

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 14, 2017

Agenda Item: 2017/2018 Wolf Hunting Seasons, Quotas, HD Boundaries, and SB 200 Quotas

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 30 Min

Background: Regulated hunting and trapping of wolves was endorsed by the Governor's Wolf Advisory Council in 2000 and is included in Montana's wolf conservation and management plan. Wolf seasons have evolved over the years from a conservative hunting-only quota of 75 wolves in 2009, to including trapping in 2012, to the current season with no quota except near the national parks and sportspersons may take up to five wolves. Montana's wolf management is a success story that has maintained a healthy, viable and connected population while allowing harvest and reducing conflicts. Other than regular calendar rotation, for 2017-18 FWP is proposing no change to the 2016-17 season.

Senate Bill 200 was legislation pass in 2013 and allows landowners or their agents to take wolves on their private property that are a potential threat to human safety, livestock or domestic dogs. The Commission annually approves a quota for SB 200 take, which last year was up to 100 in separate Commission-approved intervals of 25 in a calendar year. Typically, few wolves are taken under SB 200. It has varied from 6 to 12 wolves since SB 200 became effective as MCA 87-1-901 in July 2014. Landowners and others always could kill wolves in defense of life and property, and those numbers are also presented for comparative reasons, but require no Commission action.

Wolf take by landowners under Senate Bill 200 (MCA 87-1-901) and Defense of Property statutes.

Calendar Year	SB 200 Take	Defense of Property Take
2014	6	7
2015	12	4
2016	9	4
2017 to 3/21/17	1	0

As information to the Commission, we will be moving presentations of wolf hunting seasons, quotas, Hunting District boundaries and SB 200 quotas to the regular biennial season setting cycle of December proposals and February final actions in odd years beginning this December.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Formal public comment will be taken at this meeting and continue through 5 p.m., May 20. Any final adoption will take place at the Commission meeting in June.

Alternatives and Analysis: The proposals may be approved as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2016-17 per staff justifications, public comment and/or Commission direction.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: This status quo proposal is aligned with known biology, management history and experience, livestock depredation trends and the Montana Gray Wolf Management Plan.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve for public comment the proposed 2017-2018 wolf season and SB 200 quotas as presented by FWP.