

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM - WEEKLY REPORT

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Ken McDonald, Wildlife Bureau Chief
SUBJECT: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information
WEEK OF: May 7 - 13, 2011

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf-livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2009 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

WOLF MONITORING ACTIVITIES:

Flights: 5/5 & 6, Lance.

WOLF-LIVESTOCK ACTIVITIES:

5/11: Wildlife Services confirmed that a wolf or wolves killed a calf on private land near Silver Star. The Table Mountain pack is suspected to be involved. Wildlife Services has been authorized to kill three wolves.

5/13: Wildlife Services confirmed that a ewe was killed by a wolf or wolves on private land near Canyon Creek. This was the ewe that was previously injured on the May 2 attack. WS continues to work in the area and the 45 day management action will be renewed.

FWP welcomes George Rowan who will be volunteering for the wolf program out of Region 2 this summer. George is a wildlife biology student from the University of Montana.

Smucker has been trapping in the Blackfoot Valley for the Ovando Mtn pack.

Bradley has been trapping in the Bitterroot Valley for the Brooks Creek pack.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:

5/10: Lance spoke to approximately 20 members of the Skyline Sportsman's Club.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: Nothing to report.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RELATED ACTIVITIES: Nothing to report.

OTHER UPDATES:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is requesting public comment on proposed 2011 Wolf Seasons & Quota Alternatives:

PROPOSED 2011 WOLF SEASON ELEMENTS

Elements of the previous wolf season structure assured safety nets were incorporated so that regulated public hunting would not jeopardize wolf population long term viability. The proposed 2011 season structure retains many fundamental features from earlier season structures listed below.

1. Establishing quotas at a time of year (tentative in May and final in July) so that the most current monitoring data could be considered.
2. Maintain a 1-800 hotline so that hunters would know whether or not wolf harvest was legal (i.e. quota was open) prior to going hunting.
3. Mandatory reporting of successful harvest within 12 hours so FWP can closely monitor hunter success and quota status. Harvest quotas are proposed to tally only legal hunting harvest.
4. Mandatory carcass inspection within 10 days.
5. Closure of the season upon a 24-hour notice when a WMU or subunit quota is filled. Any harvest over-run at the WMU scale is proposed to be reduced from adjacent WMU quotas, other WMUs in the region or former recovery area or at the statewide scale.
6. FWP authority to initiate a season closure prior to reaching a quota when conditions or circumstances indicate the quota may be reached within 24 hours.
7. Definite season-ending closure date, regardless of whether the quotas were reached.
8. Emergency season closure at any time by order of the FWP Commission.
9. Adopt season structure and quota annually to better adapt and respond.

Other elements proposed include:

1. A hunting season beginning with the start of the general archery season and

- running through December 31, 2011. No trapping proposed during this period.
2. Licenses proposed to remain over-the-counter general sale to residents and nonresidents with total harvest controlled via required reporting of harvest by successful hunters.
 3. Any licensed hunter may take only one wolf in this proposed hunting season.
 4. An archery only season is proposed for all WMUs from September 3, 2011 until 20% of the WMU quota or subquota is met but ending no later than October 16, 2011.
 5. A backcountry rifle season is proposed to run from September 15, 2011 until the WMU quota or subquota is met but ending no later than December 31, 2011. This backcountry rifle season is proposed for WMU 150, deer/elk hunting district 280 portion of WMU 290 (subquota of 4) and deer/elk hunting district 316 portion of WMU 390 (subquota of 3).
 6. The general rifle season for all WMUs with remaining unfilled harvest quotas/subquotas is proposed to run from October 22, 2011 until the total WMU quota or subquota is met but ending no later than December 31, 2011.
 7. Any wolf license purchased during an open season is proposed to not be valid until 5 days from the day of purchase. This would make the sale of wolf licenses consistent with the sale of bear and lion licenses in an Enforcement effort to address potential illegal harvest prior to license purchase (see additional justification provided).
 8. A statewide quota of 220 wolves partitioned across 14 Wolf Management Units (WMUs). From modeling predictions, this represents a 40% harvest rate of the predicted pre-hunt population and will result in a population reduction of 7 - 25%.

All other season elements not specifically noted are proposed to be unchanged from 2010.

Table 1. Proposed 2011 statewide quota of 220, partitioned into proposed 14 individual WMUs (Legal Descriptions in Appendix I).

Wolf Management Unit	Proposed 2011 Quota
Northwest Montana	
Purcell – WMU 100	18
Salish – WMU 101	19
North Fork Flathead – WMU 110	2
Lower Clark Fork – WMU 121	17
Flathead – WMU 130	12
Bob Marshall – WMU 150	3
Lower Clark Fork – WMU 200	22
Blackfoot – WMU 290 (subquota of 4 in deer/elk HD 280)	20
Northcentral – WMU 400	10

Northwest Montana Total	123
Western Montana	
Bitterroot/Upper Clark Fk/Big Hole/Tendoys – WMU 210	36
West Fk Bitterroot – WMU 250	18
Western Montana Total	54
Southwest Montana	
Highlands/Tobacco Roots/Gravelly/Snowcrest – WMU 320	6
Gallatin/Madison – WMU 310	19
Southcentral Montana (subquota of 3 in deer/elk HD 316) – WMU 390	18
Southwest Montana	43
STATEWIDE TOTAL	220

COMMENT PROCESS AND DEADLINE

For further clarification, you may call the Wildlife Bureau office at 406-444-2612. To submit comments electronically, this letter with the imbedded links below can be found under “Opportunity for Public Comment” on the Hunting home page at the fwp.mt.gov website. Written comments can be sent to: FWP – Wildlife Bureau, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701. The public comment deadline for the wolf season, non-game work plan, access agreement and upland game bird limits is 5 PM, Monday, June 20, 2011. Any Final adoptions for these items are scheduled to take place at the July 14, 2011 FWP Commission meeting in Big Sky. The public comment deadline for the domestic sheep trailing is 5 PM, Monday, June 6, 2011. Any Final adoptions for this item is scheduled to take place at the June 9, 2011 FWP Commission meeting.

2011 Proposed Wolf Hunting Seasons Quotas and Hunting District Boundaries (5 PM June 20 Deadline). **The Commission has specifically asked for area-specific and detailed comments as it relates to individual WMU quotas and other season elements.**

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2011wolfHuntSeasonQuotasDistricts.html>

To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT or 1-800-847-6668.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 406-458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office at 406-657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp> Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator, George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 406-444-5609.