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Advisory Announcement

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Fall 2020 GMU 2 Wolf Harvest Announced

(Douglas) – The Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) recently summarized wolf harvest in Game Management Unit 2 (Prince of Wales and associated islands) for the fall 2020 hunting and trapping seasons. Total reported harvest documented on sealing forms was 68 wolves.

ADF&G manages game and furbearer populations for sustainable harvest. Game Management Unit 2 (GMU 2) wolf harvest management changed in fall 2019 when new regulations and a new harvest management strategy were implemented. One important change was that the Alaska Board of Game established a fall population objective for GMU 2 of 150 to 200 wolves. The Board recognized the importance of deer to GMU 2 residents, and when setting that population objective, the Board discussed both the need for a sustainable wolf population and effects of wolf predation on deer.

Under this new strategy, harvest is managed to maintain the population within the objective range through annual changes in length of the harvest season. Although wolves may be harvested under state or Federal Subsistence (Federally managed lands only) hunting and trapping regulations, most wolves are harvested by trapping. Therefore, managers primarily regulate harvest by varying the length of the trapping seasons.

DWC sets harvest season length in consultation with Federal Subsistence managers from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). State and Federal managers consider several factors when setting season length including the most recent GMU 2 wolf population estimate, harvest reported during the previous season, and observations of agency biologists, law enforcement entities, and GMU 2 residents. DWC and USFS managers set the fall 2020 trapping season length at three weeks, which resulted in a harvest of 68 wolves.

DWC managers believe the fall 2020 harvest was sustainable and anticipate that reproduction will result in a fall 2021 population within the objective range of 150-200 wolves. Effects of the 2020 harvest season on the GMU 2 wolf population will be better understood after the fall 2020 population estimate is completed. Samples for the DNA-based population estimate were collected from October – December 2020 by DWC and USFS biologists and by the Hydaburg Cooperative Association. Laboratory analysis of those samples should be completed by August and the fall 2020 estimate calculated by September 2021.