

Wolf mortality in Idaho, a final toll. 48 – 59 percent of Idaho wolves killed in one year. (UPDATED 5-8-12)

by KEN COLE on MAY 7, 2012 · 209 COMMENTS · in IDAHO WOLVES, WOLF HUNT, WOLVES

The Wildlife News has finally obtained all of the records of documented mortality for wolves from April 1, 2011 up to April 1, 2012. This information tells a grim story about what the toll of handing over management to the State of Idaho has been on the Idaho wolf population. All told, based on some estimates made using the data, under state management, 721 wolves, or **59% of the wolves**, were killed in the year running from April, 2011 – April, 2012. Even if you use only documented mortality, without estimating additional, unreported illegal take or other causes of mortality, then 492 wolves, or 48% of the wolves, in Idaho were killed.

I have made previous, and very similar posts based on preliminary information but this post is based on all of the wolf mortality information that the Idaho Fish and Game has for the period of time. The information contains critical information about the number of wolves killed which had radio collars. Using the official estimate of 746 on December 31, 2011 as a benchmark I was able to make some educated guesses about the full extent of undocumented mortality.

Using only the documented mortality it appears that, at the beginning of April, 2011 when pups were born, there were 1030 wolves and by the same time this year, before pups were born, there were 539 wolves in Idaho.

Undoubtedly there was more undocumented mortality than what is reported here. Using numbers estimated by comparing the proportion of wolves killed in the hunt that were wearing radio collars to the number of wolves killed wearing radio collars, I

estimate that, rather than the 16 wolves reported to have been illegally killed, there were actually 100 wolves killed illegally because 6 of those were wearing radio collars. The number of wolves that died (9) from unknown causes contained 5 radio collared wolves which, using the same ratio, would have resulted in an additional 80 wolves. The number of wolves that died from natural causes (5) consisted of 4 collared wolves, which, using the same ratio, would have resulted in an additional 66 wolves. Under this estimate it appears that, at the beginning of April, 2011 when pups were born, there were 1217 wolves and by the same time this year, before pups were born, there were 496 wolves in Idaho.

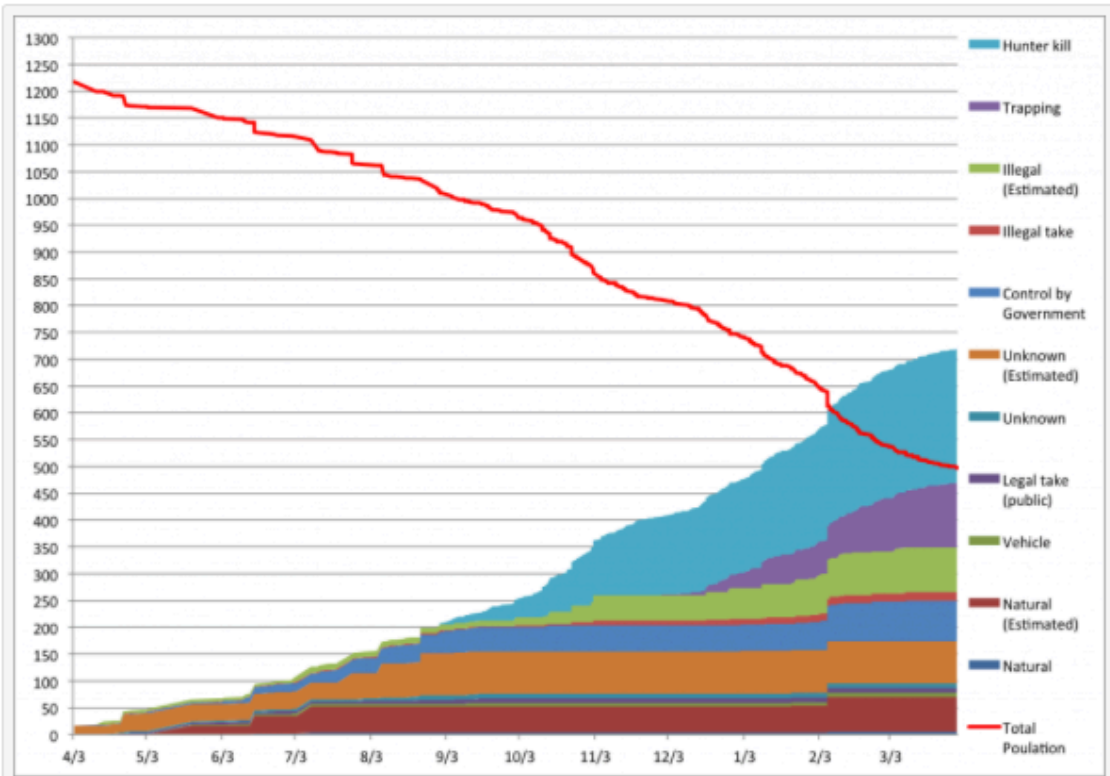
The wolves killed under the “Control by Government” (75) label included those killed by IDFG (20), USDA Wildlife Services (48), and by Idaho County Deputies (7).

Meanwhile, Idaho Fish and Game Commission Chairman, Tony McDermott still has not retracted his claim that there are 1,200 – 1,600 wolves in Idaho and the Commission set more liberal hunting rules for the upcoming year. Rocky Barker also weighed in criticizing Defenders of Wildlife for complaining about the toll that Idaho’s management has had on wolves. He seems not to understand the meaning of the word “decimate”.

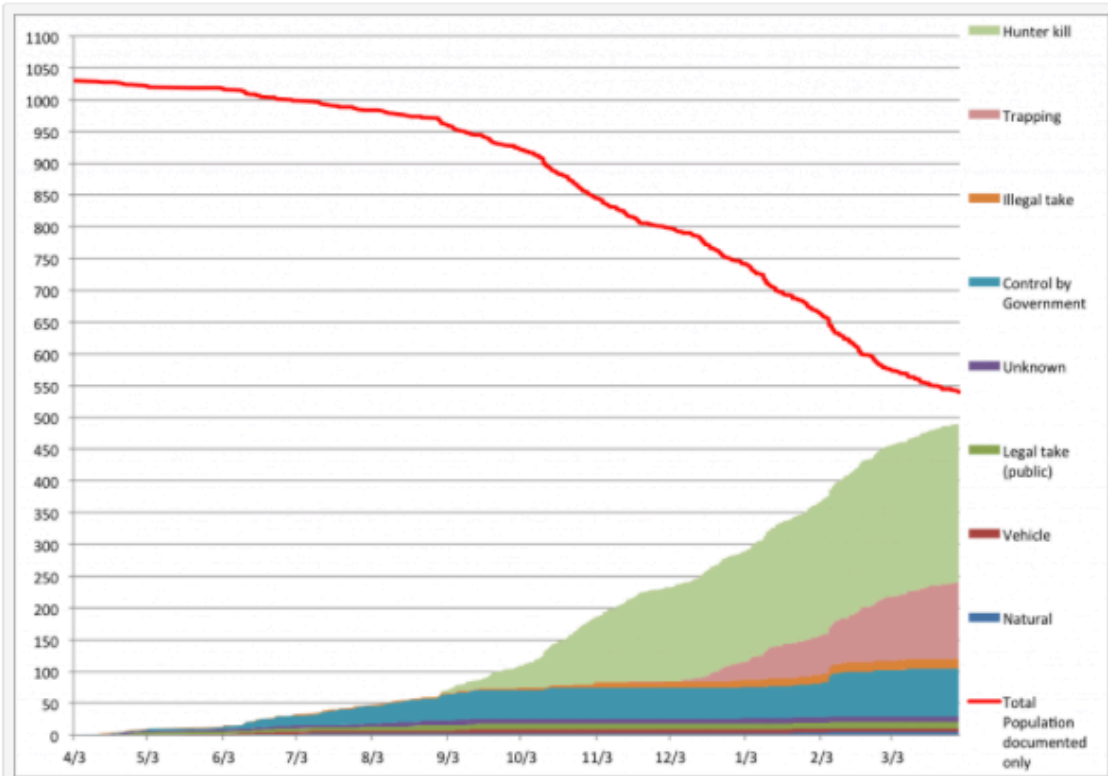
dec·i·mate (transitive verb)

dec·i·mate [déssə màyt](, dec·i·mates)

1. destroy large proportion of something
2. almost destroy something
3. kill one person in 10



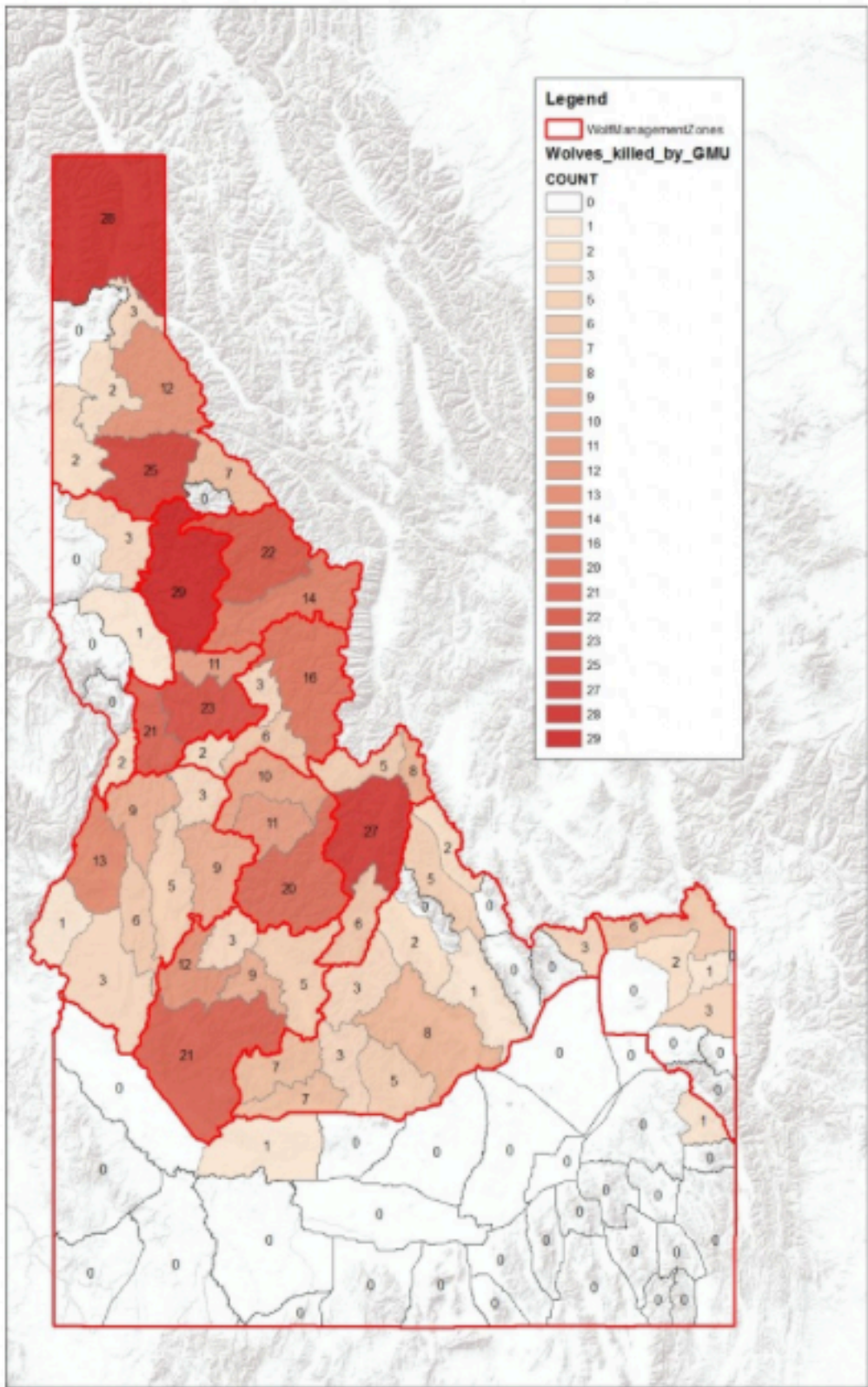
Estimated wolf mortality in Idaho, April 1, 2011 - April 1, 2012 (click for larger view)



Documented wolf mortality in Idaho, April 1, 2011 - April 1, 2012 (click for larger view)

Control (public) Legal take	9	
Control authorized take	7	
Control Capture Mortality	1	
Control-IDFG	20	
Control-WS	47	84
Illegal Non-target	2	
Illegal Over-limit	1	
Illegal take	13	
Illegal (Estimated)	84	100
Natural Disease	1	
Natural Intraspecific	3	
Natural Malnutrition	1	
Natural (Estimated)	66	71
Hunter kill	250	
Trapping	65	
Trapping Foothold	7	
Trapping Snare	50	372
Unknown	9	
Unknown (Estimated)	80	89
Vehicle	6	6

Mortality Breakdown



Wolf Mortality by Game Management Unit