

## Wickman, Erik

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**From:** Connie Poten <rattlefarm@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 19, 2023 3:22 PM  
**To:** FWP Commission  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Mountain Lion Comment

[fwcomm@mt.gov](mailto:fwcomm@mt.gov)

DATE: November 20, 2023

TO: Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

RE: MOUNTAIN LION regulations for next season

At last summer's June and August Commission meetings concerning increased mountain lion killing, 124 people wrote or spoke against increased quotas as opposed to 19 people for increased quotas. That's more than six to one against increasing quotas.

Mountain lion hound hunters even testified against the increase. One example:

I'm a houndsman. I hunted hard 3 days a week exclusively in unit 240. From Gash creek to Kootenai creek... Had great snow all season, had the worst year ever for available lions to catch. And we never did harvest anything for one reason only. If we would have killed anything, there wouldn't have been a lion to chase. Currently only 3 cats remaining left in that entire region. And they live almost exclusively on private. Every honest houndsman I know has had there worst year ever as far as catches go... there aren't as many as some would have you think. Please do not increase quotas...we haven't even filled what we got, and those who want this have been hunting there asses off trying to fill it too..  
Sincerely, Jim & Lance Byers

Another [\[helenair.com\]](http://helenair.com), from board chair of the Montana State Houndsmen Association:

"I've hunted Montana most of my adult life and the ungulate population has waxed and waned every five to 10 years. And to put the focus on lions, when there are so many other factors there, doesn't seem like an appropriate decision to make such an aggressive move." Nathan Livingston.

Nevertheless, In June you voted [\[helenair.com\]](http://helenair.com) for outfitter and Commissioner Pat Tabor's motion, which will kill up to 40% of mountain lions in some districts over the next six years. This means killing 86% more mountain lions each year, even though FWP does NOT have a population estimate, according to Brian Wakeling, game management bureau chief for FWP. This means open season on mountain lions—the sky's the limit.

Please vote against this expanded killing for the following reasons:

1. **Game animals treated as vermin.** If the proposal is adopted, mountain lions will be essentially vermin to be shot on sight. The commission is ignoring its duty to preserve diverse wildlife. This 7+

month season is too long, setting the stage for lawsuits challenging the ability of mountain lions to sustain a viable population.

2. **FWP does not know how many mountain lions are in Montana.** The expansion of killing them for no reason backed up by data means the department and commission further abandons its responsibility to the public trust to maintain healthy wildlife for future generations.
3. **Public Safety.** Allowing hound hunting in fall months puts the public in jeopardy, especially bird hunters with their dogs.
4. There is no scientific data backing this proposal. **In 65 out of 74 LMUs there is no overall quota. In several districts it is unlimited.** The purpose can only be to exterminate mountain lions as quickly as possible for the misguided belief that they interrupt the trophy hunting industry's profit engine— trophy elk and deer.
5. **This proposal is self-serving,** particularly for Commissioner Tabor, an outfitter who stands to gain from it. It goes against the will of the majority of Montanans, including mountain lion hunters who know mountain lions are already scarce and see them as valuable in their own right. They are essential to healthy ecosystems, keeping rodents and other pests contained.
6. **Current quotas are not even filled** in many LMUs. Please vote against this unnecessary and irresponsible proposal.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the ramifications of this extreme proposal and voting it down.

Sincerely,

Constance J Poten for the board of Footloose Montana

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