



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
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Forest Service

WOLF HUNTING AND TRAPPING SEASON SET IN UNIT 2

TEMPORARY SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of: 36 CFR 242.10 and .19
50 CFR 100.10 and .19

Temporary Special Action No: WSA 13-WO-09-24 Issued at: Craig, Alaska, October 30, 2024

Effective Date: Immediately

Expiration Date: 11:59 pm Monday, March 31, 2025 unless superseded by subsequent special action.

EXPLANATION: This Temporary Special Action sets the 2024-2025 Federal wolf trapping season in Unit 2 from November 15, 2024 through 11:59 pm December 15, 2024 and closes the Federal wolf hunting season in Unit 2 at 11:59 pm on December 15, 2024.

REGULATION: 36 CFR §242.26(n)(2) and 50 CFR §100.26(n)(2) are amended to read:

Unit 2 –Wolf Hunting

No limit.

Sep. 1-~~Mar. 31~~Dec. 15.

All wolves taken will be sequentially numbered, marked with the date and location recorded by the hunter for each wolf, and all hides must be sealed within 15 days of take.

Unit 2 –Wolf Trapping

No limit.

Nov. 15-~~Mar. 31~~Dec. 15.

All wolves taken will be sequentially numbered, marked with the date and location recorded by the trapper for each wolf, and all hides must be sealed within 15 days of take.

JUSTIFICATION:

In 2019, ADF&G and the Alaska Board of Game changed the wolf harvest management strategy for GMU 2 after a two-year public engagement process. The new strategy annually adjusts season length relative to annual population estimates to maintain the wolf population within the

objective range established by the Alaska Board of Game. ADF&G worked with the USFS, Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the Alaska Board of Game, the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, and trappers to develop a strategy that provides the flexibility and responsibility trappers desired, while sustainably managing wolf harvest.

ADF&G, with support from the Forest Service and cooperation from the Hydaburg Cooperative Association (HCA), estimates GMU 2 wolf abundance annually using a DNA-based mark-recapture technique. HCA experienced a staffing shortage in 2023 and was unable to fully contribute during the fall data collection effort. ADF&G and USFS collected wolf DNA samples using hair boards within ADF&G's study area on northern and central Prince of Wales Island but was unable to expand sampling to help cover HCA's area. ADF&G and designated sealers also collected tissue with the consent of trappers from harvested wolves. DNA from tissue, along with accurate reports of when and where individual wolves were harvested, contributed to the population estimate.

For fall 2023, ADF&G estimated the preharvest GMU 2 population to be 238 wolves with high confidence the true population size was within the range of 184 to 308 wolves (95% confidence interval). Managers base harvest management on the point estimate (238) because that is the value most likely to be correct given the data collected that year. However, managers recognize the true number of wolves is likely to be somewhat higher or lower and encourage the public to focus on long-term trends in abundance and harvest, rather than year-to-year changes in point estimates. Those trends indicate the population is stable and that harvest is being sustainably managed.

In GMU 2, most wolves are harvested by trapping, so state and federal managers regulate harvest by varying trapping opportunity. Determining the amount of trapping opportunity that will result in sustainable harvest involves analyzing recent population estimates, trends in trapper participation, documented harvest rates, public observations, and regulatory guidance. Harvest rate, or the number of wolves harvested per day of trapping season, is related to trapping effort, trapping conditions, and wolf abundance. Since initiating the current harvest management strategy in 2019, the daily harvest rate for GMU 2 wolves ranged from 2.0 to 3.2 wolves/day and averaged 2.4 wolves/day. Assuming an average harvest rate, managers project that one month (31 days) of trapping opportunity is likely to result in harvest of about 74 wolves ($31 \text{ days} \times 2.4 \text{ wolves/day} = 74$). However, managers recognize that the range of harvest rates documented in GMU 2 could also produce a harvest ranging from 62 to 99 wolves. Sustainability of the population is unlikely to be affected by harvest in a single year, so for 2024 managers consider harvest within that range sustainable.

On Thursday, October 24, 2024 ADF&G and the USFS held a public hearing to announce the proposed Unit 2 wolf hunting and trapping season length and field questions and concerns from the public. Since the public meeting, ADF&G and USFS biologists and leadership have again reviewed population and harvest data related to GMU 2 wolves and deer, anecdotal information about wolf recruitment and likely current wolf abundance, probable wolf trapper interest and effort; and determined that a season closure date of Sunday, December 15, 2024, will ensure sustainability of the population. Wolf trappers operating under State or Federal subsistence regulations will have 31 days of trapping opportunity throughout GMU 2. All State and Federal wolf harvest seasons in GMU 2 will close on December 15, 2024.

Federal Subsistence Board by delegation to:

/s/ William Braun
William Braun
Deputy District Ranger
Craig Ranger District
October 30, 2024

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