

PROPOSAL 43

5 AAC 84.270(13). Furbearer trapping.

5 AAC 85.056(1). Hunting seasons and bag limits for wolf.

5 AAC 92.008. Harvest guideline levels.

5 AAC 92.170(b). Sealing of marten, fisher, lynx, beaver, otter, wolf, and wolverine.

Change the harvest management strategy for wolf in Unit 2 as follows:

5 AAC 84.270(13) is amended to read:

Species and Units	Open Season	Bag Limit
(1) Wolf		
...		
Unit 2	Dec. 1—Mar. 31	No limit; <u>season may be closed by emergency order.</u>

5 AAC 85.056(1) is amended to read:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(1)		
...		
Unit 2	Dec. 1—Mar. 31	Dec. 1—Mar. 31

5 wolves

5 AAC 92.008 is amended to read:

(1) Wolves: The annual harvest of wolves in Unit 2 should **be managed to maintain the unit-wide population within a range of XXX to XXX wolves** [NOT EXCEED 20 PERCENT OF THE UNITWIDE, PRESEASON POPULATION ESTIMATE AS ESTIMATED BY THE DEPARTMENT];

5 AAC 92.170 is amended to read:

(b) The sealing of marten, fisher, lynx, beaver, land otter, wolf, or wolverine must be accomplished as follows:

(1) [IN UNIT 2, WOLF TAKEN BY TRAPPING MUST BE SEALED ON OR BEFORE THE 14TH DAY AFTER THE DATE OF TAKING] **Repealed**;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Following a fall 2014 unit-wide population estimate of 89 wolves and concurrent Endangered Species Act Species Status Assessment, in January 2015 the Board of Game (board) adopted a 20 percent Harvest Guideline Level (HGL) for Unit 2 wolves as a conservation measure that would continue to provide some harvest opportunity while allowing the population to recover. By fall 2016, the population had grown to an estimated 231 wolves, rendering this harvest restriction unnecessary. The 20 percent HGL now inhibits the Department of Fish and Game's (department) ability to manage growth of the Unit 2 wolf population and is unpopular with trappers and deer hunters. Further, even with the current 14-day sealing requirement, the department has been unsuccessful at limiting harvest to within the HGL. A new approach is needed.

The department proposes to no longer manage this population using a percentage-based HGL. Instead we propose managing the population within a desired range (i.e. population objective) with population thresholds that trigger changes in season length. Wolf abundance will be monitored relative to the desired range using periodic (every 2–4 years) population estimates. During years between population estimates, indicators of population trend including harvest, documented reproduction, and anecdotal information on wolf abundance and distribution will inform harvest management.

The department is reaching out to stakeholders to determine appropriate population objectives and other details for a new harvest strategy. Those details will be presented in the department's analysis and recommendation prior to the board meeting.

Implementing this new strategy requires amending the current HGL, and because it does not depend on in-season harvest management, the 14-day sealing requirement in Unit 2 is no longer needed.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for wolves in Unit 2 and the board will need to determine if the proposed management plan will continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-056)
