



School of Natural Resources
and the Environment

Seminar Series: Fall 2022

**FIFTEEN YEARS OF WOLF HUNTING AND TRAPPING IN IDAHO.
WHAT DO WE KNOW?**

SPEAKER: David Ausband, Idaho Coop Unit

DATE: Wednesday, November 9th

TIME: 3:00-4:00 pm

LOCATION: ENR2 S107 & [Zoom](#)

ABSTRACT:

Harvest of gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) began in Idaho almost 15 years ago. There has been fierce debate about how harvest might affect gray wolves in the state. Using a long-term genetic dataset as well as harvest information we now better understand how hunting and trapping affects wolves.

We used harvest data to examine the mechanics of wolf harvest throughout Idaho. For example, were there “safe havens”, were pups more vulnerable to harvest, and were few wolves harvested via rifle? We also used noninvasive genetic sampling to construct pack pedigrees and estimate pup survival for the harvested wolf population. We hypothesized that harvest reduces pup survival because of 1) reduced group size, 2) increased breeder turnover and/or 3) reduced number of female helpers.

Wolf harvest occurs virtually everywhere in Idaho, pups are not more vulnerable to harvest than adults, and most wolves are harvested via rifle during the general big-game season. Harvest reduces pup survival by half. In addition to harvest, turnover of breeding males and the presence of older, nonbreeding males also reduces pup survival. Large groups and breeder stability increase pup survival, however. Low to moderate rates of harvest do not increase the frequency of breeder turnover. Wolf pup survival is negatively influenced by both the direct (i.e., pup is harvested) and indirect effects of harvest that change pack size and composition.

