

**IDAHO FISH AND GAME**  
**HEADQUARTERS NEWS RELEASE**  
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**Wolf Report: Planning For Wolf Hunts**

If changes in state law, recommended by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission, are enacted by the state Legislature, it would cost \$26.50 for a tag to hunt wolves in Idaho once they are removed from the endangered species list.

The Commission will ask the Legislature to change state statutes to allow the commission to authorize wolf hunts, so if wolves are removed from the endangered species list the department would be prepared to set hunts and sell tags. The federal government has said it plans to initiate the delisting process this month. An actual hunting season on wolves could be months or years away depending on the outcome of that process.

Commissioners Thursday, January 25, approved recommended changes to three statutes that would authorize the commission to issue tags and set fees. The commissioners also agreed to ask for up to 10 special commissioners' wolf tags, and to set the price of a resident wolf tag at \$26.50 and a nonresident tag at \$256.

Hunters also must purchase an Idaho hunting license.

In addition, the commissioners proposed an increase in the price of black bear and mountain lion tags to make them the same amount as wolf tags, and the same amount as lion tags were until 2000 - \$26.50 for resident tags and \$256 for nonresident tags.

For the changes to be approved this year in time for the possibility of wolf delisting this fall, the proposed changes must be submitted as proposed legislation by early February.

Meanwhile, Fish and Game officials are working on a wolf hunting and species management plan under the guidelines of the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan that would reduce wolf numbers in areas of conflict and try to stabilize numbers across the rest of the state.

Any hunting seasons must be approved by the commissioners.

Large carnivore coordinator Steve Nadeau has assembled a planning team that includes the Fish and Game wildlife staff members and wolf specialist. The public will be involved at various levels throughout the planning process.

Fish and Game officials expect to have a final plan for hunting delisted wolves in Idaho ready for Commission approval in November.

Idaho has never had a hunting season on wolves. They were killed off across most of their range in the lower 48 states by the early 1900s. By the time they were listed as an endangered species in 1974, they were reduced to a small population in the northeastern corner of Minnesota and Isle Royale, Michigan.

In 1995, a federal reintroduction program brought 35 wolves to Idaho. Today, officials estimate about 650 wolves in 71 packs, and 41 or more breeding pairs inhabit Idaho.