

RESOLUTION OF THE IDAHO FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
ADOPTED AUGUST 17, 2009

RESOLUTION of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission (“Commission”) adopted August 17, 2009, at the special meeting conducted in Idaho Falls, Idaho, for the purpose of establishing the 2009 Wolf Hunting Season and Harvest Limits to meet the goals of the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan.

RECITALS:

1. It is the law and policy of the State of Idaho that “All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated and managed”.
2. Idaho’s law and policy includes providing Idaho citizens (and others as permitted by law) “continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping”.
3. The Commission has the authority, power and duty to administer and carry out the State of Idaho’s wildlife policy consistent with state law.
4. Wildlife management under this policy requires the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to monitor prey populations to ensure that the capacity of the habitat to support them is not exceeded. Surveys of predators help managers understand predator-prey dynamics and enable them to ensure long-term viability of populations of both. IDFG and this Commission are committed to managing Idaho’s wildlife populations with long-term health, sustainable hunter harvest and conservation as guiding principles.
5. In 1974 the gray wolf was listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and protected as an endangered species.
6. In 1987 the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (“Service”) developed a Wolf Recovery Plan, which established a recovery goal of at least 10 breeding pairs and at least 100 wolves for three consecutive years in three core recovery areas: Central Idaho, Northwestern Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Area.
7. In 1994 the Service proposed designating portions of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming as nonessential experimental wolf population areas for the gray wolf. Before introducing wolf populations, the Service prepared an Environmental Impact Statement supporting the Plan’s recovery goal of 10 breeding pairs and 100 wolves in three separate recovery areas for a period of three years.
8. In 1995 and 1996, 66 Canadian wolves were released in central Idaho (35 wolves) and Yellowstone National Park (31 wolves). By 2000, the northern Rocky Mountain wolf population had expanded to include more than 30 breeding pairs and 300 wolves.

9. In 2002 the Idaho Legislative Wolf Oversight Committee developed the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, which was accepted and passed by the Idaho Legislature. The Legislature in a good faith effort to ensure ESA recovery, increased Idaho's minimum wolf population as directed in the Federal Plan from 100 individuals and 10 breeding pairs to 150 individuals and 15 breeding pairs.
10. The Service's recovery goal of 10 breeding pairs and 100 wolves in three separate recovery areas for a period of three consecutive years was reached in 2002.
11. On March 6, 2008 the Commission adopted the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan. The purpose of the plan is to insure a viable gray wolf population, provide harvest, reduce conflict, and provide a flexible, adaptive process for the management of wolf populations during the five-year period following de-listing. The 2008 Plan will ensure that wolf populations are maintained at 2005 levels (518 wolves, more than 5 times the minimum Federal recovery level) or higher. The 2008 Plan will also maintain balanced gray wolf and prey populations, ensure genetic transfer through maintaining connectivity, and minimize conflict with humans and domestic animals.
12. The Service de-listed the gray wolf population from the Endangered Species List in March of 2008. A lawsuit was filed in Federal District Court in Montana by a group of Plaintiffs challenging the Service's delisting rule. On July 18, 2008, U.S. District Judge Donald W. Molloy issued an Order granting the Plaintiff's request for injunction and returning wolves in Idaho to ESA protection, thus precluding implementation of Idaho's Wolf Management Plan.
13. On May 22, 2008 the Commission adopted a proposed Wolf Hunting Season and Rules for the fall of 2008, intending to manage wolf populations at the 2005 level.
14. By year-end 2008, based on the best available science, the wolf population in Idaho was at least 846 wolves and approximately 1,600 in the Northern Rocky Mountain population. The Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population is a 400-mile southern extension of the vast Canadian and Alaskan populations whose numbers are estimated to exceed 60,000 animals.
15. Idaho's wolf population continues to grow and expand at an average annual rate of 20 percent. Based upon the best available science, the 2009 population is more than 1,000 wolves in Idaho, 10 times the minimum Federal recovery level.
16. Confirmed domestic livestock depredations have escalated with the increasing wolf population and will continue to do so without State management. Wolves occupy nearly all suitable habitats in Idaho, which leaves little room for continued growth.
17. Wolf predation has and continues to have a substantial adverse affect on elk populations in certain areas, particularly in northern and central Idaho where population objectives are no longer met. Wolf predation has prevented elk population objectives from being

met in several zones and has necessitated reduced opportunities for hunters, negatively affecting Idaho's economy, as well as IDFG revenues.

18. The impact of the continuing population increase of wolves in Idaho is creating a severe economic hardship for Idaho's guides and outfitters, as well as adverse economic impacts on the service industries in Idaho's communities who support the business aspect of hunting.
19. This Commission and IDFG have heard from thousands of sportsmen and others who value Idaho's hunting culture, traditions and heritage. These traditions depend on healthy populations of deer, elk and moose. IDFG's 2009 non-resident hunter survey clearly shows that a major factor in the decline of non-resident tag sales is Idaho's wolf population and its impacts on wildlife.
20. IDFG's goal of maintaining harvest opportunity for wolves is part of the 2008 Management Plan and an important component to maintaining long-term viable wolf and ungulate populations. Harvest strategies include hunts with limits, with harvestable surplus shared with the Nez Perce Tribe.
21. The Commission has considered the foregoing, including the minimum estimated 2009 wolf population growth, total mortality, the impacts of wolf predation on livestock and ungulate populations, genetic connectivity, statewide and zone harvest limit and seasons, and the expected impact on growing wolf populations.

NOW, THEREFORE, by reason of the foregoing, it is hereby:

RESOLVED, that the 2008 Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan be and is hereby reaffirmed;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Commission reaffirms its commitment to adaptively manage wolves in accordance with the goal of achieving 2005 population levels within a reasonable period of time;

FURTHER RESOLVED that a harvest limit be established for the 2009 wolf hunting season of 220 wolves, distributed among zones consistent with the IDFG staff recommendation, the Delisting Rule, and 2008 Management Plan objectives; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the wolf hunting season proposed by IDFG staff be and is hereby approved, subject to review at the November meeting of the Commission.

DATED this 17th day of August, 2009.

COMMISSIONERS:

WAYNE WRIGHT, Chairman

CAMERON WHEELER

BOB BAROWSKY

TONY McDERMOTT

FRED TREVEY

RANDY BUDGE

GARY POWER