

2012 Minnesota Wolf Season Report



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All data contained herein are subject to revision, due to updated information, improved analysis techniques, and/or regrouping of data for analysis.

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Minnesota Wolf Season Summary

In 2011, the Minnesota Legislature authorized the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to implement a wolf season following the removal of wolves from the federal Endangered Species Act and classified wolves as small game in state statute. In anticipation of delisting in January of 2012, DNR first began discussing the design of a potential regulated public hunting and trapping season for wolves late in 2011. The 2012 Legislature established wolf hunting and trapping licenses, further clarified authority for DNR to implement a wolf season and required the start of the season to be no later than the start of firearms deer season each year. After drafting an initial proposal, DNR sought public input on the proposed 2012 wolf season structure prior to implementing the season and made slight modifications to the proposal in summer 2012. This report attempts to communicate the outcome of the first regulated wolf season by presenting information about the harvest.

Wolf season licenses were offered through a lottery application and a deadline was established for purchase of licenses awarded through the lottery. Unsold licenses were available at a later date for purchase by unsuccessful lottery applicants.

The wolf season harvest was divided into three segments; an early hunting season that coincided with the firearms deer season, a late hunting season, and a concurrent late trapping season. The wolf range was divided into three zones to facilitate management discussions with tribal governments and natural resource agencies based on ceded territories in northeastern and east central Minnesota (Figure 1). A total target harvest of 400 wolves was established to limit total potential take of wolves through the season and to initiate the close of the season. Each of the 3 zones had independent target harvests for early and late seasons (Table 1).

Hunters and trappers were required to register wolves harvested by 10 PM the day of harvest and were also required to monitor by phone or internet the season progress and check for an announcement of season closure when the target harvest by zone or season was reached.

Successful hunters and trappers also had to bring harvested wolves to DNR offices for pelt tagging, collection of additional harvest information, and to allow for collection of biological samples. Information was collected from hunters about the location of harvest and biological samples were collected from wolves including a tooth, tissue samples, and female reproductive tracts for characterizing demographics of wolves taken during the season.

Additional information from the 2012 wolf season is provided in the tables and figures below. A survey was conducted to gather information from wolf hunters and trappers regarding preferences and opinions relative to their satisfaction, efforts, success, motivations, and attitudes about wolf hunting and management issues. Survey results will be available in a separate report.

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Table 1. 2012 Minnesota wolf season zone target harvest.

WOLF SEASON ZONE	HARVEST TARGET	Early season harvest target
East Central	18	9
Northeast	117	58
Northwest	265	133
Total	400	200

Table 2. License, season, and season dates for 2012 Minnesota Wolf Season

LICENSE	SEASON	DATES
A	Early Hunting	Nov. 3 – 18, 100 Series Deer Permit Areas Nov. 3 – 11, 200 Series Deer Permit Areas
B	Late Hunting	Nov. 24 – Jan. 31, 2013
C	Late Trapping	Nov. 24 – Jan. 31, 2013

Table 3. 2012 Minnesota wolf season application and lottery information.

Season	Licenses available	Res. applicants	Non-res. applicants	Res. win	Non-res. win	% Draw success
Early Hunting	3,600	12,054	148	3,552	48	30
Late Hunting	2,400	7,617	185	1,559	48	21
Late Trapping		3,762	22	793	0 ^a	21
Totals	6,000	23,433	355	5,904	96	

^a Non-residents are not eligible to trap wolves in Minnesota.

Table 4. 2012 Minnesota wolf season licenses issued.

Season	Lottery licenses	Unsold lottery licenses	Military licenses	Total
Early Hunting	2,974	615	81	3,670
Late Hunting	1,422	187	47	1,656
Late Trapping	663	130	4	797
Totals	5,059	932	132	6,123

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Table 5. Effort and success information for participants in the 2012 Minnesota wolf season.

Season	Licenses issued	% participation ^a	Avg. days effort ^a	Total harvest	Success rate ^b
Early Hunting	3,670	87	6.7	147	4.6
Late Hunting	1,656	79	7.5	67	5.1
Late Trapping	797	85	19.8	199	29.4

^a Data on participation and days effort obtained from hunter/trapper survey.

^b Harvest success calculated after adjusting for % participation obtained from hunter/trapper survey.

Table 6. Zone specific closure dates for 2012 Minnesota wolf season.

Season	Zone		
	NW	NE	EC
Early Hunting	11/18/2012	11/15/2012	11/5/2012
Late Hunting	1/3/2013	12/15/2012	12/14/2012
Late Trapping	1/3/2013	12/15/2012	12/14/2012

Table 7. Zone and season specific harvest of wolves in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season.

Season	Zone			
	NW	NE	EC	All
Early Hunting	86	56	5	147
Late Hunting	44	23	0	67
Late Trapping	154	37	8	199
All	284	116	13	413

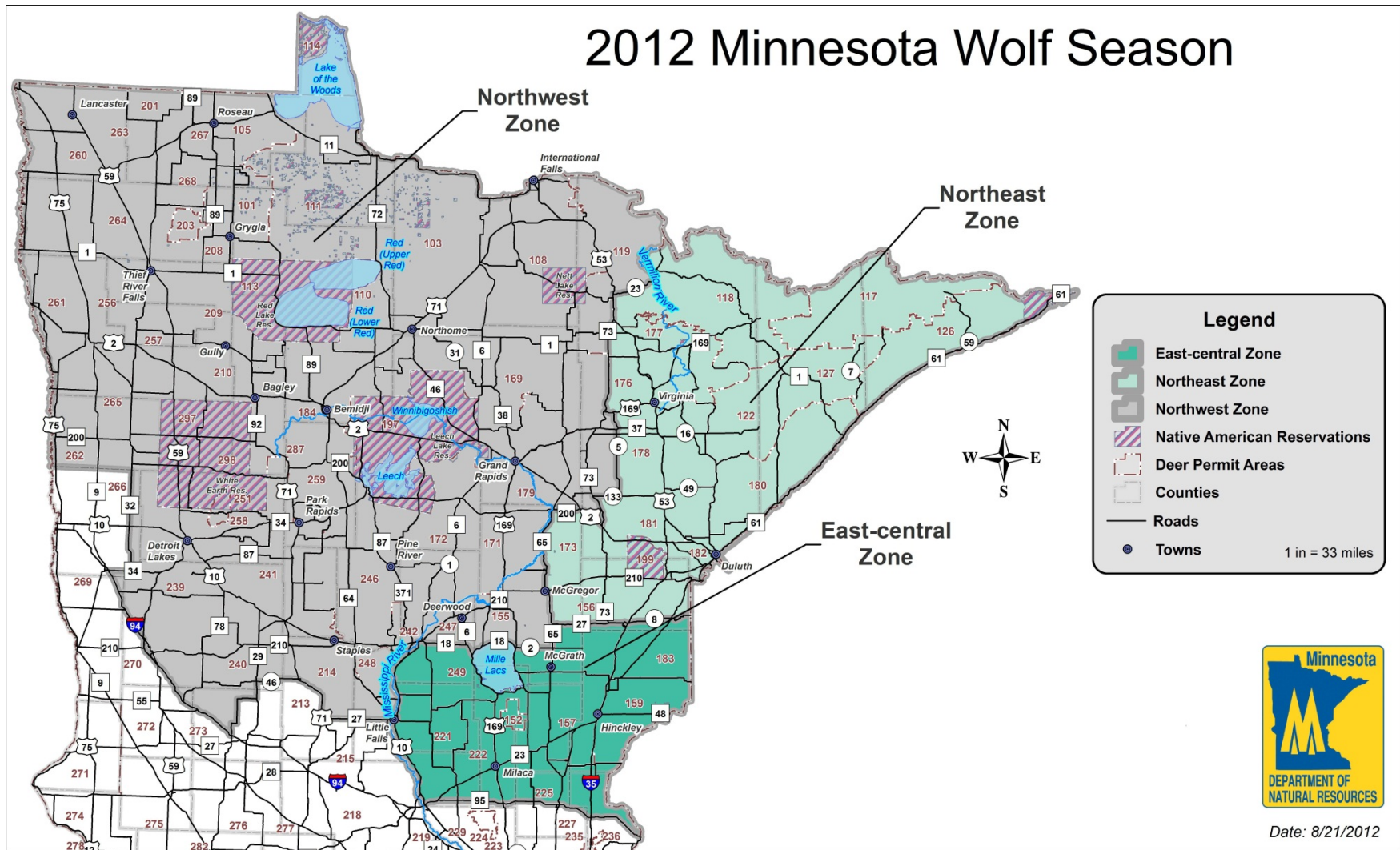
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Table 8. Harvest of wolves in Minnesota by county during the 2012 wolf season.

COUNTY	Early Hunting	Late Hunting	Late Trapping	Total
St. Louis	42	17	41	100
Itasca	22	4	23	49
Roseau	10	5	16	31
Beltrami	6	3	18	27
Lake	12	4	9	25
Koochiching	14	6	5	25
Aitkin	10	2	11	23
Becker	0	7	10	17
Cass	5	0	13	18
Cook	4	4	6	14
Clearwater	4	1	7	12
Hubbard	2	0	9	11
Marshall	1	6	1	8
Crow Wing	1	1	6	8
Lake of the Woods	4	1	2	7
Otter Tail	2	1	3	6
Pine	2	0	3	5
Carlton	3	0	2	5
Pennington	0	3	2	5
Polk	0	1	3	4
Kanabec	2	0	3	5
Morrison	0	0	3	3
Red Lake	1	1	1	3
Kittson	0	0	2	2
Total	147	67	199	413

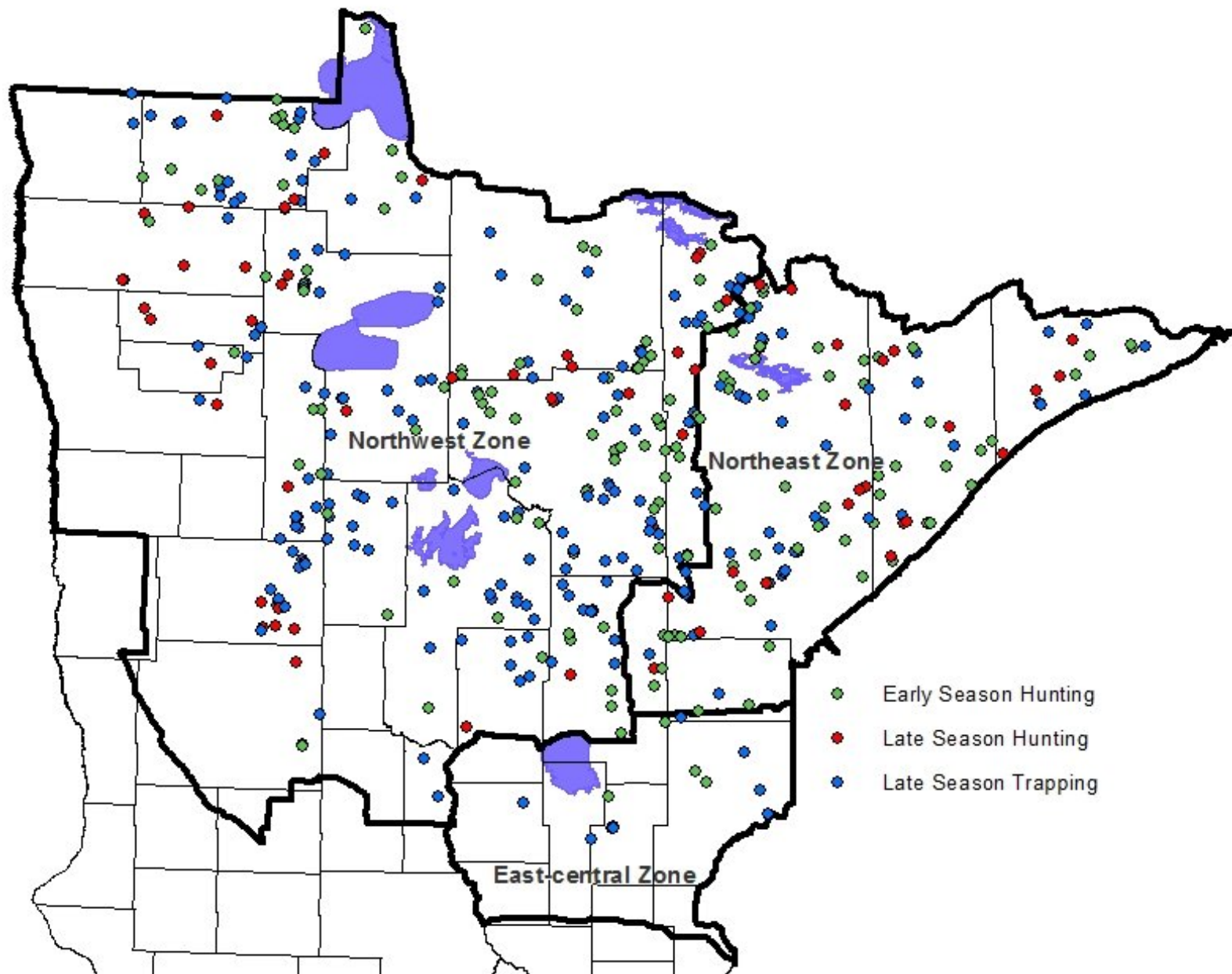
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Figure 1. 2012 Minnesota Wolf Season Map



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Figure 2. Wolf harvest locations (n=413) in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season.



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Figure 3. Percentage of wolf harvest by day during the early hunting season compared to percentage of deer harvest over same period during the firearms deer season.

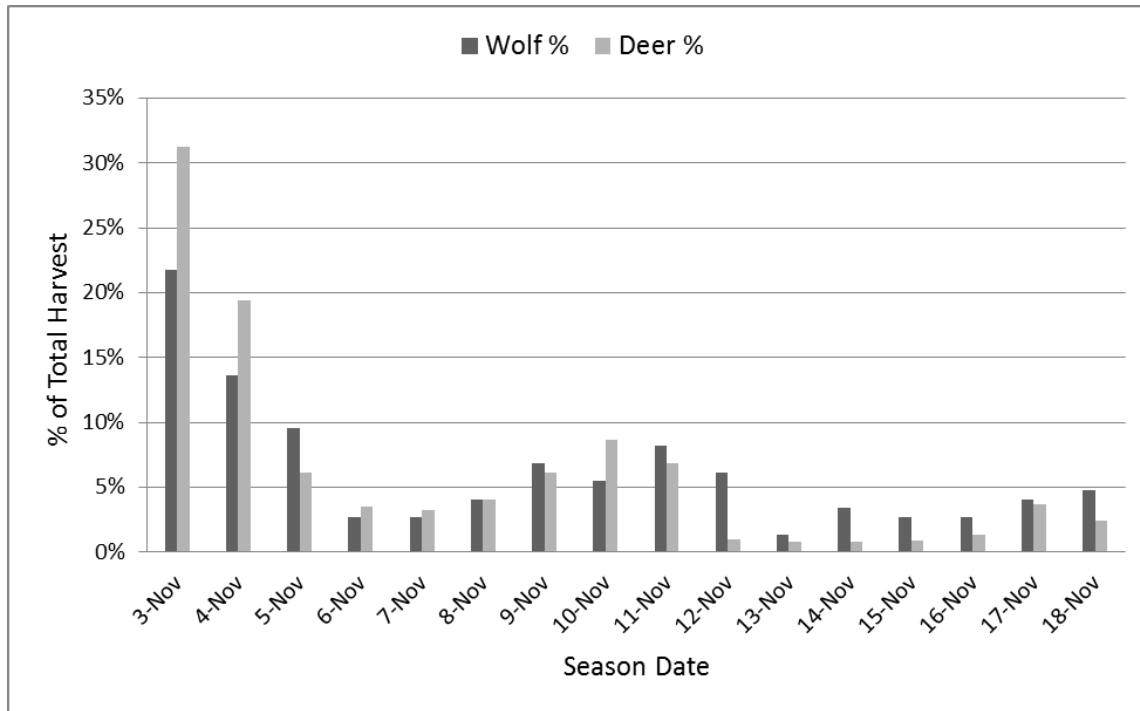
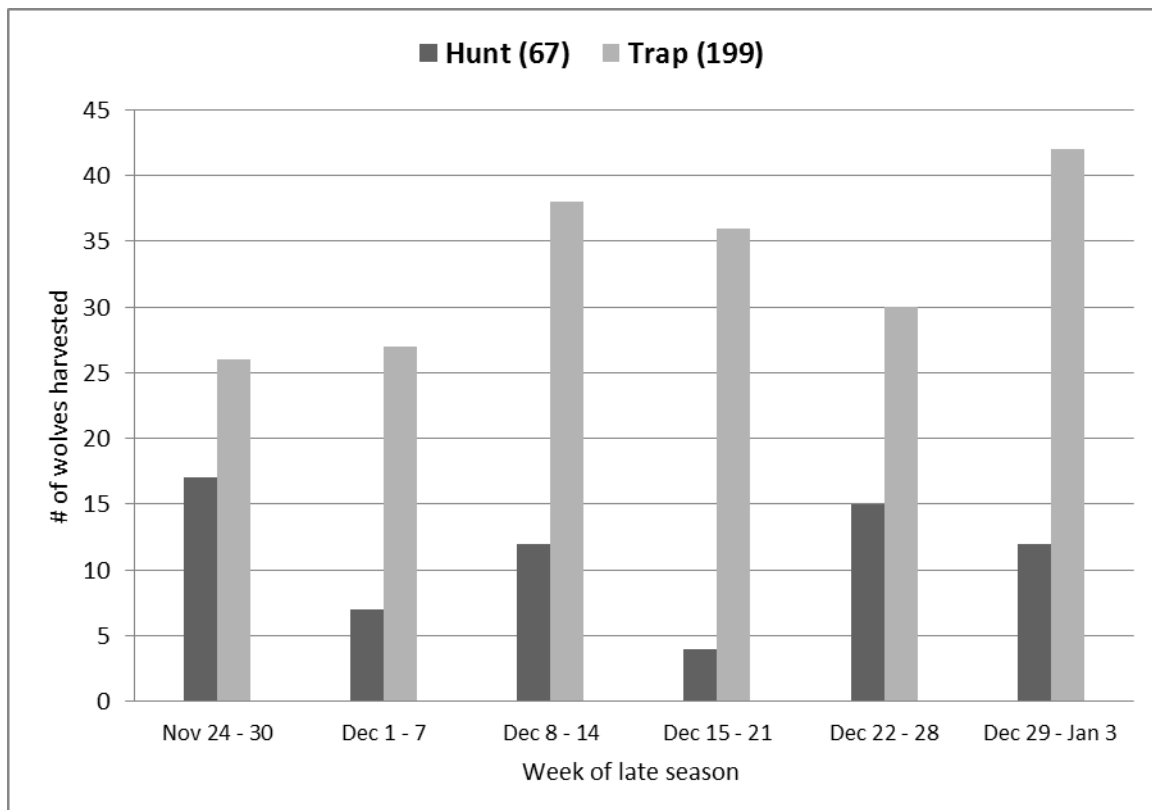
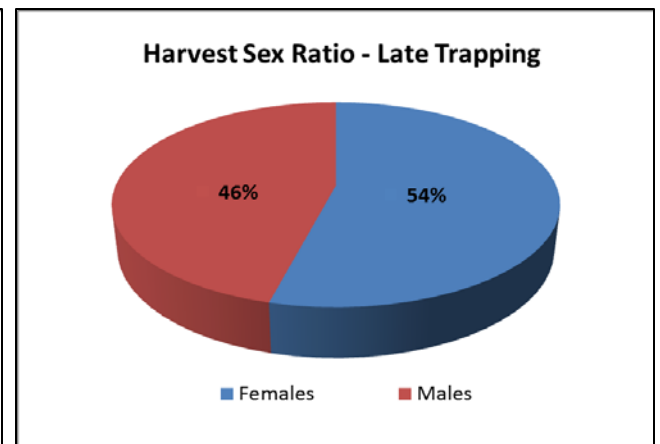
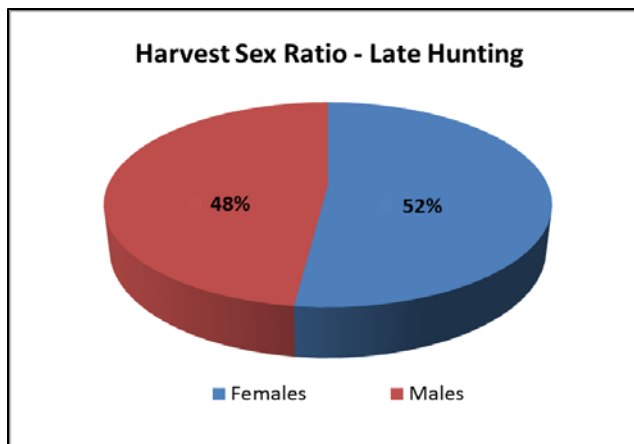
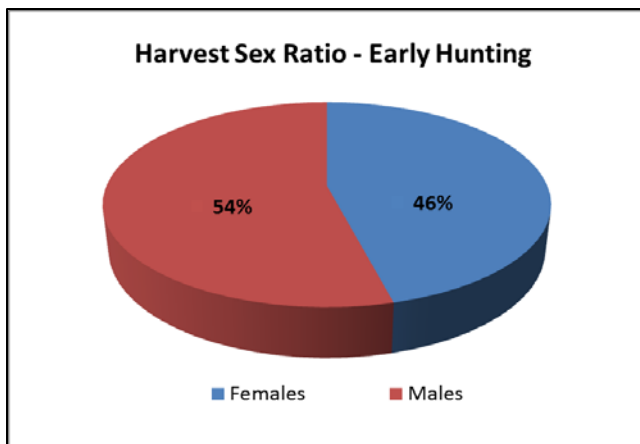
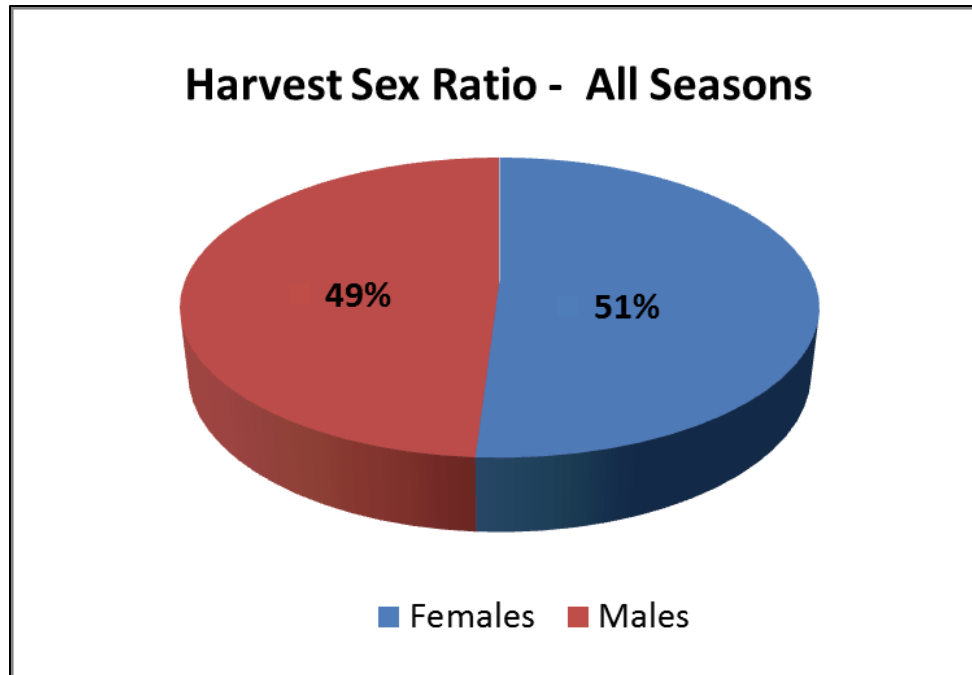


Figure 4. 2012 Minnesota late season wolf harvest by week.



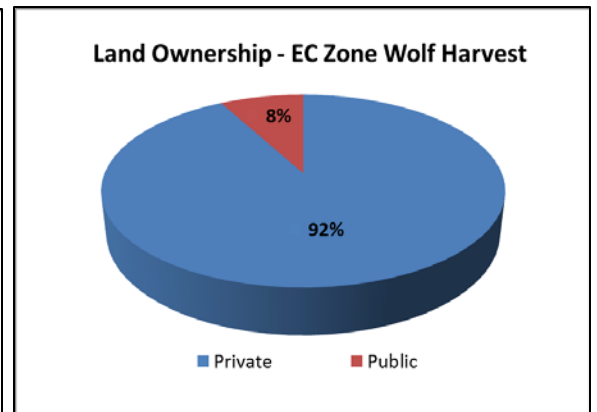
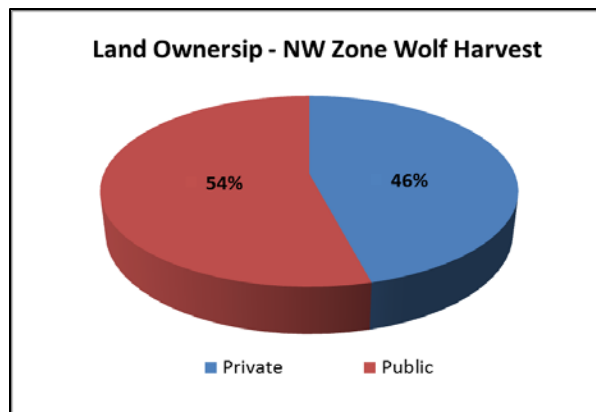
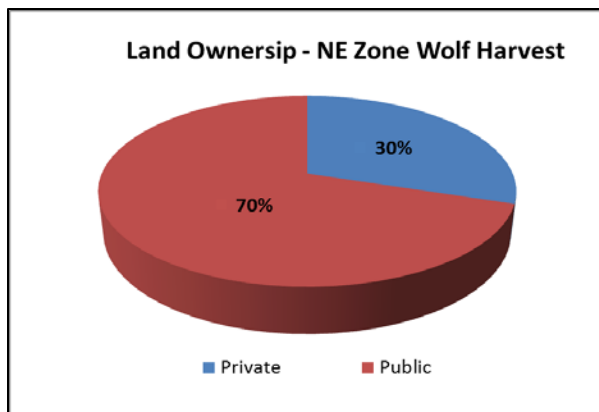
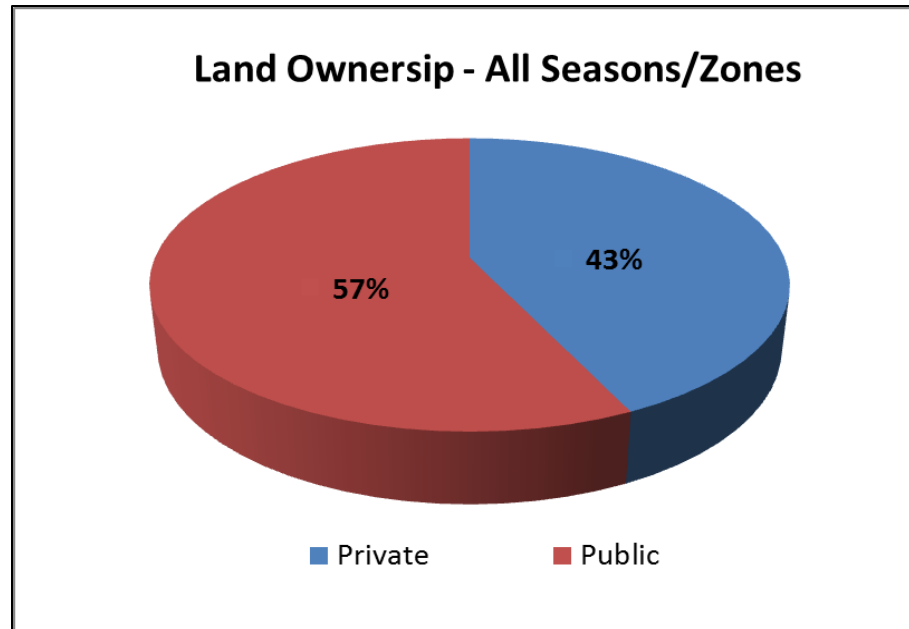
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Figure 5. Sex ratio of wolves (n=413) harvested in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season.



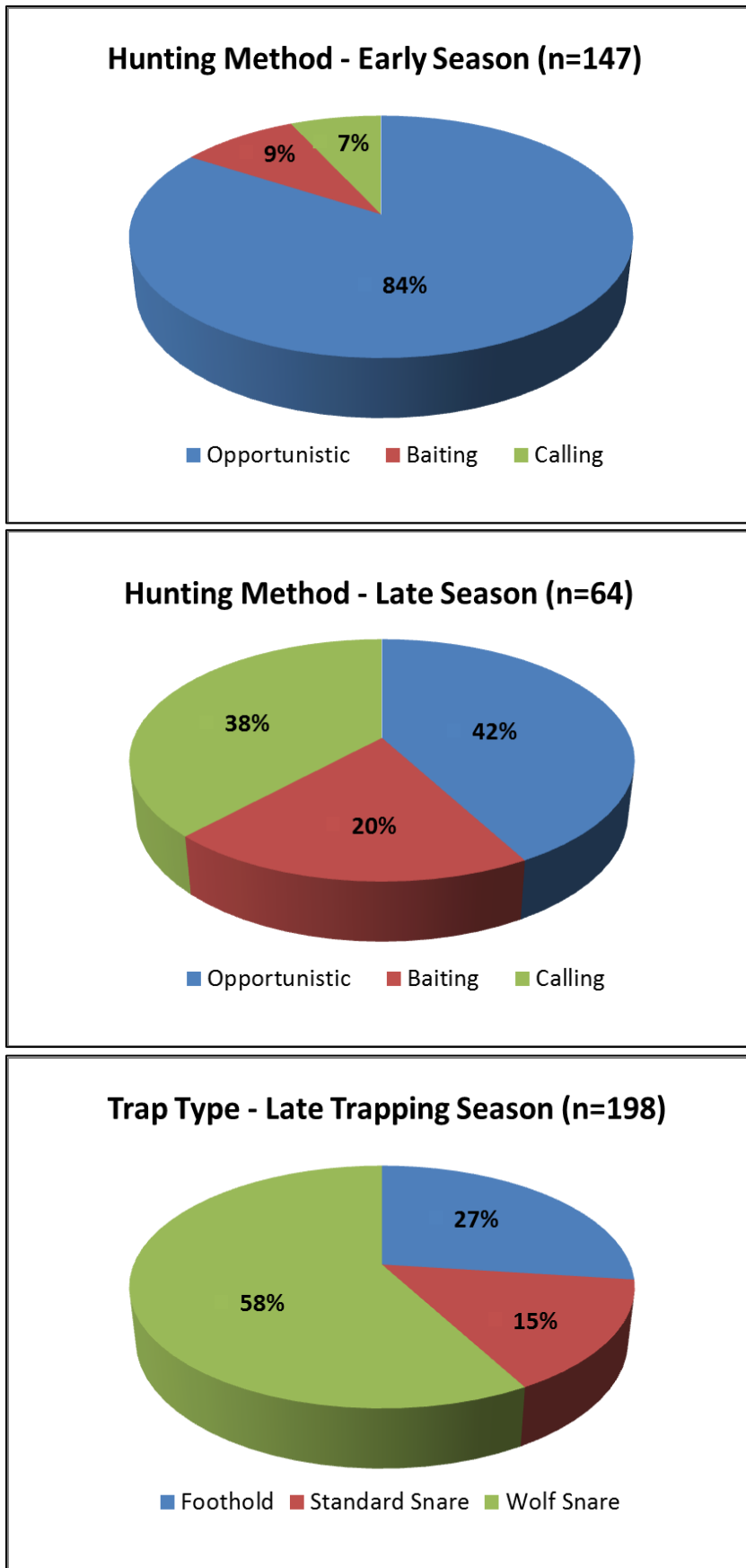
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Figure 6. Land ownership for locations where wolves were harvested in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season.



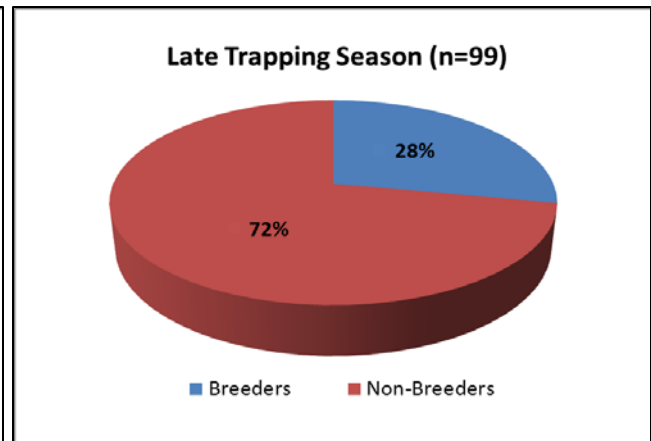
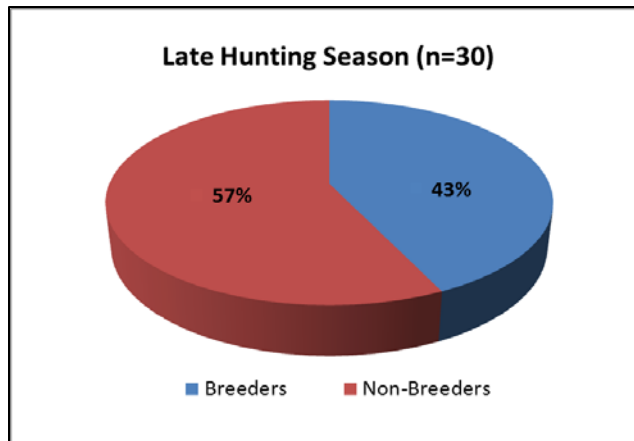
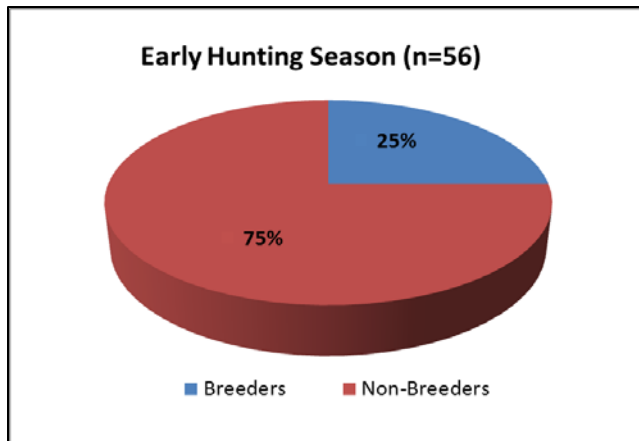
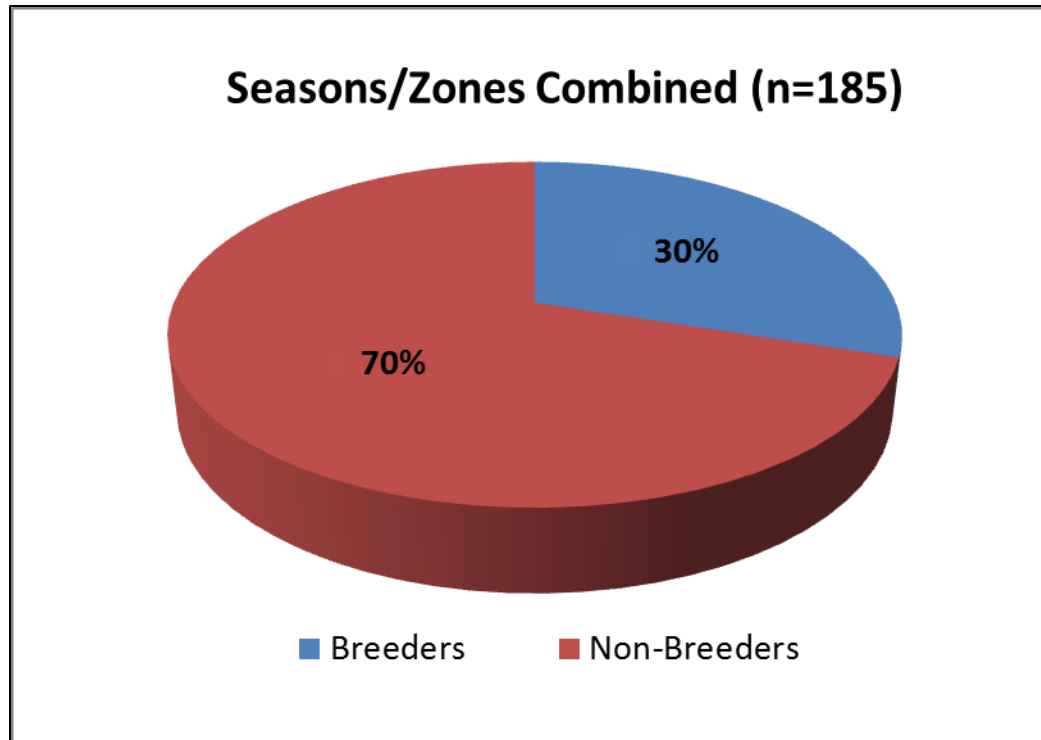
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Figure 7. Method of take for wolves harvested in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season.



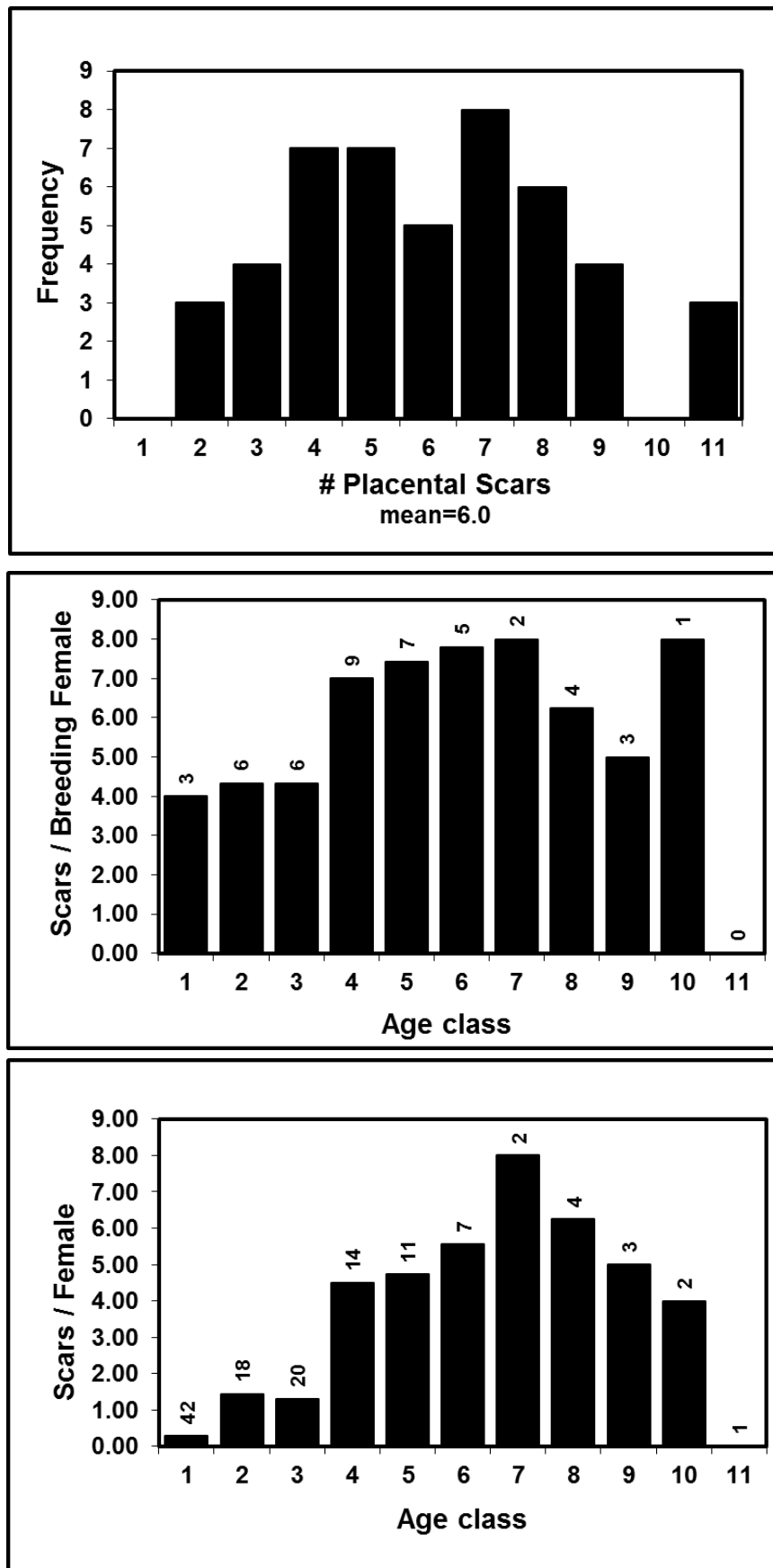
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Figure 8. Percentage of female wolves taken in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season that were breeders the previous summer.



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Figure 9. Placental scar counts for female wolves harvested in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season. Sample sizes for age-specific graphs are shown above the horizontal bars.



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Figure 10. Ages of wolves taken in Minnesota during the 2012 wolf season.

