



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL AND INFORMATION SHEET

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Meeting Date: June 20, 2024

Agenda Item: Mountain lion quotas for fall 2024 – winter 2025.

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 minutes

Background: The fall 2024 – winter 2025 mountain lion harvest quotas and licenses numbers are recommended based on prior commission direction and recommendations developed from feedback provided by the West-central Lion Ecoregional Population Objective Committee (LEPOC). The department recommends no changes to the mountain lion season adopted in June 2023 as amended in December 2023, except for the male and female quotas developed from the West-central LEPOC feedback. Season structure for fall (archery and season without hounds) and winter season remain unchanged. Winter season will continue to allow the use of hounds, and harvest will be allocated, in accordance with commission direction, between Limited Lion Licenses that will be awarded through the lottery draw and Unlimited Lion Licenses that are governed by sex-specific quotas.

Public Involvement Process and Results: The department used feedback from the West-central LEPOC to develop a harvest target for Lion Management Units (LMUs) 204, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 240, 250, 270, 280, 290, 318, 339, 350, 380, 391, 411, 413, 416, 421, 422, 445, and 448 (Table 1). The department developed quotas and licenses (total 235/year) to achieve a stable population in the mountain lion population over the next six years, with focal areas to reduce predation on ungulate populations (LMUs 240, 250, 270) and focal areas to reduce pressure on lion abundance (LMUs 210, 211, 213, 380, 391, 413). As part of the modelling and analysis for the LEPOC deliberations, it was determined that the prior five-year average harvest (151/year) would result in a greater than 10 percent increase over the next six years. The harvest prescription adopted by the commission in 2023 for the LMUs within the ecoregion (280/year) was determined to result in a decline of less than 10 percent if maintained for the next six years within the west-central ecoregion.

Public comment will be solicited for a four-week period following the April 17 commission meeting. Public comments will be posted online and provided to commissioners at least two weeks prior to the June commission meeting.

Analysis and Alternatives: Mountain lion harvest is analyzed based on population and harvest monitoring data collected by the department. Recommendations provided are based on the feedback from the West-central LEPOC within specific LMUs of that ecoregion. The remaining quotas and licenses numbers are recommended to remain unchanged from that adopted by the commission in June and December 2023.

Alternative A: The commission may choose to adopt the department's recommendation that incorporates the feedback provided by the West-central LEPOC.

Alternative B: The commission could choose to revert to the statewide proposal adopted by the commission in 2023, which addresses ungulate focal areas as deemed appropriate by the commission when adopted.

Alternative C: The commission may choose to amend the recommended proposal in some other fashion and adopt as deemed appropriate.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale: The department recommends the commission adopt the mountain lion quotas as presented.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the fall 2024 – winter 2025 mountain lion seasons as presented by the department, including the recommendations that influence the west-central ecoregion, with all other aspects regarding prior seasons adopted, except for those influenced by routine calendar rotations.