

Harvestable Species Plan and Environmental Assessment Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

Executive Summary

The purpose of this plan is to provide direction for managing legally harvestable species within Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (referred to as the Park). 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.

A Wildlife Management Plan for Harvestable Species and Environmental Assessment for Apostle Islands National Lakeshore was completed in 2007. Since that time, the status of certain wildlife species has changed, necessitating important updates, and the park 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.

National Park Service (NPS) objectives for harvestable species include:

1. Managing processes and preserving ecologically sound native biological communities, while recognizing factors unique to island ecosystems.
2. Providing for appropriate state regulated hunting and trapping opportunities.
3. Provide for treaty-related hunting, trapping and gathering opportunities.
4. Providing for appropriate public plant gathering.

Species/groups that are addressed by this plan include: white-tailed deer; black bear; wolves; furbearers; small game; wild turkey; waterfowl; and certain plants/berries/nuts. Fishing and harvest of aquatic species is excluded from this plan. The Plan is limited to terrestrial species.

There are four alternatives included within the plan/environmental assessment (EA).

- **Alternative A** is continuation of current management. In the 2007 Plan/EA, this was Alternative D.
- **Alternative B** manages for ecological integrity and primitive hunting experiences. This alternative continues current management of deer, bear, small game, wild turkey, and waterfowl. It addresses gathering and wolf management.
- **Alternative C** manages for ecological integrity and diverse hunting experiences. This alternative is very similar to Alternative B, differing in its approach to wolf management.
- **Alternative D** reduces park specific regulations and zoning (e.g., park specific deer harvest regulations) and increases consistency with statewide management.

The primary changes to the plan are related to gathering of wild plants and wolf management. Gathering is consistent between alternatives and is addressed within the section “Actions Common to all Alternatives.”