



# 2011 Montana Wolf Hunting Season Report



## **About the 2011 Wolf Hunt**

### Quotas, Harvests & Closures

- Statewide quota: 220
- Total Harvested: 166, 75 percent.
- The season closed Feb. 15, a season extension was proposed in Nov. and adopted in order to increase wolf harvest closer to the statewide quota of 220.
- The season closed Feb. 15, an extension of 46 days beyond the scheduled Dec. 31, 2011 closing. A total of 45 wolves were harvested during the extended season.
  - WMU 100: quota 18; 16 harvested.
  - WMU 101: quota 19; 19 harvested. Season closed Dec. 19.
  - WMU 110: quota 2; 2 harvested. Season closed Feb. 1, 2012.
  - WMU 121: quota 17; 13 harvested.
  - WMU 130: quota 12; 11 harvested.
  - WMU 150: quota three; one harvested.
  - WMU 200: quota 22; eight harvested.
  - WMU 210: quota 36; 25 harvested.
  - WMU 250: quota 18; six harvested.
  - WMU 290: quota 20; 17 harvested.
  - WMU 310: quota 19; 16 harvested.
  - WMU 320: quota six; five harvested.
  - WMU 390: quota 18; 18 harvested. Season closed Nov. 16, 2011.
    - four wolves harvested in subunits north of Yellowstone National Park (hunting districts 313 & 316). Season closed Oct. 6.
  - WMU 400: quota 10; nine harvested.

### Hunt Details

- Elk and deer hunters opportunistically harvested 43 wolves (26 percent).
- Most wolves were harvested before noon.

### Harvest Geography

- 52 percent of wolves harvested on public lands.
- Wolves were harvested from about 60 different packs.
- Wolves were harvested from 10 different (of the 60) packs with confirmed livestock or domestic dog encounters.

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

### Wolf Licenses and Hunters

- A total of 18,689 licenses were purchased (18,531 residents; 158 non-residents).
- FWP estimates about 13 percent of Montana resident elk hunters bought a wolf licenses in 2011.
- Licenses cost \$19 for residents and \$350 for non-residents.
- Total license revenue: \$407,389
- Most successful wolf hunters (163) were Montana residents.
- No wolves were harvested by hunters with an outfitter.

### **About the Wolf Harvest**

#### Age & Sex

- 97 adults: 58 percent of total harvest.
- 35 yearlings: 21 percent of total harvest.
- 25 juveniles: 15 percent of total harvest.
- nine age unknown: 6 percent of total harvest.
- 86 males
- 80 females

#### Average Weight

- Adults: 91 pounds. Largest wolf weighed 120 pounds.
- Yearlings: 73 pounds
- Juveniles: 58 pounds

#### Color

- 115 were gray.
- 37 were black.
- Seven were white.
- Seven were unknown.

#### Health

- Most were healthy; 5 percent noted unhealthy or with some form of injury.
  - Five had injuries or scars to paws or shoulder.
  - At least two had parasites.
  - One had porcupine quill injuries.



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## Legal Challenges

### Federal Lawsuit on Wolf Delisting

In April 2011, the U.S. Congress passed a law with a rider that revised the Endangered & Threatened Wildlife list by removing most wolves in the Northern Rockies.

In May, the USFWS published the final delisting rule. In June, a lawsuit was filed in the Federal District Court challenging the constitutionality of the Congressional rider. FWP submitted amicus curiae briefs.

On Aug. 3, the court upheld the constitutionality of the Congressional rider. Five days later, a group of plaintiffs filed a notice of appeal to the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court and a second group soon filed a notice of appeal to the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit. An emergency motion was then filed for an injunction to stop the proposed wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana. The State of Montana and FWP filed an amicus curiae brief in support of the federal decision. Wolf hunting began Aug. 30 in Idaho and Sept. 3 in Montana.

### Montana's Legal Position

With the delisting in May 2011, the wolf was reclassified as a species in need of management. Federal regulations were replaced by Montana's laws, rules, and wolf conservation and management plan.

### The Future

FWP will discuss 2012-13 regulation changes that could include allowing hunters to take more than one wolf or to purchase more than one hunting license. Also possible are rules to allow electronic calls, more wolf hunting educational opportunities, statewide quota adjustment and a longer hunting season.

### Predator and Prey

FWP seeks to ensure that the wolf stays off of the federal endangered species list while pursuing a wolf population level below current numbers in response to impacts on game populations and livestock.

## 2011 Gray Wolf Hunting Season Harvest Locations

Of the statewide harvest, 132 (80 percent) came from nine counties:

- Beaverhead (13)
- Flathead (22)
- Gallatin (11)
- Lewis & Clark (8)
- Lincoln (26)
- Missoula (15)
- Park (13)
- Ravalli (13)
- Sanders (11)

The other counties include: Carbon (1), Deer Lodge (1), Glacier (2), Granite (5), Jefferson (1), Lake (1), Madison (6), Mineral (5), Pondera (1), Powell (4), Stillwater (1), Silver Bow (2), Teton (4).

