



Idaho Department of Fish and Game NEWS RELEASE

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Headquarters

Lolo Wolf Control Action Completed

Idaho Fish and Game, with assistance from USDA Wildlife Services, has completed wolf control actions in northern Idaho's Lolo elk zone to improve elk survival in the area.

Predation impacts to elk calf and cow survival is the primary factor limiting recovery of the Lolo elk population.

Using a helicopter, Wildlife Services agents killed 20 wolves during the operation, which started last week. The operation is consistent with Fish and Game's [Elk Management Plan](#) and [Lolo Predation Management Plan](#).

The control operation was paid for using Fish and Game license dollars transferred to the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board, created by the Idaho Legislature in 2014.

Fish and Game authorizes control actions where wolves are causing conflicts with people or domestic animals, or are a significant, measured factor in deer and elk population declines. Such control actions are consistent with [Idaho's 2002 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan](#) approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Idaho Legislature.

Fish and Game prefers to manage wolf populations using hunters and trappers and only authorizes control actions where regulated harvest has been insufficient to meet management goals. The Lolo zone is steep, rugged country that is difficult to access, especially in winter. To date, hunters and trappers have taken 20 wolves in the Lolo zone during the 2015-2016 season. The trapping season ends March 31 and the hunting season ends June 30.

The Lolo elk population has declined drastically over the last 25 years, from 16,000 elk to fewer than 1,000 elk today. Short-term goals for the Lolo elk population outlined in the [2014 Elk Management Plan](#) include stabilizing the population and helping it grow.

Fish and Game has worked with the U.S. Forest Service for over 40 years to improve habitat for elk in the Lolo zone and will continue to do so. Hunting in the zone has been extremely restricted since the late 1990's. Rifle bull hunting was reduced by half and all rifle cow hunts have been eliminated. Additional restrictions were placed on rifle and archery hunters in 2011.

Fish and Game stepped up predation management in the Lolo area through increased harvest opportunities of black bears and mountain lions. Restoring the Lolo elk population will require continued harvest of black bears, mountain lions and wolves along with wolf control actions when needed.

Wolf control actions have been conducted in the Lolo zone for the last five years. In 2014, 19 wolves were killed and 23 were removed in 2013.

The overall objective is to maintain a smaller, but self-sustaining wolf population in the Lolo zone in order to allow the elk population to recover.

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