

PROGRESS IN MANAGEMENT OF THE ALASKAN WOLF POPULATION

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In 1959, the State of Alaska initiated a study of Alaskan wolf populations with two major goals: 1) to change public attitude toward the wolf, and 2) to gather information useful in the understanding of population dynamics of wolves. In an effort to change the sportsmen's attitude a series of management procedures have been implemented which include the following: in 1963 the wolf was formally designated a big game animal by the State Board of Fish and Game; wolves are completely protected in much of south-central Alaska; a bag limit of two wolves was prescribed for the entire Arctic when an aircraft is used in hunting; formal control of wolf populations was terminated throughout interior arctic Alaska (the U. S. F. W. S. has continued the use of poison on certain reindeer grazing bases); permits to trap wolves during late spring, summer and early fall are not issued; non-residents are encouraged to hunt wolves as trophies and as many as 100 permits have been issued annually. Also, while not a part of the management procedures, legislation to remove the bounty was introduced in the State Legislature on two occasions. Specimens have been collected from approximately 2,300 wolves throughout Alaska. Age determinations based on ossification of the epiphysis of long bones show that net productivity of the arctic wolf population is low compared with other areas of Alaska. The reasons for this may be related to excessive exploitation.

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