007 (see Refsnider, Chap. 21). Wolf management reverted to the individual states at that time. Although this delisting has since been challenged, we believe that biological recovery of wolves has occurred and anticipate the delisting will be restored. This will be the first case of wolf conservation reverting from the federal government to the state conservation agencies in the United States.

In the process of wolf recovery, we have learned much about wolf biology and ecology, endangered species management, carnivore conservation, landscape ecology, depredation management, and social aspects of wildlife conservation. Our book traces wolf recovery in this region and highlights lessons learned by conservationists during the recovery process.

The concept for this book grew out of a well-attended symposium held at the annual meeting of The Wildlife Society in Madison, Wisconsin on September 29, 2005. Many of the authors of the chapters in this book presented portions of their material at that conference. The chapters also cover a broader and more complete range of information than was possible in a half-day symposium. To that end, we recruited additional authors to contribute chapters in the book. These authors are professionals who are or were directly involved in major portions of research and

conservation of wolves in the Great Lakes region. Authors represent federal, state, and nonprofit conservation agencies, and universities in the region.

Our goal was to produce a semitechnical book on wolf recovery that is both rigorous with respect to science and policy and accessible and interesting for the lay reader. The story of wolf recovery in the Great Lakes region is one of international significance for conservationists, and wolves themselves are controversial, charismatic, and fascinating on many levels. Each chapter presents a thorough review of the pertinent literature. Some chapters also present new data or new perspectives and interpretations. To maintain scientific rigor, each chapter was reviewed by at least two professionals who are specialists in the relevant fields.

Contributing authors represent a remarkable breadth in professional expertise, and cover topics ranging from ecology to policy to cultural, social, and historic significance of wolves. Moreover, the authors address wolf recovery from diverse perspectives that range from important ecological theory developed and applied by academicians in some of the region's best universities to the on-the-ground, muddy-boot realities of local management pioneered by dedicated conservationists working for public and private agencies. Indeed, we are especially proud of this cross-disciplinary collaboration because it parallels the cross-disciplinary collaboration between researchers, managers, and private conservationists that facilitated wolf recovery in the Great Lakes region.

For the purpose of this book, we assume wolves in the Great Lakes region are mainly gray wolves of the subspecies *Canis lupus nubilus*. However, we recognize some recent research suggests that a mixture of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) and Eastern wolves (*Canis lycaon*) may exist in the region (see Nowak, Chap. 16).

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Wydeven, A.P.; van Deelen, T.R.; Heske, E. (Eds.)

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