

GRAY WOLF MANAGEMENT ON FORT MCCOY



WHY DOES FORT MCCOY MANAGE GRAY WOLVES

- Congress has mandated that all federal agencies shall utilize their authorities to help conserve endangered species.
- Fort McCoy must abide by all applicable laws and regulations, such as the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- The Army is entrusted to be good stewards of the federal lands it occupies.
- Management Objectives: **MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO MILITARY TRAINING** while at the same time complying with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

HISTORY OF WOLF MANAGEMENT ON FORT MCCOY

- Winter track surveys to document the presence of wolves were initiated during the winter of 1995/1996.
- Wolf tracks were first documented during December 1999, when the tracks of a lone male were observed.
- This wolf established a territory on Fort McCoy, north of Highway 21 (i.e. North Post).
- During the summer of 2001, a female wolf arrived within the North Post territory.
- In December 2002, a coyote trapper inadvertently captured a female wolf in a trap on North Post. With assistance from the WDNR, a telemetry collar was attached.

HISTORY OF WOLF MANAGEMENT ON FORT MCCOY

- The first documentation of wolf pups being borne on Fort McCoy occurred in 2003.
- The Fort McCoy Wolf Management Plan was approved in 2003. This plan was last updated in 2011.
- A pair of wolves established a territory on South Post (south of Highway 21) during the winter of 2009/2010.
- Wolf numbers on the Installation have fluctuated from year to year (see table on next page).

Winter wolf population estimates based on track surveys and wolf observations.

| YEAR | NORTH POST | SOUTH POST |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1997/1998 | 0 | --- |
| 1998/1999 | 0 | --- |
| 1999/2000 | 1 | 0 |
| 2000/2001 | 1 | 0 |
| 2001/2002 | 2 | 0 |
| 2002/2003 | 5 | 0 |
| 2003/2004 | 2 | 0 |
| 2004/2005 | 4 | 0 |
| 2005/2006 | 2 | 0 |
| 2006/2007 | 5 | 1 |
| 2007/2008 | 5 | 0 |
| 2008/2009 | 7 | 0 |
| 2009/2010 | 4 | 2 |
| 2010/2011 | 12 | 8 |
| 2011/2012 | 10 | 7 |
| 2012/2013 | 9 | 2 |
| 2013/2014 | 5 | 2 |
| 2014/2015 | 3 | 0 |
| 2015/2016 | 3 | 0 |

GRAY WOLF MONITORING

- Track Surveys: To estimate wolf numbers, track surveys are conducted numerous times each winter 12-24 hours after a fresh snowfall.
- Howling Surveys: During the summer and early fall, surveys are conducted by stopping at locations throughout a pack territory and imitating the howl of a wolf. If within hearing distance, wolves will often howl back. This survey technique is useful in determining if pups are present within the pack.

GRAY WOLF MONITORING

- Radio Telemetry: Locating collared wolves allows their home range to be estimated. The North Post Pack territory is estimated to be a minimum of 95 square miles in size while the South Post Pack territory (when occupied by wolves) is estimated to be a minimum of 37 square miles in size.
- Surveillance Camera: A remote operated camera is used to assist in determining pack size and the identification of individual animals. Road-killed deer were often used to attract deer to the camera location.

WOLF MORTALITY

- There are many causes of wolf mortality including: disease, other wolves, vehicle collisions, legal harvest (in years when season is conducted), depredation permits, and illegal shooting.

HISTORY OF WOLF W788

- On December 21, 2011, a female wolf estimated to be 8 months old was captured in a coyote trap on South Post.
- United States Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services employees placed a telemetry collar on her.
- This wolf was given the identification code W788.
- W788 remained on Fort McCoy until mid-February 2012 when she could no longer be located.

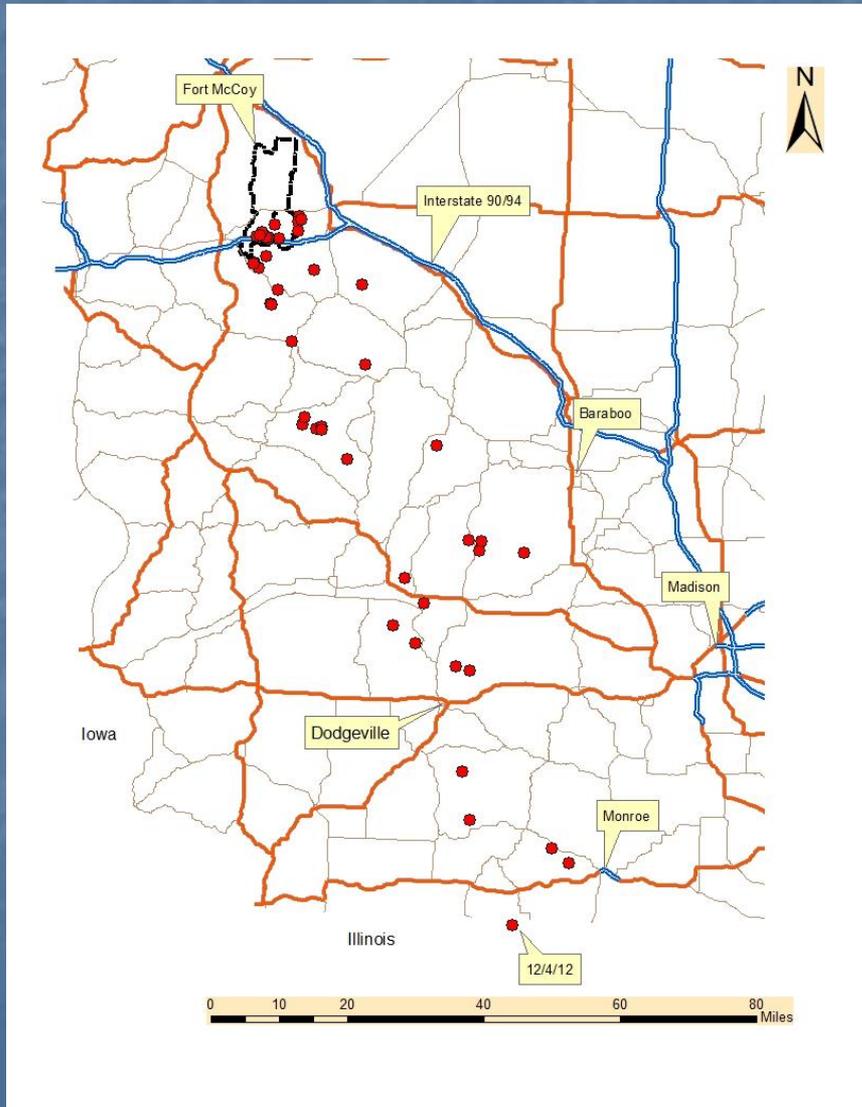
HISTORY OF WOLF W788

- In early April 2012, WDNR pilots located W788 near Richland Center, WI, approximately 35 miles south of her capture location.
- W788 moved back and forth between Richland Center and Fort McCoy until mid-summer when she crossed the Wisconsin River near Lone Rock.
- In early November she was found only a few miles north of the Illinois border.
- When located by WDNR pilots on December 4, 2012, she had crossed the border into Illinois.

HISTORY OF WOLF W788

- W788 stayed in and around the Wisconsin/Illinois border for several months.
- On March 15, 2013, her collar was detected in mortality mode.
- A necropsy was performed on the carcass and it was determined that she had likely died from injuries after being struck by a vehicle.
- Her carcass was found 108.5 miles south of where she was originally captured on Fort McCoy.

Telemetry locations for W788 from December 21, 2011 – December 4, 2012.



**W788 was found dead
On March 15, 2013, only
A few miles from her
December 4, 2012
location.**

Surveillance Camera Photos



Surveillance Camera Photos Wolf Pups At Den

