

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

Species: Mountain Lion
Region: 3
Hunting District: 350/370
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 the total harvest quota from 4 any legal mountain lion **to 3 any legal mountain lion**. Maintain the female subquota at 1.

During the 2012-13 biennial season setting process, the FWP Commission approved a proposal to reconfigure certain lion management units in Region 3. In this reconfiguration, Hunting Districts 350 and 370 were combined into one LMU. From 2012-2015 the total quota for LMU 350/370 was 3 lions with a female subquota of 1. From 2016-2019 the quota was raised to 4, retaining the female subquota. For the past two years, the female subquota was overran by 2 cats each year. Table 1 gives the summary of quotas and harvest for LMU 350/370.

Table 1: Mountain lion quotas, harvest and closure dates for LMU 350/370, 2000-2019

HUNT YEAR	FEMALE QUOTA	FEMALE TAKEN	MALES TAKEN	QUOTA TOTAL	TOTAL HARVEST	FEMALE CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED
2012	1	1	2	3	3	12/15/2012	12/28/2012
2013	1	1	3	3	4	12/18/2013	12/23/2013
2014	1	1	2	3	3	12/3/2014	12/21/2014
2015	1	1	3	3	4	12/13/2015	1/1/2016
2016	1	1	3	4	4	12/20/2016	1/3/2017
2017	1	3	0	4	3	12/23/2017	1/5/2018
2018	1	3	0	4	3	1/14/2019	1/27/2019
2019	1	1	1	4		1/12/2020	

2. Why is the proposed change necessary?

The quota reduction is being proposed to maintain recreational opportunity in measure with the lion population in this LMU. The removal of 6 females (legal, illegal and incidental) the past 2 years most likely has reduced the local population, as evidenced by the longer season to fill. The quota still has not been met for this year as of the writing of this justification.

3. 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 objective for mountain lions, Region 3 has adopted the approach of maintaining lion populations at sustainable levels that provide for maximum chase and harvest opportunity while keeping in balance with the prey population. We’ve

accomplished this by holding quotas steady for a period of years, making moderate adjustments when local conditions indicate. For instance, from 1998-2005 quotas across much of Region 3 were fairly liberal in order to decrease the regional population. Harvest data and hunter observations suggested this objective was met so from 2006-2012 quotas were set to a more conservative level to allow the population to stabilize. From 2012-2018 the region once again adopted more liberal quotas in response to indicators suggesting increasing populations. This proposal for LMU 350/370 is inline with the regional approach to lion management.

4. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors that have relevance his change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, temperature / precipitation information).

Access to LMU 350/370 is sufficient to accommodate lion harvest and chase. There is suitable yet disparate access to public land throughout the LMU. However, many houndsmen have secured access to most of the private land in the LMU.

5. 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 will be discussed at the annual Region 3 lion management meeting in Three Forks on March 5th, as well as with several houndsmen, landowners and local warden with interest in that area.

Submitted by: Vanna Boccadori
Date: 4 March 2020

Approved: _____
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: _____
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: