

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Species: Bobcat
Region 2
Hunting District: region-wide
Year: 2019

1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).

Decrease the bobcat harvest quota from 200 to 150 in Region 2.

The bobcat harvest quota was 140 from 1990-1998, 160 in 1999, 180 from 2000-2008, 100 from 2009-2011, 180 from 2012-2015 and 200 from 2016-2018. The season has closed early in every year since 2006 due to the quota being met, and in 2018-2019 the season was preemptively closed at 58 days of the possible 75-day season, due to a harvest of 196 bobcats at that time.

2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.

The objective of this proposed change is to reduce harvest to a level below the observed recruitment rate, which will allow bobcat numbers to rebound.

3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.

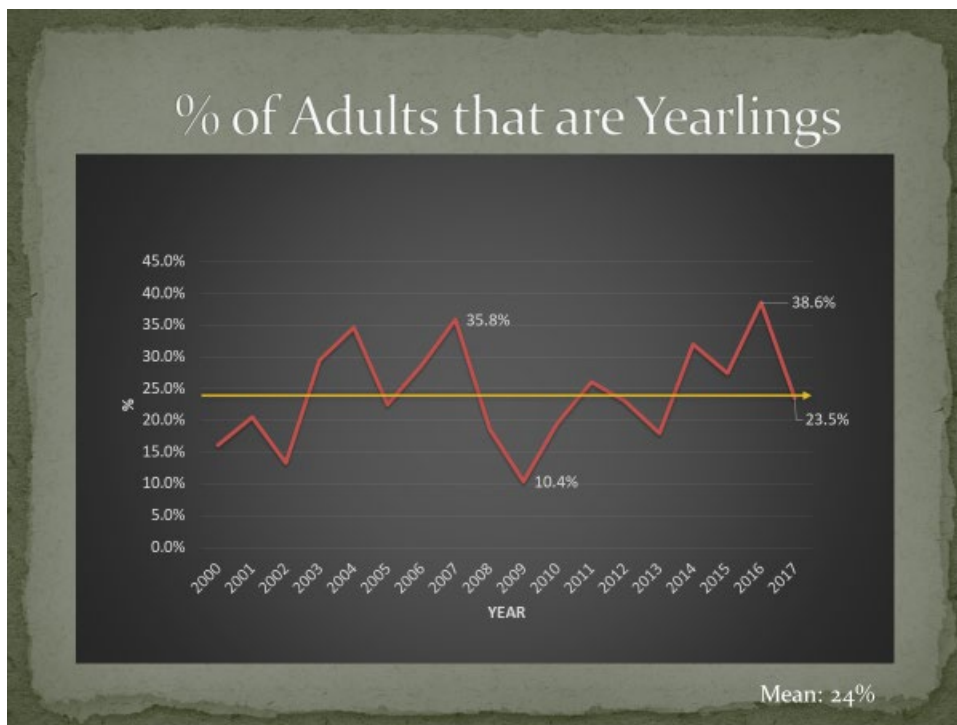
The success of this proposal will be measured by an Integrated Population Management (IPM) model, now being developed, with the intent of maintaining a stable regional bobcat population over time. While the IPM is being developed and institutionalized, Region 2 will look for the proportion of the harvested population to reflect average or better recruitment before raising the quota again.

4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).

This proposal is a response to the current trend in the juvenile: adult ratio in the harvest, as well as the percent of adults in the harvest that are yearlings. The juvenile: adult ratio in the harvest has been 0.21, 0.34 and 0.18 in 2016-2018, at or below the long-term average of 0.34. The percent of adults in the harvest that are yearlings was 23.5% (below the mean of 24%) in 2017; data for 2018 are not yet available, but given the downward trend in percent juveniles in the harvest we would expect the percent yearlings to continue trending downward.

5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).

Weather extremes in all seasons over the past three years may affect the natural predator-prey balance; however, we have no specific causative data to explain the resulting bobcat recruitment.



6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).

FWP discussed this matter with the District Two membership of the Montana Trappers Association at their annual meeting on May 4th in Missoula, and we agreed with those in attendance that FWP

and the trappers should be the first to respond with any harvest adjustments needed to conserve the resource. It was further resolved that the harvest quota should promptly increase to its likely point of stability (i.e., 180) when recruitment rebounds.

Submitted by: Mike Thompson and Tyler Parks

Date: May 13, 2019

Approved: _____
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: _____
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: