

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: June 7, 2017

Agenda Item: Moose, Sheep and Goat Quotas Outside Biennial Quota Ranges

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

Background: The Commission previously adopted quota ranges for moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat for each hunting district within which FWP can make changes that do not need Commission approval. However, changes outside the adopted ranges do need Commission approval. FWP is proposing two such changes: one each for moose and sheep. No other changes outside of the adopted quota ranges are proposed. Detailed information on each proposal is found in the proposal justifications included in the Commission packet.

- For moose FWP proposes to reduce the 513-50 antlered-bull licenses in the Fishtail-Stillwater area from 3 to 1 and to change the adopted quota range from 3-10 to 1-10. Much of the moose winter range in this HD was negatively impacted by fire in 1988, and the moose population has been in a long-term decline since that time. This decline is further reflected by declining hunter success and increased hunter effort. Survey data also suggests the population is only recruiting 2 to 4 moose/year – 1 to 2 bull moose/year. In the face of these data issuing 3 bull licenses/year appears to be excessive.
- For bighorn sheep FWP proposes to increase the 301-20 either-sex licenses in the Spanish Peaks from 5 to 7 and to change the adopted quota range from 2-5 to 2-10. This herd is doing well and the proposed increase in licenses follows criteria in the Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy.

Public Involvement Process & Results

These proposals have not been presented to any sport groups or landowners. Moose license holders that have come through the Columbus Check Station in the last couple of years have consistently complained about the lack of moose sightings. The bighorn sheep proposal is expected to be widely supported. Public comment on this proposal will be taken at this meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

No alternatives were considered.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission adopt the proposed changes to the 513-50 moose and 301-20 bighorn sheep licenses.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish & Wildlife Commission adopt the changes to the 513-50 moose and 301-20 bighorn sheep licenses as proposed by FWP.