

Wolf hunt open house in CDA

By Summer Crosby

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No quota has been set for the wolf during this year's season.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has proposed a wolf hunting season for Aug. 30 to March 31. Jim Hayden, IDFG regional wildlife manager, said the commission has also proposed a trapping season for the wolf, Dec. 1 through Jan. 15.

"We've added a month to the front of the hunting season and this will be our first trapping season," Mr. Hayden said.

The public is invited to an open house at the Panhandle Region office at 2885 W. Kathleen Avenue in Coeur d'Alene Thursday, from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Regional staff will be on hand to answer questions and to solicit input on the 2011 wolf season proposals.

Mr. Hayden said the changes should bring an 18 percent harvest increase. Overall, the IDFG expects to see a 20 percent reduction in the state's wolf population numbers.

Twenty-four wolves may be harvested during the trapping season in the Panhandle region. Hunters may purchase three trapping tags and two hunting tags. There is no limit on the number of wolves that may be killed during the hunting season in the Panhandle. Other zones without a specific harvest limit include the Lolo, Selway and Middle Fork zones. The reason for the no harvest limit in the four zones is due to the wolf's impact on the numbers of elk, Hayden said.

"We expect 32 wolves to be harvested from the Panhandle," Mr. Hayden said. "That number should come close to stopping growth, which means the region will be at about the same number of wolves next year."

Mr. Hayden said before trappers are issued tags they will have to undergo a mandatory trapping education class. Wolves that are killed will have to be reported to IDFG within 72 hours.

"We want to make sure the harvest does not cause the population to approach the delisting criteria," Mr. Hayden said.

Mr. Hayden said anyone wishing to give their input on the proposed plan can do so through a survey on the IDFG Web site, <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/>, where the entire proposal can also be found.

The IDFG commission will meet in Salmon at the end of the month, July 27, 28 and 29.