



THE **OUTSIDE** IS

Wildlife Division
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
April 23, 2020

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is requesting public review and comment on the following items. Supporting information on these items can be found on our website under “Opportunity for Public Comment” at fwp.mt.gov/hunting/ or directly by using the links below.

2020 Mountain Lion Quotas

Proposed harvest quotas for mountain lion are based on research, surveys, harvest and mortality data, and public comment. Below are proposed changes from 2019 quotas and subquotas. All other quotas and subquotas are proposed as unchanged from 2019 levels. Quotas apply to “any legal lion” unless otherwise noted and as influenced by subquotas. Region 3 mountain lion Hunting District (HD) 350, 370: decrease total quota from 4 to 3, while maintaining female subquota at 1. Mountain lion HD 392: increase total quota from 3 to 4, while maintaining female subquota at 1. Mountain lion HD 390,391: increase total quota from 10 to 11, while maintaining female subquota at 5. Mountain lion HDs 322, 326, 330: decrease total quota from 7 to 6, while maintaining female subquota at 2. Mountain lion HDs 323, 324, 325, 327: decrease total quota from 7 to 6, while maintaining female subquota at 2. Region 4 mountain lion HD 422, 423, 424, 425, 442: decrease total quota from 13 to 12 and male quota from 8 to 7, while maintaining female quota at 5. Mountain lion HD 447, 405, 471: increase total quota from 7 to 8 and male quota from 4 to 5, while maintaining female quota at 3.

Surplus Sale of Special Lion Licenses

Special mountain lion licenses are allocated through a drawing. To limit applications to those individuals most interested in hunting special lion license areas, special lion license applicants currently forfeit the opportunity to purchase a different lion license, even if unsuccessful in the drawing. In February 2020, the commission adopted sex-specific licenses for certain districts within Region 1, requiring applicants to choose between a male or female license when applying. This new structure could potentially result in some special licenses going unallocated. Under existing regulations, these surplus special lion licenses could not be purchased by unsuccessful applicants. FWP is proposing that the commission allow unsuccessful applicants for special lion licenses to purchase surplus special lion licenses if they are available. This proposal does not change existing regulations restricting a special lion license applicant’s ability to purchase a general lion license.

Implementing the HB 311 Nonresident Hound Handler Permit

House Bill 311 was passed by the 2019 Montana State Legislature and created a Nonresident Hound Handler License (Class D-4). The primary intents of the bill were to reduce the amount of illegal outfitting that may be occurring, increase resident lion hunting opportunity, and to shift outfitted lion hunting to those properly licensed in Montana. Statutory limitations of HB311 include that no more than 35 D-4 licenses be issued in any year, and no more than two in any

district. A D-4 license is for personal use only and cannot be used to assist any other person in the pursuit of a lion for harvest. The cost of a D-4 license is \$500 and will be adjusted annually. HB311 requires that the license fees be used for mountain lion management, conservation, and monitoring. Montana-licensed outfitters and guides and nonresidents hunting with any Montana-licensed outfitters are not required to have a Class D-4 license. FWP proposes to implement HB311 as stated in statute with the first draw for D-4 licenses for license year 2020, concurrent with other big game drawings. Thirty-five D-4 license applicants would be selected from those that apply. All lion districts would be eligible, but only the first two applicants to be drawn for a specific district will receive the license for that district.

Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan

The current Montana CWD Management Plan details the 2014 Decision Notice by FWP regarding our surveillance and response to CWD detections in the state. Proposed to the commission and functionally implemented in the fall of 2017 with Montana's first positive CWD detection in free-ranging wild deer, the plan builds upon previous FWP management plans and adds significant logistical details for the plan's practical implementation. The plan version presented to the commission in April 2020 includes proposed adjustments based upon implementation experience gained through surveillance, testing, management, and outreach efforts since the first Montana detection in 2017. The intent of previous plans and proposed changes to the current plan is still to: 1) limit the spread of CWD since it has now been detected in Montana; 2) maintain or reduce the prevalence of CWD in specific locations once detected; and 3) improve communication and outreach on CWD with the public, other agencies, and within FWP. Born out of real experience with surveillance, testing, and outreach efforts since 2017, most of the proposed plan edits are relatively minor. In addition to an evolving approach to the assessment and prioritization of next surveillance areas, the most significant proposed change is to replace area-specific carcass transportation restriction zones with a statewide carcass disposal requirement that would apply to all deer, elk, and moose carcasses wherever in the state they are harvested by hunters or as vehicle-killed salvage. In pursuit of a simpler message easier for FWP to communicate and for the public to hear, this proposed language essentially requires brain and spinal cord material to be left at the kill site or deposited in a class II landfill. Another proposed change is to prohibit the use of cervid-derived glandular scents to limit the potential for spread.

TO MAKE A COMMENT

For further clarification or additional materials, you may call the Wildlife Division office at 406-444-2612 or email to fwpwld@mt.gov. Comments will be accepted online by using any of the links below, in writing sent to the address above, and by email to fwpwld@mt.gov.

COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE & FINAL ADOPTION MEETING

Comments on all proposed items will be accepted until **Monday, May 25, 2020, at 5 p.m.**, with final adoption at the **June 18th** commission meeting.

- ✓ **2020 Montana Lion Quotas**
<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2020/mountainLionQuotas.html>
- ✓ **Surplus Sale of Mountain Lion Licenses**
<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2020/surplusSpecialMountainLion.html>
- ✓ **Implementing the HB311 Nonresident Hound Handler Permit**
<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2020/HB311NonresidentHoundHandler.html>
- ✓ **Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan**
<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2020/cwdManagementPlan.html>