



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
PO Box 168  
Yellowstone National Park  
Wyoming 82190

IN REPLY REFER TO:

NI615/1.A.2.(YELL)  
xA3815a/9.B.

CERTIFIED

DEC 16 2021

The Honorable Greg Gianforte  
Office of the Governor  
Montana State Capitol Building  
P.O. Box 200801  
Helena, Montana 59620-0801

Dear Governor Gianforte:

In the span of less than three months, at least 12 Yellowstone National Park wolves have been killed within Montana's wolf management units 313 (Gardiner) and 316 (Cooke City), just north of the park boundary. This exceeds the total harvests of park wolves taken from those two units in any previous year and we're only halfway through the State's hunting season.

Due to the extraordinary number of Yellowstone wolves already killed this hunting season, and the high probability of even more park wolves being killed in the near future, I am requesting that you suspend wolf hunting in 313 and 316 for the remainder of this season. I am also asking that you and the Commission strongly consider reinstating appropriate quotas in 313 and 316 in future hunting seasons. Quotas were originally put in place not only to protect the Yellowstone wolf population, but also to protect the corresponding economic and tourism interests of Montana that are derived from wolf watching in the park. We have succeeded together over the past years at achieving both of these important objectives without affecting Montana's ability to accomplish its statewide wildlife conservation goals.

The State's data shows little to no wolf-related depredation incidents occurring in northern Yellowstone and also shows that the elk population in northern Yellowstone is "At" the population objectives set by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) Department. On a larger regional scale, FWP-Region 3, which includes northern Yellowstone, shows the region's elk population "Over" the objectives set by the State.

The State of Montana benefits directly from conservation investments, tourism, and wildlife viewing in and around Yellowstone. Visitors to Yellowstone spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year in communities within 50 miles of the park. Tourism to Yellowstone supports thousands of jobs and has an estimated overall benefit of \$640 million to the area's economy. The positive economic impacts of visitors viewing wolves in Yellowstone is estimated to be well over \$30 million annually, much of which is spent in local Montana communities and counties.

Wolves in Yellowstone represent over a quarter century of partnership with Montana and many other stakeholders who understand their value to Yellowstone. As we move into Yellowstone's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, the time is right for us to focus on how we can work together to accomplish our mutual objectives. Whether those objectives are strengthening transboundary wildlife conservation, providing quality visitor access and enjoyment, or improving the condition of local and state economies, our decisions today will shape what Yellowstone will look like tomorrow.

While you understandably expect me to consider the impacts of Yellowstone decision making on Montana, I am again asking that you similarly consider the impacts of Montana's decision making on Yellowstone. I appreciate the longstanding cooperative relationship Yellowstone has enjoyed with the State on a variety of major issues over past years. I believe there are no issues in which we cannot find common ground and ask for your assistance and leadership in helping achieve our mutually beneficial goals.

I look forward to keeping the lines of communication open and working cooperatively with you and your staff. I am also happy to travel to Helena to meet with you in person on this important topic. If you have any questions, please contact me at (307) 344-2002.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Sholly', with a long, sweeping underline.

Cameron H. Sholly  
Superintendent

Season	Wolf ID	Pack	Sex	Age	State Harvested	Hunt District
<b>2009-10</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT AND ID ONLY)</b>					
	716F	Cottonwood Creek	Female	4.50	MT	WMU 3
	uncollared	Cottonwood Creek	Male	adult	MT	WMU 3
	uncollared	Cottonwood Creek	Unknown	0.50	MT	WMU 3
	527F	Cottonwood Creek	Female	7.50	MT	WMU 3
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>(NO HUNTING SEASON, WOLVES RELISTED)</b>					
<b>2011-12</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT AND ID ONLY)</b>					
	uncollared	642F's Group	Female	1.50	MT	WMU 313/316
	642F	642F's Group	Female	4.50	MT	WMU 313/316
<b>2012-13</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT, ID, AND WY)</b>					
	uncollared	Junction Butte	Female	adult	MT	WMU 316
	uncollared	Junction Butte	Male	0.40	MT	WMU 316
	793M	Snake River	Male	5.50	WY	Pacific Creek
	824M	Mollie's	Male	1.50	MT	WMU 390
	829F	Blacktail	Female	1.60	MT	WMU 390
	823F	Junction Butte	Female	1.60	MT	WMU 390
	754M	Lamar Canyon	Male	4.60	WY	Sunlight
	uncollared	Bechler	Female	0.60	ID	Island Park
	uncollared	8 Mile	Male	1.60	MT	WMU 390
	832F	Lamar Canyon	Female	6.70	WY	Sunlight
	uncollared	8 Mile	Male	adult	MT	WMU 390
	uncollared	Bechler	Female	0.70	ID	Island Park
<b>2013-14</b>	<b>NO WOLVES HARVESTED (HUNTING SEASONS IN MT, ID, AND WY)</b>					
<b>2014-15</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT AND ID ONLY)</b>					
	uncollared	Junction Butte	Female	1.50	MT	WMU 313
	689M	Cougar Creek	Male	8.50	MT	WMU 313
	889F	Lone wolf	Female	3.50	MT	WMU 316
	uncollared	8 Mile? Cougar?	Female	0.50	MT	WMU 313
	uncollared	Prospect Peak?	Male	adult	MT	WMU 313
<b>2015-16</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT AND ID)</b>					
	968F	Disperser, from Jbutte	Female	1.60	MT	WMU 390
<b>2016-17</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT AND ID ONLY)</b>					
	uncollared	Junction Butte	Female	1.50	MT	WMU 313
	uncollared	Junction Butte	Male	1.50	MT	WMU 313
	uncollared	Junction Butte	Male	0.50	MT	WMU 313
	uncollared	8 Mile	Female	0.50	MT	WMU 316
	uncollared	8 Mile	Male	adult	MT	WMU 316
	uncollared	8 Mile	Unknown	Unknown	MT	WMU 316
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT, ID, AND WY)</b>					
	uncollared	Prospect Peak	Male	3.5	MT	WMU 316
	uncollared	Prospect Peak	Female	0.5	MT	WMU 316
	uncollared	Snake River	Male	3.5	WY	
	uncollared	963F Group	Male	3.7	MT	WMU 390
	uncollared	Canyon	Male	7.7	MT	WMU 390
	uncollared	Canyon	Female	4.7	MT	WMU 390
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT, ID, AND WY)</b>					
	1116	Cougar Creek	Male	6.8	MT	WMU 310
	uncollared	1118F group	Female	4.6	WY	WMU 1
	926F (no collar)	Lamar Canyon	Female	7.6	MT	WMU 316
	uncollared	1005F group	Male		MT	WMU 313
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>(HUNTING SEASONS IN MT, ID, AND WY)</b>					

yellow highlight indicates wolves harvested in MT near the north park boundary

Quota of 18 wolves for WMU 390 in MT of which 313/316 were subunits; FWP shut down subunits 313/316 after 4 wolves were harvested

316 got its own designation as a WMU and a quota of 3 wolves; 313 was still part of WMU 390

313 got its own designation as a WMU and a quota of 4 wolves;

quota of 3 (or 4) wolves in 313 and 3 wolves in 316 (needs confirmation)

quota of 2 wolves in 313 and 2 wolves in 316 (needs confirmation)

quota of 2 wolves in 313 and 2 wolves in 316 (commission rejected proposal to increase quotas)

quota of 2 wolves in 313 and 2 wolves in 316

quota of 2 in WMU 313 and 2 wolf in WMU 316

quota of 2 in WMU 313 and 2 wolf in WMU 316

962M	Loner	Male	7.8	MT	WMU 390
uncollared	Mollie's	Male	1.5	WY	WMU 2
uncollared	Phantom Lake	Male	0.6	MT	WMU 313
uncollared	Phantom Lake	Male	0.6	MT	WMU 313

**2020-21 (HUNTING SEASONS IN MT, ID, AND WY)**

uncollared	Phantom Lake	Male	0.5	MT	WMU 313
uncollared	Phantom Lake	Male	0.5	MT	WMU 313
1201F	Wapiti Lake, dispersing	Female	2.7	MT	WMU 310

quota of 1 in WMU 313 and 1 wolf in WMU 316

**2021-22 (HUNTING SEASONS IN MT, ID, AND WY)**

uncollared	Junction Butte	Female	0.4	MT	WMU 316
uncollared	Junction Butte	Female	0.4	MT	WMU 316
uncollared	Junction Butte	Female	1.4	MT	WMU 316
1109F	Junction Butte, dispersing	Female	6.5	WY	Unit 1
uncollared	Bechler	unknown	0.5	ID	ID 62 or 62A
uncollared	Bechler	unknown	0.5	ID	ID 62 or 62A
uncollared	Phantom Lake	Female	adult	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Phantom Lake	Male	adult	MT	WMU313
1266M	Wapiti Lake	Male	1.6	WY	Unit 4
uncollared	Phantom Lake	Female	unknown	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Phantom Lake?	Female	unknown	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Phantom Lake?	Female	unknown	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Rescue Creek	Male	unknown	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Junction Butte	unknown	1.6	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Junction Butte	unknown	1.6	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Junction Butte	unknown	1.6 or 2.6	MT	WMU313
1238M	Mollie's	male	2.7	WY	Unit 1
uncollared	Phantom	male	adult	MT	WMU313
uncollared	Phantom	female	1.8	MT	WMU313
1234M	Wapiti	male	3.8	MT	WMU313

Harvest date unlimited; no quotas in WMU 313/316

20 total (3 in WMU 316; 12 in WMU 313); 7 of 10-12 wolves in Phantom pack harvested

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE  
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS  
LT. GOVERNOR

January 6, 2022

Cameron H. Sholly  
Superintendent  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 168  
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

Dear Superintendent Sholly:

In response to your December 16, 2021 letter regarding wolf management in Montana, I share your interest in keeping our lines of communication open and working together on the many issues we share.

The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission establishes hunting regulations in accordance with the laws of the State of Montana. The Commission adopts regulations based on the scientific data and findings from expert biologists at Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Montana law requires regulations to ensure a sustainable population of wolves in the state. Furthermore, the Commission adopts regulations after significant public input.

As you note in your letter, wolves from Yellowstone National Park have been harvested on land in the State of Montana. Once a wolf exits the park and enters lands in the State of Montana, it may be harvested pursuant to regulations established by the Commission under Montana law. These regulations provide strong protections to prevent overharvest.

Given the Commission's role in establishing hunting regulations or changing existing ones, I have forwarded your letter to the Commission for its consideration, and I encourage you to bring any outstanding concerns you may have to the Commission.

Thank you for your service and your dedication to Yellowstone National Park, and I look forward to continue working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Gianforte".

Greg Gianforte  
Governor