

**Meeting Date:** May 10, 2018

**Agenda Item No. 11**

**Agenda Item:** Wolf hunting and trapping proposals update

**Bureau Chief Approval:**

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

**Background:**

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission has unique authority to establish harvest seasons (including season dates, bag limits, size, sex, and harvestable species) via proclamation, rather than through IDAPA rulemaking. The Commission considers proposed changes for season setting and publishes proclamations biennially in March of odd-numbered years for big game species, including wolves.

The Commission set the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 hunting and trapping seasons for wolves at their March 2017 meeting. Although the Department focusses efforts on the season-setting process on a biennial cycle, the Commission has the authority to consider proposals and make adjustments annually if necessary due to fire, bad winter weather, a disease event, or other factors.

At their March 2018 meeting, the Commission considered a proposal to modify the 2018-2019 wolf hunting seasons to extend the season in Game Management Units in southern Idaho that currently close on March 31, and have an open spring black bear season, by 1 month to close on April 30 (Fig. 1). The extension of the wolf hunting season into the spring would allow the opportunity for wolf harvest during the overlap with spring black bear seasons that open in April.

Further, the Commission considered proposals submitted jointly by the Idaho Trapper's Association, Upper Snake River Trappers of Idaho, Intermountain Fur Harvesters, Foundation For Wildlife Management, East Idaho Houndsmen Association, Idaho Houndsmen Association, and Idaho Farm Bureau for potential modifications to the 2018-2019 trapping season. The proposal would open wolf trapping seasons (including snares) in Units 2 (open entire unit), 32A, 33, 66, and 69, preferably Oct 1 – Mar 31, and expand the current trapping season dates in Units 4, 4A, 39, 43, and 44 by moving the opening date to Oct 1 and run through Mar 31 (Fig. 2).

At the March 22, 2018 meeting, the Commission voted to defer action and further discussion on the proposals to a later date.

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

Idaho Code 36-104 grants authority to the Commission to promulgate rules for the taking of wildlife consistent with state policy.

**Public Involvement Process:**

Recommendations for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 wolf trapping seasons that were set in March 2017 resulted from year-round public involvement, and population and harvest monitoring. The proposal to modify the 2018-2019 wolf hunting season was generated by the public (spring black bear hunters) for potential modifications to the 2018-2019 season. The proposal to modify the 2018-2019 wolf trapping seasons were generated by the public and submitted jointly by the Idaho Trapper's Association, Upper Snake River Trappers of Idaho, Intermountain Fur Harvesters, Foundation For Wildlife Management, East Idaho Houndsmen Association, Idaho Houndsmen Association, and Idaho Farm Bureau.

The proposals for changes to the 2018-2019 wolf trapping seasons were posted on the Department's website in early March and the wolf hunting season proposal was posted in mid-March to inform the public and provide an opportunity to provide input.

The Department received input from 765 individuals on the proposal to expand the wolf hunting seasons to April 30 in 48 GMUs in southern Idaho that have spring bear seasons. Eighteen percent (136) of respondents supported the proposals and expressed the opinion that Idaho has too many wolves and the season expansion would provide spring bear hunters an opportunity to take wolves. Eighty-two percent (622) opposed the proposal. The most sentiments expressed by those opposed were a concern that the April hunt would result in the direct or indirect killing of pups or nursing females and that wolves should not be killed regardless of method, location, or timing.

Of comments received on the Department's website regarding the trapping proposal, 46% (513) supported opening a new trapping season in the units Oct 1 – Mar 31 vs. 51% (572) opposed. Forty-six percent (507) of commenters also supported expanding the trapping season dates to start Oct 1 in the specified units vs. 50% (553) opposed. Supporters indicated there are too many wolves in the state and additional harvest opportunities are desirable. The primary reasons expressed for opposing the proposals included a general opposition to killing wolves, concern about the use of snares (including by hunting dog owners), and a feeling that Oct 1 was too early and would conflict with other users.

Several individuals addressed these topics at the Commission's public hearing on March 21.

**Justification:**

The Commission deferred action and further discussion on the proposals at their March meeting. This agenda item is provided at Commission request for discussion.

**Staff Recommendation:**

N/A. This agenda item is provided for Commission discussion.

**Action Requested:**

N/A.

2018 - 2019 Wolf Hunting Seasons		
Units	Season Dates	Notes
1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8A, 9, 10A, 11, 11A, 13, 14, 15, 18	July 1 - June 30	<i>Private land only</i>
	Aug 1 - Mar 31	
16	July 1 - June 30	<i>Private land only</i>
	Aug 1 - Mar 31	<i>Hunting open in that portion of Unit 16 south of the Selway River only.</i>
	Aug 1 - June 30	<i>Hunting open in that portion of Unit 16 north of the Selway River only</i>
10, 12, 16A, 17, 19, 20	July 1 - June 30	<i>Private land only</i>
	Aug 1 - June 30	
20A, 26, 27	Aug 30 - June 30	
21, 28	Aug 30 – <del>Mar 31</del> Apr 30	<i>Open outside designated wilderness only</i>
	Aug 30 - June 30	<i>Open inside designated wilderness only</i>
19A, 21A, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 36B, 39, 43, 44, 48, 60, 60A, 61, 62, 62A, 63, 63A, 64, 65, 67	Aug 30 – Apr 30	
38, 40, 41, 42, 46, 54, 55, 57, 68, 68A, 71, 73A, 74 <del>19A, 21A, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 36B, 39, 43, 44, 48, 60, 60A, 61, 62, 62A, 63, 63A, 64, 65, 67</del>	Aug 30 – Mar 31	
29, 30, 30A, 32, 32A, 36A, 37, 37A, 45, 49, 50, 51, 52, 58, 59, 59A, 66, 66A, 69, 76	Aug 30 – Apr 30	<i>Motorized Hunting Rule Applies, See pages 101 - 103</i>
47, 52A, 53, 56, 70, 72, 73, 75, 77, 78 <del>29, 30, 30A, 32, 32A, 36A, 37, 37A, 45, 49, 50, 51, 52, 58, 59, 59A, 66, 66A, 69, 76,</del>	Aug 30 – Mar 31	<i>Motorized Hunting Rule Applies, See pages 101 - 103</i>

Figure 1. Proposed changes to wolf hunting seasons in southern Idaho Game Management Units with open spring black bear seasons.

2018 - 2019 Wolf Trapping Seasons		
Units	Season Dates	Notes
1, <del>4A</del> , 5, 10A, 14, 15, 16, 20A, 26, 27, 29, 36A, 37, 37A, <del>43, 44</del> , 50, 51	Nov 15 - Mar 31	
2	<del>Nov 15</del> <u>Oct 1</u> - Mar 31	<del>Trapping open only in portion of Unit 2. See note 1, page 79.</del>
3	Nov 15 - Mar 31	Trapping open only in portion of Unit 3. See note 2, page 79.
4	Oct <del>10</del> <u>1</u> - Nov 14	Foothold traps only. Trapping open in that portion of Unit 4 within the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene drainage upstream from Cataract Creek
	Nov 15 - Mar 31	
<del>4A</del>	<del>Nov 15</del> <u>Oct 1</u> - Mar 31	
6	Oct 10 - Nov 14	Foothold traps only. Trapping open in that portion of Unit 6 within the North Fork of the St Joe River drainage.
	Nov 15 - Mar 31	
7, 9	Oct 10 - Nov 14	Foothold traps only
	Nov 15 - Mar 31	
10, 12, 16A, 17, 19, 20	Oct 10 - Mar 31	
13, 18, 22	Nov 15 - Mar 15	Private land only
19A, 25	Nov 15 - Mar 15	
21, 21A, 30, 30A, 36B, 58, 59, 59A, 60, 60A, 61, 62, 62A, 64, 65, 67	Nov 15 - Mar 31	Foothold traps only, EXCEPT snares may be used on private land only
23	Nov 15 - Mar 15	Foothold traps only, Trapping open only in portion of Unit 23. See note 3, page 79.
24	Nov 15 - Mar 15	Foothold traps only, Trapping open only in portion of Unit 24. See note 4, page 79.
28	Nov 15 - Mar 31	Foothold traps only, EXCEPT snares may be used on private land and in that portion of Unit 28 within designated wilderness
<del>32A, 33</del>	<u>Oct 1 - Mar 31</u>	New Trapping Opportunity
36	Nov 15 - Mar 31	Trapping open only in portion of Unit 36. See note 5, page 79. Foothold traps only, EXCEPT snares may be used on private land only
39	<del>Nov 15</del> <u>Oct 1</u> - Mar 31	Foothold traps only, That portion of Unit 39 within Ada County is closed
<del>43, 44</del>	<del>Nov 15</del> <u>Oct 1</u> - Mar 31	
45	Nov 15 - Mar 31	Private land only
<del>66, 69</del>	<u>Oct 1 - Mar 31</u>	New Trapping Opportunity

(con't.)

2018 - 2019 Wolf Trapping Seasons		
Units	Season Dates	Notes
8, 8A, 11, 11A, 31, 32, <del>32A, 33</del> , 34, 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 52A, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 63, 63A, <del>66</del> , 66A, 68, 68A, <del>69</del> , 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78	None	

Notes:

- ~~1. That portion of Unit 2 north of Highway 54 between Bayview and Spirit Lake, east of Highway 41 between Spirit Lake and Blanchard, and north of Blanchard Valley Road to the Idaho/Washington state line.~~
2. That portion of Unit 3 within the Little North Fork Coeur d' Alene River drainage.
3. Trapping open only in the following portions of Unit 23: Open in that portion of Unit 23 west of U.S. Highway 95 and north of the Smoky Boulder Road. Also open within that portion of Unit 23 east of U.S. Highway 95 that is within Idaho County and outside the National Forest System boundary.
4. Trapping open on private land only in that portion of Unit 24 within the following boundary: beginning north of Cascade at the junction of State Highway 55 and Warm Lake road, then north on Highway 55 to West Roseberry Road, then west on West Roseberry Road to Norwood Road, then south on Norwood road to Tamarack Falls Road, then west on Tamarack Falls Road to West Mountain Road, then north on West Mountain Road to Forest Service Road 186, then northwest on Forest Service Road 186 to No Business Saddle, then south along the Unit 24/32A unit boundary to the intersection of the Unit 24/32A/33 unit boundaries at Smith's Ferry, then north along the Unit 24/33/25 boundary to the North Fork Gold Fork River, then downstream on the North Fork Gold Fork River to State Highway 55, then south on State Highway 55 to the point of beginning.
5. That portion of Unit 36 north of State Highway 21 and north of State Highway 75 from Stanley to the east border of Unit 36.

Figure 2. Proposed changes to wolf trapping seasons.