

1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Summary

Overview

The 1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan guides the government's wildlife management decisions affecting Yukon wolves. The plan acknowledges the complexity of wolf management issues, including a range of biological, social, and economic impacts.

The 17-page-long plan adopts an integrated ecosystem approach that today is the norm for wildlife management planning processes.

The concerns and diverse interests addressed by the plan include: strategies to ensure wolves continue to exist in healthy numbers; recognition of the non-consumptive values of wolves; recommendations for showing greater respect to wolves when hunting or trapping them; and recognition that there may be special conditions under which wolf numbers may need to be reduced to help increase ungulate populations.

Principles and Goals

There are ten principles and four goals that underpin the plan. The principles include the value of wolves and their prey to Yukon ecosystems, the inherent value of wolves, consider research and monitoring, and a broad range of human values involving wolves.

The goals define the general intent of the wolf conservation and management plan:

- To serve as a reference for all parties interested in the long-term survival of Yukon wolf populations;
- To provide for a variety of human and wildlife values;
- To identify opportunities to increase public awareness and understanding of wolves and management decisions; and
- To identify the conditions under which wolf reduction may be used.

Highlights of Recommendations

Non-consumptive use of wolves

The plan acknowledges that attitudes about wildlife are shifting, noting the growing interest in non-consumptive activities such as wildlife viewing, tourism and photography, and the inherent value of wild animals and the environment. Recommendations include producing interpretive materials about wolves, encouraging non-consumptive opportunities, increasing budgets for non-consumptive use programs, and supporting habitat protection measures.

Consumptive use of wolves

The plan makes five recommendations to protect and promote hunting and trapping. These include requiring hunting seals or tags, setting bag limits, establishing a hunting season, and supporting existing *Wildlife Act* regulations such as prohibiting the use of aircraft or snowmachines for hunting, firearms restrictions, and night hunting.

Management of ungulates

The well-being of wolves depends very much on the well-being of their prey – mainly moose, caribou and mountain sheep – and the plan acknowledges the challenges of managing these interconnected species. Recommendations include adopting ungulate and habitat management objectives that avoid the need for wolf reduction, protecting ungulate habitat, considering predators' needs when making management decisions that affect ungulates, and improving ungulate research and monitoring.

Wolves and agriculture

The plan recognizes that conflicts will occur between livestock owners and wolves, and that other government policies are in place to deal with these situations. Recommendations include meeting with agriculture representatives to improve understanding about the Yukon government's Problem Wildlife Policy, and committing to study and better prepare for potential conflicts between wildlife and agricultural land users.

Wolf reduction programs

While the plan advocates for management decisions that help avoid the need for wolf reduction, it also acknowledges that wolf reduction may be considered in some situations. It recommends the conditions required before a wolf reduction

program can be considered, guidelines for deciding whether or not to proceed with a wolf reduction program; and guidelines for carrying out wolf reduction.

In brief, the plan recommends that reduction should only be considered as a last resort. Wolf reduction is to be limited to a specific area where ungulates are threatened with local extinction. Also, wolf reduction can be considered when an ungulate population is low or declining if biological information has been collected over a two-year-long period about wolves, ungulates, bears, human harvest, and habitat — and with a hunting closure in place for that period.

The plan establishes seven guidelines to aid in making decisions on wolf reduction programs if/when the pre-conditions are met. These include rigorous experimental design, approvals and agreements, calf survival and population increase thresholds, and a percentage limit on the number of wolves in the territory subjected to reduction. The plan also sets out a number of program implementation guidelines related to methodology, hunting, and monitoring.

Public education, conflict resolution and research

Finally, the wolf conservation and management plan makes recommendations for improving public education, helping to resolve conflicts, and conducting research. These include developing education materials that consider both consumptive and non-consumptive viewpoints, and incorporating a number of ethical, biological, and traditional research recommendations

For Further Information:

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