

PROPOSAL 54

5 AAC 92.008. Harvest guideline levels.

Identify an area in Unit 2 for protected status for wolves as follows:

Under general authority, as applicable: 5 AAC 84.270(13), 5 AAC 85.056(1), 5 AAC 92.008.

Task the department with identifying 2/3rds of Unit 2 land area for protected status for wolves. Work to ensure the protected areas have relatively high deer carrying capacity and are large enough to be buffered from trapping pressure.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Managing wolves by population objective requires accurate population size estimates. Tracking mortality requires accurate and timely reporting, as well as an estimate of illegal and natural mortality. Obtaining population and mortality data is difficult and costly, and its accuracy has been questioned.

An alternative is to manage the system spatially. If the wolf population can sustain ~30% annual mortality, then open ~ 1/3rd of the unit to wolf trapping each year and close the remainder. The areas subject to closure, and those that are open, could be established permanently by the Board of Game, or perhaps rotated on a long-term schedule. The goal would be to maintain large enough reserves for two-three packs of wolves to be protected and thereby serve as a source population for the “sink areas” that are producing the 30% annual harvest. Spreading the protected areas across the unit could help maximize genetic diversity.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Wildlife Alliance

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