

May 10, 2023

Submitted online via the Commission's agenda page

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Wildlife Division
1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Tel: (406) 444-2612
Email: fwpwd@mt.gov

Re: Mountain Lion Hunting Season Proposals for Fall 2023 – Winter 2024

To Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission,

I write to you today on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity (“Center”) and our 1.7 million members, supporters and online activists, more than 5,700 of which call Montana home. The Center has worked on issues regarding mountain lion management across the United States for many years and our members and supporters care deeply about the protection of mountain lion populations throughout the world and in Montana.

As the cover sheet for this agenda item notes, the Northwest Lion Ecoregional Planning Objective Committees recommend that mountain lion populations be reduced by 12.5 percent by 2029 and recommend increasing hunting quotas to accomplish these goals. The overall objectives are to reduce ungulate predation, assist in recruitment in struggling ungulate populations, maintain a healthy lion population, reduce human-lion conflicts, maximize satisfaction for lion hunting and harvest, maximize satisfaction for non-harvest lion chasing, maximize satisfaction for ungulate hunters, and maximize social acceptance of lion hunting. The Commission adopted these recommendations in June 2022 and they are part of the 2023 status quo recommendation. While the agency states that it adopted all of the recommendations above,

the cover sheet makes clear that the main goal of the proposed alternatives is to appease ungulate hunters.

The four proposed alternatives include: (1) the status quo, including all aspects of the 12.5 reduction in the Northwest Ecoregion as adopted by the Commission in 2022; (2) a 10 percent reduction statewide within six years plus a 12.5 reduction in the Northwest Ecoregion; (3) a 20 percent reduction statewide within six years; and (4) a 40 percent reduction within six years. The proposed alternatives largely ignore the best available science on the impact of mountain lion hunting in terms of meeting the adopted recommendations as stated above, and specifically to protect ungulate populations for hunter opportunity.

First, the Department admits that “[r]esponse in prey populations to manipulations of mountain lion populations are dependent on many additional factors, including other predators, habitat condition, and weather and climate” and that “the specific relationships between mountain lions and ungulate populations in most LMUs have not been quantified.” Thus, even the Department admits that killing mountain lions may not have any impact on ungulate populations.

Second, the most recent science regarding using sport hunting as a management tool for mountain lions finds that hunting these animals doesn’t produce the management outcomes sought by state agencies, but instead solely provides a sport hunting opportunity. (Laundré and Papouchis 2020). Specifically, this study looked at management strategies for mountain lions in 11 western states and compared several desired management outcomes to the state of California, which has not allowed any sport hunting of cougars since 1972. The study found no support for the idea that sport hunting decreases conflict with humans or livestock, and in some cases found that higher kill rates of mountain lions correlate with increased livestock conflict. Finally, the

study found no correlation between the use of mountain lion hunting as a management tool and an increased deer population.

This is by no means the first study that has brought these issues to light. Other science exists supporting the idea that sport hunting of mountain lions does not result in a higher ungulate population (Ballard et al. 2001; Hurley et al. 2011). In fact, several studies show that sport hunting as a management tool worsens the very problem it is meant to solve by increasing the rate of mountain lion interactions with both people and livestock. (Lambert et al. 2006; Treves et al. 2016; Peebles et. al 2013).

The Department's 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy also acknowledges that several factors impact ungulate populations, with weather and forage availability – rather than predation – being the most significant limiting factors. While predation is unlikely to directly reduce an ungulate's population, predation may slow a herd's recovery after a harsh winter.

This science should call into question the Department's and the Commission's messaging and decision making around using hunting as a management tool. The science does not support the idea that hunting of mountain lions has a better public safety outcome, decreases livestock conflicts or increases ungulate populations. If those are the outcomes the Department and the Commission seek, the proposed alternatives are not in line with those management goals.

Aspects of the Department's recommendations are also inconsistent with the Department's own 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy. For example, the Strategy states that delineated ecoregions will be the spatial basis for the Department's mountain lion management. However, the Department now suggest the Commission may implement a variety of quotas across Lion Management Units or across ecoregions.

We also ask that the Department and Commission reconsider the issuance of special licenses. This new special license structure causes a number of issues. First, it is difficult to comprehend the purpose of setting regional hunting district quotas if special licenses are not restricted to those quotas. This could lead to large numbers of mountain lions being taken from one or two hunting districts, causing location-specific declines or even localized eradication of the species. This would not only have negative impacts to the local ecosystem but also would make it significantly more difficult for hunters in the years following to successfully hunt a mountain lion.

Second, most hunting districts in Montana set separate quotas for males and females and a few hunting districts do not. The female quotas put in place are important to protect females. The protection of females is important because female survival and mortality rates drive the population trend and because killing a single female may mean the mortality of several mountain lions. Although illegal under Montana law, hunters do sometimes kill a nursing female. If a hunter kills a nursing female mountain lion, her young kittens will die from starvation or dehydration. Additionally, when hunters remove stable adult mountain lions from a population, it attracts young male mountain lions to these vacancies. The immigrating young males often times will kill the kittens from the previous male so they sire their own. In the process, however, females defending their kittens are also frequently killed as well. It is not just the one mountain lion in the hunter's crosshairs who dies: hunting causes a harmful domino effect in mountain lion populations.

Finally, it is important that the Commission use current population estimates prior to setting hunting unit quotas and considering the allowance of special licenses unlimited by the quotas set. A recent article in Montana Outdoors described new DNA and computer modeling

methods that are being used by MFWP biologists to estimate mountain lion populations (Castle 2021). This same article noted that in the past, FWP had set quotas too high and mountain lion hunters demanded that FWP reduce the annual harvest to increase the population. The Commission should be wary of raising the quotas and permitting special licenses, which may result in a steep decline in the population which nobody wants, including hunters.

We ask that the Commission keep all of the factors and science described above in mind when adopting quotas for the upcoming fall and spring seasons. Specifically, we ask that the Commission reject any alternative that proposes a statewide reduction and reconsider the idea of issuing special licenses. We would also ask that the Commission reconsider allowing the unsportsman-like conduct of using hounds to hunt mountain lions, especially for nonresidents.

Sincerely,



Andrea Zaccardi
Legal Director, Carnivore Conservation Program
Center for Biological Diversity
Tel: (303) 854-7748
Email: azaccardi@biologicaldiversity.org

REFERENCE LITERATURE

- Ballard WB, Lutz D, Keegan TW, Carpenter LH, deVos JC Jr.. Deer-predator relationships: A review of recent North American studies with emphasis on mule and black-tailed deer. *Wildl Soc Bull.* 2001; 29: 99–115.
- Beausoleil, Richard A., G.M. Koehler, B.T. Maletzke, B.N. Kertson, “Research to Regulation: Cougar Social Behavior as a guide for Management,” *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 37, no. 3 (June 2013). DOI 10.1002/wsb.2899.
- Castle, Jessianne. Big Cats, Big Territories: How new DNA technology, spatial science, and computer modeling are helping FWP adjust mountain lion numbers to where Montanans want them. *Montana Outdoors* (Nov.-Dec. 2021): pp. 36-42.

- Cooley, H. S., R. B. Wielgus, G. M. Koehler, H. S. Robinson, and B. T. Maletzke. "Does Hunting Regulate Cougar Populations? A Test of the Compensatory Mortality Hypothesis." *Ecology* 90, no. 10 (Oct 2009): 2913-21. <https://doi.org/10.1890/08-1805.1>.
- Hurley MA, Unsworth JW, Zager P, Hebblewhite M, Garton EO, Montgomery DM et al. Demographic response of mule deer to experimental reduction of coyotes and mountain lions in Southeastern Idaho. *Wildl Monographs*. 2011; 178: 1–33.
- Lambert, C. M. S., R.B. Wielgus, H.S. Robinson, D.D. Katnik, H.S. Cruickshank, R. Clarke, and J. Almack. "Cougar Population Dynamics and Viability in the Pacific Northwest." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 70 (2006): 246-54.
- Laundré, John W., and Christopher Papouchis. "The Elephant in the Room: What Can We Learn from California Regarding the Use of Sport Hunting of Pumas (Puma Concolor) as a Management Tool?". *PLOS ONE* 15, no. 2 (2020): e0224638. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0224638>.
- Peebles, Kaylie A., Robert B. Wielgus, Benjamin T. Maletzke, and Mark E. Swanson. "Effects of Remedial Sport Hunting on Cougar Complaints and Livestock Depredations." *Plos One* 8, no. 11 (Nov 19 2013): e79713. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0079713>.
- Robinson, Hugh S. et al. "Sink Populations in Carnivore Mangment: Cougar Demography and Immigration in a Hunted Population." *Ecological Applications* 18(4) (2008).
- Robinson, Hugh S. and R. Desimone. "The Garnet Range Mountain Lion Study: Characteristics of a Hunted Population in West-Central Montana: Final Report." *Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks* (2011).
- Robinson, Hugh S. et al. "A Test of the Compensatory Mortality Hypothesis in Mountain Lions: A Management Experiment in West-Central Montana." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 78: 5 (2014).
- Robinson, Hugh S., Toni Ruth, Justin A. Gude, David Choate, Rich DeSimone, Mark Hebblewhite, Kyran Kunkel, Marc R. Matchett, Michael S. Mitchell, Kerry Murphy and Jim Williams. "Linking Resource Selection and Mortality Modeling for Population Estimation of Mountain Lions in Montana." *Ecological Modelling*, 11-25 (2015).
- Treves A, Krofel M, McManus J. Predator control should not be a shot in the dark. *Front Ecol Environ*. 2016; 14: 380–388.
- Wielgus, R. B., D. E. Morrison, H. S. Cooley, and B. Maletzke. "Effects of Male Trophy Hunting on Female Carnivore Population Growth and Persistence." [In English]. Article. *Biological Conservation* 167 (Nov 2013): 69-75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2013.07.008>.



May 10, 2023

footloosemontana.org

Lesley Robinson, Chair
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Brian Wakeling, Game Management Bureau Chief
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Submitted via email: fwcomm@mt.gov; brian.wakeling@mt.gov

RE: Proposed reductions of mountain lions in the Northwest Ecoregion 2023 through 2028 and in LMUs 100, 121, 122, 123, 124, 201, 202, 285 and 299.

Dear Chair Robinson, Chief Wakeling, and Members of the Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment on behalf of Footloose Montana and our thousands of supporters in Montana. We strongly oppose all four hunting quota alternatives proposed by FWP, each of which proposes a ‘reduction’ of the mountain lion population in our state. In addition, we reject any further increase of the quotas already in place in LMUs 100, 121—124, 201-202, 285 and 299.

Between 2007 and 2021, hunters have killed a total of nearly 7,000 mountain lions (6,926/4,321 males and 2,605 females). Under the guise of ‘conservation,’ mountain lions and other top predators such as wolves are relentlessly targeted by FWP and killed for recreation, sport, trophies and profit. Montana’s nearly eight-month-long mountain lion hunting season begins in September and ends in mid-April of the following year and includes the shooting of mountain lions with archery and rifles, a hound training season and the use of hounds to chase and tree the lions before they are shot.

Mountain lions are a native keystone species in Montana and should be preserved.

As top predators killed for trophies, mountain lions have sophisticated levels of intelligence, emotion, and sociality (Batavia et al. 2018). Killing mountain lions for sport, recreation, trophies and profit is a morally indefensible practice, constitutes frivolous killing, and commercializes wildlife—a clear violation of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Trophy hunting is causing social chaos among mountain lions, which none of FWP’s population models or number estimate captures, yet it is a harsh reality for these animals. Scientific studies, including FWP’s own research acknowledge the fact that trophy hunting disrupts the social fabric of mountain lion society, that killing mother lions exposes kittens to starvation and death by exposure and predation, and that killing older males increases infanticide and can lead to an *increase* in conflicts with humans. In other words, FWP’s lethal management of mountain lions may cause most, if not all the problems the agency is using as arguments to justify a hunting season of mountain lions publicly.

Comments:

Significant uncertainties regarding the statewide mountain lion population exist:

FWP refers to a population estimate that ranges between 2,784 to 5,156 animals. This is an estimate from 2010-2012 that is addressed in a 2014 UM research/FWP paper. This is in contrast to at least one scientific analysis of Montana’s habitat areas and known density rates for mountain lions that puts their likely population between 2,112 and 3,258 (Mountain Lion Foundation/Montana).

- FWP possibly overestimates the state’s mountain lion population, at a very minimum, these numbers are outdated, and not representative of the current reality, especially given the risks from climate change (drought, extreme temperatures, flooding, fire, etc. affecting all wildlife). In addition, Montana has experienced significant growth of its human population in recent years, an increase that has reduced habitat availability and quality for many wildlife species, including mountain lions and their prey species.
- The estimate of the mountain lion population in the Northwestern Ecoregion is 1,376 individuals. Even the LEPOC 2022 recognized the problem with this assumed population number and stated:

“There is uncertainty in the lion population estimate. This makes it difficult to precisely prescribe lion harvest rates. There are concerns that snaring of other predators impacts lions (FWP can pull together data, but there is a lot of uncertainty about the level of underreporting)” (p.35)

<https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/commission/2022/jun-23/mountain-lion-quota/nw-lepoc-2022-final.pdf>

The sentence in parenthesis above implies that FWP does not consider traps and snares as sources of mortality in their modeling of the mountain lion numbers, nor in the modeling of the four alternatives to reduce the mountain lion population in the Northwest Ecoregion/LMUs. Yet, FWP's incidental capture report shows that 99 mountain lions were caught in traps and snares set for other species between 2012 and 2017; 67 mountain lions died, and 32 were released (17% with foot injuries). The report noted that "all mountain lions caught in snares died." FWP did not provide a further breakdown of how many females were affected. The number of kittens that died of starvation, exposure, dehydration, and predation as a consequence of indiscriminate trapping and snaring is unknown, yet it is a reality (e.g., we know anecdotally of an incident where a mountain lion mother in the Bitterroot was found strangled to death in a snare with her two kittens also dead at her feet.)

Trophy hunting destroys the social fabric of mountain lion society:

Mountain lions are quite social and live in 'communities' with females sharing carcasses with other females, while male mountain lions may protect their females, kittens, and territory from incoming, competing males. Hunting can cause social chaos within cougar populations by disrupting these communities, which increases intra-species conflicts. Destabilization of mountain lion populations causes increased conflicts with humans, pets, and livestock (Peebles et al. 2013).

FWP's own 2011 study addresses the destructive impacts of hunting on the social structure of mountain lions and notes, "... harvest may disrupt the social structure of males and their ability to define and defend exclusive home ranges" (Robinson and DeSimone, "The Garnet Mountain Lion Study: Characteristics of a hunted population in West-Central Montana," 2011, p. 16). Today, consensus in the scientific literature exists that killing dominant territorial male mountain lions from a population has multiple destructive consequences, including:

- An increase in intra-species competition for mates and territory.
- Provides openings for juveniles and subadults to move into their territory leading to greater aggression between mountain lions and mortalities to females and subsequent infanticide—the killing of unrelated offspring.

For decades, FWP has used the same arguments of population control and decreasing human-lion conflicts (mainly depredation) to justify the alleged need for a hunting season for mountain lions while providing no evidence of its effectiveness to support either. Once again, these claims are contrary to scientific studies that show a positive association between hunting mountain lions and an increase of complaints and depredation, for example:

- Hunting destroys the sex structure and shifts a population towards younger males, who are less experienced and much more likely to engage in conflicts and depredations than mountain lions in a stable population with older mountain lions present. Research by Robert Wielgus has shown that killing adult males increased cougar sightings (often perceived as a ‘conflict’) and also the number of cattle and sheep killed by other mountain lions, as inexperienced younger males moved into the older males’ territory.
- Research by Peebles et al. (2013) has found that,

“... each additional cougar on the landscape increased the odds of a complaint of livestock depredation by about 5 %. However, contrary to expectations, each additional cougar killed on the landscape increased the odds by about 50% ... Very heavy hunting (100% removal of residents adults in 1 year) increased the odds of complaints and depredation in year 2 by 150% to 340% (p. 6).

- A study in Washington state showed that an increase in complaints, including sightings and predations, both of which was assumed to reflect a ‘rapidly growing mountain lion population,’ which prompted an increase in hunting mountain lions was in reality a result of a declining female and increasing male demographic in the population (Robinson et al. 2008 cited in Peebles et al. 2013). Heavy hunting of mountain lions skewed the ratio of young males in the population by causing compensatory immigration and emigration by young male cougars (Teichman et al. 2016).

FWP’s 2019 report notes that mountain lion attacks on humans are extremely rare, with the only fatal attack occurring in 1989. Non-fatal attacks (mostly involving children and pets) are also rare (though one known recent incident involved a dog getting killed by a mountain lion in Missoula’s Rattlesnake Valley in 2022). The same report notes that “Juvenile and subadult mountain lions are responsible for most human-lion conflicts across the western U. S. (Mattson 2007), including Montana” (Montana Mountain Lion: Monitoring, Management and Strategy 2019, p. 24). Once again, FWP’s own research provides further support for the link between trophy hunting of mountain lions causing social chaos and leading to an *increase* in conflicts involving mountain lions. Instead of intensifying the killing of mountain lions, FWP should do a better job in educating the public on safety issues and how to foster respect for living with predators.

Mountain lion females, mothers and kittens are frequent victims of trophy hunters and hounds men.

FWP’s trophy hunting also cruelly affects mountain lion mothers and their kittens. Researchers report that in heavily hunted populations, female mountain lions experience higher levels of intraspecific aggression (fights with other individual lions), resulting in predation on

themselves and their kittens (Stoner et al. 2013). As mountain lions give birth year-round, ‘sportsmen’ kill pregnant mountain lions. In addition, killing mountain lion mothers causes the death of orphaned kittens by starvation, dehydration, exposure to extreme temperatures, and predation (O’Malley et al., Wildlife Society Bulletin, 2018).

Hound hunting lacks the “fair chase” component valued in other types of hunting and is animal cruelty whereby hounds, often mistreated themselves, kill mountain lion kittens, and often get injured or even killed by mountain lions and/or other predators. Hound hunting is not only harmful to dogs but also energetically taxing and stressful to mountain lions (Harlow et al. 1992).

Hunting of mountain lions is unnecessary for ‘population control’:

Mountain lions are a self-regulating species, “which means they control their own population size in balance with the ecosystem without the need for human intervention” (Mountain Lion Foundation). Cougars require large expansive swaths of habitat with individuals maintaining large home ranges (they can range from 25-500 square miles) that overlap with one another; mountain lions occur at low densities relative to their primary prey and must remain at a smaller size relative to their prey’s biomass to survive, thus when prey populations decline so do mountain lion populations.

Hunting detrimentally impacts the ecological function of mountain lions:

Mountain lions are a keystone species and drive the ecosystems in which they live. As top predators, they regulate many of the other species in their communities, including herbivores who then regulate the plant community. Research shows the essential role that cougars play for maintaining biodiversity, e.g., the “trophic cascade effect.” Also, a study in Zion National Park demonstrated that in areas where mountain lion numbers are low, the population of mule deer increases significantly, which limits the growth of cottonwood trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. Subsequently, these plants no longer provide habitat and food for butterflies and other insects, frogs, and lizards (Ripple and Beschta 2006). In addition, mountain lions can help maintain the health and viability of their prey species by preying on the sick ungulates, thereby reducing the risk of spreading diseases. Thus, a reduction of mountain lion populations in Montana could backfire by eliminating the best defense against diseases increasing among ungulates, including chronic wasting disease.

Composition of the Northwest LEPOC is problematic:

FWP represents sportsmen interests and is an agency that must sell mountain lion hunting licenses to help guarantee its relevance and survival. Any ‘problem’ identifications, setting of quotas, and questions regarding how drastically Montana’s mountain lion population should be

reduced stem from this focus and determines FWP's objectives, e.g., "maximizing hunter satisfaction" and "maximize social acceptance of lion hunting" (instead of educating the public about the value of mountain lions and how to manage human-lion conflicts non-lethally).

The members of the LEPOC seemed to have been handpicked by a FWP Team (they were recommended to the director) and couldn't have been less diverse in ethnicity, gender, and values (an overwhelming dominance of white male trophy-hunting and outfitter interests). This 'advisory' group is now recommending a 12.5 percent reduction of the mountain lion population in the Northwest Ecoregion and further reductions in nine LMUs. The 'stable' and 'increase' options quickly discarded, this leaves the public only one 'reduction' alternative to choose from—a 10 percent, 12.5, 20 or 40 percent (!) reduction. Not only is the goal of reducing the mountain lion population self-serving, but the claims by members of the LEPOC to support the alleged need to increase the quotas on mountain lions (which soon will be followed by claims to increase quotas on other predators), are based on pre-determined beliefs and hunting interests, rather than science and the interests of the majority of the public.

FWP continues its relentless and unjustified focus on killing predators in Montana, contradicting the agency's own research findings and conclusion: "Weather and forage availability are more likely than predation to explain chronically low ungulate populations. The influence of these potentially limiting factors should be evaluated before predation [of ungulates] is implicated" (Montana Mountain Lion 2019, p. 17).

And now that a recent Montana study has shown that hunting of mountain lions does not increase elk demographic in the short-term and that in fact, "sustained harvest treatments would be necessary to achieve longer-term elk population demographic responses," (Proffitt et al. 2020), FWP is proposing a multiple-year strategy of increased hunting of mountain lions to achieve the desired increase in elk population. At the same time, FWP's 2022 data on its elk count shows that Region 1 is meeting its objective.

Clearly, hunting presents a major contributor of mortality for ungulates such as mule deer, elk, and deer. Instead of increasing the hunting and quotas of mountain lions, FWP should consider reducing hunting permits and quotas of these ungulates and shift their focus away from their war against predators, starting by eliminating the already excessive trophy hunting of predators such as wolves, bears and mountain lions.

FWP should shift to a holistic approach to ecosystem management with mountain lions as an important, integral part. Most human-caused conflicts with mountain lions, including predation, should be solved with non-lethal methods, and killing individual 'problem' mountain lions should be the last resort. For these and other reasons provided below, we do not support a mountain lion hunting season or any of the proposed quota increases to reduce the number of

mountain lions in the Northwest Ecoregion and LMUs listed above. We believe mountain lions should not be managed exclusively for trophy hunters but on behalf of all Montanans. We call on FWP to end trophy hunting of mountain lions in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anja Heister, PhD on behalf of the Footloose Montana Board

Literature cited:

Batavia et al (2018). “The elephant (head) in the room: A critical look at trophy hunting.”

<https://tinyurl.com/38xxp72r>

Harlow et al. (1992). “Stress response of cougars to nonlethal pursuit by hunters.”

<https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/abs/10.1139/z92-020>

Peebles et al. (2013). “Effects of Remedial Sport Hunting on Cougar Complaints and Livestock Depredations.” <https://tinyurl.com/bden74x9>

Proffitt et al. (2020). “Integrated Carnivore-Ungulate Management: A Case Study in West-Central Montana.” <https://tinyurl.com/32dhyurd>

Ripple and Beschta. (2006). “Linking a cougar decline, trophic cascade, and catastrophic regime shift in Zion National Park.” <https://tinyurl.com/ppb7emwf>

Robinson and DeSimone,, (2011). “The Garnet Mountain Lion Study: Characteristics of a hunted population in West-Central Montana. <https://tinyurl.com/29ck48h4>

O’Malley et al., Wildlife Society Bulletin, 2018). “Aligning mountain lion hunting seasons to mitigate orphaning dependent kittens.”

<https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/wsb.902>

Stoner et al. (2013). “Dispersal behaviour of a polygynous carnivore: do cougars *Puma concolor* follow source-sink predictions?” <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2981/12-124>

Teichman et al. (2016). “Hunting as a management tool? Cougar-human conflict is positively related to trophy hunting.” <https://tinyurl.com/mr3b7pjh>

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilshat@rapidnet.com
605-787-6466
May 11th, 2023

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Mt 59620-0701

Dear Commissioners,

RE: Montana Mountain Lion Hunting Season

Prairie Hills Audubon Society is an environmental group located in western South Dakota. We support recovery of mountain lion populations in the north west area of SD around the Custer-Gallatin National Forest units of SD. The management of lions in SE Montana is important to SD as a source population for our Custer-Gallatin National Forest units. We have had at times breeding populations and/or long-term resident lions at the Custer National Forest lands or nearby uplifted areas of state/private lands. SD Game, Fish and Parks lion hunting season on the prairie is however not protective of lions in those areas.

We do not believe that raising quotas to reduce the mountain lion population in Montana will accomplish the intended goals to reduce human-lion conflict or aid ungulate populations.

We ask that you vote to maintain the status quo in Montana on June 8th, and not approve any increases that would lead to mountain lion population reduction.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Hilding", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nancy Hilding
President Prairie Hills Audubon Society

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:07:16 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:11:38 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:21
IP Address: 72.174.6.250

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Bob Pearson
City/Town: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Email Address: rotax800x@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Mule deer numbers continue to decline must do something before it's too late.

I support reducing mountain lion populations as much as possible. So I would support reducing numbers by 40 percent!!!

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:09:09 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:14:57 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:48
IP Address: 72.174.161.110

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Randy Setter
City/Town:	Anaconda
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	randysetter325@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Hunting district 214 seems like 4 lions is alot of harvest for such a small unit by land area.

#3

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:34:35 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:37:50 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:15
IP Address: 174.215.21.140

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Laurie Lohrer
City/Town: Lewistown
State/Province: MT
Email Address: laurielohrer@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

RE: Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024, I advocate for fourth alternative which will achieve a 40 percent reduction in mountain lion numbers statewide within six years. thank you.

#4

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 13, 2023 7:20:47 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 13, 2023 7:22:59 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:11
IP Address: 184.167.231.166

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Ben Bouley
City/Town: Butte
State/Province: MT
Email Address: bouley624@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I believe you should reduce the quota by 40 percent for 6 years

#5

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 13, 2023 8:31:03 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 13, 2023 8:37:06 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:02
IP Address: 174.234.15.189

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: 4065464779
City/Town: Florence
State/Province: MT
Email Address: srtoppinconstruction@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I support the increase in quota numbers for mountain lions. I truly believe that the state has fallen behind on predator population quotas, and also logical guesstimates on predator populations in all units. I do understand it is one of the hardest populations to survey. I truly believe this will be beneficial to not only the game populations, but also have a more positive effect on the overall diminishing eco system that is occurring across the state.

#6

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, April 14, 2023 6:40:06 AM
Last Modified: Friday, April 14, 2023 6:41:36 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:29
IP Address: 174.198.128.118

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Dan
City/Town:	Columbia Falls
State/Province:	WY
Email Address:	duckbuster870@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

There is absolutely no reason to reduce the mountain lion quotas. There are too many predators and hardly any deer or elk left. This would be ridiculous!

#7

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, April 14, 2023 8:56:30 AM
Last Modified: Friday, April 14, 2023 9:00:00 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:30
IP Address: 107.122.177.68

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Brian Cannata**
City/Town: **Missoula**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **briancannata@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I'm in favor of the 40%reduction plan for mountain lions in 6 years.

#8

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, April 14, 2023 4:54:50 PM
Last Modified: Friday, April 14, 2023 5:07:55 PM
Time Spent: 00:13:04
IP Address: 174.234.2.144

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: James Byers
City/Town: Victor
State/Province: MT

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

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
406 370 3406

#9

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, April 14, 2023 8:13:40 PM
Last Modified: Friday, April 14, 2023 8:26:09 PM
Time Spent: 00:12:29
IP Address: 72.174.74.225

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Kyle Reedy
City/Town:	Great Falls
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	kyle_reedy@msn.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Are mountain lion populations actually declining because of hunting is it because the lack of ungulates to prey on in the NW region? Of the alternatives I think the best option would be the first alternative is the status quo, which includes all aspects of the 12.5 percent reduction in the Northwest Ecoregion as adopted by the commission in 2022.

#10

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, April 16, 2023 9:18:32 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, April 16, 2023 9:25:20 AM
Time Spent: 00:06:47
IP Address: 199.168.110.217

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Wyatt Terry
City/Town: Lewistown
State/Province: MT
Email Address: wyattcterry@icloud.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I am confused on why the lion numbers need to be decreased when they obviously are not over populated. Trying to decrease mountain lion numbers will not bring back all of the ungulates that the fish and game has been poorly managing for years. If you believe there is too many lion I suggest you get out of your pickups and come snowshoe with me for awhile and show me where all the lion tracks are. Predators need to be managed but decimating the population will not help.

#11

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:05:39 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:59:10 AM
Time Spent: 00:53:30
IP Address: 50.37.116.138

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Scott Hanson
City/Town: Libby
State/Province: MT
Email Address: scottehanson@protonmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I have concerns that if the commission adopts the plan to reduce mountain lion populations across the state that they are doing so without seeing the effects of the change in mountain lion regulations for the 2022 season. I am specifically looking at the NW ecoregion because that is what I am familiar with and I believe that the commission should see if current regulations and harvest quotas are having the desired impact on ungulate populations before increasing harvest. While I believe the evidence is pretty clear that the mountain lion harvest and mule deer and elk populations are linked here in the NW ecoregion, I believe that changes should be incremental. The regulation changes last year were a step in the right direction and may be all the change necessary to balance population and opportunity for all species.

There has been talk by people here in Region 1 about the desire to see increased mule deer populations and some people in FWP are using that as an opportunity to push harvest restrictions when last year this same person (a FWP employee) told the commission that further restrictions to mule deer harvest in R1 will not increase population, because effectively all the does are being bred. I support the commission taking actions to increase mule deer/elk populations that will actually increase populations.

The commission should adopt a plan to make small incremental changes and make changes based on individual HDs instead of statewide changes when it comes to harvest quotas and population objectives.

#12

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, April 17, 2023 9:02:35 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:02:05 PM
Time Spent: 16:59:29
IP Address: 206.127.119.82

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Cody Carestia
City/Town: Townsend
State/Province: MT
Email Address: spurin48@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I'm not sure why a proposal for extreme overharvest would be proposed for a big game designated species? I feel it is in Montana sportsmens best interests for a respectable balance of all our big game to be the management goal, healthy management, not extermination. Furthurmore and most concerning is there is a study that was approved by the commission in 2019 intended to guide the decision making regarding lion management: https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/conservation/wildlife-reports/mountain-lion/mountain-lion-monitoring-and-management-strategy_final_adopted-1.pdf

It is quite concerning that the current commission chooses to ignore following the science that we spent 100's of thousands of dollars obtaining to just do what they think is best, or perhaps suits their own personal agenda over that of the Montana sportsman as a whole. I am completely against the commissions proposals in its entirety given their brazen lack of consideration for the information provided to make sound management decisions.

#13

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 6:46:23 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 7:02:19 PM
Time Spent: 00:15:56
IP Address: 66.109.158.125

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Cory Ovitt
City/Town:	Plains
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	crovitt@icloud.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Last year the majority of the comments about the new proposals were totally against them and yet the commission didn't listen to the people. Looking at the proposals of over harvest in the next 6 years proves once again that this is about money only and not science based management. I commented last year that going to a unlimited draw would change the harvest from 90% resident/10% non resident to 10% resident/90% non resident and that's exactly what happened. Now you want to up the quota more, not because the lion population is way over objective but so you can line your pockets and outfitters pockets with more easy money. I'm disgusted with the direction the commission has went with almost all of the hunting proposals but especially mountain lion. I am a lifetime Montana resident that is outraged over the outfitter/land owner preference our commission has taken!

#14

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 7:39:13 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 7:50:15 PM
Time Spent: 00:11:02
IP Address: 50.37.116.138

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Dorian Boling
City/Town: Libby
State/Province: MT

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

We just made changes last year about mountain lion hunting. It is too early to tell what the out come of these changes are. I do not want us going down a path of over harvesting mountain lions that will just lead to draw areas again, I also understand each part of montana needs to be adjusted for the individual area. I support quotas as needed by mountain lion populations, we do not need to wipe them out, we just need to manage the population and find balance between mountain lions and ungulates. We need to keep in mind long term populations, nothing is going to be a fast change to boost ungulates populations.

#15

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:00:54 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:21:22 PM
Time Spent: 00:20:28
IP Address: 174.198.138.34

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Rob morgan
City/Town: Billings
State/Province: MT
Email Address: rmorgan30x@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I've been a houndsman in region 7 for years, I spend 40 plus days a year hunting elk and deer, and 70 plus days lion hunting. The muledeer population has been on a steady decline for years. Powder River and Rosebud counties are the go to destination for a bulk of muledeer hunters especially non resident. For the past few years there have been thousands of doe tags each year, this combined with a booming bear and coyote population the lions are getting a bad rap for the mismanagement of our deer. I put on thousands of miles each winter and can personally tell you there is not a lion in every drainage like most believe. First we need to manage ourselves before we declare war on the lions. We had great snow this winter there where only 18 lions taken out of the 45 in region 7 and most guys kill everyone they catch. Just my 2 cents having lived here all my life.

#16

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 2:22:06 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 2:33:13 PM
Time Spent: 00:11:07
IP Address: 205.235.214.249

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Jared Stenberg**
City/Town: **Malta**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **stenberg.jared@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I would like to understand why FWP is proposing to lower mountain lion populations because of public perception? I don't believe that any ecological decisions should be made just because people complain. Deer hunters are obviously going to hate lions. Just because deer and elk hunters say there are too many lions, doesn't mean there are. How accurate are the population studies being done? What data do we have to compare them to? At what point does science go out the window? Is the data being collected analyzed for predator prey relationship? If so, is human harvest accounted for in this? I do not agree with dropping the populations statewide. Especially by such drastic measures. The studies have not been conducted statewide. The lions are a resource for the houndsmen in this state, just the same that elk are to the elk hunters. If the prey species is truly effected by the number of lions, then i would support this. But it is not. There is more effect on Mule Deer numbers from doe harvest by hunter than lions. And its not even close. I live in region 6, and our lion population is very sensitive to over harvest. With having 2 reservations within our lion habitat, we cannot even come close to managing our populations correctly. With the harvest on the reservations the last 2 years, our population has taken a drastic decline. Please don't raise our quotas here.

I do not support the raise in quotas, and i hope my voice is heard.

#17

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 9:10:57 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 9:15:55 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:57
IP Address: 72.255.141.222

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Chase Dirden
City/Town: Havre
State/Province: MT
Email Address: chase.dirden@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

This can not be a state wide proposal and needs to be looked at in region to region matter. For example in region 6 we can not afford a reduction in numbers between over harvest on quota numbers the last few years and then the take of lions on reservations and accidentals from trapping the mountain lion population has taken a significant hit.

#18

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 20, 2023 6:31:44 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 20, 2023 6:40:51 AM
Time Spent: 00:09:06
IP Address: 98.97.34.139

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Josh pallister
City/Town: Boulder
State/Province: MT
Email Address: fuzzypallister@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

As a long time houndsman and Outdoorsman, I have a rather intimate knowledge of lion quota structure for the past 30 years and feel as tho the science has been eroded away from lion management. I believe the quota structure used in district 3 through 7 has worked well and gives biologists more hands on input than currently proposed changes. I vote to quit looking at deer and elk as (for human consumption) and leave the lion management up to the biologists!!! As can be seen ,the quotas have not been met and further reduction of lion numbers in a number of areas can only hurt populations.

#19

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 20, 2023 11:04:22 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 20, 2023 11:21:43 AM
Time Spent: 00:17:20
IP Address: 209.137.225.166

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Cole Hage
City/Town:	Clinton
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	cole21hage@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Reduction of lion population in the north west section of the state based off of the findings by the NWLEPOC at 12.5% is a scientific decision, I believe a 10% reduction across the state is a bad idea because it does not take into consideration the differences in populations based on specific areas that all have different lion populations and density's and lumps them all into one generic category which can lead to improper management. We would be increasing quotas in some areas that didn't even fill during the last hunting season. Putting forth a plan for areas that we don't have current data to base out objectives off of could lead to over Harvest. Many things go into the health of deer and elk populations and it seems like this plan over harvests lions to compensate for lack of management or control of other factors. It is other through study's that if you harvest more than 30% of a lion population it will not be able to support itself and recover which would lead to us losing a major part of our ecosystem.

#20

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, April 22, 2023 10:44:26 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, April 22, 2023 11:00:19 AM
Time Spent: 00:15:53
IP Address: 174.234.12.208

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: jake herak
City/Town: twin bridges
State/Province: MT
Email Address: jherak3232@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

mountain lions are a predator that needs management period. i've personally been lion hunting with hounds for 12 years now. it seems every year the lion population has been decreasing since the first year i started. i have to put more miles on to locate a track, i don't believe that lions are the cause of our mule deer populations decreasing.. fact is there are more hunters than ever before due to the montana population exploding.. as i said lions need management but they don't need to be wiped completely off the map a slight increase in harvest (10%) would make a huge impact in my local area.. a 40% increase in the quota would completely whipe them off the map in less than 5 years. that would be a huge mistake in my opinion.. i put in over 70 days a year chasing cats and put on over 15,000 miles, so i would say i have a decent gauge on the cat population in my area..

#21

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, April 23, 2023 2:03:50 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, April 23, 2023 2:23:05 PM
Time Spent: 00:19:14
IP Address: 69.145.184.50

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Jason Butler
City/Town: Lolo
State/Province: MT
Email Address: jbut1020@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I would encourage the commission to follow the science and data that has been and is currently being gathered by the LEPOCs across the state. With that being said, I would propose that the commission remain status quo with the lion harvest across the state. Set the quotas at the conclusion of the West Central LEPOC's work so that all science and data collected can be used in the quota setting process. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jason Butler
Lolo, MT. 59847

#22

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, April 24, 2023 12:06:33 PM
Last Modified: Monday, April 24, 2023 12:12:07 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:33
IP Address: 192.161.70.106

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **james r harmonay**
City/Town: **Livingston**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **james.harmonay@yahoo.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I strongly agree with increasing the quota for mountain lions. I would also suggest allowing lion and wolf seasons to overlap with spring bear seasons to increase hunter opportunity, especially for hunters without access to dogs.

#23

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 9:35:32 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 9:43:28 AM
Time Spent: 00:07:56
IP Address: 72.175.210.66

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Robert Chesterfield
City/Town:	Dillon
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	rchester21@aol.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I am writing to voice my concerns with the proposed changes to the mountain lion management. I am confused as to why there has been so much time, money, and effort between biologists and houndsman to collect data on the mountain lions in this state, just to turn around and not use the data collected to manage those mountain lions. The state has been broken down into multiple Ecoregions for lions. The purpose of the data collection was to get a presumably accurate population estimate. Thus, giving the FWP a baseline to manage the mountain lions throughout each individual Ecoregion. The current plan can be found at https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/conservation/wildlife-reports/mountain-lion/mountain-lion-monitoring-and-management-strategy_final_adopted-1.pdf.

The problem I see going forward, would be that judging a whole Ecoregion (or the entire State) off of one small area of a particular Ecoregion would not be following and or practicing good use of the data that has been collected. For some Ecoregions, the studies are being done in the best habitat for mountain lions in that specific Ecoregion. To draw a conclusion on a whole Ecoregion from a particular area of that Ecoregion would most likely be detrimental to the areas of the Ecoregion where the populations are less dense. Some parts of these Ecoregions are only going to hold a small number of cats because of habitat constraints. This needs to be taken in to consideration during the management deciding process.

I really cannot see why anyone would come to the conclusion that removing 40 percent, or 20 percent of a population would be a good idea, especially when basing it off of the best parts of mountain lion habitat in the state of Montana. I believe it doesn't matter what species we are talking about; this is a huge reduction. Especially in areas where there is a low density to start with, and the percentages are being based of off a small data collection in the better parts of certain Ecoregions. Even a 10 percent reduction in areas would greatly affect a population that is already low in density.

I can get on board with reducing lion number in areas where there is an overpopulation or above objective population. The mountain lions need to be managed; and if the mountain lions are over the objective then action should be taken. But until research is done in areas were lions are less dense, I have a hard time saying we should be significantly reducing the population Statewide. I do not believe that is using the current data correctly or accurately. It is more drawing conclusions from a very small data sample in high density regions.

Due to seeing data collected from the Northwest Ecoregion I can confidently get on board with lowering that population 12.5 percent by 2028. But I would like to see more research done in other parts of the Ecoregions where the mountain lions are low in density before we jump to conclusions on what mountain lion populations are in these areas of Montana. I draw my conclusions and concerns from being in a low density area and spending at least three quarters or more of the mountain lion season in the mountains following my hounds.

I feel it would have a substantially negative impact on populations in these low density areas where there is already a down swing in population numbers currently happening from what I see on a day to day basis. I would like to see stable populations continue across the State into the future for future generations of Montanans to pursue. I do not think that some of these proposals have the best interest for the future of all mountain lions. Rather it seems they are trying to eradicate the mountain lion, not manage the mountain lion. Every animal predator or prey has it place on the landscape and needs to be managed. But it needs managed in a way that will leave a healthy population on the landscape for future Montanans.

Thanks for your time,

Robert Chesterfield

#24

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, April 26, 2023 3:01:37 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, April 26, 2023 3:23:15 PM
Time Spent: 00:21:37
IP Address: 174.198.143.146

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Josh Smith
City/Town: Havre
State/Province: MT
Email Address: Walkerhound80@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Please do not increase the lion quota further in region 6 this past season was a struggle to even find a track to run after the severe over kill of lion's the previous winter. We are in a different situation with our lion population in region 6 with having habitat being in smaller islands it takes far longer to recover population nand between incidental harvest and the harvest not considered on tribal grounds between the two reservations in our region there were close to 3 times our quota taken in the 21-22 winter which has made a huge impact on our population. This being said both reservations in the region are harvesting more lions in recent years and are going to continue to impact the population. This past season was the slowest year in the last ten years in 690 and not much better in 620 our local houndsmen ask you please do not raise our quotas higher.

#25

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, April 28, 2023 1:17:17 PM
Last Modified: Friday, April 28, 2023 1:22:27 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:10
IP Address: 162.217.231.127

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **karen carter**
City/Town: **eureka**
State/Province: **MT**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I vehemently oppose increasing the quota for mountain lion harvest and believe this proposal should be abandoned completely. There are scientific papers documenting that killing more lions will not increase the ungulate population nor decrease human-lion conflict (which is already almost non-existent). Additionally, maximizing lion hunter satisfaction has no place whatsoever in wildlife regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.

#26

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:18:15 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:20:13 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:58
IP Address: 216.220.1.160

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Alexandra Amonette
City/Town: Big Timber
State/Province: MT
Email Address: abamonette@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases. Where I live, there are hardly any mountain lions anymore, and we need them to keep the overpopulation of mule deer in check.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

Thank you.

#27

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:18:49 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:23:04 AM
Time Spent: 00:04:14
IP Address: 174.193.132.170

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Marsha Katz
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	adaptmt@aol.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

Please don't increase mountain lion quotas from last season. Currently there is no data to support such increases.

I live in a forested area on the edge of Missoula. The mountain lions help with our deer population.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

Thank you,
Marsha Katz

#28

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:21:36 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:23:21 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:45
IP Address: 72.175.52.225

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Brent Downey
City/Town: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Email Address: bddowney@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#29

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:22:41 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:23:33 AM
Time Spent: 00:00:51
IP Address: 72.36.62.92

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Jozef P Timmers
City/Town: Ashland
State/Province: MT
Email Address: jozef.timmers@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#30

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:26:47 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:28:18 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:30
IP Address: 72.174.142.221

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Kristin A McNamara Freeman
City/Town: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Email Address: snicklefritzin43@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I urge you to eliminate Mountain Lion quotas. The science is clear: Killing more of these majestic cats won't help Montanans — and could devastate the ecosystem.

#31

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:27:44 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:28:54 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:09
IP Address: 71.36.62.100

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **robin vogler**
City/Town: **bigfork**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **vogler_robin@yahoo.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#32

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:36:59 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:38:33 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:34
IP Address: 47.44.119.99

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Jake Davis
City/Town: Kalispell
State/Province: MT
Email Address: 22jakedavis@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that the recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#33

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:39:26 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:40:31 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:05
IP Address: 104.28.49.80

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Tina Oglesby
City/Town: Helena
State/Province: MT
Email Address: oglesbymt@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency’s best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what’s desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#34

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:42:33 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:45:32 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:58
IP Address: 155.254.9.99

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	m h
City/Town:	Cardwell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	rluvpups2@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

You are harming the wildlife by increasing and using trophy hunting on all wildlife and by either selling off land where they live to to many people or having stupid trophy hunts and allowing killing of our wildlife in their dens with their offspring. We need them more than we need illegals or people from other states moving into the areas they live. The wildlife does more good than harm unlike humans.

#35

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:46:33 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:54:01 AM
Time Spent: 00:07:27
IP Address: 192.161.71.219

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Jennifer Nitz
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	grizzalo@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Commissioners,

I urge you to reject increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices. Science proves that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

Hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe.

The agency must ensure that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed, the agency must collect sufficient data to support that. Do not increase the mountain lion quota.

#36

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:53:49 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:55:35 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:46
IP Address: 65.141.177.212

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Aaron Crapster
City/Town: Bozeman
State/Province: MT
Email Address: jacrapster@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#37

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:50:34 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:56:57 AM
Time Spent: 00:06:22
IP Address: 69.144.145.131

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Mary F. Thibaudeau**
City/Town: **GREAT FALLS**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **purplemaryt@aol.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Please stop decreasing the Mountain Lion quotas! We need 'em just as all creatures big & small are sacred!

#38

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:59:01 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 11:59:43 AM
Time Spent: 00:00:41
IP Address: 76.75.18.76

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Charles Ivor
City/Town: Wise River
State/Province: MT
Email Address: cfifish@mac.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

ter:

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that

#39

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 12:00:14 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 12:09:09 PM
Time Spent: 00:08:54
IP Address: 174.45.250.45

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Patricia A Simmons
City/Town:	Bozeman
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	psimmons100@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Stop - mountain lion quotas! These are scarce to see, beautiful native wildlife that are only hunted for trophies, and not for eating. This is not moral hunting! Educate the public instead about how to live around lions just like they need to do for wolves and grizzly bears and all native wildlife in Montana. I've lived in Montana for 45 years, been a hunter, fisher, hiker, skier and lover of wildlife. I donate annually for non-game wildlife. I've never seen a lion but would love to. It is gross to have dogs chase lions - is not "manly" or "moral". You employ in FWP many biologists and ecologists - I can't believe you are listening to science, but instead promoting murder for profit. Use scientific data to make decisions. You're turning lions into adversaries, instead of living peacefully - they really should be non-game wildlife, since they aren't eaten for food.
Do not increase mountain lion killing.

#40

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 12:16:01 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 12:16:45 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:43
IP Address: 148.59.190.17

Page 1

Q1 Respondent skipped this question

Contact information:

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

Thank you for considering my concerns

#41

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 12:49:47 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 12:56:54 PM
Time Spent: 00:07:06
IP Address: 173.205.178.23

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Scott Merrell
City/Town: Thompson Falls
State/Province: MT
Email Address: ssmdeep@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

My concern is hunting these animals to Extinction! Most of the time they are of no bother to me, and are very important to the overall health of ungulates. I have so many deer in my yard that I would like to invite a few Lions down to help. Let's not decimate the Lion population so the deer population explodes further!!!

#42

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 12:48:10 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:01:52 PM
Time Spent: 00:13:42
IP Address: 63.153.109.248

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Julie Chapman
City/Town: Huson
State/Province: MT
Email Address: julie@JulieTChapman.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I strongly urge you not to raise mountain lion killing quotas, when you do not have the data to support such a raise. In fact, such quotas go against your own best management practices!

Killing mountain lions does NOT prevent conflicts with livestock, or increase populations of deer and elk. (Aren't we dealing with overcrowding of elk in areas of the state??)

I am appalled that the agency seems to think the best course for dealing with predators is to kill as many as possible. Along with so much else about the intolerance and legislative overreach of Montana's government, this makes me ashamed to be a Montanan.

#43

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:00:09 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:03:35 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:25
IP Address: 172.58.45.254

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **MARTHA RHOADES**
City/Town: **Billings**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **rhoadm4275@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Please keep in mind that mountain lions have a beneficial effect on controlling species that can be pests. Do not allow over hunting. I am opposed to quotas that would allow extermination of 30% or more

#44

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:06:10 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:09:17 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:06
IP Address: 63.153.65.241

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Janet Cass
City/Town: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Email Address: janetkcass@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

Increasing mountain lion quotas from last year is a bad idea. There is no data to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science.

Be responsible--Don't increase quotas.

Sincerely,
Janet Cass

#45

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:30:02 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:32:19 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:17
IP Address: 206.183.116.63

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Barbara Bartell
City/Town: Charlo
State/Province: MT
Email Address: chr2760@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Don't increase the number of mountian lions to be killed, please. It doesn't do any good for anyone. Those ones who kill the lions are using high powered rifles, scopes, there's not anything to be proud of and the hunters are mistakenly proud.

#46

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:36:46 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:37:21 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:34
IP Address: 63.151.104.248

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Douglas Rohn**
City/Town: **Bozeman**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **lymfatic@me.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#47

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:31:10 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:49:57 PM
Time Spent: 00:18:46
IP Address: 63.153.11.153

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Norman Bishop
City/Town: Bozeman
State/Province: MT
Email Address: nabishop32@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dr. John A. Vucetich, who has studied wolves on Isle Royale for three decades wrote in his 2021 book, Restoring the Balance, that "The health of ecosystems inhabited by large herbivores depends on the cascading trophic effects of predation." Krumm et al. (2009) wrote "...that mountain lions in this area actively selected prion-infected individuals when targeting adult mule deer as prey items." Killing large carnivores is counterproductive to the interests of hunters, because their absence from the ecosystem allows diseases to run amok, and rendering big game inedible or at best, unattractive. As a hunter and a former member of the MTFWP R3 Citizens' Advisory Committee, I look to the commission for restraint in setting quotas for lion hunting.

#48

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:52:00 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 1:55:11 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:10
IP Address: 71.32.54.200

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Billy Angus
City/Town: Hamilton
State/Province: MT
Email Address: wizardofhamilton@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

LEAVE OUR MOUNTAIN LIONS, WOLVES, AND BEARS ALONE OR ELSE
NOT ONLY MONTANA'S PRODUCTS AND TOURISM WILL BE BOYCOTTED,
BUT I WILL NO LONGER RECOGNIZE MONTANA AS THE 41st STATE!!

#49

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 2:09:31 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 2:12:08 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:36
IP Address: 63.153.92.88

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: K Timboe
City/Town: Great Falls
State/Province: MT
Email Address: championsayn@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

Also trophy hunting in general is entirely unnecessary for anything beyond ego, in simplest terms.

#50

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 2:31:52 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 2:33:06 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:13
IP Address: 68.106.184.14

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Layne Wheeler**
City/Town: **Livingston**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **layne.wheeler@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

As a citizen, voter, and constituent, I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#51

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 3:52:26 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 3:59:35 PM
Time Spent: 00:07:09
IP Address: 174.22.1.218

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Catherine Haug
City/Town:	Bigfork
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	cmhaug44@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

Mountain lions are precious here in NW Montana. The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Killing more of these majestic cats won't help Montanans — and could devastate the ecosystem. Hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

I urge you to forego increasing the allowed killing of mountain lion quotas from last season, especially in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

#52

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 3:46:05 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 4:13:34 PM
Time Spent: 00:27:28
IP Address: 148.59.189.118

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Samantha Hill**
City/Town: **Bozeman**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **wrenhassman@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases. The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to reduce their population, prevent conflicts with livestock, increase populations of deer and other ungulates, and increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more. This is because when an adult male is killed within his territory. The female and kittens he protects attracts multiple young males to his territory. These young males are often inexperienced and prone to kill livestock and create conflicts in communities.

Mountain lions keep herds moving to prevent overgrazing, and ensure healthy deer and elk populations by removing sick and injured animals, as well as preventing the spread of diseases, like chronic wasting disease.

Mountain lions are beautiful, intelligent, extremely social animals that don't deserve to be gunned down or chased to death by hounds. The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#53

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 4:32:21 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 4:33:45 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:23
IP Address: 66.109.139.210

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Erin Nuzzo
City/Town: Missoula
State/Province: MT
Email Address: erinnuzzo@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

Thank you for your consideration,
Erin Nuzzo - Missoula, MT

#54

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 4:52:56 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 5:11:06 PM
Time Spent: 00:18:10
IP Address: 209.161.136.38

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Patrick McGuffin
City/Town: Great Falls
State/Province: MT
Email Address: mcguffin3@msn.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Please do not increase the quotas on mountain lions, the data provided is pretty sketchy. Increasing the quota based on poor information and science may do more harm than good.

#55

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 5:06:17 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 5:11:57 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:39
IP Address: 184.167.66.115

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Gloria Phillip
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	gloria.phillip@mso.umt.edu

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Mountain lion quotas should not be increased as they keep ungulates from overpopulation. If mountain lions are dramatically decreased in Montana, there will be an imbalance of nature. Trophy hunting of mountain lions is abhorrent to all Montanans who wish to keep wildlife in Montana and if licenses are issued, they should be prohibitively expensive.

#56

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 5:47:59 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 5:48:21 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:22
IP Address: 209.200.220.129

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Cathy Reich
City/Town: Superior
State/Province: MT
Email Address: actonreich@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#57

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 7:08:57 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 7:10:49 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:52
IP Address: 209.137.227.116

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Ron Torretta
City/Town: Trout Creek
State/Province: MT
Email Address: rontorretta@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#58

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 7:10:15 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 7:12:48 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:32
IP Address: 184.166.79.182

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Hanna Keemink
City/Town: Missoula, Mt.
State/Province: MT
Email Address: hkmink@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#59

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 7:25:26 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 7:31:31 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:05
IP Address: 67.44.192.23

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Dr. Kari Gunderson
City/Town: Condon
State/Province: MT
Email Address: cnd2543@blackfoot.net

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I am a third generation Montanan and I am opposed to the alternative to reduce the mountain lion population by 40% in Montana. This appears to be driven by the majority of commissioners who are outfitters or have family ties to outfitters and is done in self interest and financial gain. This is not justified by the best available biological science and benefits the outfitter industry, not most Montanans. Thank you for your consideration.

#60

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 8:47:52 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 8:57:01 PM
Time Spent: 00:09:08
IP Address: 63.153.68.140

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Cheryl Sage
City/Town: Florence
State/Province: MT
Email Address: cbramsen43@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

How do you determine that there are too many mountain lions? Who decides an animal must die because they don't fit within the margins of population set by a bureaucrat? When will these animals fit into the ecosystem without "your control"? Out of staters have no business taking our wildlife under any circumstances so why are their hunts allowed? I disagree with the proposition of removing wild life incase a human might run into them. This is Montana. Eyes wide open and best hiking awareness. Don't remove these animals by death.

#61

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 9:58:36 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 10:00:51 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:15
IP Address: 75.216.247.14

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Rebekah Patrick
City/Town: Bozeman
State/Province: MT
Email Address: rebekahdriessen@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Please do not allow mass killing of mountain lions. The ecosystem benefits from them and they are iconic and intelligent creatures that should not be exterminated. Please do not raise the quota on mountain lion killing.

#62

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 01, 2023 10:46:33 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 01, 2023 10:47:13 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:40
IP Address: 47.37.52.246

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Dylan Flather
City/Town:	Hamilton
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	dylan.flather@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#63

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 1:23:18 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 1:24:41 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:23
IP Address: 85.74.107.233

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Judith Barringer
City/Town: Seeley Lake
State/Province: MT
Email Address: J.M.Barringer@ed.ac.uk

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less, not more, safe.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science.

#64

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 7:25:23 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 7:34:47 AM
Time Spent: 00:09:23
IP Address: 174.45.253.48

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Nicholas Kovalcik
City/Town: Bozeman
State/Province: MT
Email Address: nick.kovalcik@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I am writing today to ask you not to raise the hunting quota for mountain lions next season. Killing more mountain lions will not guarantee more elk and deer on the landscape, nor will it guarantee less conflict with livestock and humans. Killing more mountain lions for the sake of recreational hunting may in fact have a profoundly negative impact on the various ecosystems that the mountain lions inhabit here in Montana. I respectfully ask you to please keep the mountain lion hunting quota as it is currently. Thank you.

#65

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 8:29:33 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 8:31:56 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:23
IP Address: 166.137.115.71

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Janae Nelson**
City/Town: **Frenchtown**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **janae87ram@yahoo.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

Thank you.

#66

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 9:11:55 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 9:12:37 AM
Time Spent: 00:00:41
IP Address: 47.5.3.210

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Tristan Sophia
City/Town: Butte
State/Province: MT
Email Address: tristan9593@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#67

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 10:26:29 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 10:29:07 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:38
IP Address: 35.150.95.136

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Darryl Wrona
City/Town:	Billings
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	freevet04@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

WHAT BULLSHIT THIS FUCKS MONTANA BUT HELPS YOU AND YOUR RICH FRIENDS

#68

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 3:19:47 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 3:21:22 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:34
IP Address: 69.145.48.43

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Jillian Fiedor
City/Town: BILLINGS
State/Province: MT
Email Address: jfiedor19@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

Thanks for your time.

#69

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 4:02:28 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 4:03:08 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:39
IP Address: 99.145.236.251

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Wendy Keefover
Email Address: wkeefover@humanesociety.org

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Director Warsech and Chair Robinson:

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our supporters in Montana, we thank you for the opportunity to submit the following comments regarding mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) management by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). The FWP's recommendations do not conform to the best available science, including the substantial science developed by Montana's own mountain lion biologists over the decades.

- Mountain lions can only withstand offtake in amounts less than 14% of their entire population. Mountain lions cannot withstand substantial amounts of killing by humans – whether for hunting, livestock protection or for other reasons. Their populations must be carefully managed to prevent local extirpation.
- As an apex carnivore, they regulate the numbers of smaller carnivores, including coyotes, thus increasing the biological diversity of their habitat. Without mountain lions' presence, ecosystems are not as diverse. Killing lions and other apex carnivores increases the densities of coyotes. Killing lions leaves less carrion for over 30 other species.
- Contrary to FWP's goals, randomly killing mountain lions will not increase ungulate populations nor make livestock or people safer—because killing resident animals just increases the influx of juvenile mountain lions who have lesser hunting skills and are more likely to get into livestock conflicts.
- Mountain lions select for ungulates who have disease or illnesses like chronic wasting disease – but not if their populations are wiped out.
- Mountain lion mothers spend up to two years raising and provisioning their young. Mothers and kittens maintain strong family bonds.
- Wild carnivores like mountain lions, bears and wolves hold inherent value. Studies show most Montanans want to know they are able to live and thrive in their state. These animals also hold enormous economic value to the state of Montana – most tourists spend billions of dollars in two regions: near Yellowstone and Glacier national parks.
- Trophy hunting mountain lions disrupts their delicate social structures. For instance, killing large toms for trophies, results in immigrant male, juvenile lions coming in to take their place, and those juveniles will attempt to kill the offspring from the previous male. This leads to more deaths than the state can assess. Also, killing breeding females leaves kittens to die from starvation, predation or exposure to weather.
- Holding practice hounding chase seasons on mountain lions will lead to the death and disruption of numerous species, including upon deer and elk, and the young of any animals whose feet touch the ground. Chase seasons are unethical and unnecessary.

State wildlife officials have a duty to all members of the public. The FWP's 2023 mountain lion proposals reflect an abrogation of that duty and merely pander to certain stakeholder groups, harming the public's trust in wildlife management and potentially setting up the state to extirpate local populations of mountain lions, which will not accomplish goals of creating greater number of ungulates for hunters, nor making livestock or people safer. These proposals are shameful and unjustifiable.

Sincerely,

Wendy Keefover
Senior Strategist, Carnivore Protection
The Humane Society of the United States
wkeefover@humanesociety.org

#70

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 5:01:38 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 5:05:32 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:53
IP Address: 184.167.255.65

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Richard Clark
City/Town: Columbia Falls
State/Province: MT
Email Address: mulesnmontana@startmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Hello

Thank you for taking my letter. As an avid Hunter and outdoorsman all of my life who is Montana's have always waited for somewhat better management and as we all know predators are not only a part of hunting but are part of natural management The taking of too many of any one species to include mountain lions does not do any good for the diversity and always seems to in the end hurt the natural order of our national Forest parks and wellness areas some quotas are too high and we all know as hunters that gianforte is very interested in continuing all of his trophy hunting with that said I urge you to take into consideration not just mountain lion quotas but all of the rest of the quotas as well and use science instead of emotion to better manage our wildlife!

What happened with our bison this year was just yet another example of extremism when we the public have very little opportunity to hunt bison

Richard Clark

#71

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 7:47:36 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 7:54:02 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:26
IP Address: 47.45.141.212

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Ruth Swenson**
City/Town: **Helena**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **ruthannaswenson@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Please do NOT increase mountain lion quotas from the last season. There is no scientific data to support an increase and therefore increasing quotas is in direct conflict with FWP best management practices directive and is in direct conflict with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy.

Science tells us that hunting mountain lions often makes livestock and humans less safe.

#72

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 8:19:49 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 02, 2023 8:23:54 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:04
IP Address: 72.175.63.58

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Robert McInnis
City/Town: Bozeman
State/Province: MT

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Why do we have to kill more Mountain lions? We are living on their land and we choose to work and live here. Please please please stop killing predators

#73

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 03, 2023 6:56:22 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 03, 2023 6:56:44 AM
Time Spent: 00:00:21
IP Address: 172.221.104.140

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Dan Struble**
City/Town: **LIVINGSTON**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **oxylus2019@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#74

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 03, 2023 9:55:57 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 03, 2023 10:01:09 AM
Time Spent: 00:05:11
IP Address: 71.15.197.158

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Christopher Riti
City/Town: Bozeman
State/Province: MT
Email Address: christopher.riti@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners - I am writing to express my opposition to increasing mountain lion quotas from last season as there are no data points to support such increases. An increase would seem to represent unnecessary and inappropriate slaughtering of mountain lions without any underlying scientific rationale to justify such actions. Best management practices for the agency should be guided by such scientific evidence, not by recreational hunting interests - especially given that such killing does not lead to purported desired outcomes like a healthier ungulate population, reduction in livestock hunting, etc. In fact, increased hunting typically leads to perverse, unexpected, and undesired outcomes - including increased attacks and unhealthy overall populations.

#75

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 03, 2023 3:44:22 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 03, 2023 3:49:31 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:08
IP Address: 72.255.162.249

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Bud Martin
City/Town: Zortman
State/Province: MT
Email Address: redbone_outfitting@msn.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I would like to see a lion quota increase of 300% in the 620 area. It is currently the fastest filling quota in the state of Montana and the mule deer herd is decimated because of lion depredation.

#76

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 04, 2023 6:57:05 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 04, 2023 7:07:10 AM
Time Spent: 00:10:04
IP Address: 69.145.40.73

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Carol Yerden
City/Town:	Whitefish
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	ckyerden405@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Commissioners,

I strongly urge you to not increase the lion quotas for the 2023-2024 season. There is an absence of scientific data to support any increases. Hunting can only disrupt lion territories.

To see a live lion in the wild is a treasure and rare treat to me and our families.

#77

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 04, 2023 10:51:47 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 04, 2023 11:09:11 AM
Time Spent: 00:17:24
IP Address: 66.109.135.182

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Betty Potter
City/Town: Greenough
State/Province: MT
Email Address: pfamilytrust@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I disagree with raising the quota for mountain lion hunting because it interferes with the management of all wildlife. Having predators actually makes for a healthier herd of ungulates which has been proven. I actually participated in lion study on my land. Also when a female with kittens is killed even up to 3 year old kittens which stay with their mother the kittens tend to be the ones getting in trouble because they weren't able to learn from their mother. I have been noticing since the new governor and legislators have taken over they have been trying to kill off anything that they are wanting to hunt themselves. from inhumane trapping to not wanting bison given to tribes or other places and not killing them. Mother Nature does a better job of managing the earth than humans for sure

#78

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 04, 2023 1:29:05 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 04, 2023 1:35:55 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:50
IP Address: 66.62.89.101

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Jeff Darrah
City/Town: Stevensville
State/Province: MT
Email Address: jdarrah21@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I reside in the Bitterroot Valley and mountain lions are having an impact on our ungulate populations especially in HD270 and HD250. I strongly support more mountain lion harvest in R2. I would support a thirty to forty percent increase in the mountain lion harvest and a restructuring of the season that would somehow incentivize the take of female lions, whether it be allowing a hunter to harvest two lions one being a female or somehow increase the availability to non-residents to help harvest female lions. R2 has several HD's below the elk objectives and mule deer numbers appear to be on the decline as well.

#79

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 04, 2023 6:04:57 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 04, 2023 6:09:18 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:20
IP Address: 104.28.50.113

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Hailey Moore**
City/Town: **Whitefish**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **haileymoore78@yahoo.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

It seems as though more scientific data is needed to implement changes in these quotas. A drastic increase in harvest numbers could potentially have a negative impact on the ecosystems FWP is charged with protecting. As an avid hunter and Montanan, I respectfully request a deeper look into how this will impact all issues on the table BEFORE quotas are increased.

#80

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, May 05, 2023 11:15:00 AM
Last Modified: Friday, May 05, 2023 11:15:57 AM
Time Spent: 00:00:57
IP Address: 64.201.206.7

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Tamm Zaryski**
City/Town: **Plentywood**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **zcar@sasktel.net**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support that.

#81

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, May 05, 2023 8:18:41 PM
Last Modified: Friday, May 05, 2023 8:22:49 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:07
IP Address: 66.109.158.24

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Kathy Kinzfogl**
City/Town: **Bigfork**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **birdfrog@blackfoot.net**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to forego increasing mountain lion quotas from last season in the absence of data necessary to support such increases.

The current alternatives for the 2023-2024 mountain lion hunt go against the agency's best management practices, needlessly killing mountain lions.

Science shows that recreational hunting of mountain lions often has outcomes that are the exact opposite of what's desired. Recent studies found that hunting mountain lions fails to (1) reduce their population, (2) prevent conflicts with livestock, (3) increase populations of deer and other ungulates, or (4) increase public safety.

In fact, hunting of mountain lions often makes livestock and people less safe — not more.

The agency should be ensuring that all season-setting rules are compatible with the 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is fully backed by science. If more killing is allowed in the future, the agency should collect sufficient data to support their decision. Thank you for your consideration.

#82

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 06, 2023 9:18:09 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 06, 2023 9:35:11 AM
Time Spent: 00:17:01
IP Address: 216.14.243.88

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Sally Baskett
City/Town: Dixon
State/Province: MT
Email Address: sbaskett@blackfoot.net

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Once again the FWP dismays me in it's apparent intent to wipe predators off the face of Northwest Montana. The evidence presented in reducing mountain lion populations is less than convincing. I hike regularly throughout the region and can assure you there is no shortage of deer or elk in this area. What there is, is an abundance of roads impinging into core areas. I do not see anything more than the barest mention that perhaps this could be a major factor in the actual (or percieved) shortage of ungulates. I do not know of anyone around here who has been attacked by a lion. I do not know of someone with missing dogs, and at any rate dogs left to wander on their own are fair game for whatever wants them (including ranchers rifles). I detect the stench of Paul Fielder in this. This increase in lion "harvest" is ill thought, not with good scientific support, and will not assist in increasing ungulate populations, particularly in Northwest Montana. Your own scientists, and others not swayed by agency politics can confirm that habitat loss and poaching (which I KNOW is significant here, I find dumped carcasses frequently) would have more effect. Stop the politically expedient posturing and do the right thing.

#83

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 06, 2023 9:28:16 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 06, 2023 10:19:46 AM
Time Spent: 00:51:29
IP Address: 50.37.153.125

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Ben Barks**
City/Town: **Libby**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **ben_barks@yahoo.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Commissioners,

I am asking that the commission keep the mountain lion quota numbers in Region 1 the same as the 2022 quotas. The commission adopted these quota numbers in June of 2022 and they are part of the 2023 "status quo" recommendation from FWP. The Northwest LEPOC recommended the Lion populations in the Northwest Ecoregion be reduced by 12.5 percent overall by 2028.

We have only one year behind us in this new approach to Lion management in Region 1, so let's see how this plays out over the next few years. Quota numbers went over what was set by commissioners in almost every LMU's in Region 1 this past season. That fact speaks loudly to the concerns that the public suggested might happen when this took effect last season. There were a lot of comments made from the public that the change from a special permit season to an open quota season could cause problems and, as an avid houndsman in Region 1, I can attest it did cause some problems. The commission was aware of those issues, rat-race mentality of some, harvesting of immature lions, over harvesting in some drainages, etc. All of those issues were seen.

I believe we do not have a excessive ungulate predation caused by lions in Region 1. When our ungulate population was at an all time high so were our Lion population.

The concern of many people in Region 1 was it seemed this whole change in Lion management could possible be seen as money driven. I hate to say that, but unfortunately that issue happens a lot when large sums of money are involved in the harvest of mountain lions by outfitters. The harvest of a lion is an easy hunt for an outfitter compared to other big game species in Montana and it's just a plain fact, not hard to figure out.

If the commission votes to raise the quota numbers to a 20% or a 40% increase over the next 6 years, it will do nothing but confirm the suspicion that many already have. This is not good for public trust and it shows lack of integrity of the commission.

Let's keep the quota numbers the same for a few more years and watch what happens. Thank you for your time.

#84

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 06, 2023 11:28:48 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 06, 2023 11:44:33 AM
Time Spent: 00:15:44
IP Address: 76.75.33.236

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Charles McDougal**
City/Town: **Sheridan**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **2houtdoors@gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

All,

I believe increasing Mountain Lion Quotas state wide, thus reducing Lion numbers by 20,30,40% state wide would have a profound impact and unforeseen problems in maintaining a healthy yet well managed Lion population. I agree that the declining Mule Deer population is of great concern. I do not believe lions are the biggest threat to the decline state wide. Let's consider lion management on a local LMU level and adjust accordingly.

Let's consider the number of resident and non-resident Mule Deer hunters as well as all other predators and habitat loss contributing to the decline in Mule Deer population. In short I see no benefit in targeting Mountain Lions specifically for the declining Mule Deer population state wide.

Sincerely Charles

#85

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 06, 2023 4:11:30 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 06, 2023 4:17:30 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:59
IP Address: 162.217.231.127

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Bud Lavery
City/Town:	Eureka
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	budlavery64@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

There should be a DECREASE in mountain lion quotas. There is a natural balance between predators, like mountain lions, and prey, like white-tailed deer. In my region of the state, the white-tail deer population is severely overpopulated. That's why we have the second highest deer/car collision rate in the country (we hit one this Fall). The mountain lions will take out the sick and weak deer first, and prevent the spread of chronic wasting disease. The proposals to increase the killing of mountain lions are ridiculous. Keep Montana Wild! This is one of the many reasons we "The last best place".

#86

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, May 06, 2023 4:40:21 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, May 06, 2023 4:48:38 PM
Time Spent: 00:08:16
IP Address: 162.217.231.127

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Karen
City/Town: Eureka
State/Province: MT
Email Address: fwp@wildlifelover.net

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Please do not proceed with this proposal. We do not need to kill more mountain lions, nor encourage more quota licenses, but rather need to coexist with this keystone predator, and deal with livestock conflicts if they happen. Increasing cougar quotas could more likely increase livestock conflict by orphaning kittens.

Please stand up for the peaceful coexistence of wildlife by abandoning this bad proposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

#87

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, May 07, 2023 1:24:53 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, May 07, 2023 1:30:24 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:30
IP Address: 98.97.33.182

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	James Price
City/Town:	Troy
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	jarratt1@comcast.net

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I am for the second alternative of a 10% reduction. I cross country ski all winter in the Yaak area (Upper Ford Road area) and I do not see many lion tracks. I use to see more in past years. Plenty of deer.

#88

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 08, 2023 9:32:56 AM
Last Modified: Monday, May 08, 2023 10:01:30 AM
Time Spent: 00:28:33
IP Address: 71.32.53.179

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Mark Oswald
City/Town: Hamilton
State/Province: MT
Email Address: moswaldnra@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I favor a 20% to 40% increase of Mt. Lion quotas. Deer/Elk/Moose numbers are trending down (with some exceptions of certain HDs). Our fawn/doe, and calf/cow ratios are at a level similar to those of Yellowstone NP., there, being no predator hunting. So it seems that apex predators are to contribute to these lower numbers (of coarse other factors will effect these numbers. Habitat loss, weather etc..). Mt. Lions are also primary predators of our Big Horn/Mt. Goat, these numbers are also lower than should be (Again, these numbers can be effected by weather, vehicle strikes, introduction of domestic sheep/goats with associated diseases etc...). A 6 year cycle seems," too little, too late" for some of our HDs. we need action to happen sooner.

#89

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 09, 2023 3:12:29 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 09, 2023 3:39:14 PM
Time Spent: 00:26:44
IP Address: 174.198.133.161

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Stephen Kenley
City/Town: Hamilton
State/Province: MT
Email Address: ibstephen@Cybernet1.Com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I am glad to see the Quota's raised in HD 250, but the Lion populations in HD 240, and HD 270 are also too high as Kelly Prophet's Scientific Lion Density Study in 2014 showed. The Department of Fish & Wildlife promised to raise Lion Quota's to Match the Lion population which was 2 1/2 to 3 times higher than the Department estimated at that time.

#90

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, May 09, 2023 3:37:24 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, May 09, 2023 4:12:32 PM
Time Spent: 00:35:07
IP Address: 174.198.143.31

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Steve Wilson
City/Town:	Victor
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	sawilson1@q.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

My comments concern only the bitterroot hunting districts 204 261 HD240 HD250 HD270 Upon the conclusion of the lion density study in the upper bitterroot it was determined that the lion numbers needed to be cut by 30% the number of lions in hunting district 250 and 270 was 170 30% of 170 is 51 lions. The region 2 Wildlife manager, Completely ignored Doctor Proffits Recommendation we have yet to this day met that criteria. The thing to remember is that study was only done and two upper Bitterroot hunting districts, we have Hunting district 240 which is bordered by 60 miles of wilderness which was never figured in to this recommendation it was determined that we had possibly three times that number in a Bitterroot. We don't need a six year plan 30% needs to start immediately and carry-on until the numbers of deer elk Moose Sheep and goats were in the early 2000s, It's not loss of habitat or climate change hits simply predation in Lions are the number one Apex predator in the Northwest or in our case west central. We are in the predator pit And we need to dig our way out.

#91

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 11:18:13 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 11:20:54 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:41
IP Address: 63.153.100.41

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Don Patterson
City/Town: Corvallis
State/Province: MT
Email Address: d5357mt@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I support proposed alternative number 3, third alternative
would achieve a 20 percent reduction statewide within six years

#92

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 2:21:53 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 2:47:33 PM
Time Spent: 00:25:40
IP Address: 98.127.255.64

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Anne D Schumacher**
City/Town: **Bozeman**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **annebenschumacher@yahoo.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to not increase mountain lion quotas from last season because no data supports such increases. The agency should follow the 2019 Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy, which is based on science, in setting the rules.

My husband and I used to raise sheep in northwestern Colorado and the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming. Our experience, along with that of all of our neighbors, was that overhunting mountain lions failed to reduce their population, protect our livestock or increase deer and other ungulate populations. It created more problems.

#93

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 12:25:59 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 3:00:45 PM
Time Spent: 02:34:46
IP Address: 69.20.132.18

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Andrea Zaccardi
City/Town:	Victor
State/Province:	ID
Email Address:	azaccardi@biologicaldiversity.org

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

May 10, 2023

Submitted online via the Commission's agenda page

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Wildlife Division

1420 East Sixth Avenue

P.O. Box 200701

Helena, MT 59620-0701

Tel: (406) 444-2612

Email: fwpwld@mt.gov

Re: Mountain Lion Hunting Season Proposals for Fall 2023 – Winter 2024

To Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission,

I write to you today on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity (“Center”) and our 1.7 million members, supporters and online activists, more than 5,700 of which call Montana home. The Center has worked on issues regarding mountain lion management across the United States for many years and our members and supporters care deeply about the protection of mountain lion populations throughout the world and in Montana.

As the cover sheet for this agenda item notes, the Northwest Lion Ecoregional Planning Objective Committees recommend that mountain lion populations be reduced by 12.5 percent by 2029 and recommend increasing hunting quotas to accomplish these goals. The overall objectives are to reduce ungulate predation, assist in recruitment in struggling ungulate populations, maintain a healthy lion population, reduce human-lion conflicts, maximize satisfaction for lion hunting and harvest, maximize satisfaction for non-harvest lion chasing, maximize satisfaction for ungulate hunters, and maximize social acceptance of lion hunting. The Commission adopted these recommendations in June 2022 and they are part of the 2023 status quo recommendation. While the agency states that it adopted all of the recommendations above, the cover sheet makes clear – that the main goal of the proposed alternatives is to appease ungulate hunters.

The four proposed alternatives include: (1) the status quo, including all aspects of the 12.5 reduction in the Northwest Ecoregion as adopted by the Commission in 2022; (2) a 10 percent reduction statewide within six years plus a 12.5 reduction in the Northwest Ecoregion; (3) a 20 percent reduction statewide within six years; and (4) a 40 percent reduction within six years. The proposed alternatives largely ignore the best available science on the impact of mountain lion hunting in terms of meeting the adopted recommendations as stated above, and specifically to protect ungulate populations for hunter opportunity.

First, the Department admits that “[r]esponse in prey populations to manipulations of mountain lion populations are dependent on many additional factors, including other predators, habitat condition, and weather and climate” and that “the specific relationships between mountain lions and ungulate populations in most LMUs have not been quantified.” Thus, even the Department admits that killing mountain lions may not have any impact on ungulate populations.

Second, the most recent science regarding using sport hunting as a management tool for mountain lions finds that hunting these animals doesn't produce the management outcomes sought by state agencies, but instead solely provides a sport hunting opportunity. (Laundré and Papouchis 2020). Specifically, this study looked at management strategies for mountain lions in 11 western states and compared several desired management outcomes to the state of California, which has not allowed any sport hunting of cougars since 1972. The study found no support for the idea that sport hunting decreases conflict with humans or livestock, and in some cases found that higher kill rates of mountain lions correlate with increased livestock conflict. Finally, the study found no correlation between the use of mountain lion hunting as a management tool and an increased deer population.

This is by no means the first study that has brought these issues to light. Other science exists supporting the idea that sport hunting of mountain lions does not result in a higher ungulate population (Ballard et al. 2001; Hurley et al. 2011). In fact, several studies show that sport hunting as a management tool worsens the very problem it is meant to solve by increasing the rate of mountain lion

interactions with both people and livestock. (Lambert et al. 2006; Treves et al. 2016; Peebles et. al 2013).

The Department's 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy also acknowledges that several factors impact ungulate populations, with weather and forage availability – rather than predation – being the most significant limiting factors. While predation is unlikely to directly reduce an ungulate's population, predation may slow a herd's recovery after a harsh winter.

This science should call into question the Department's and the Commission's messaging and decision making around using hunting as a management tool. The science does not support the idea that hunting of mountain lions has a better public safety outcome, decreases livestock conflicts or increases ungulate populations. If those are the outcomes the Department and the Commission seek, the proposed alternatives are not in line with those management goals.

Aspects of the Department's recommendations are also inconsistent with the Department's own 2019 Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy. For example, the Strategy states that delineated ecoregions will be the spatial basis for the Department's mountain lion management. However, the Department now suggest the Commission may implement a variety of quotas across Lion Management Units or across ecoregions.

We also ask that the Department and Commission reconsider the issuance of special licenses. This new special license structure causes a number of issues. First, it is difficult to comprehend the purpose of setting regional hunting district quotas if special licenses are not restricted to those quotas. This could lead to large numbers of mountain lions being taken from one or two hunting districts, causing location-specific declines or even localized eradication of the species. This would not only have negative impacts to the local ecosystem but also would make it significantly more difficult for hunters in the years following to successfully hunt a mountain lion. Second, most hunting districts in Montana set separate quotas for males and females and a few hunting districts do not. The female quotas put in place are important to protect females. The protection of females is important because female survival and mortality rates drive the population trend and because killing a single female may mean the mortality of several mountain lions. Although illegal under Montana law, hunters do sometimes kill a nursing female. If a hunter kills a nursing female mountain lion, her young kittens will die from starvation or dehydration. Additionally, when hunters remove stable adult mountain lions from a population, it attracts young male mountain lions to these vacancies. The immigrating young males often times will kill the kittens from the previous male so they sire their own. In the process, however, females defending their kittens are also frequently killed as well. It is not just the one mountain lion in the hunter's crosshairs who dies: hunting causes a harmful domino effect in mountain lion populations.

Finally, it is important that the Commission use current population estimates prior to setting hunting unit quotas and considering the allowance of special licenses unlimited by the quotas set. A recent article in Montana Outdoors described new DNA and computer modeling methods that are being used by MFWP biologists to estimate mountain lion populations (Castle 2021). This same article noted that in the past, FWP had set quotas too high and mountain lion hunters demanded that FWP reduce the annual harvest to increase the population. The Commission should be wary of raising the quotas and permitting special licenses, which may result in a steep decline in the population which nobody wants, including hunters.

We ask that the Commission keep all of the factors and science described above in mind when adopting quotas for the upcoming fall and spring seasons. Specifically, we ask that the Commission reject any alternative that proposes a statewide reduction and reconsider the idea of issuing special licenses. We would also ask that the Commission reconsider allowing the unsportsman-like conduct of using hounds to hunt mountain lions, especially for nonresidents.

Sincerely,

Andrea Zaccardi

Legal Director, Carnivore Conservation Program

Center for Biological Diversity

Tel: (303) 854-7748

Email: azaccardi@biologicaldiversity.org

REFERENCE LITERATURE

Ballard WB, Lutz D, Keegan TW, Carpenter LH, deVos JC Jr.. Deer-predator relationships: A review of recent North American studies with emphasis on mule and black-tailed deer. *Wildl Soc Bull.* 2001; 29: 99–115.

Beausoleil, Richard A., G.M. Koehler, B.T. Maletzke, B.N. Kertson, "Research to Regulation: Cougar Social Behavior as a guide for Management." *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 37. no. 3 (June 2013). DOI 10.1002/wsb.2899.

- Castle, Jessianne. Big Cats, Big Territories: How new DNA technology, spatial science, and computer modeling are helping FWP adjust mountain lion numbers to where Montanans want them. *Montana Outdoors* (Nov.-Dec. 2021): pp. 36-42.
- Cooley, H. S., R. B. Wielgus, G. M. Koehler, H. S. Robinson, and B. T. Maletzke. "Does Hunting Regulate Cougar Populations? A Test of the Compensatory Mortality Hypothesis." *Ecology* 90, no. 10 (Oct 2009): 2913-21. <https://doi.org/10.1890/08-1805.1>.
- Hurley MA, Unsworth JW, Zager P, Hebblewhite M, Garton EO, Montgomery DM et al. Demographic response of mule deer to experimental reduction of coyotes and mountain lions in Southeastern Idaho. *Wildl Monographs*. 2011; 178: 1–33.
- Lambert, C. M. S., R.B. Wielgus, H.S. Robinson, D.D. Katnik, H.S. Cruickshank, R. Clarke, and J. Almack. "Cougar Population Dynamics and Viability in the Pacific Northwest." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 70 (2006): 246-54.
- Laundré, John W., and Christopher Papouchis. "The Elephant in the Room: What Can We Learn from California Regarding the Use of Sport Hunting of Pumas (*Puma concolor*) as a Management Tool?". *PLOS ONE* 15, no. 2 (2020): e0224638. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0224638>.
- Peebles, Kaylie A., Robert B. Wielgus, Benjamin T. Maletzke, and Mark E. Swanson. "Effects of Remedial Sport Hunting on Cougar Complaints and Livestock Depredations." *Plos One* 8, no. 11 (Nov 19 2013): e79713. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0079713>.
- Robinson, Hugh S. et al. "Sink Populations in Carnivore Management: Cougar Demography and Immigration in a Hunted Population." *Ecological Applications* 18(4) (2008).
- Robinson, Hugh S. and R. DeSimone. "The Garnet Range Mountain Lion Study: Characteristics of a Hunted Population in West-Central Montana: Final Report." *Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks* (2011).
- Robinson, Hugh S. et al. "A Test of the Compensatory Mortality Hypothesis in Mountain Lions: A Management Experiment in West-Central Montana." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 78: 5 (2014).
- Robinson, Hugh S., Toni Ruth, Justin A. Gude, David Choate, Rich DeSimone, Mark Hebblewhite, Kyran Kunkel, Marc R. Matchett, Michael S. Mitchell, Kerry Murphy and Jim Williams. "Linking Resource Selection and Mortality Modeling for Population Estimation of Mountain Lions in Montana." *312 Ecological Modelling*, 11-25 (2015).
- Treves A, Kropfel M, McManus J. Predator control should not be a shot in the dark. *Front Ecol Environ*. 2016; 14: 380–388.
- Wielgus, R. B., D. E. Morrison, H. S. Cooley, and B. Maletzke. "Effects of Male Trophy Hunting on Female Carnivore Population Growth and Persistence." [In English]. *Article. Biological Conservation* 167 (Nov 2013): 69-75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2013.07.008>.
-

#94

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 7:53:47 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 7:55:02 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:15
IP Address: 98.97.115.26

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Sas Weber
City/Town: Belgrade
State/Province: MT
Email Address: sas@stuartweber.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

I live in the Gallatin Valley and raise sheep. They graze about one section West of the Forest Service boundary. The Bridgers have a moderate lion population. By using portable electric fence I am able to keep losses from predation by lions to the very minimum. The Bridgers have a huge white tail deer population. Reducing the number of lions would only make the population larger. In regards to human-lion conflict, in the Bridgers that is a non-issue.

I urge you to resist the desires of the lion hunters, who use dogs and radios and vehicles to tree lions. That is inhumane and absolutely unnecessary. The lion density is self-regulating in nature and we don't need human hunters to keep the numbers in check.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

#95

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 9:02:57 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 9:07:13 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:15
IP Address: 72.174.64.179

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Footloose Montana
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	loxodonta66@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

May 10, 2023

Lesley Robinson, Chair
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Brian Wakeling, Game Management Bureau Chief
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Submitted via email: fwcomm@mt.gov; brian.wakeling@mt.gov

RE: Proposed reductions of mountain lions in the Northwest Ecoregion 2023 through 2028 and in LMUs 100, 121, 122, 123, 124, 201, 202, 285 and 299.

Dear Chair Robinson, Chief Wakeling, and Members of the Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment on behalf of Footloose Montana and our thousands of supporters in Montana. We strongly oppose all four hunting quota alternatives proposed by FWP, each of which proposes a 'reduction' of the mountain lion population in our state. In addition, we reject any further increase of the quotas already in place in LMUs 100, 121—124, 201-202, 285 and 299.

Between 2007 and 2021, hunters have killed a total of nearly 7,000 mountain lions (6,926/4,321 males and 2,605 females). Under the guise of 'conservation,' mountain lions and other top predators such as wolves are relentlessly targeted by FWP and killed for recreation, sport, trophies and profit. Montana's nearly eight-month-long mountain lion hunting season begins in September and ends in mid-April of the following year and includes the shooting of mountain lions with archery and rifles, a hound training season and the use of hounds to chase and tree the lions before they are shot.

Mountain lions are a native keystone species in Montana and should be preserved.

As top predators killed for trophies, mountain lions have sophisticated levels of intelligence, emotion, and sociality (Batavia et al. 2018). Killing mountain lions for sport, recreation, trophies and profit is a morally indefensible practice, constitutes frivolous killing, and commercializes wildlife—a clear violation of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Trophy hunting is causing social chaos among mountain lions, which none of FWP's population models or number estimate captures, yet it is a harsh reality for these animals. Scientific studies, including FWP's own research acknowledge the fact that trophy hunting disrupts the social fabric of mountain lion society, that killing mother lions exposes kittens to starvation and death by exposure and predation, and that killing older males increases infanticide and can lead to an increase in conflicts with humans. In other words, FWP's lethal management of mountain lions may cause most, if not all the problems the agency is using as arguments to justify a hunting season of mountain lions publicly.

Comments:

Significant uncertainties regarding the statewide mountain lion population exist:

FWP refers to a population estimate that ranges between 2,784 to 5,156 animals. This is an estimate from 2010-2012 that is addressed in a 2014 UM research/FWP paper. This is in contrast to at least one scientific analysis of Montana's habitat areas and known density rates for mountain lions that puts their likely population between 2,112 and 3,258 (Mountain Lion Foundation/Montana).

- FWP possibly overestimates the state's mountain lion population, at a very minimum, these numbers are outdated, and not representative of the current reality, especially given the risks from climate change (drought, extreme temperatures, flooding, fire, etc. affecting all wildlife). In addition, Montana has experienced significant growth of its human population in recent years, an increase that

has reduced habitat availability and quality for many wildlife species, including mountain lions and their prey species.

- The estimate of the mountain lion population in the Northwestern Ecoregion is 1,376 individuals. Even the LEPOC 2022 recognized the problem with this assumed population number and stated:

“There is uncertainty in the lion population estimate. This makes it difficult to precisely prescribe lion harvest rates. There are concerns that snaring of other predators impacts lions (FWP can pull together data, but there is a lot of uncertainty about the level of underreporting)” (p.35) (<https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwpc/commission/2022/jun-23/mountain-lion-quota/nw-lepoc-2022-final.pdf>)

The sentence in parenthesis above implies that FWP does not consider traps and snares as sources of mortality in their modeling of the mountain lion numbers, nor in the modeling of the four alternatives to reduce the mountain lion population in the Northwest Ecoregion/LMUs. Yet, FWP’s incidental capture report shows that 99 mountain lions were caught in traps and snares set for other species between 2012 and 2017; 67 mountain lions died, and 32 were released (17% with foot injuries). The report noted that “all mountain lions caught in snares died.” FWP did not provide a further breakdown of how many females were affected. The number of kittens that died of starvation, exposure, dehydration, and predation as a consequence of indiscriminate trapping and snaring is unknown, yet it is a reality (e.g., we know anecdotally of an incident where a mountain lion mother in the Bitterroot was found strangled to death in a snare with her two kittens also dead at her feet.)

Trophy hunting destroys the social fabric of mountain lion society:

Mountain lions are quite social and live in ‘communities’ with females sharing carcasses with other females, while male mountain lions may protect their females, kittens, and territory from incoming, competing males. Hunting can cause social chaos within cougar populations by disrupting these communities, which increases intra-species conflicts. Destabilization of mountain lion populations causes increased conflicts with humans, pets, and livestock (Peebles et al. 2013).

FWP’s own 2011 study addresses the destructive impacts of hunting on the social structure of mountain lions and notes, “... harvest may disrupt the social structure of males and their ability to define and defend exclusive home ranges” (Robinson and DeSimone, “The Garnet Mountain Lion Study: Characteristics of a hunted population in West-Central Montana,” 2011, p. 16). Today, consensus in the scientific literature exists that killing dominant territorial male mountain lions from a population has multiple destructive consequences, including:

- An increase in intra-species competition for mates and territory.
- Provides openings for juveniles and subadults to move into their territory leading to greater aggression between mountain lions and mortalities to females and subsequent infanticide—the killing of unrelated offspring.

For decades, FWP has used the same arguments of population control and decreasing human-lion conflicts (mainly depredation) to justify the alleged need for a hunting season for mountain lions while providing no evidence of its effectiveness to support either. Once again, these claims are contrary to scientific studies that show a positive association between hunting mountain lions and an increase of complaints and depredation, for example:

- Hunting destroys the sex structure and shifts a population towards younger males, who are less experienced and much more likely to engage in conflicts and depredations than mountain lions in a stable population with older mountain lions present. Research by Robert Wielgus has shown that killing adult males increased cougar sightings (often perceived as a ‘conflict’) and also the number of cattle and sheep killed by other mountain lions, as inexperienced younger males moved into the older males’ territory.
- Research by Peebles et al. (2013) has found that,

“... each additional cougar on the landscape increased the odds of a complaint of livestock depredation by about 5 %. However, contrary to expectations, each additional cougar killed on the landscape increased the odds by about 50% ... Very heavy hunting (100% removal of residents adults in 1 year) increased the odds of complaints and depredation in year 2 by 150% to 340% (p. 6).

- A study in Washington state showed that an increase in complaints, including sightings and predations, both of which was assumed to reflect a ‘rapidly growing mountain lion population.’ which prompted an increase in hunting mountain lions was in reality a

result of a declining female and increasing male demographic in the population (Robinson et al. 2008 cited in Peebles et al. 2013). Heavy hunting of mountain lions skewed the ratio of young males in the population by causing compensatory immigration and emigration by young male cougars (Teichman et al. 2016).

FWP's 2019 report notes that mountain lion attacks on humans are extremely rare, with the only fatal attack occurring in 1989. Non-fatal attacks (mostly involving children and pets) are also rare (though one known recent incident involved a dog getting killed by a mountain lion in Missoula's Rattlesnake Valley in 2022). The same report notes that "Juvenile and subadult mountain lions are responsible for most human-lion conflicts across the western U. S. (Mattson 2007), including Montana" (Montana Mountain Lion: Monitoring, Management and Strategy 2019, p. 24). Once again, FWP's own research provides further support for the link between trophy hunting of mountain lions causing social chaos and leading to an increase in conflicts involving mountain lions. Instead of intensifying the killing of mountain lions, FWP should do a better job in educating the public on safety issues and how to foster respect for living with predators.

Mountain lion females, mothers and kittens are frequent victims of trophy hunters and hounds men.

FWP's trophy hunting also cruelly affects mountain lion mothers and their kittens.

Researchers report that in heavily hunted populations, female mountain lions experience higher levels of intraspecific aggression (fights with other individual lions), resulting in predation on themselves and their kittens (Stoner et al. 2013). As mountain lions give birth year-round, 'sportsmen' kill pregnant mountain lions. In addition, killing mountain lion mothers causes the death of orphaned kittens by starvation, dehydration, exposure to extreme temperatures, and predation (O'Malley et al., Wildlife Society Bulletin, 2018).

Hound hunting lacks the "fair chase" component valued in other types of hunting and is animal cruelty whereby hounds, often mistreated themselves, kill mountain lion kittens, and often get injured or even killed by mountain lions and/or other predators. Hound hunting is not only harmful to dogs but also energetically taxing and stressful to mountain lions (Harlow et al. 1992).

Hunting of mountain lions is unnecessary for 'population control':

Mountain lions are a self-regulating species, "which means they control their own population size in balance with the ecosystem without the need for human intervention" (Mountain Lion Foundation). Cougars require large expansive swaths of habitat with individuals maintaining large home ranges (they can range from 25-500 square miles) that overlap with one another; mountain lions occur at low densities relative to their primary prey and must remain at a smaller size relative to their prey's biomass to survive, thus when prey populations decline so do mountain lion populations.

Hunting detrimentally impacts the ecological function of mountain lions:

Mountain lions are a keystone species and drive the ecosystems in which they live. As top predators, they regulate many of the other species in their communities, including herbivores who then regulate the plant community. Research shows the essential role that cougars play for maintaining biodiversity, e.g., the "trophic cascade effect." Also, a study in Zion National Park demonstrated that in areas where mountain lion numbers are low, the population of mule deer increases significantly, which limits the growth of cottonwood trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. Subsequently, these plants no longer provide habitat and food for butterflies and other insects, frogs, and lizards (Ripple and Beschta 2006). In addition, mountain lions can help maintain the health and viability of their prey species by preying on the sick ungulates, thereby reducing the risk of spreading diseases. Thus, a reduction of mountain lion populations in Montana could backfire by eliminating the best defense against diseases increasing among ungulates, including chronic wasting disease.

Composition of the Northwest LEPOC is problematic:

FWP represents sportsmen interests and is an agency that must sell mountain lion hunting licenses to help guarantee its relevance and survival. Any 'problem' identifications, setting of quotas, and questions regarding how drastically Montana's mountain lion population should be reduced stem from this focus and determines FWP's objectives, e.g., "maximizing hunter satisfaction" and "maximize social acceptance of lion hunting" (instead of educating the public about the value of mountain lions and how to manage human-lion conflicts non-lethally).

The members of the LEPOC seemed to have been handpicked by a FWP Team (they were recommended to the director) and couldn't have been less diverse in ethnicity, gender, and values (an overwhelming dominance of white male trophy-hunting and outfitter

Public Comment: Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024

have been less diverse in ethnicity, gender, and values (an overwhelming dominance of white male trophy hunting and outdoor interests). This 'advisory' group is now recommending a 12.5 percent reduction of the mountain lion population in the Northwest Ecoregion and further reductions in nine LMUs. The 'stable' and 'increase' options quickly discarded, this leaves the public only one 'reduction' alternative to choose from—a 10 percent, 12.5, 20 or 40 percent (!) reduction. Not only is the goal of reducing the mountain lion population self-serving, but the claims by members of the LEPOC to support the alleged need to increase the quotas on mountain lions (which soon will be followed by claims to increase quotas on other predators), are based on pre-determined beliefs and hunting interests, rather than science and the interests of the majority of the public.

FWP continues its relentless and unjustified focus on killing predators in Montana, contradicting the agency's own research findings and conclusion: "Weather and forage availability are more likely than predation to explain chronically low ungulate populations. The influence of these potentially limiting factors should be evaluated before predation [of ungulates] is implicated" (Montana Mountain Lion 2019, p. 17).

And now that a recent Montana study has shown that hunting of mountain lions does not increase elk demographic in the short-term and that in fact, "sustained harvest treatments would be necessary to achieve longer-term elk population demographic responses," (Proffitt et al. 2020), FWP is proposing a multiple-year strategy of increased hunting of mountain lions to achieve the desired increase in elk population. At the same time, FWP's 2022 data on its elk count shows that Region 1 is meeting its objective.

Clearly, hunting presents a major contributor of mortality for ungulates such as mule deer, elk, and deer. Instead of increasing the hunting and quotas of mountain lions, FWP should consider reducing hunting permits and quotas of these ungulates and shift their focus away from their war against predators, starting by eliminating the already excessive trophy hunting of predators such as wolves, bears and mountain lions.

FWP should shift to a holistic approach to ecosystem management with mountain lions as an important, integral part. Most human-caused conflicts with mountain lions, including predation, should be solved with non-lethal methods, and killing individual 'problem' mountain lions should be the last resort. For these and other reasons provided below, we do not support a mountain lion hunting season or any of the proposed quota increases to reduce the number of mountain lions in the Northwest Ecoregion and LMUs listed above. We believe mountain lions should not be managed exclusively for trophy hunters but on behalf of all Montanans. We call on FWP to end trophy hunting of mountain lions in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anja Heister, PhD on behalf of the Footloose Montana Board

Literature cited:

Batavia et al (2018). "The elephant (head) in the room: A critical look at trophy hunting." <https://tinyurl.com/38xxp72r>

Harlow et al. (1992). "Stress response of cougars to nonlethal pursuit by hunters." <https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/abs/10.1139/z92-020>

Peebles et al. (2013). "Effects of Remedial Sport Hunting on Cougar Complaints and Livestock Depredations." <https://tinyurl.com/bden74x9>

Ripple and Beschta. (2006). "Linking a cougar decline, trophic cascade, and catastrophic regime shift in Zion National Park." <https://tinyurl.com/ppb7emwf>

Robinson and DeSimone, (2011). "The Garnet Mountain Lion Study: Characteristics of a hunted population in West-Central Montana." <https://tinyurl.com/29ck48h4>

O'Malley et al., Wildlife Society Bulletin, 2018). "Aligning mountain lion hunting seasons to mitigate orphaning dependent kittens." <https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/wlcb.002>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/wsb.902>

Stoner et al. (2013). "Dispersal behaviour of a polygynous carnivore: do cougars *Puma concolor* follow source-sink predictions?"
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2981/12-124>

Teichman et al. (2016). "Hunting as a management tool? Cougar-human conflict is positively related to trophy hunting."
<https://tinyurl.com/mr3b7pjh>

#96

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 11, 2023 5:47:22 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 11, 2023 8:10:23 AM
Time Spent: 02:23:00
IP Address: 98.97.36.189

Page 1

Q1 Respondent skipped this question

Contact information:

Q2
Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission,

For the Fall 2023 - Winter 2024 Mountain Lion quotas, we urge the Commission to adopt the first alternative which maintains the status quo. The current Mountain Lion Management Plan and quotas are allowing mountain lion populations to rebound. We thank the commission for applying the Lion Ecoregional Planning Objective Committee's data to determine quotas.

Sincerely,
Helena Edelson
Large Carnivore Fund
Gardiner, MT

#97

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 11, 2023 10:15:40 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 11, 2023 10:24:22 AM
Time Spent: 00:08:41
IP Address: 63.153.19.111

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Roland Deane
City/Town: Three Forks
State/Province: MT
Email Address: mabledeane@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

It is not right for a person who applies for one of the Limited Special Mountain Lion license to be unable to purchase an Unlimited Special Mountain Lion License if unsuccessful in the Limited draw. The General Mountain Lion license is only good during Bow and Rifle season and cannot be used during Mountain Lion season. Many hunters will not apply for the Limited Licenses because if they are not successful in the draw, they cannot hunt during regular Mountain lion season.

#98

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 11, 2023 3:24:52 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 11, 2023 3:32:06 PM
Time Spent: 00:07:14
IP Address: 205.207.149.242

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Nathan Varley**
City/Town: **Gardiner**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **nathan@wolftracker.com**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Dear Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission,

Bear Creek Council is a community-based wildlife conservation and ecotourism organization based in Gardiner that works on key issues affecting our community and its tourism economy. We strive for practical solutions to the complex issues around the abundant native wildlife in the Gardiner Basin and Yellowstone National Park. We also promote our incredible, world-class wildlife resources as a sustainable asset that benefits our community as we welcome people from around the globe.

We are writing to urge the Commission to adopt the second alternative of maintaining the status quo with regard to Mountain Lion quotas for the fall 2023- winter 2024 season, leading to at most a 10 percent reduction statewide within six years if the quota were achieved. Bear Creek Council does not see a compelling reason to increase reduction targets and we're encourages that the current Mountain Lion Management Plan and corresponding quotas have allowed mountain lion populations to rebound from approximately 1000 to 5000 while in place. Bear Creek Council applauds the Commission for using the data collected under the Lion Ecoregional Planning Objective Committees to address population trajectory and provide the basis to determine quotas. It is our view that this is exemplary wildlife management and should management should continue in this manner.

Sincerely,

Nathan Varley
President

#99

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 11, 2023 3:51:28 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 11, 2023 4:04:01 PM
Time Spent: 00:12:32
IP Address: 184.166.100.98

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Mac Minard
City/Town:	Clancy
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	moga@mt.net

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

To: Fish and Game Commission Members
Director Worsech
Deputy Director Dustin Temple

From: Mac Minard
Executive Director, MOGA

Date: May 10, 2023

Re: MOGA REVIEW OF LION QUOTAS

Commission Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the pending Mountain Lion Quotas as presented by the Department in preparation for the June 8 Commission meeting.

MOGA understands the following:

- 1) Department staff has completed their work on lion ecoregion 1 and the results suggest that lion abundance using prior methodology was biased low. That means that there are more lions on the landscape than originally estimated. Former harvest quotas have been based on the underestimated populations within what is now ecoregion 1 LMUs.
- 2) There is an appetite in some Regions to increase lion harvests based on this result (underestimate) and to address depressed ungulate populations (predator management). Department staff have provided projections for a range of population reductions from 10% to as much as 40% over 6 years in some hunting districts.
- 3) There seems to be a move to apply the ecoregion 1 result to other lion ecoregions even though the assessments there have not been formally completed. Extrapolating results from one ecoregion to another is a questionable technical decision.

Based on the above information and in conversations with several of the MOGA directors and former Directors and membership, MOGA has done two things related to the upcoming June meeting:

- 1) Established a general policy on lion quotas for the upcoming Commission meeting, and
- 2) Conducted a granular review of the proposed quotas and provide comment in support or opposition (with recommendations) by Ecoregion/Hunting District

General Policy on Quotas

MOGA supports the application of the best science provided by the lion ecosystem methodology. We support the adjustment of lion harvest strategy based on application of the best science at the LMU level.

Given that previous methodology appears to have underestimated lion abundance, there is a general justification for increased quotas across the board.

We further support accelerated reductions in lion populations to help depressed ungulate populations recover (ungulate focal areas). We recognize that the approach needs to be surgical (at the LMU level) rather than universal. Some regions/Hunt Districts have ungulate management issues, and some (not sure where) do not. Therefore, we question the application of statewide reduction goals as is presented in FWP options 2 – 4 in the tentatives. Rather, a more measured and geographically tapered approach should be applied that may be amended as the Ecoregion studies are completed. We do consider some regional conditions for deer and elk at the tipping point and therefore recommend a rapid reduction in lions. Adjustments to overall lion abundance should be focused on LMUs that coincide with ungulate recovery areas (ungulate focal areas).

Public Comment: Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024

NW Ecoregion – We support an accelerated reduction in lions by increasing harvest quotas (30 % in six years) with harvest opportunity disproportionately weighted (40% in six years) to ungulate focal areas.

WC Ecoregion - We support the status quo or modest increase in harvest quota (10% reduction in 6 years) in most districts with exceptions being those that are experiencing significant declines in ungulate numbers (LMU 240, 250, 445).

Region 3 – We support the status quo or modest reductions with exceptions for depressed ungulate populations

Region 4 – We support an accelerated reduction in lions by increasing harvest quotas.

Region 5 – We support an accelerated reduction in lions by increasing harvest quotas

Region 6 - We support an accelerated reduction in lions by increasing harvest quotas

Region 7 - We support an accelerated reduction in lions by increasing harvest quotas

Granular Review

The following is the MOGA recommendations by LMU. District Directors did a deep dive with knowledgeable members within the districts and provided detailed and thoughtful recommendations based on the review of proposed lion quotas District by District. This can only come from the ground level of people who have detailed knowledge.

A detailed set of recommendations by LMU and Ecoregion is being provided to each of the Commission members as an EXCEL table for ease of use.

#100

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, May 11, 2023 1:45:59 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, May 11, 2023 5:26:32 PM
Time Spent: 03:40:33
IP Address: 98.244.10.170

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **Paige Munson**
Email Address: **pmunson@mountainlion.org**

Q2

Please comment on the Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.

Position: Oppose

Dear members of the Commission,

We write to you on behalf of our Montana members, asking you to reject all proposals to increase mountain lion hunting quotas in Montana. The aim of these quota increases is to reduce the mountain lion population in the state, either by 10, 20, or 40 percent in 6 years.(2) We believe that increasing quotas will:

- 1.Alter the mountain lion population negatively and increase risks of conflict
2. Have no beneficial effect Montana's ungulate populations long term and may place them at risk in the future
3. Cause landscape level losses of biodiversity
- 4.The quota increase does not represent the view of Montanans or all stakeholders

Furthermore, these proposals do not align with current cougar research; the FWP's mission to provide for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks, and resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations;(3) and the stated management objectives to conserve mountain lions as a functional and valued part of Montana's wildland ecosystems.(4)

- 1.Quota increases may alter the mountain lion population negatively and increase risks of conflict

Mountain lion populations do not usually require management to control growth, since their population is self-regulating. This is due to their social structure and territorial behavior, the limit of prey abundance, and the carrying capacity of the land to support those populations.(5) A great deal of energy is needed to sustain large carnivores in ecosystems, meaning that they always occur in relatively small numbers. These proposals to reduce the mountain lion population further are unnecessary, and likely to cause far more issues than they could solve.

Montana's currently has a population estimate for two of its mountain lion ecoregions, the Northwest and West-Central region. Using the median density obtained from field monitoring the estimate for the two regions is 2,409 independent aged mountain lions per 100 km².(6) The median population density in the West-Central region was estimated to be 2.0 independent aged mountain lions per/100 km² as of the winter of 2021-2022.(7) In the Northwest ecoregion, monitoring showed a median independent aged mountain lion density of 3.7 per 100km². These densities are normal and should be considered a management success as opposed to a need for population control.

Hunting mortality is additive mortality, meaning that any hunting will cause mountain lion mortality rates to exceed what they would if they were not hunted.(8) Further research has shown that in hunted populations, issues arise when lions are hunted at high levels. High levels of hunting is linked with increased human wildlife conflict in subsequent years.(9,10) The precise mechanism for this hasn't been fully identified but there are potential explanations. High levels of hunting have been shown to skew populations to be younger and more male. This is largely due to the arrival of young immigrating males into territories that have been emptied due to hunting.(11) These young males are unfamiliar with the area and may not be as skilled of hunters, leading to them targeting easy prey such as unprotected livestock or pets. Additionally, many mountain lion kittens are orphaned by hunting. Mountain lion females spend about 82% of their lives raising kittens.(12) Kittens typically spend 18 months (about 1 and a half years) with their mothers before dispersing. Young kittens will likely die with the loss of their mother, but older kittens may be able to survive on their own. However, learning to hunt fully grown deer is a skill that is learned with their mother.(13) Without her, juveniles often lack the ability to hunt large prey on their own and may seek out easier prey in the form of unprotected livestock and pets. The targeting of mountain lions will not be effective at reducing human-lion conflict or meet the goal of sustaining a healthy mountain lion population.

2. Quota increases will likely have no beneficial effect Montana's ungulate populations long term and may place them at risk in the future

The goal of the reduction to the lion population in Montana is to bolster ungulate populations within the state, particularly elk. Montana is currently experiencing widespread drought across the state. (14) The resulting decline in quality forage is likely to impact prey populations through bottom-up effects. If ungulates are malnourished, they will be more vulnerable to all forms of mortality, including predation. Drought in Montana leaves deer in poor condition prior to winter causing more die off events. As this happens, the cougar population will reduce in response, as mule deer abundance has been shown to limit mountain lions with the effect being observable after a lag of around 4 years.(15)

There is no reliable evidence to support the reduction of carnivore populations to bolster their prey for the long-term. Additionally, the limited research that does support carnivore reduction emphasizes the necessity of identifying that the prey population is in fact below carrying capacity and that predation is a limiting factor before reduction is ever considered.(16) Montana has not identified the carrying capacity for ungulates in Montana, nor has it identified any negative impacts of predation. In fact, research in Montana has primarily identified other factors outside of predation to have the greatest impact on ungulate populations. Research on the recruitment of elk in western Montana found that the highest indicator for increased recruitment was higher levels of summer precipitation. Predator abundance had minimal effects, and the authors warned against making any management decisions for predator species in regard to ungulates without more robust data. (17) The ungulate population is unlikely to experience higher levels of recruitment from the reduction of the mountain lion population. One of the major benefits provided by mountain lions to their prey is that they help prevent overpopulation that could lead to over browsing of forage that triggers starvation, and population crashes. This overpopulation and subsequent crash previously occurred in Montana.(18) Targeting mountain lions may increase the risk of these population crashes for ungulates in the future.

3. Quota increases may cause landscape level losses of biodiversity

Mountain lions promote biodiversity in the ecosystems they are a part of. Their kills provide food for carrion eaters and fertilize the soil for years promoting forage that is suitable for ungulates. (19, 20) Mountain lions also promote biodiversity by preventing competitive exclusion. Competitive exclusion occurs when two species are competing for the same resources (occupying the same niche). The more competitive species will exploit the resource better than the weaker competitor and the weaker competitor will die out. If a carnivore preys upon the most competitive animal, then there is still room for the weaker competitor so they may both exist. The carnivore may also alter the behavior of its prey, opening certain areas for the weaker competitor to utilize. (21) Mountain lions also promote the biodiversity of plants. This is primarily through mitigating the spread of invasive species. Native ungulates typically choose native plants. When ungulates overgraze, they can decimate native populations leaving more room for invasive species to encroach. Mountain lions can help prevent this overgrazing by keeping ungulates from growing past the carrying capacity of the land, thus helping to preserve native plant communities.(22)

4.The quota increase does not represent the view of Montanans or all stakeholders

The recommendation to consider population reduction came from some concerned members of the public and does not necessarily represent the true view of all relevant Montanans. Wildlife is a public resource for all citizens of Montana, with management of that resource given to the state and delegated to the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Under the North American Model for Conservation, management is to be made using the best available scientific evidence. However, these policies do not follow the best available science.

Instead, these quota increases aim to align with public opinion. Unfortunately, the true public opinion of Montana has not been sought out either, with only complaints against lions being used as consideration. To truly gauge what constituency desires, public opinion surveys would need to be conducted that represented all of those in the constituency. Alternatively, committees with a diversity of viewpoints and opinions could be formed to make decisions.

This was not adequately done with the formation of the Northwest Region Lion Ecoregional Population Objective Committee or in the application for the West-central Lion Ecoregional Population Objective Committee. When members of the advisory panel were applying, they had to identify as one of the following categories to represent: “hound handler,” “deer hunter,” “elk hunter,” “sheep hunter,” “lion guide/outfitter,” “livestock producer,” or “general public.” No representation was allocated to researchers, non-consumptive wilderness users, outdoor recreationists, or the conservation community. Including representation from multiple groups who can be expected to advocate increased hunting, while allocating no representation for non-consumptive, conservation, or scientific voices necessarily biases the process and the advice that the department and commission receives. Had these other voices been included in the panel, the recommendations to FWP and the commission would likely be more balanced and would not just reflect a more accurate understanding of the science of mountain lions and their interactions with livestock and ecosystems but would better reflect the views Montana public and the views of tourists drawn to Montana’s wilderness and wildlife.

If the Commission wishes to base mountain lion management policy on public opinion over scientific evidence, then that must be stated along with rigorous effort to find solutions representative of the entire constituency. In review, we ask that the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission reject all proposals that increase mountain lion hunting quotas and reduce the mountain lion population. We urge the Commission to vote to maintain the status quo in Montana. Reductions pose the following risks to the mountain lion population, the ungulate population, and the biodiversity of the state:

1. Alter the mountain lion population negatively and increase risks of conflict
3. Have no beneficial effect Montana’s ungulate populations long term and may place them at risk in the future

Cause landscape level losses of biodiversity

4. The quota increase does not represent the view of Montanans or all stakeholders

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations to make changes to the proposed Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024.(23) Please include these comments as a part of the official record regarding this decision.

References:

1 Mountain lion quotas and license descriptions for fall 2023–winter 2024. 2022.

<https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwpc/commission/2023/jun/mountain-lion-quotas/cs-mountain-lion-quotas-final.pdf> 2 Potential quotas by LMU combined. 2023. <https://fwp.mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwpc/commission/2023/jun/mountain-lion-quotas/potential-quotas-by-lmu-combined.pdf> 3 About FWP. Montana Fish, Parks, & Wildlife. Web. <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp> 4 Montana mountain

lion monitoring and strategy. 2019. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.
