

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 11, 2016

Agenda Item: 2016-17 Helena Urban Deer Plan Quota Ranges and Quota

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

In 2003, the Montana Legislature authorized cities to create plans to control wildlife to address public health and safety within city limits. Such plans must be approved by the Fish & Wildlife Commission. The City of Helena subsequently developed an Urban Deer Management Plan seeking to remove deer to achieve an objective of 25 deer per square mile. FWP completed a third programmatic environmental assessment in 2009 that confirmed objectives and methods relative to urban deer management in Helena. This current proposal is to establish the quota range for the 2016-2017 biennium and would cover deer removals during the Nov. 15, 2016 – March 31, 2017 and Nov. 15, 2017 – March 31, 2018 time periods. If the number of deer prescribed to be taken in any one year is within the quota range then no commission action is required regarding that number. This current action is only to adopt the quota range within which to operate. FWP is proposing no change to the existing quota range of 0-250. Any quotas do not apply to individual deer removed under urgent public-safety situations. For the commission's information only, and not requiring commission action, the number proposed to be removed during this current winter, Nov. 15, 2015 – March. 31, 2016, is 130 deer, which could go up to 180 if removal of males is disproportionately high.

FWP is not proposing any changes to the proposal adopted in December.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The City of Helena conducted extensive public involvement in developing its plan and the previous urban deer EAs. FWP provided separate 30-day public comment periods. Public support was split throughout these earlier processes. Public comment ran from Dec. 10 to Jan 22. We received 18 comments with 5 against culling of deer in Helena and 7 supporting, only 2 comments were on the subject of approving a quota range, and both were in favor. Others made general comments about deer in Helena. All comments are included in the commission packet.

Alternatives and Analysis

The proposal may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, or with deletions as per staff justifications, public comment and/or commission discussion.

Proposed Motion

I move the commission adopt for the 2016 - 2017 quota range of 0-250 for take of urban deer by the City of Helena as presented by city staff and FWP.