



NEWS RELEASE



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Bruce Dale, Director, Wildlife Conservation
ADF&G; www.adfg.alaska.gov

Tongass National Forest

Earl Stewart, Forest Supervisor
Matt Anderson, District Ranger
US Forest Service; www.fs.usda.gov/tongass/

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Contacts:

ADF&G, Tom Schumacher
Regional Supervisor, (907) 465-4267, tom.schumacher@alaska.gov

U.S. Forest Service, Paul Robbins Jr.
Public Affairs Officer, (907) 228-6201, paulrobbins@fs.fed.us

2018 GMU 2 Wolf Harvest Quota Announced

CRAIG, Alaska – Biologists with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), announce that the Game Management Unit (GMU) 2 wolf harvest quota for regulatory year (RY) 2018 will be set at 45 wolves.

ADF&G and the USFS currently manage wolves on Prince of Wales and associated islands, collectively known as GMU 2, for an annual harvest not to exceed the Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) in ADF&G regulation: 20 percent of the most recent unit-wide population estimate. Our primary goal for managing wolves in GMU 2 is to ensure a population that provides opportunity for a sustainable harvest. While legal harvest is only one of several factors influencing wolf numbers in GMU 2, it is the one under managers' control.

Because dense forest cover makes estimating wolf numbers from aerial surveys impractical, ADF&G, with support from the USFS, estimates wolf abundance in GMU 2 using a DNA mark-recapture technique. In 2017, ADF&G used the same large, northcentral Prince of Wales Island study area as in 2014-2016. ADF&G also collaborated with the Hydaburg Cooperative Association (HCA) to establish an additional study area, monitored by HCA staff, adjacent to the southern boundary of the original study area. This collaboration effectively expanded the study area to approximately 80% of Prince of Wales Island and over 60% of the land area of GMU 2.

Data collected from October through December 2017 resulted in a GMU 2-wide population estimate of 225 wolves, with high confidence that the actual number of wolves in GMU 2 prior to the autumn 2017 hunting and trapping seasons was within the range, 198 to 264 wolves. This is the most current population estimate.

Results of the autumn 2017 survey were similar to those of the autumn 2016 survey, suggesting the rapid population growth from 2015 to 2016 has stabilized. ADF&G and the USFS attribute growth of the population to conservative harvest management since 2015. Based on documented growth of the population since 2014 and the most recent population estimate, the RY2018 GMU 2 harvest quota was set at 45 wolves, the maximum allowed by

current regulation. Also, as in previous years, substantiated accounts of unreported, human-caused mortality will be counted toward the harvest quota.

Now that the wolf population has grown and appears stable in GMU 2, the January 2019 Alaska Board of Game meeting in Petersburg affords an opportunity to change how GMU 2 wolves are managed. Two proposals to change Unit 2 wolf harvest management have been submitted, including one by ADF&G (Proposal 43). This proposal asks the Board to establish a population objective range for GMU 2 wolves and to allow ADF&G to manage harvest to maintain the population within that range. Proposals affecting the Southeast Region can be viewed on the ADF&G Board's website at; <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook>.

The GMU 2 wolf hunting and trapping seasons for Federally-qualified subsistence users on Federal lands open on Sept. 1 and Nov. 15, respectively. State wolf hunting and trapping seasons in GMU 2 open on Dec. 1. The length of the state seasons will depend on the number of wolves taken during the Federal hunting and trapping seasons prior to Dec. 1. The State and Federal seasons will be closed when managers believe harvest is approaching 45 wolves.

Please call the ADF&G Ketchikan area office at 907-225-2475 for more information. For more information from the U.S. Forest Service, please call District Ranger Matt Anderson at 907-826-1600. 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 <http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/index.cfm>.

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