

GRAY WOLF

Commonly Asked Questions & Answers

1. How long have wolves been on Fort McCoy?

During the summer of 1999, possible wolf scat was observed on roads and trails north of Highway 21 (North Post). During the gun-deer season that same year several hunters reported seeing what they believed to be a wolf. In December 1999, tracks were observed after a fresh snowfall. These tracks were confirmed as wolf track by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) biologist Dick Thiel. Wolves have occupied one or more territories on the installation since that time.

2. Did the government release wolves on Fort McCoy?

No. Beginning in the 1980s, wolves from Minnesota began to disperse into Wisconsin. By the mid-1990s, wolves had established territories within the Black River State Forest in Jackson County. It is likely that the first wolf documented on Fort McCoy in 1999 dispersed from one of the packs found within Jackson County.

3. Does the Army monitor the wolf population on the installation?

Yes. To determine the population of wolves on the Installation, track surveys are conducted from December - March annually. Trail cameras are also used to assist in determining pack size and the identification of individual animals. As resources allow and in coordination with the WDNR and Wildlife Services, wolves are trapped and telemetry collars are placed on them. Monitoring these collared wolves provides information regarding territory size, den and rendezvous sites, habitat utilization within territories, etc. Howling surveys are conducted during the summer and early fall to help determine if pups are present within the pack(s). All monitoring data collected is shared with the WDNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

4. Why does the Army monitor/manage the wolf population on the installation?

The Army, as a federal agency, is required to abide by all requirements of the Endangered Species Act. The Army is also entrusted to be good stewards of the federal lands it occupies. Management of wolves will continue after their removal from the endangered species list to help ensure that they remain a component of the wildlife found on the Installation.

5. Did Fort McCoy allow the hunting and trapping of wolves on the Installation as part of Wisconsin Wolf Seasons in 2012-2014?

No. The territorial boundaries of both of the Installation wolf packs extend onto private property. Fort McCoy wanted to determine if wolves from these packs would be harvested on adjacent private properties. In addition, Fort McCoy hunting and fishing permits, via a contract with the WDNR, are issued through the Automated License Issuance System (ALIS). The current contract does not allow the sale of Fort McCoy Wolf Permits and would require a modification to do so. The cost to modify this contract is not fiscally responsible since; at most, a small number of permits would be issued annually.

6. Will Fort McCoy allow the hunting and trapping of wolves on the Installation as part of future Wisconsin Wolf Seasons?

All options for managing wolves on the Installation, to include allowing the hunting and trapping of wolves, will remain open. Wolf numbers on the Installation have declined since the winter of 2010/2011. This decline can be attributed to: natural dispersion of wolves; wolf mortality resulting from private landowners shooting wolves under the authority of depredation permits; Wildlife Services personnel trapping/euthanizing depredating wolves; mortality caused by vehicle collisions; and mortality resulting from wolves being harvested during the WDNR Wolf Season on lands adjacent to the Installation. It may not be necessary to hold a Wolf Season on the Installation to manage wolf numbers.

7. If wolves from packs residing on Fort McCoy are depredating livestock on private lands, will Fort McCoy allow control efforts to occur on the Installation?

Yes. In 2012, it was discovered that wolves from both packs residing on the Installation were depredating and/or harassing livestock on private property adjacent to the Installation. Fort McCoy granted permission to United States Department of Agriculture - Wildlife Services personnel to set traps on the Installation adjacent to this private property in an attempt to capture/euthanize wolves.