Many of our residents were probably very happy to hear that wolves in the western Great Lakes region had been removed from the federal endangered species list.

And, it seems, just in the nick of time, if persistent rumors heard about the area carry any weight.

Wolves, like any carnivore, like to bite into any nice warm and tasty morsel suitable for family dining. In our area and that means deer, and we certainly have been seeing quite a few deer around city areas this year.

Not quite as visible, but nonetheless around, are the wolves, say some area residents, especially in and around the Iron County Fairgrounds area.

Rumors some will say, and maybe that's a fact, or maybe not. But it's not that far a stretch of the imagination to know that wherever there is an abundance of deer, you will have a highly skilled predator closely watching for a chance at an easy meal.

If the wolves are being spotted that close to town, it also means any outdoor pet not protected by top-to-bottom and overheard fencing may not survive that fresh air excursion into the back yard.

That may also be the fate of anyone walking their pet along the wayside.

Part of the problem is that we still see deer as a symbol of our outdoor lifestyle. They are beautiful, with those big soulful eyes and Bambi-like qualities, unless you happen to have one jump right in front of your vehicle and you can't stop in time to prevent having the car totaled.

Add to that problem, some of us still regard feeding our city deer as a duty to take care of God's dumb creatures that are destined to survive in our very ungodly winter weather.

So, we feed the deer our scraps. And when those scraps aren't enough, the deer help themselves to our bird feeders and devour every bit of corn and seed they can wrap their tongues around.

Nicely fed, fat deer are just what the predator wolf is looking for, but they'll more than happily settle for a skinny deer or a dog or a cat or rabbit… a ravenous wolf isn't too particular about what he or she eats, just that it fills the pit in an empty stomach and also feeds the rest of the lair.

I like seeing deer along the side roads when I'm driving. I prefer seeing them a little further into the woods so I know they won't be jumping out in front of my car.

I don't like seeing deer along the side roads whether I'm driving or walking, knowing that just beyond could be a couple of wolves setting up camp a few hundred feet from where I live.

If we're going to have to accept the wolves in our midst, I prefer both the predator and the prey be as far away from my living space as possible. Jeremiah Johnson I'm not.

--Allyce Westphal