



WGFD

Conserving Wildlife, Serving People

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Lower Quota Leads to Faster Wolf Closures

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Cheyenne - Two weeks into Wyoming's second wolf season, a total of 13 wolves, or half of the 2013 quota, have been reported as legally harvested through the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's (WGFD) trophy game hotline. Hunt areas 10, five and two are closed for the remainder of the season as their established quotas have been met.

As was the case in 2012, Wyoming hunters took advantage of the new opportunity and went afield to hunt wolves in Wyoming's wolf trophy game management area in northwest Wyoming. Field checks indicate many hunters harvest wolves subsequent to pursuing big game species such as elk or deer. Because last year's hunting season achieved success in reaching WGFD management goals of a reduction in population, the quota was scaled back for 2013.

"Last year at this time, none of the wolf hunt areas had reached quota," said Alan Dubberley, Public Information Officer for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD). "With the quota reduced to 26 wolves in the Wolf Trophy Game Management area, down from 52 last year, it is easy to see why the areas are closing faster. In 2012, the first season didn't close until Oct. 20 and six of the 10 areas never reached quota."

One of the reasons for the quick notice of the closures is the hotline implemented for hunters to be able to report their harvest. It is required that any wolf harvest is reported within 24 hours by calling the hotline at 800-264-1280. The skull and pelt must be presented to a game warden, biologist, or other personnel at a WGFD regional office for registration within five days of the harvest.

Area 10 closed opening day. Area five closed one week into the season on Oct. 8 and the most recent area to close is area two northwest of Cody. All of these areas are now closed to wolf hunting for the remainder of the season.

The quota for area two was four wolves; a total of five were harvested.

"When the day started on the 13th, there was still one wolf left to fill the quota for area two," Dubberley said. "Two hunters called in to report they had harvested a wolf on the same day."

While exceeding trophy game mortality quotas is uncommon, it does happen and WGFD wolf managers account for these contingencies when calculating appropriate quotas. Hunting is only one variable of many considered in wolf management. Other considerations include pup recruitment, natural mortality, and mortality resulting from livestock conflict.

As with other trophy game species like mountain lions and black bears, wolves are managed using the mortality quota system. The hunting season in each specific wolf area remains open until the quota for the area is reached, or until December 31, whichever comes first.

In areas outside the Wolf Trophy Game Management Area, where wolves are designated as predatory animals, no license is required to harvest a wolf, and there are no closed seasons or bag limits. Anyone who takes a wolf in areas of the state where wolves are designated as predatory animals is required to report the kill to a district game warden, biologist or WGFD personnel at a regional office within 10 days after the date the wolf was killed. Presenting the skull and pelt is not required, but doing so does aid in department efforts to monitor wolf populations and genetic interchange through the state.

Department wildlife managers indicate the state is on track to meet its delisting commitment to exceed 10 breeding pairs and 100 individual wolves at the end of the calendar year in the wolf trophy game management area.

Hunters with questions about hunting seasons or regulations can pick up a copy of the current hunting regulations for the species in which they are interested at any license selling vendor, regional WGFD office or call the WGFD sportsman line at 307-777-4600.

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