

My name is Jason Schuldt, I am 59 years old, I live in Forest Lake, have a cabin on a small Lake in Lutsen, MN, and my family has hunted deer in the Tofte-Lutsen area since 1935. I have two children, Autumn and Jack, who are young-adult deer hunters, but we no longer hunt along the north shore of MN due to the extreme wolf predation and lack of deer in that area.

My grandfather, father, brother, uncles, and I hunted in the Tofte/Lutsen area and experienced the ebbs and flows of deer hunting in that region for over 90 years. However, since 2010, there has been a steady decline of whitetail, due to extreme wolf predation, coupled with occasional severe winters. We experienced more severe winters from 1935-2000 but never saw drops in the deer population like I have seen in the past 15 years. I also have seen, heard, and had face-to-face encounters with wolves that would have never happened prior to the early 2000's. I do not want wolves eliminated from that region, since they play an important role in the ecosystem, however, they do need to be managed through a hunting/trapping season.

During the summer months, I fish about 60 days per year and would typically see deer **daily** while driving to and from our cabin in Lutsen. Most days, I would see 1 or 2 deer and the best days, over 20 deer would be spotted. Last year, I saw a combined total of only 3 deer while driving in the backwoods of the Tofte/Lutsen area from May – October. The last time I saw a deer during deer-season was a 6-point buck in 2018, which I did not have the heart to shoot.

What has changed? The winters are milder but the number of wolves has grown exponentially, due to lack of a wolf season and the false premise that the brain-worm in whitetails impacts the moose population. Biologists have proven that the brain worm in moose is carried by a slug, which can easily be found on the underside of vegetation in that region. Therefore, increasing the wolf population to suppress the deer population is based on a completely incorrect scientific premise and does nothing to help the moose population. We now encounter wolves during the summer months, which rarely happened when I was a child, they regularly approach our cabins looking for beaver, deer, fox, pets, and they are no longer afraid of humans. I have had them shadow my wife, while walking through the woods, they thought she was a deer, and a friend of mine lost his lab when the wolves baited the dog in and killed them by a pond on their property near Grand Marais.

We no longer hunt in the Lutsen/Tofte area and it is heartbreaking, since this was our most-treasured family tradition. I will not take my children to that region because they will not see a deer or even sign, unless you hunt next to the shore of Lake Superior in areas primarily occupied by humans. Even so, there are so few deer, I don't feel it would be ethical to shoot them at this time.

I simply ask the MN legislature and governor to reinstate a wolf season in Minnesota to maintain balance in the ecosystem and to preserve the hunting opportunities and traditions in northeastern Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Jason Schuldt

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