



# NEWS RELEASE



## Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner  
Eddie Grasser, Director, Wildlife Conservation  
ADF&G; [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)

## Tongass National Forest

Earl Stewart, Forest Supervisor  
Mark Pentecost, District Ranger  
US Forest Service; [www.fs.usda.gov/tongass/](http://www.fs.usda.gov/tongass/)

### For Immediate Release

Oct. 31, 2022

#### Contacts:

ADF&G, Tom Schumacher  
Regional Supervisor, (907) 465-4359,  
[tom.schumacher@alaska.gov](mailto:tom.schumacher@alaska.gov)

U.S. Forest Service, Paul Robbins Jr.  
Public Affairs Officer, (907) 617-2063,  
[paul.robbs@usda.gov](mailto:paul.robbs@usda.gov)

## Public Meeting and Hearing Announced Regarding 2022 GMU 2 Wolf Harvest

**CRAIG, Alaska**– The USDA Forest Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) will hold a public meeting and hearing to share information and solicit comments on the fall 2022 joint state-federal wolf trapping season in GMU 2. Following analysis and consultation ADF&G and the Forest Service intend to offer 31 days of trapping opportunity for wolves during fall 2022 in Game Management Unit (GMU) 2 (Unit 2 in the Federal regulations).

The meeting and hearing will be held telephonically on Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2022, at 6pm. Opportunity will be provided for the public to share information, interact with state and federal managers, and offer testimony.

The public is encouraged to participate in this meeting by calling the telephone number below. When prompted, enter the passcode.

#### Public Meeting/Hearing Information:

Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2022 at 6pm  
Teleconference: (888) 455-9312  
Passcode: 7380475

#### Background

Since 2019, the wolf harvest management strategy on Prince of Wales and associated islands, collectively known as GMU 2, has been to annually adjust harvest opportunity to achieve a level of harvest that will maintain the wolf population within a sustainable fall population objective range as established by the Alaska Board of Game. ADF&G worked with the Forest Service Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the Alaska Board of Game, the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, and trappers to develop this new strategy that provides trappers with the flexibility and responsibility they desired while sustainably managing harvest of this wolf population.

Most GMU 2 wolves are taken by trapping, so harvest management focuses on adjusting the length of the trapping season. ADF&G, with support from the Forest Service and Hydaburg Cooperative Association

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

(HCA), annually estimates wolf abundance in GMU 2 using a DNA-based mark-recapture technique. In the fall of 2021, ADF&G and HCA collected wolf DNA samples from within the same large study areas used in 2016-2020. However, deep snowfall beginning in late November inhibited access to some areas and fewer samples were collected than in recent years. Samples were also collected from harvested wolves.

### Interpreting Estimates

ADF&G estimates the fall population of wolves in GMU 2 by analyzing detections and movements of individual wolves identified through DNA collected from hair traps and from harvested wolves. Field and lab work for each estimate take about 10 months to complete. For fall 2021 ADF&G estimated the GMU 2 population at 268 wolves (point estimate) with high confidence that the true number of wolves in GMU 2 prior to the fall 2021 hunting and trapping seasons was within the 95% confidence interval range, 216 to 332 wolves. Within that range of plausible values, ADF&G bases harvest management on the point estimate because that is the value most likely to be correct given the data collected that year. However, ADF&G recognizes that the true number of wolves is likely to be somewhat higher or lower than the point estimate and encourages the public to focus on long-term trends in abundance and harvest, rather than year-to-year changes in estimates. Those trends indicate the population is stable and that harvest has been sustainably managed.

The fall 2021 population point estimate of 268 wolves is lower than the fall 2020 estimate of 386 wolves and statistically similar to the 2019 estimate of 316 wolves. A recent analysis by ADF&G found that when fewer data are available for estimates, estimates tend to be biased low. Due to heavy snow fewer samples were collected in fall 2021, and that could account for the lower 2021 estimate. A lower estimate could also result from a lower wolf population, and ADF&G will continue monitoring the trend of this population. Sixty-six wolves were reported harvested in 2021, and with reproduction in 2022, it is likely that at least that number of new wolves was recruited into the fall 2022 population. ADF&G concludes that the fall 2021 population estimate is plausible and in fall 2022 the GMU 2 wolf population remains sustainable and stable.

### Fall 2021 Harvest Management

Setting harvest season length involves considering a variety of biological factors and regulatory guidance. The current fall population objective is 150-200 wolves. Since first implementing the current harvest management strategy in 2019, harvest rate (wolves harvested per day of trapping season) has average 2.6 wolves/day and ranged from 2.1 to 3.2 wolves/day. Assuming the average harvest rate, about 81 wolves will be harvested during a 31-day trapping season with a potential range of 65 to 99 wolves. ADF&G will monitor harvest during the season but believes that a 31-day season will result in a sustainable level of harvest and maintain the post-harvest GMU 2 wolf population within or above the fall population objective.

Please call the ADF&G Ketchikan area office at 907-225-2475 for more information. For more information from the Forest Service, please call Subsistence Coordinator Robert Cross at 907-723-8653. Maps of Federal lands within GMU 2 are available at Forest Service offices. Maps and additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program can be found on the web at [www.doi.gov/subsistence](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence) or by visiting [www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska](https://www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska).

-end-