

Alexander Archipelago Wolf (*Canis lupus ligoni*)



The wolf was selected as an MIS because of population viability concerns in some areas of the Tongass.

The wolf inhabits the mainland and the larger islands south of Frederick Sound (MacDonald and Cook 2000). However only the largest islands, including Prince of Wales, Kuiu, Kupreanof, Mitkof, Etoilin, Revillagigedo, Kosciusko, Zarembo, and Dall islands, are thought to support persistent wolf populations (Person *et al.* 1996). Analysis has shown that wolves on Prince of Wales Island are a population segment isolated from all other wolves in Southeast Alaska and coastal British Columbia (Weckworth *et al.* 2005). Wolves will prey on deer, beaver, and salmon; in most areas of Southeast Alaska the wolf depends heavily on deer. Wolves use a wide variety of habitats when prey are present, and they can affect prey populations in those areas. Wolf densities are closely tied to the population levels of their prey. Wolves have large home ranges (about 100 square miles per pack), use a wide variety of habitats, and are very mobile (Person *et al.* 1996).

2008 Forest Plan

A. Implement a Forest-wide program, in cooperation with ADF&G and USFWS, to assist in maintaining long-term sustainable wolf populations.

1. Where wolf mortality concerns have been identified, develop and implement a Wolf Habitat Management Program in conjunction with ADF&G. To assist in managing legal and illegal wolf mortality rates to within sustainable levels, integrate the Wolf Habitat Management Program (including road access management) with season and harvest limit proposals submitted to federal and state boards.

a) Participate in interagency monitoring of wolf populations on the Forest.

b) Where wolf population data suggest that mortality exceeds sustainable levels, work with ADF&G and USFWS to identify probable sources of mortality. Examine the relationship among wolf mortality, human access, and hunter/trapper harvest. Conduct analyses for smaller islands (e.g., Mitkof Island), portions of larger islands, or among multiple wildlife analysis areas (WAAs).

c) Where road access and associated human-caused mortality has been determined, through an interagency analysis, to be a significant contributing factor to locally unsustainable wolf mortality, incorporate this information into Travel Management planning and hunting/trapping regulatory planning. The objective is to reduce mortality risk and a range of options to reduce this risk should be considered. In these landscapes, both open and total road density should be considered. **Total road densities of 0.7 to 1.0 mile per square mile or less may be necessary.** Options shall likely include a combination of Travel Management regulations, establishing road closures, and promulgating hunting and trapping regulations to ensure locally viable wolf populations. Local knowledge of habitat conditions, spatial locations of roads, and other factors need to be considered by the interagency analysis rather than solely relying upon road densities. Road management objectives would be developed and implemented through an interdisciplinary Access and Travel Management or comparable process. (See Transportation Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.) Suggested wolf hunting and trapping changes would be developed and forwarded to the Federal Subsistence Board and the Alaska Board of Game.

2. Provide, where possible, sufficient deer habitat capability to first maintain sustainable wolf populations, and then to consider meeting estimated human deer harvest demands. **This is generally considered to equate to the habitat capability to support 18 deer per square mile (using habitat capability model outputs) in biogeographic provinces where deer are the primary prey of wolves.** Use the most recent version of the interagency deer habitat capability model and field validation of local deer habitat conditions to assess deer habitat, unless alternate analysis tools are developed. Local knowledge of habitat conditions, spatial location of habitat, and other factors need to be considered by the biologist rather than solely relying upon model outputs.

3. Design management activities to avoid abandonment of wolf dens.

a) **Maintain a 1,200-foot forested buffer, where available, around known active wolf dens.** Road construction within the buffer is discouraged and alternative routes should be identified where feasible. No road construction is permitted within 600 feet of a den unless site-specific analysis indicates that local landform or other factors will alleviate potential adverse disturbance.

b) If a den is monitored for 2 consecutive years and found to be inactive, buffers described in a), above, are no longer required. However, in the spring, prior to implementing on-the-ground management activities (timber harvest or road construction), check each known inactive den site to see if it has become active.

Project Level

At the project level den sites are documented. All known active dens receive the buffer as stated in the Forest Plan. These buffers may alter proposed unit boundaries.

