



Montana Fish
Wildlife & Parks

2009 Montana Wolf Hunting Season Report

About the 2009 Wolf Hunt

Quotas, Harvests & Closures

- Statewide quota: 75
- Total harvested: 72
- The season closed on Nov. 16, about two weeks before the general season was scheduled to end
 - WMU 1 quota was 41; 38 harvested; 3 wolves were harvested in early backcountry areas (HD150/151/280)
 - WMU 2 quota was 22; 21 harvested
 - WMU 3 quota was 12; 13 harvested; 9 wolves were harvested in early backcountry area (HD316) and season was closed early on Oct. 9 to limit the number of wolves harvested

Hunt Details

- Elk and deer hunters opportunistically harvested most wolves (78%)
- Most wolves were harvested before noon
- Some hunters harvested the first wolf seen, but most hunters reported seeing 2-3 wolves prior to harvesting a wolf
- Wolves were harvested at an average distance of 150 yards

Harvest Geography

- Eighty two percent of the wolves were harvested on public lands
- Wolves were harvested from about 40 different packs
- Wolves were harvested from about 10 different packs with confirmed livestock or domestic dog encounters

**See back page for a map of harvest locations.*

Wolf Licenses and Hunters

- A total of 15,603 licenses were purchased (15,514 residents; 89 non-residents)
- FWP estimates about 12 percent of Montana resident elk hunters bought a wolf license in 2009
- Licenses cost \$19 for residents and \$350 for nonresidents
- Total license revenue: \$325,916
- Most successful wolf hunters (69 of 72) were Montana residents
- 6 wolves were harvested by hunters with an outfitter

About the Wolf Harvest

Age & Sex

- 27 adults: 38 percent of total harvest
- 22 yearlings: 31 percent of total harvest
- 22 juveniles: 31 percent of total harvest
- 1 age unknown
- 41 males
- 31 female

Average Weight

- Adults: 97 pounds. Largest wolf weighed 117 pounds
- Yearlings: 80 pounds
- Juveniles: 62 pounds

Color

- 61 percent were gray
- 36 percent were black
- 3 percent were white

Health

- Most were healthy
- 2 had slight mange
- 1 had fleas

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Legal Challenges

Federal Law Suit on Wolf Delisting

In 2010, U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy in Missoula will begin to consider a lawsuit that seeks to rescind the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services' decision to delist wolves in all of the Northern Rocky Mountain Recovery Area, except in Wyoming. A decision is expected this spring or summer.

Judge Molloy, in denying a motion to stop wolf hunts in Montana and Idaho, indicated that the USFWS may have violated the federal Endangered Species Act when it carved Wyoming out of its decision to delist wolves elsewhere in the region.

Montana's Legal Position

- Wolves are recovered and shouldn't be returned to the list of endangered species
- Keeping wolves listed in Wyoming complies with the ESA
- Montana's management of wolves is already proven and protective regulatory laws are in place to ensure wolf conservation continues long into the future
- The recovery requirement of genetic exchange

between the three core populations of the wolf has been and will be met in the future

The Future

FWP is preparing wolf hunting proposals for the 2010 and 2011 seasons, including season dates, quotas, management units and more, which the FWP Commission would consider this spring.

Proposals approved by the FWP Commission will be available for public review and comment before any final adoption.

Predator and Prey

FWP recognizes the need for additional statewide discussion about wolf management as related to prey species such as elk and deer. FWP aims to continue that discussion in 2010.

If Wolves are Relisted

If a federal court order puts wolves back under the federal Endangered Species Act, wolf control would again be guided by federal regulations and regulated hunting would be precluded. FWP will pursue all legal options that allow managing wolves in balance with other species.

2009 Gray Wolf Hunting Season Harvest Locations

