

2011 Montana Wolf Update

Presented to EQC
May 24, 2011



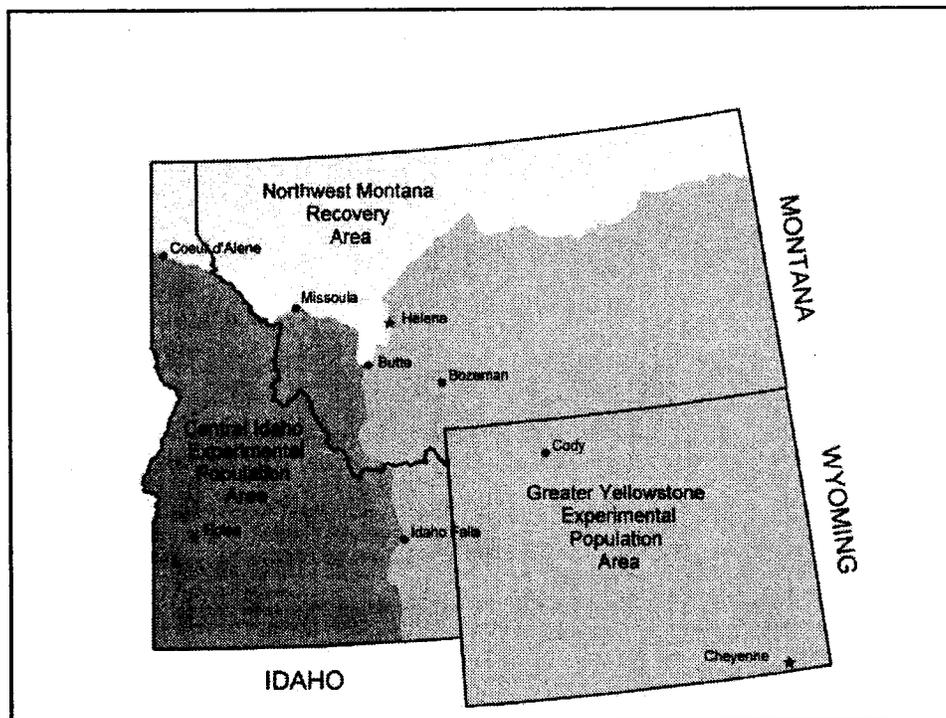
**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Objectives:

- *Maintain a viable and connected wolf population*
- *Gain and maintain authority for State of Montana to manage wolves.*
- *Maintain positive and effective working relationships with livestock producers, hunters, and other stakeholders.*
- *Reduce wolf impacts on livestock.*
- *Reduce wolf impacts on big game populations.*
- *Maintain sustainable hunter opportunity for wolves.*
- *Maintain sustainable hunter opportunity for ungulates.*
- *Increase broad public acceptance of sustainable harvest and hunter opportunity as part of wolf conservation.*
- *Enhance open and effective communication to better inform decisions*
- *Learn and improve as we go.*

Terminology

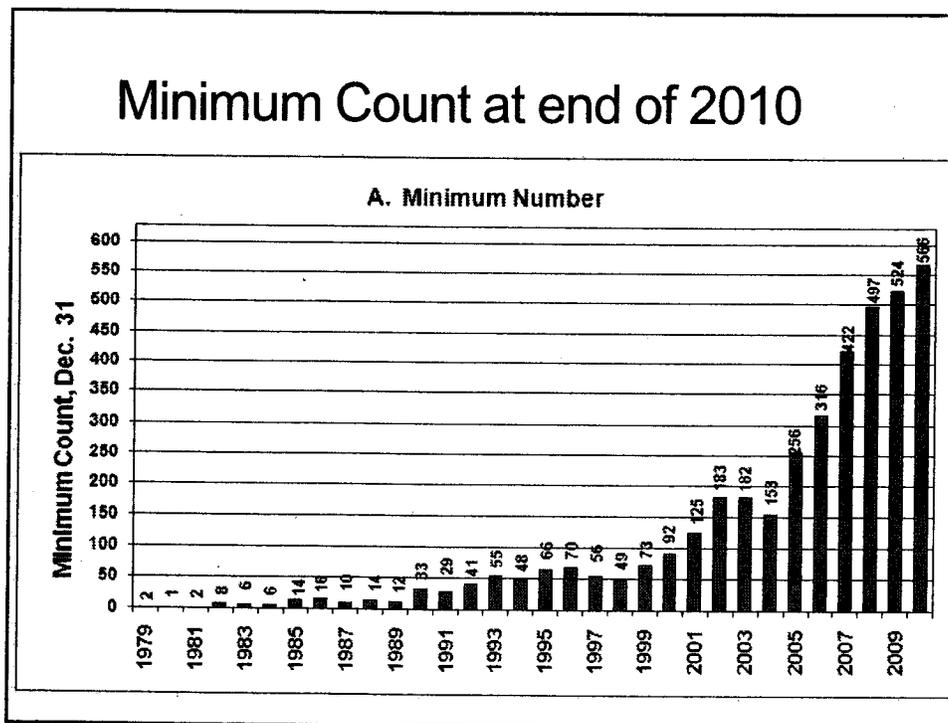
- **Minimum Number**
 - Minimum number of wolves counted and reported at the end of the calendar year
 - Undercounts total wolf population by an estimated 10-30%
- **Predicted Number**
 - Number of wolves predicted to be in the population.
 - Generally exceeds the minimum number by 10-30 %



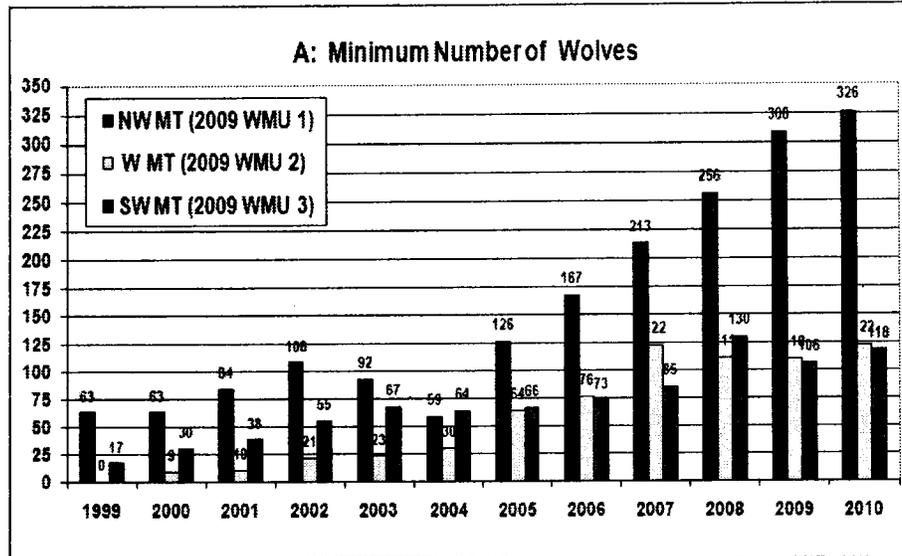
Federal – State Plan

- **Federal**
 - 100 Wolves
 - 10 Breeding Pairs
- **State**
 - 150 Wolves
 - 15 breeding pairs

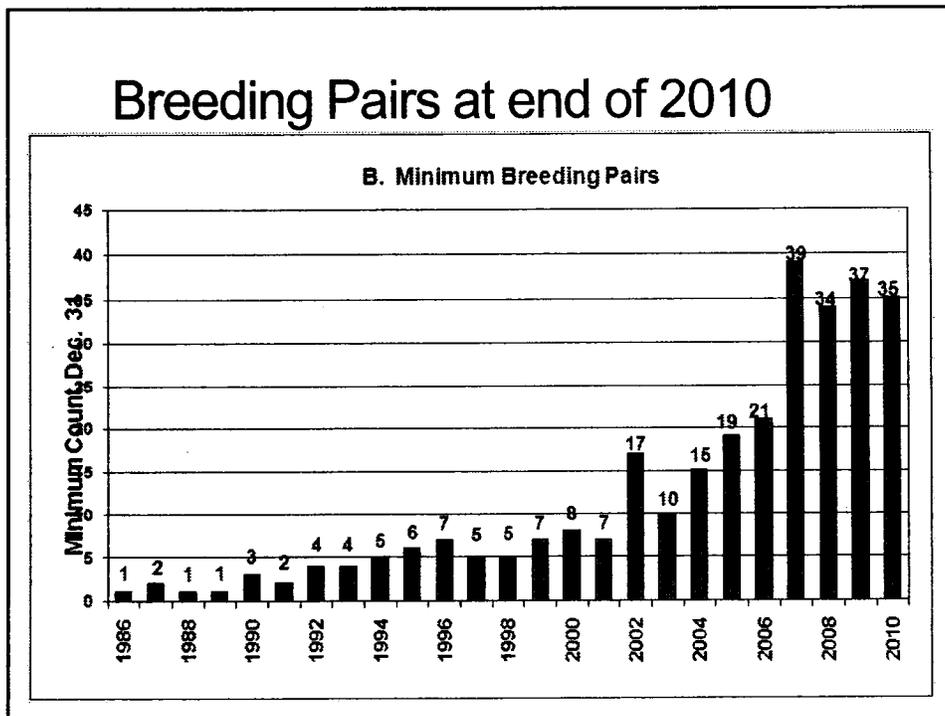
Breeding pair = Adult male, Adult female, ≥ 2 pups at end of December



Minimum No. of Wolves at End of 2010



Breeding Pairs at end of 2010



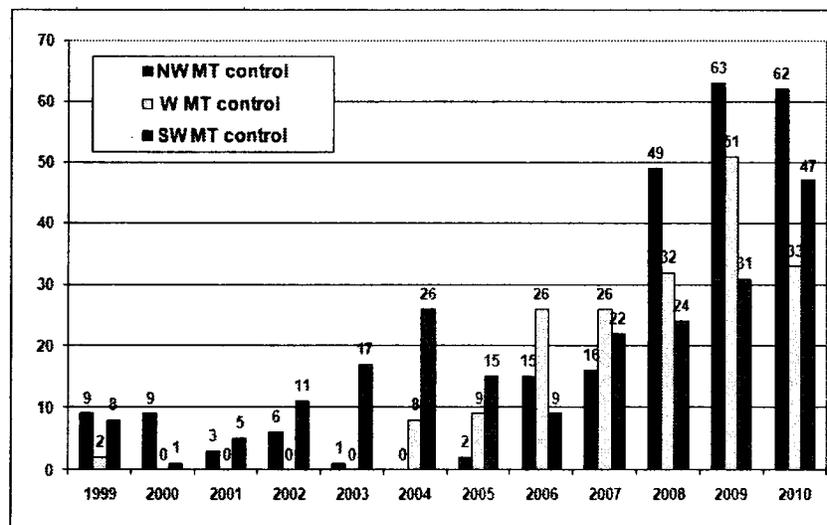
Wolves Removed to Date (by WS)

(as of May 15)

- Complaints
 - Fed Fiscal Year 2011 to date = 44
 - Fed Fiscal Year 2010 to date = 143

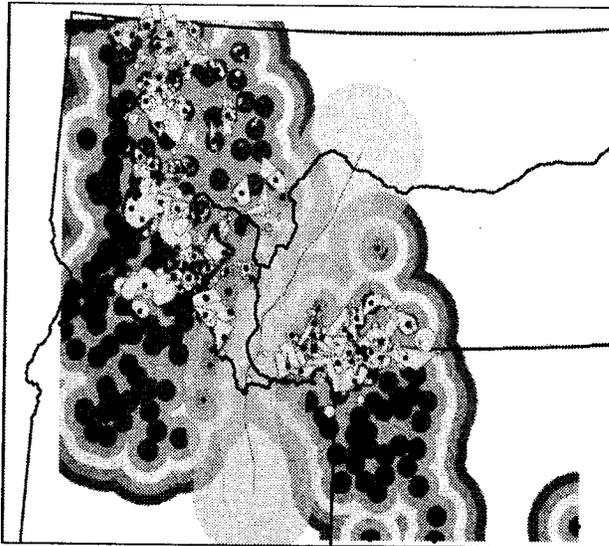
- Wolves Removed
 - Fed Fiscal Year 2011 to date = 21 wolves
 - Fed Fiscal Year 2010 to date = 99 wolves

Depredation Control (1999-2010)

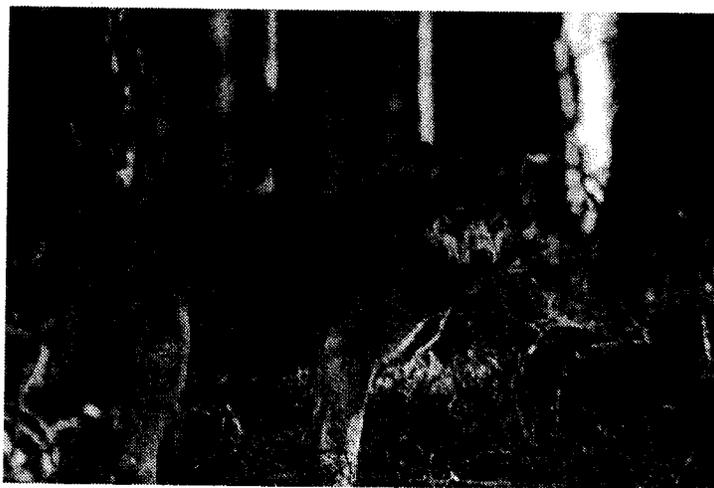


Connectivity

Vonholdt et al. (2010)
show substantial levels of
gene flow between three
Subpopulations in the
Northern Rockies.



2011 Wolf Season Proposal

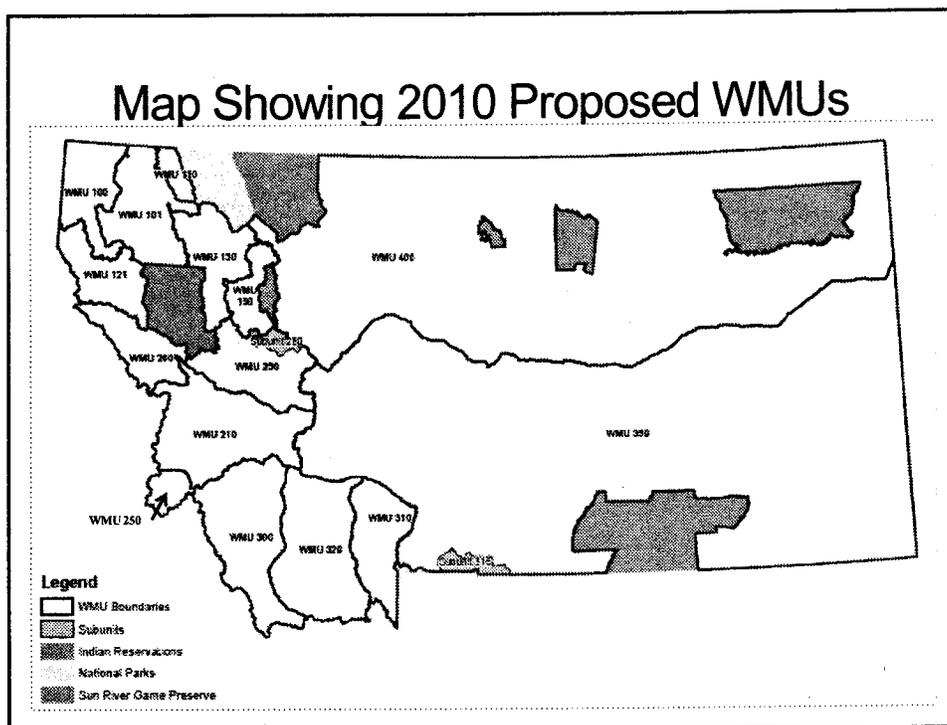


2011 Wolf Season Proposal

- Proposed Quota
 - 220 (40% harvest rate in each of the recovery areas)
- 14 wolf management units in 3 recovery areas
 - Subquota = 3 in HD 316 in WMU 390
 - Subquota = 4 in HD 280 in WMU 290
 - NEW → WMU 250 (W Fk Bitterroot) = 18
- Season Dates
 - Archery Only – Sept 3 – Oct 16 (NTE 20%)
 - Back Country – Sept 15 – Dec 31 (NTE 20%)
 - General Rifle – Oct 22 – Dec 31
- Unit closed when quota filled or Dec. 31st

2011 Wolf Season Proposal (cont.)

- Limit of 1 wolf per year
- Must report kill within 12 hours
- Must present hide and skull within 10 days
- WMU closes within 24 hours of notice
- Harvest overrun at WMU scale will be reduced from adjacent WMU or WMU in recovery unit
- No electronic devices for calling
- License not valid until 5 days after purchase during an open season



NW Montana Proposed Quotas

	Quota =	186	220
▪ WMU 100 (Purcell)		18	18
▪ WMU 101 (Salish)		22	19
▪ WMU 110 (N Fk Flathead)		2	2
▪ WMU 121 (L. Clark Fk)		19	17
▪ WMU 130 (Flathead)		9	12
▪ WMU 150 (Bob Marshall)		5	3
▪ WMU 200 (L. Clark Fk)		22	22
▪ WMU 290 (Blackfoot)		15	20
▪ WMU 400 (Northcentral MT)		<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
		122	123

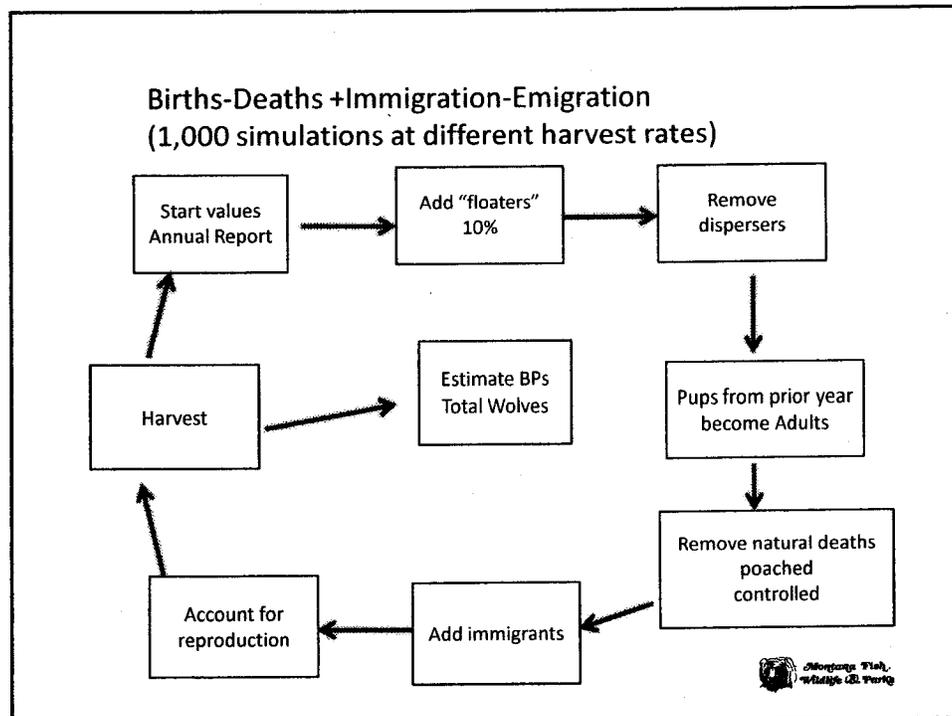
W. Montana Proposed Quotas

<u>Quota =</u>	186	220
▪ WMU 210 (Bitterroot/ Upper Clark Fk/Big Hole)	26	36
▪ WMU 250 (W fk Bitterroot)	<u>0</u>	<u>18</u>
	26	54

SW Montana Proposed Quotas

<u>Quota =</u>	186	220
▪ WMU 320 (Highlands/Tobacco Roots/ Gravelly/Snowcrest)	8	6
▪ WMU 310 (Gallatin/ Madison)	15	19
▪ WMU 390 (S-Cent MT)	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>
	38	43

Potential Implications of Proposal



2011 Wolf Season Proposal - Predicted Results -

2010 "Old" Model

- Estimated to reduce population by 25%
- Predicted end of year minimum population = 425
- Estimated breeding pairs at end of year = 19

- Predicted pop if no harvest = 647

Assumes 100% Harvest Rate

"New" Model

- Estimated to reduced population by 7%
- Predicted end of year min. population = 526

- Predicted pop if no harvest = 632

2009 Wolf Hunt Summary

- Quota of 75 → 72 taken
 - WMU 1 = NW MT = 38/41
 - WMU 2 = W MT = 22/22
 - WMU 3 = SW MT = 12/13
- Season closed on November 16 as quota was quickly approached (SW MT previously closed on 10/26/09)
- 78% opportunistically harvested by deer/elk hunters
- 31% juveniles; 31% yearlings; 38% adults

2011 Wolf Season Proposal

▪ **Process from here:**

- Commission Adopts Proposal (May 12)
- Proposed Structure and Quota open for Public Comment
- Public Comment Accepted May 13-June 20
- Final Regulations Adopted by Commission at July 14, 2010 Meeting (Big Sky)
- Licenses go on sale August 2011

Questions?



