

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item**

Item No. 2.A.

SUBJECT: Request that the Board take action to consider approval of a quota for a February 2021 wolf hunt in accordance with the circuit court order issued on February 11, 2021 in Hunter Nation et al. v. WDNR, et al, Civ. No. 2021-CV-31 (Jefferson County)

FOR: February 15, 2021 Board meeting

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Keith Warnke, Administrator, Fish, Wildlife and Parks Division

SUMMARY:

On February 11, 2021, a Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge ruled the department must implement a regulated wolf harvest season for the remainder of February 2021. Given the mandate from the court, the department will be recommending a February 2021 harvest quota and permit level for wolves based on the information available as of April 2020. The number of wolf harvest permits to be issued is recommended to equal ten times the state quota after accounting for tribal declarations.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the quota for a February 2021 wolf hunt in accordance with the circuit court order issued on February 11, 2021.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):

☒ Background memo

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For

Approved by	Signature	Date
Eric Lobner, Wildlife Management program	DocuSigned by: <i>Eric Lobner</i> 49A5E090CF88465...	2/12/2021 3:26 PM CST
Keith Warnke, FWP Division Administrator	DocuSigned by: <i>Keith Warnke</i> 9D69747CE78D4CA...	2/12/2021 3:30 PM CST
Preston D. Cole, Secretary	DocuSigned by: <i>Todd Ambbs</i> 6793A7BA427C4CD...	2/12/2021 3:50 PM CST

by Todd Ambbs

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8

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CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 12, 2021

TO: Natural Resources Board Members

FROM: Secretary Preston D. Cole

SUBJECT: February 2021 wolf harvest season quota and permit levels

Summary

On February 11, 2021, a Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge ruled the department must implement a regulated wolf harvest season for the remainder of February 2021. Given the short time remaining and the mandate from the court, the department will be recommending a February 2021 harvest quota and permit level for wolves based on population information gathered over winter 2019-2020 and reported in April 2020. The number of wolf harvest permits to be issued is recommended to equal ten times the quota.

BackgroundWolf Population:

In April 2020 the statewide occupancy model estimate was 1195 wolves. This estimate is above the current state wolf management plan goal of 350 wolves living outside of tribal reservations in Wisconsin. Rigorous population monitoring has been conducted on the population for over 40 years and this commitment continues with the use of a variety of scientific approaches including winter track surveys, statistical population modeling, GPS collaring, public wolf reports, and documenting wolf mortalities.

Approach to harvest quotas:

Quota recommendations to maintain the current population were developed by department staff in consideration of several factors including the most recent population estimate, the population's response to harvest in the 2012-14 seasons, the current management plan, the scientific literature, and estimated impacts of various February 2021 harvest quotas resulting from population model projections. Given the timeframe, public and tribal input was very limited and the Wolf Advisory Committee was unable to meet. It is DNR's recommendation that the Natural Resources Board approve a harvest quota of 200 wolves from non-reservation lands for the February 2021 season.

Approach to harvest permits:

The recommended ratio of wolf hunting and trapping permits to state quota is 10:1. This ratio was used in 2012, 2013, and 2014 and resulted in quotas being met in all zones prior to the scheduled end of the season. The final number of permits available to state hunters will be determined following adjustment of the quota based on tribal declaration.

Applications for harvest permits and season dates

The application period for harvest permits will begin February 16 at 12:01 am and close February 20th at 11:59 pm. Customers will be able to view the results on February 22nd. Drawing winners can begin hunting and trapping when they have purchased their license and printed their carcass tag. The season will run through February 28th.

Drafted by: Keith Warnke