

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**  
**QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Species: Goat  
Region: 3  
Hunting Districts: 312  
License Year: 2020

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

- Decrease 312-20 Either-sex mountain goat licenses from 4 to 1. THIS IS OUTSIDE THE QUOTA RANGE OF 4-8.

From 2005-2018 eight Either-sex mountain goat licenses were offered in HD 312. In 2019 the quota was reduced to 4 licenses.

**2. What is the objective of this proposed change?**

The objective of this proposed action is to ensure that hunting opportunity is commensurate with the current known mountain goat population in the Pioneer Mountains while also managing for sustained wildlife watching opportunities.

**3. How will the success of this proposal be measured?**

This proposal will be deemed successful if harvest success is 100%, days per hunter trend downward, and the number of observed goats during aerial surveys and from public observations trend upward.

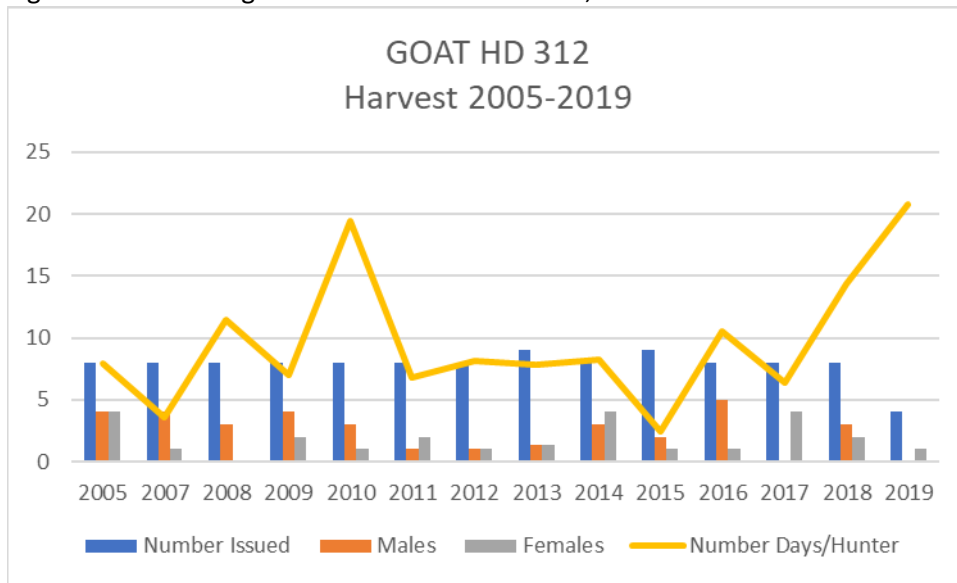
**4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

While there is no formal management plan for mountain goats at this time, there is an implicit objective to manage the Pioneer mountain goat population at a self-sustaining level while also providing high-quality hunting and wildlife-watching opportunities. This is a native goat population. It has historical significance has the source for over 120 goats trapped at the "goat pens" at the head of Canyon Creek and transplanted across Montana to start new herds.

Unlike other big game species, research has shown that hunting is additive rather than compensatory mortality with mountain goats. Females typically don't breed until 3 years of age, give birth to singlets, and provide maternal care to both young-of-the-year and yearlings. Because of this conservative breeding biology, it is recommended that native mountain goat herds be managed at <4% hunter mortality when >100 known individuals are in the population. The highest number of goats observed during aerial surveys over the past 15 years has been 36, although it was noted that many tracks were observed that did not produce animals and not all suitable goat habitat was surveyed.

Figure 1 provides harvest data that have informed this proposal.

Figure 1: Mountain goat harvest data for HD 312, 2005-2019.



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

The mountain goat population in the Pioneer Mountains is likely a conglomerate of several small herds distributed across the alpine habitat in this mountain range provides suitable goat habitat. While access is generally challenging to these locations, some goat country is more accessible than others and harvest has occurred disproportionately on goat herds in those areas. As mountain goats are not known to readily recolonize, this likely has led to extirpation or severe diminishment of these local herds.

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).**

This proposal has been drafted on the recommendation of the recently retired Dillon area wildlife biologist, Craig Fager. It has been distributed to over 200 interested parties via the Butte area wildlife biologist's email list.

Submitted by: Vanna Boccadori on behalf of the Dillon area biologist

Date: 6 March 2020

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: