

USACE Natural Resource Management

Mammals



Gray Wolf

FAST FACTS

REASONS FOR CURRENT STATUS: Gray wolves were initially listed as a subspecies under predecessors of the Endangered Species Act. The gray wolf was grandfathered into the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and in 1978 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reclassified the gray wolf as species and listed it as threatened in Minnesota and endangered wherever else found in the lower 48 states.

By the time the gray wolf was reclassified in 1978, it had already been extirpated from much of its historical range.

The decline of the gray wolf in the 19th and 20th centuries was primarily the result of human-caused mortality such as poisoning, unregulated trapping and shooting, and even government funded wolf-extermination efforts. (USFWS)

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: The USFWS's longstanding approach to recovery focused on reestablishing wolf populations in three specific regions of the country: The Eastern United States (including the Great Lakes States), the northern Rocky Mountains, and the Southwestern United States. Since the species' 1978 reclassification, the gray wolf populations have increased in numbers and expanded in distribution. There now exists two large, stable or growing metapopulations in the Great Lakes region and the Western U.S.

Gray wolves' population increase and expanded distribution reached the point that the species was delisted by USFWS in 2020. At time of delisting, the responsibility for sustainable management and protection was returned to state and tribal wildlife agencies. The Service based this decision on the best data available and thorough analysis of ongoing threats. (USFWS)

HABITAT NEEDS: The gray wolf is able to occupy a wide range of habitats including temperate forests, mountains, tundra, taiga, and grasslands. Consequently, the gray wolf displays no particular habitat preference.

- Minimum of 10,000-13,000 sq km (with low road density) might be necessary to support a viable population. (USFWS)
 - Young are born in underground burrow which may have been dug by a wolf or abandoned by another mammal. (USFWS)

Appearance: The gray wolf is between 5 to 6 feet in length and stands at a height of around 2.5 feet, making them noticeably larger than coyotes which occupy the same range. This species generally grows to weigh between 50 to 100 pounds, with males being heavier than females. Their fur is most often mixed gray in color, but some wolves may be black or white. They have a broad snout and slightly rounded ears. (USFWS)

Photos: United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Natural Resource Management (NRM)

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USACE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ROLE: According to the Engineering Research and Development Center's Threatened and Endangered Species Team Cost Estimates, the USACE has expended over \$350,000 on efforts related to the gray wolf since 2006. The costs associated with the gray wolf have been incurred by multiple business lines including, but not limited to, Environmental Stewardship, Hydropower, and Regulatory. Funds have been expended on efforts such as In-house Research and Inventory, Survey, and Monitoring efforts.

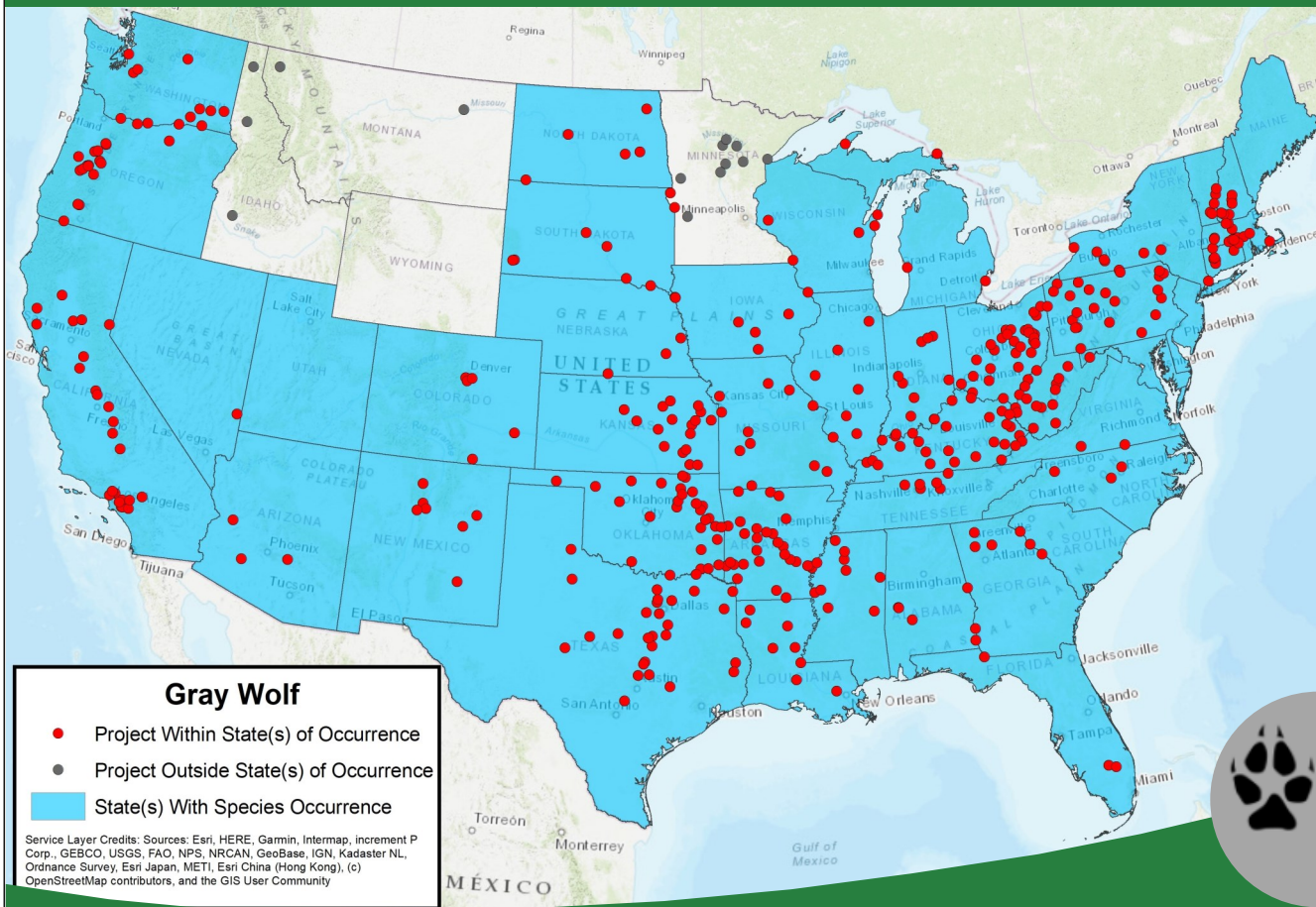
WHAT IS USACE NRM DOING:

Despite the gray wolf's wide range and broad distribution, the species was only listed in a single district of the Mississippi Valley Division in the FY20 NRM Assessment. Within the St. Paul district the gray wolf was noted to have the potential to occur at the Eau Galle River Lake Project and all six of the lakes referred to as the Reservoirs at the Headwaters of the Mississippi River—Cross Lake, Gull Lake, Leech Lake, Pokegama Lake, Sandy Lake, and Winnebigo Lake.

At these projects and across the gray wolf's range, USACE works to ensure that no current or proposed work will negatively impact the gray wolf or its habitat.



Photo Above: A day use area at Eau Galle Lake, which is noted in FY20 NRM Assessment to have the potential for the gray wolf to occur.



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Source: Map provided by Ashleigh Boss, ORISE Fellow, Institute for Water Resources

