

EXCERPT FROM DNR TIMELINE, Nov. 29, 2018

May 20, 2016: The Michigan DNR Wildlife Division contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via email to urge the agency to authorize Wildlife Services to use lethal control to help manage wolves on the Tom Dykstra farm in Ontonagon County. The farm had experienced chronic wolf problems in each of the past several years. Duane Kolpack has a farm of his own, but he also works as a caretaker at the Dykstra farm.

The email read, in part: “The aggressive nature of the depredation on this farm and brazen attitude toward people is becoming disconcerting. Over the past approximately two-week period, this farm has had 12 calves killed and four others injured by depredating wolves. In one case, the wolf was sufficiently bold as to enter the pasture and kill a calf at the very moment one of our Wildlife Technicians was in the same field investigating a previous kill. We believe there may be three wolves hunting this particular farm. We have captured two of those animals, fitted them with GPS collars, held them in a crate, and fired cracker shells over their heads at the time of release in an effort to discourage them from further activity on the farm. This effort appears to have failed. Within two days of capturing and harassing these animals, three more calves were killed. The GPS data suggest these wolves have not abandoned the farm and, in fact, continue to occupy the area within one mile of the capture location. With these facts in mind, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources feels strong that the three wolves frequenting the Dykstra Farm should be euthanized before they develop into a serious threat to human safety.”

In a response from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the DNR Wildlife Division and Wildlife Services that same day, the following passage was included:

“We greatly appreciate the exceptional efforts made by the Michigan DNR and Wildlife Services to address the wolf issues occurring at the Dykstra farm in Ontonagon County. Unfortunately, the matter has progressed to the point that there are human safety risks and we agree with the Michigan DNR’s recommendations action should be taken before the human safety risks become more serious or immediate.”

Note: Subsequent of this reporting, details were clarified regarding what happened at the Dykstra Farm when the DNR wildlife technician had been present. Biologists confirmed that a DNR wildlife technician had been at the farm delivering batteries for lights being used to harass wolves. A passerby told the technician there was a wolf in the pasture harassing cows. The technician drove out into the pasture. The wolf was staring down a calf, preparing to kill it. From about 60-80 yards away, the technician blew the horn of the vehicle. The wolf did not move. The technician then fired a shot from the vehicle over the head of the wolf and it ran away. GPS data showed one of the wolves collared left the farm after being harassed did not return. DNR Wildlife Division administrators had determined the wolves on the farm were becoming more brazen, producing a demonstrable, yet not immediate, threat to human safety, prompting the email to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.