

Wolf Management Plan Review Submission

Having had the rare privilege of seeing wolves in the wild, I feel inclined to comment on the new Wolf Management Plan.

First of all, I want to make it clear that these comments are my personal opinions.

However, I found some of the points summarized from the Renewable Resource Council meeting of 11 February 2011 were those I could agree with. Specifically that it is necessary to balance hunters' expectations of what is a sustainable moose harvest in any particular area.

I agree with their statement that the Yukon is a small jurisdiction, with limited government resources and a growing population. Wolf and ungulate management should recognize this.

Wolves exist in a complex management environment and complex ecosystem. Wolf management involves consideration of other predators, including people, and multiple prey; in other words, complex predator/prey systems, climate and habitat. Given what we have learned about the resilience of wolf populations to reductions, the new plan should focus less on that.

There must be a change from the "all-or-nothing" approach to wolf management to one that applies proactive, timely, small scale, targeted, local measures to achieve modest localized results. This requires measures to be implemented in a planned fashion, to avoid undertaking measures as a "last resort."

Ungulate harvest must take into account all harvesters, people and predators alike. If a population is seen to be under threat, measures must be implemented that will reduce or eliminate all human hunting until such time as that population has recovered, following rigorous scientific methods of determining that the risk of elimination of that population has passed.

Therefore, taking into account wolf reproduction and social structure, the only effective means to regulate wolf numbers is by sterilization of the dominant pair in a pack. Although viewed as costly, this action is more biologically and economically feasible and effective than any other method of population control. It is small scale, targeted, local and can be proactive, an approach suggested by the Renewable Resource Council's summary.

As the current boom in mining eats up more habitat, the moose population will likely decline. Wolves should not be blamed for human excesses, whether with a bulldozer or a rifle.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Whitley.