



NEWS RELEASE



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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2023 GMU 2 wolf trapping season announced

CRAIG, Alaska – Biologists with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service (USFS), have determined 31 days of trapping opportunity for wolf in Game Management Unit (GMU) 2 (Unit 2 in the federal regulations) will result in a sustainable level of harvest. State and federal subsistence wolf hunting seasons in GMU 2 opened on September 1. State and federal subsistence wolf trapping seasons in GMU 2 will open on November 15. To ensure sustainable harvest, state and federal subsistence wolf hunting and trapping seasons in GMU 2 will close at 11:59 p.m. on December 15, 2023.

Background

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 strategy annually adjusts season length relative to annual population estimates to achieve a level of harvest that maintains the wolf population within an objective range established by the Alaska Board of Game. ADF&G collaborated 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 trappers with the flexibility and responsibility they desired, while sustainably managing harvest of the wolf population.

ADF&G, with support from the USFS and the Hydaburg Cooperative Association, annually estimates GMU 2 wolf abundance using a DNA-based mark-recapture technique. In fall 2022, ADF&G and partners collected wolf DNA samples using hair boards within the same large study areas used in 2016-2021. ADF&G and designated sealers with the consent of trappers also collected tissue from harvested wolves. DNA from tissue, along with accurate reports of when and where individual wolves were harvested, contribute to population

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estimates. ADF&G's annual survey memos on GMU 2 wolf population estimates provide more detailed information on the population and management. Those memos can be found on the department's website at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wolf.resources>.

Sealing Requirements

State sealing regulations for wolves harvested in GMU 2 require all hides to be sequentially numbered by the hunter or trapper, the hunter or trapper must call the ADF&G Ketchikan office at (907) 225-2475 within 7 days of take to report the date and location of take, and all hides must be sealed within 15 days of take. These regulations were designed to provide more precise data for managers to use when calculating population estimates.

Federally qualified users harvesting wolves on federally managed land in GMU 2 may seal wolves under federal subsistence regulations. Federal sealing regulations were recently updated and now require wolves harvested in GMU 2 to be sealed within 15 days of take and that hides be sequentially numbered and marked with the date and location of take by the trapper.

All GMU 2 trappers are encouraged to provide one foreleg bone from the front lower limb for each harvested wolf to the designated sealer at the time of sealing. The bone should be the complete, unaltered bone from the elbow to the wrist joint. Trappers should mark legbones with the same sequential number as the corresponding hide. Foreleg bones are used to age harvested wolves. The proportion of harvested wolves in each age class (pup, yearling, adult) is an indicator to managers of the population's productivity and survival.

Please call the ADF&G Ketchikan area office at 907-225-2475 for more information. For more information from the USDA Forest Service, please call Tongass Subsistence Coordinator Robert Cross at 907-723-8653. 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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