

**Meeting Date:** January 23, 2020

**Agenda Item No.** 5E

**Agenda Item:** Change allowable tag number for Gray wolves (**Action**)

**Bureau Chief Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager

**Background:**

The Commission has unique authority to establish the harvestable species, sex and size that may be harvested, season dates, tag numbers, and daily and seasonal bag limits via proclamation, rather than through IDAPA rulemaking. Proclamations are published biennially for big game species.

At their March 2019 meeting, the Commission acted to adopt staff recommendations to expand hunting season dates in several regions and to expand wolf trapping opportunity with extended season dates in some units and new seasons in 38 game management units. In addition the Commission adopted an increase in the bag limit from the previous limit of up to 5 wolf hunting tags and 5 wolf trapping tags per person per calendar year. Following Commission action (beginning calendar year 2019), sportsmen could purchase up to 10 hunting tags and up to 10 trapping tags per person for use in Game Management Units in the Panhandle, Clearwater, Upper Snake, and Salmon Regions. The limit remains 5 hunting tags and 5 trapping tags per person per calendar year in Game Management Units in the Southwest, Magic Valley, and Southeast Regions.

Preliminary data on wolf harvest available as of January 2, 2020 indicates 350 wolves had been harvested by hunters and trappers during 2019 (170 hunted, 180 trapped). Four individuals harvested 10 or more wolves during 2019; one individual harvested and tagged the maximum of 20 wolves during the calendar year.

The Commission requested a discussion and potential action on allowable wolf tag numbers at their January meeting.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

Idaho Statute 36-104 authorizes the Commission to establish rules for the taking of wildlife consistent with state policy. The Commission has authority to set seasons and bag limits for the take of big game animals by proclamation. Commission action is required to modify the 2019 and 2020 seasons and bag limits set by the Commission at their March 2019 meeting.

**Public Involvement Process:**

Recommendations for the 2019 and 2020 big game seasons resulted from year-round public involvement, and population and harvest monitoring. Proposals were scoped internally and with the public through 27 public meetings around the state, email outreach, and through our website. Proposals were posted on the Department website and input was solicited from February 4 through February 24, 2019. Additional input was received by public testimony at the March, May, July, and November 2019 commission meetings.

**Justification:**

Commission action is required to adopt changes to the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 hunting seasons and bag limits for gray wolves.

**Staff Recommendation:**

This agenda item discussion is presented at Commission request. Action is at Commission discretion.