

Harvestable Species Plan/EA for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore FAQ's (frequently asked questions)

The National Park Service (NPS) is working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), and the Bad River and Red Cliff Tribes to update the park's Harvestable Species Plan for the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

- **What is the purpose of the plan?**

To provide direction for managing legally harvestable species within Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Harvestable species includes wildlife that are huntable and trappable, as well as plant species that can be legally gathered by the general public or tribal members as part of their treaty reserved rights.

- **Why is an update needed?**

Since the Wildlife Management Plan for Harvestable Species was completed in 2007, the status of certain wildlife species has changed, necessitating important updates, and the NPS has had an opportunity to determine the effectiveness of the previous plan. In addition, plant gathering has been added to the plan because certain plants are subject to harvest and were not included in the previous plan.

- **Is hunting and trapping currently allowed in Apostle Islands NL?**

Yes.

- **Why is hunting and trapping allowed in a national park area?**

The legislation that created the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore permits hunting, fishing, and trapping "in accordance with the appropriate laws of Wisconsin and the United States, to the extent applicable."

- **Are there harvest regulations in Apostle Islands NL that differ from statewide regulations?**

For the majority of harvestable species, regulations within the park tend to be consistent with current state regulations. Some special regulations and restrictions apply. For example, no-fee access permits are required for harvest activity on islands within the Park (except small game)(previous DMU 79; does not include Long). NPS access permits provide the park with timely harvest information and enhance the capability of the NPS to respond quickly in case of emergencies.

There are special state regulations for deer harvest on islands within the Park (previous DMU 79). The Mainland Unit and Long Island are managed consistent with larger management units (previously DMU 3 and DMU 7).

Deer hunting regulations for islands within the Park (except Long) were changed through the WDNR's (Section 5, NR 10.01(3)(em)2.b) regulatory process in 2008, implementing the Plan's preferred alternative. Current regulations include an archery season beginning on the Saturday nearest September 15 and continuing through September 30; and November 1 through the Sunday nearest January 6. Regulations also include a muzzleloader hunt during the month of October and Apostle Islands specific tags that are in addition to other statewide tags.

There are four alternatives presented for the management of wolves in the park. Alternative A is consistent with current state emergency regulations; under Alternative B there would be a zero quota for the park; under Alternative C there would be a zero quota for the Mainland Unit, Sand and Long Islands with the rest of the park consistent with state regulations; and under Alternative D the entire park would be managed consistent with state regulations as they are developed and change in the future.

- **Are there areas closed to hunting?**

Yes, for public safety, hunting is not allowed within 100 yards of buildings, docks, campsites or other park facility.

Hunting is only allowed on use and occupancy properties with permission of the lessees.

Gull and Eagle Islands are closed to harvest to protect colonial birds.

Hunting is not allowed during the main visitor season (currently from Memorial Day through Labor Day).

- **What species are be covered by the plan?**

white-tailed deer

black bear

wolves

furbearers (e.g., otter, fisher, mink, beaver)

small game

wild turkey

waterfowl

plants subject to gathering

- **What happens next?**

The draft document will be available for public review for 30 days. Comments will be accepted through March 28, 2014.

Comments will be considered and incorporated into the document, where appropriate.

A determination will be made as to whether or not this is a significant federal action. If it is not, an alternative will be selected and a Finding of No Significant Impact will be prepared and approved by the NPS's Midwest Regional Director. If it is considered a significant federal action, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared.

The plan is expected to be finalized and implemented by the fall of 2014.