

Most Michiganders like having wolves in their home state

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The overwhelming majority of Michigan residents place value on having wolves in their home state while a small minority would buy a license to hunt them, according to a Michigan State University study.

The survey, which addresses how the state could manage its wolf population now that *Canis lupus* has been removed from the federal [endangered species list](#), indicates that 82 percent of those surveyed value knowing that there are [wolves](#) in Michigan. On the other end of the spectrum, only 14 percent report that they would purchase a license to hunt wolves.

However, it is important to seriously consider the responses of Upper Peninsula [residents](#), some of whom have to live with wolves in their backyards and farms, according to Meredith Gore, assistant professor of fisheries and wildlife.

“Although UP residents placed the lowest value on wolves, still 61 percent said they value them,” she said. “However, they also showed the greatest interest in purchasing a hunting license. In fact, 55 percent of those surveyed said they would.”

The intent of the study, which polled nearly 1,000 residents, was to measure public opinion about hunting before policy changes are proposed. It was designed to give legislators and other policymakers insight about how Michiganders may react to legislation and policies managing the wolf population, which is estimated at approximately 600.

“We asked the questions in such a way to determine how residents felt a decision to hunt should be made,” Gore said. “We wanted to measure how many Michiganders agree that decisions should be based on biological science compared to those who think that they should be handled via a public vote.”

Nearly 80 percent of residents agreed that science should be used to decide a [wolf](#) hunt. This is compared to 56 percent of those surveyed who indicated the issue should be decided through a ballot initiative. This finding shows support for public belief in science, namely in support of science’s role in wildlife management, Gore added.

The study was co-authored by Michael Nelson, MSU associate professor of environmental ethics and philosophy, and Michelle Lute, MSU graduate student. Researchers from Michigan Technological University also contributed to the survey. The questions were part of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research’s Office for Survey Research at MSU.

Provided by Michigan State University

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