

Neighboring states change their wolf hunts

By Larry Hyslop



Gray wolf hunting seasons are beginning in nearby states, photo from the USFWS

Wolf hunts in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming are beginning with some major differences for this year's hunts. Of course, the largest change in Wyoming is that there will be a wolf hunt. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) removed gray wolves as a federal endangered species in Wyoming. Wolves come under state management beginning October First.

Earlier, wolves had been delisted in Idaho and Montana, but the USFWS had not removed wolves from the threatened list in Wyoming because the state management plan at that time had been basically to shoot all wolves on sight. The newly approved Wyoming plan is slightly better. In most of the state, wolves are designated as Predatory Animals. They can be killed without a permit and with no bag limits or closed seasons, so they will be shot on sight.

In the northwest corner of Wyoming, outside of Yellowstone and Grand Tetons National Parks along with the National Elk Refuge, wolves are designated as Trophy Game Animals. There, hunting seasons run from October First through the end of December, or until a mortality quota is reached for each of 12 hunt areas. Wolf hunters must report kills within 24 hours and present the skull and pelt to a game warden within five days.

Then there is a "flex area" where wolves are Trophy Game Animals from October 15 through February and Predatory Animals the rest of the year. Wyoming, outside of Yellowstone National Park, has approximately 224 wolves. Wolf licenses cost Wyoming residents \$18.

Montana's wolf hunt began with an archery season September 1, backcountry rifle season began September 15 and a general rifle season begins October 15. The season runs through February.

This year also sees Montana's first wolf trapping season, from December 15 through February. Prospective trappers must take a certification class and have a wolf trapping license. One person can kill three wolves but only one through hunting. The other two can only be trapped, or a trapper can trap all three wolves. Wolf kills must be reported within 24 hours.

Montana contains approximately 653 wolves. Last year's hunters took 166 wolves, 75% of the annual quota. Their wolf licenses for hunting or trapping cost residents \$19.

In Idaho's northern "panhandle", hunters can now kill wolves year-round on private ground. The rest of the state hunt began August first and trapping begins November 15. Hunters can purchase five wolf tags but half of the state's hunting zones only allow two tags to be used. Trappers can use all five tags in all zones but one. Trappers can also use wolf carcasses as bait in the panhandle.

Last year, Idaho hunters took 255 wolves and trappers took 124 wolves. Idaho's approximate population is 746 wolves. Wolf tags cost residents \$11.50.

There have still been no confirmed sightings of wolves in Nevada. It is highly likely that a few wander into Elko County from Idaho, however. Wolves are designated as protected game animals in Nevada. This designation was set up so if and when wolves do show up, they can be controlled and protected as game animals.

Elko Daily Free Press, "Nature Notes", 9/14/2012
© Gray Jay Press, Elko, NV

Return to [Elko Nature Notes](#)