



## MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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**Meeting Date:** December 14, 2021

**Agenda Item:** 2022–2023 Black Bear Mandatory Harvest Reporting Requirements

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 Minutes

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**Background:** Currently, successful black bear hunters are required to present their harvest for physical inspection by a department employee, who must collect a premolar from the bear for use in cementum aging of the animal. The age data is used by the department to monitor population demographics that influence harvest recommendations. During the inspection, information about the location of the harvest is routinely collected. Current regulations only require that black bear harvests must be reported through the Harvest Reporting Line within a limited number of hunting districts that have an established quota.

The department proposes to eliminate the physical inspection because it is a burden on the hunter and the department. In lieu of the physical inspection, the department is recommending the commission require hunters to submit a premolar from the harvested animal and drop it off at a department office or mail it to the department within 10 days following the harvest. The department also recommends that all harvests should be reported on the Harvest Reporting Line, and all harvests should include a location that includes the legal description known as Township, Range, and Section. This proposal would require that all harvests would be reported through the Harvest Reporting Line at 1-877-FWP-WILD (397-9453) or (406) 444-0356 within 48 hours of the kill. Details of this proposal are included in the Black Bear Master List that accompanies the black bear hunting regulation proposals. The commission is also considering all regulations and descriptions of boundaries for the 2022-2023 season and will adopt regulations in total in a future meeting, whether a change is proposed or not.

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** Additional public comment will be accepted on the proposals adopted for comment by the commission and on those aspects of the regulations that do not change but complete a regulation package for 2022-2023. Public comment will be accepted through Jan. 14, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The commission may provide the department with additional amendments on any aspect of season structure, quota, or hunting district, and the department will seek additional public comment on all proposals. A final recommendation will be presented to the commission at their February meeting.

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** The department recommends the commission approve for public comment the proposed 2022 and 2023 black bear mandatory reporting regulations as described in the Black Bear Master List.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission vote to adopt for public comment: Changes identified in the Black Bear Master List regarding black bear harvest reporting requirements as presented by the department and as part of the overall black bear regulations.