



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION FWP PROPOSAL AND INFORMATION SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** Nov. 12, 2024

**Agenda Item:** Additional Fall 2024–Winter 2025 Wolf and other Species Trapping Regulations Within and Outside the Geographic Scope Identified by Federal Court Order

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 60 Minutes

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**Background:** Most furbearer and wolf regulations for Fall 2024 and Winter 2025 were adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission at their Aug. 20, 2024 meeting. Commission decisions on department proposals addressing wolf trapping dates and some other trapping regulations were deferred until the October commission meeting to allow more time for proposals to be developed. The October 10 meeting was subsequently postponed until November 12.

Proposed wolf and other trapping regulations are described below. Additional details including trapping recommendations addressing methods for improving efficiency, selectivity, and animal welfare are available in the supplemental document. Dates below in the Predator and Nongame Animal Trapping section are modified from the supplemental document to be consistent with the timing of the November commission meeting relative to earlier fall trapping efforts that have already occurred.

## Wolf trapping

- January 1 – February 15, inside geographic scope identified by federal court order (see supplemental document).
- First Monday after Thanksgiving (Dec. 2, 2024) - March 15, outside geographic scope identified by federal court order.

## Predator and Nongame Animal Trapping Inside geographic scope identified by federal court order

- Starting December 1, all trappers, except those using water sets or live cage traps, must obtain a free supplemental trapping permit when targeting nongame (raccoon, badger, red fox) and predatory animals (coyote, striped skunk, spotted skunk, weasel). This includes trappers holding a valid trapping license.
- Additionally, trappers trapping for livestock protection must complete and sign an affidavit identifying the producer's name, that the producer has provided permission for trapping activities to occur on their private or leased property, and the county where such activities will occur.
- Recreational trappers not trapping for livestock protection and trappers trapping for livestock protection must adhere to the current "Non-target Capture Requirement" rule, as it relates to reporting.

## 48 hours after FWP is aware of and has publicly noticed the capture of any grizzly bear

- From date of adoption to December 31, 2024, and from Feb. 16, 2025, to August 31, 2025, all recreational trappers inside of the geographic scope identified by federal court order, except those using water sets or live cage traps, must adhere to the following regulations:
- All foothold trap ground sets regardless of target species must have an inside jaw spread of less than or equal to 5 1/2 inches.
- Snares are not allowed unless they meet all the following criteria:
  - A breakaway lock device installed on the loop end designed to release when more than 350 pounds of force is applied;

- The snare is fastened to an immovable object solidly secured to the ground (i.e., the use of drags is unlawful); and
- The top of the loop of the snare is no more than 26 inches above the ground; in snow, 26 inches is measured from the compacted snow in a trapper's footprint made by the full weight of the trapper.

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** FWP staff attended meetings about trapping including Montana Trappers Association, Montana Fur Harvesters, and representatives of the livestock industry. Public comment will be solicited following web-posting of this proposal and at the November 12 commission meeting. Public comments will be made publicly available.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** Wolf trapping season dates and open areas are currently established by federal court order. The additional proposed regulations are designed to maintain trapping opportunity and to further inform and limit potential incidental take of grizzly bears by recreational and livestock protection trapping efforts in the area identified by federal court order.

Alternative A: The commission may approve the proposed additional regulations and recommendation including other trapping activities in addition to wolf, as presented by the department.

Alternative B: The commission may choose to adopt an amended version of the proposal presented by the department, within limits established by federal courts.

**Agency Rationale and Recommendation:** FWP recommends the commission adopt the proposed trapping regulations and recommendations as presented here and in detail in the supplemental.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the proposed additional trapping regulations and recommendations on trapping activities as presented by the department, with all other aspects regarding prior adoptions included, except for those influenced by routine calendar rotations.