

2025
Region One
Mountain Lion Report

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
August 2026



PURPOSE

This report summarizes harvest information that Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) collects annually for mountain lions (*Puma concolor*) within FWP administrative Region One (R1). These data help biologists and managers evaluate population trends, work with Wildlife Commissioners, and the public on the management of the species. Factors which affect mountain lion populations are complex, with management decisions made according to biological, social and political concerns. This summary is not intended to serve as a comprehensive evaluation of R1 lion management, and care should be taken when interpreting population and harvest information without additional context.

INTRODUCTION

R1 encompasses the northwestern corner of Montana and differs from much of the rest of the state due to its heavily forested landscape and relatively high amounts of annual precipitation. Mountain lion habitat in R1 is nearly contiguous across the region and considered ideal over more than 80% of the region.

Dispersal plays an important role in mountain lion ecology and management. Lion populations are best thought of as many connected sub-populations linked by dispersing animals. As such, local sub-populations can be resistant to harvest because lions are able to readily emigrate from adjacent areas. Conversely, dispersal can cause local populations to exhibit lower growth rates than expected given typical rates of adult survival, birth, and litter size. Because dispersal links local lion sub-populations across a broad area, mountain lions are most effectively managed at large spatial scales. Today, Montana divides the state into four biologically meaningful mountain lion “ecoregions” within the state (Northwest, West-Central, Southwest, and Eastern). These ecoregions are large, contiguous areas of the state within which lion habitat is broadly similar and serves as the spatial framework of FWP’s management program.

The Northwest Ecoregion includes all R1 and a small portion of northern Region 2 (R2). The ecoregion is further divided into smaller Lion Management Units (LMUs, Figure 1). In Region 1 these largely correspond to existing Hunting Districts established for deer and elk. FWP establishes a quota system for each LMU to help distribute harvest and hunting pressure across the ecoregion.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Montana Mountain Lion Monitoring and Management Strategy (MTFWP 2019) outlines the state’s approach for conserving, monitoring, and managing mountain lions within the state. The strategy divides the state into four ecoregions and utilizes both an integrated population model (IPM) and Spatial-Capture-Recapture (SCR) model to estimate abundance and evaluate the effects of hunting. The SCR model is a field-based population monitoring effort carried out within the three western ecoregions. In each of these

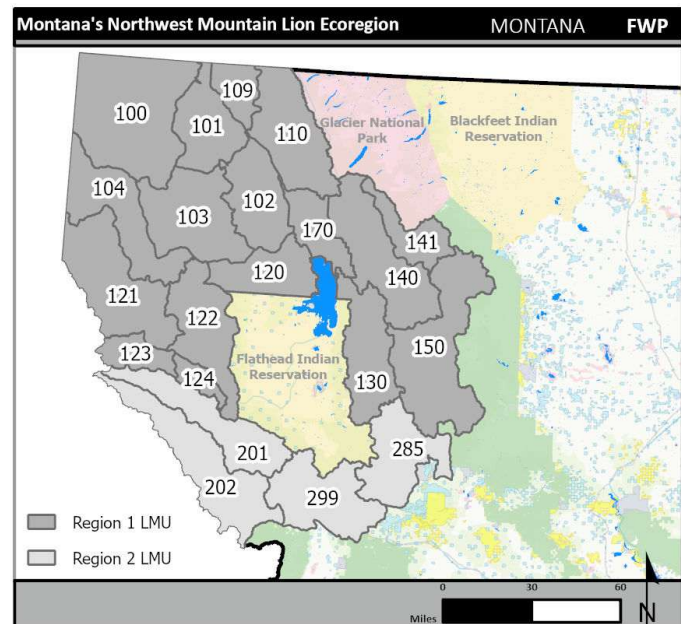


Figure 1: Montana's Northwest Mountain Lion Ecoregion includes all for MT FWP's Region 1 and four LMUs in Region 2.

ecoregions, population estimates are updated every six years, using two years of field data collected from monitoring areas. The SCR model estimates lion population within monitoring areas and links lion density to habitat quality across the ecoregion. The SCR estimate is incorporated into an IPM that also uses lion age and gender from harvested lions with vital rates from past studies to project population trend. Fieldwork to update the SCR estimate for the Northwest Mountain Lion Ecoregion commenced in December 2025 and will be complete by April 2027. Analysis of the data and production of a population estimate will occur sometime in late summer/early fall 2027. Upon completion, FWP will utilize the updated SCR estimate, in concert with the IPM to assess current population status of lions in the Northwest Mountain Lion Ecoregion. This adaptive approach allows for development of management goals and strategies, an adequate time frame (6 years) to apply those strategies, and a method (IPM and SCR population estimate) to evaluate the effectiveness of the applied strategy at meeting management goals.

POPULATION ESTIMATE AND OBJECTIVE

In 2021, the Northwest Ecoregion population estimate was 1,376 (90%CI: 650-2,547) independent-aged lions. This estimate was based on the IPM and SCR methodology produced from the field work conducted during the winters of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

That same year, FWP convened The Northwest Lion Ecoregional Population Objective Committee (LEPOC) to directly engage the public in lion management decision-making. The LEPOC was composed of 10 members of the public who reside within or close to the Northwest Ecoregion, and as a committee, represented a broad spectrum of mountain lion stakeholder viewpoints. The objective of the LEPOC was to work with FWP to provide a recommendation to the Fish & Wildlife Commission regarding:

- 1) The ecoregion population trend over a 6-year period;
- 2) The magnitude of population change (% up or % down);
- 3) The distribution of lion harvest to aid ungulate populations, reduce landowner conflicts, and affect age-structure of lion harvest.

The 2021 Northwest LEPOC recommended that mountain lion populations in the Northwest Ecoregion be reduced by 12.5% overall by 2028 and provided recommended harvest quotas to further reduce mountain lion numbers in ungulate focal areas within LMUs 100, 121, 122, 123, 124, 201, 202, 285, and 299. The fundamental objectives of this lion population reduction are to reduce ungulate predation, assist recruitment in struggling ungulate populations, maintain a healthy lion population as a natural part of the ecosystem, and reduce human-lion conflict. The commission adopted these recommendations for the 2022 license year.

The following year, the Fish and Wildlife Commission further liberalized the season in R1, increasing harvest quotas to affect a 30% reduction in lion populations over a six-year period commencing in the 2023-2024 season and a 40% reduction in ungulate focal areas.

SEASON STRUCTURE

Mountain lion season structure in R1 has varied greatly over time in response to both fluctuations in lion numbers and social considerations. An abundant road system in many areas and consistent snow during the winter season has enabled hunting with hounds to be an efficient and effective way to harvest lions. Because of these frequent changes to season structure, mountain lion harvest does not correlate well with mountain lion abundance.

From 2019-2021, lion harvest was managed primarily through limited sex-specific licenses which were available through a drawing. Since the 2022 license year, mountain lion harvest in R1 has been regulated at the LMU level through a female and male quota system. Harvest opportunity is allocated across three license types:

- Unlimited Lion License, available over-the-counter, and valid in specified LMUs until quotas are filled;
- Limited Lion License, available through a drawing, and valid in designated LMUs good through the entire season;
- Restricted License available over-the-counter, and valid statewide through the archery and fall season (no dogs; Table 1).

Table 1: Available quota by license year. From license year 2022 – 2025 season structure was managed with a male and female quota allocated across three license types. Quotas were increased following the 2022 license year, after Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted increased quotas to affect a 30-40% reduction in lion populations for the Northwest Ecoregion over a six-year period commencing in the 2023-2024 license year. With the conclusion of the 2025 license year (ending April 15, 2026), we are three-years into that six-year period.

LMU	2022 License Year				2023-2025 License Year			
	Total Quota	Limited Licenses	Quota		Total Quota	Limited Licenses	Quota	
			Male	Female			Male	Female
100	25	6	8	11	30	6	10	14
101	9	2	3	4	13	2	5	6
102	10	2	4	4	14	2	6	6
103	14	3	5	6	18	3	7	8
104	11	2	4	5	15	2	6	7
109	5	0	3	2	8	0	5	3
110	5	0	3	2	8	0	5	3
120	9	2	3	4	12	2	5	5
121	20	5	7	8	24	5	9	10
122	16	3	6	7	20	3	8	9
123	8	1	3	4	10	1	4	5
124	5	0	3	2	7	0	4	3
130	10	2	4	4	12	2	5	5
140	14	1	7	6	19	1	10	8
141	6	0		6	UNL	0		UNL
150	7	0		7	UNL	0		UNL
170	UNL	Any License	UNL	UNL	UNL	Any License		UNL
Total	174	29	76	69	210	29	89	92

HARVEST SUMMARY

The following pages present harvest information for R1 LMUs, with additional details provided for harvest and quota fill rates since license year 2022, when FWP adopted the current female and male quota system.

The winter of 2025-2026 saw mild temperatures, inconsistent snowpack, and significant wind events that challenged travel on forest roads across the region. In license year 2025, a total of 107 mountain lions were harvested across R1 LMUs — 59 males and 48 females (Table 2). As in previous seasons since 2022, four LMUs accounted for over 50% of the Region’s total harvest: LMUs 100, 103, 121, and 122.

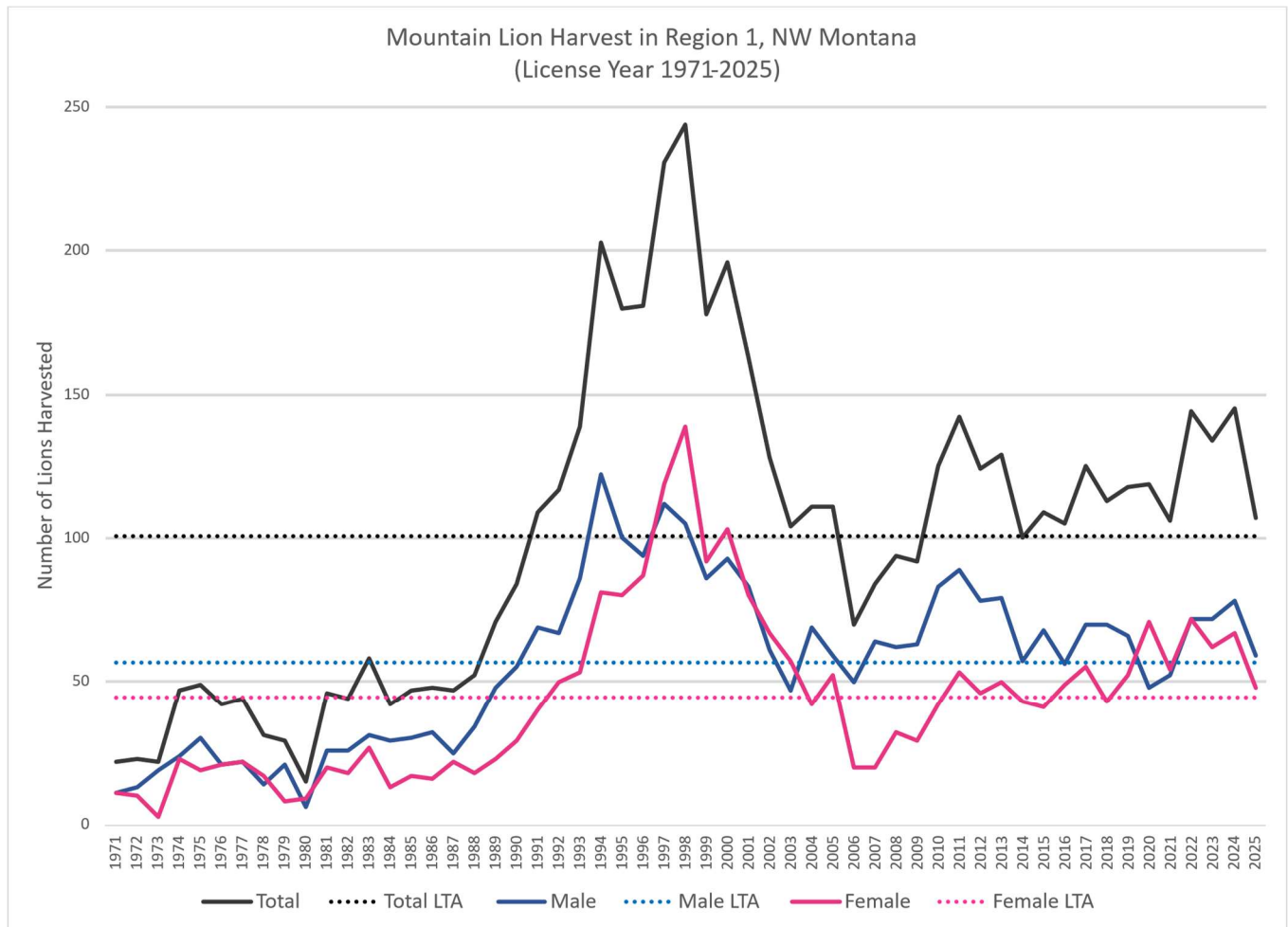


Figure 2: Mountain Lion Harvest in Region 1, Northwest Montana (1971-2025); Total Harvest (black line); Male Harvest (blue line); and Female harvest (pink line). Long-Term Average (LTA) Harvest is the average harvest across all years.

Table 2: Available Quota and Harvest (license years 2022 – 2025). After license year 2022, the Wildlife Commission increased harvest quotas across the region to affect a 30-40% reduction in mountain lion abundance over a six-year period.

	2022 LYR	2023 LYR	2024 LYR	2025 LYR
Unlimited License Male Quota	76	89	89	89
Unlimited License Female Quota	69	92	92	92
Total Unlimited License Harvest Quota	145	181	181	181
Limited License Quota	29	29	29	29
Total Quota	174	210	210	210
Total Male Harvest	72	72	78	59
Total Female Harvest	72	62	67	48
Total Harvest	144	134	145	107
Limited License Fill Rate	58.6%	31.0%	17.2%	20.7%
Unlimited Male Quota Fill Rate	78.9%	70.8%	83.1%	61.8%
Unlimited Female Quota Fill Rate	97.1%	67.4%	71.7%	50.0%
Unlimited Quota Fill Rate	87.6%	69.1%	77.3%	55.8%
Non-Res Prop. of Unlimited Male Harvest	33.3%	15.9%	25.7%	40.0%
Non-Res Prop. of Unlimited Female Harvest	23.9%	37.1%	15.2%	28.3%
Non-Res Prop. of Unlimited Total Harvest	28.3%	26.4%	20.7%	34.7%
Female Proportion of Harvest	50.0%	46.3%	46.2%	44.9%

Table 3: LMU closure rate (the number of days to LMU Closure “Quota Filled”) for license years 2022 – 2025.

LMU Closure Rate (License Years 2022 – 2025)

LMU	LYR2022		LYR2023		LYR2024		LYR2025	
	Days to Close Male	Female	Days to Close Male	Female	Days to Close Male	Female	Days to Close Male	Female
100**	15	32	96	135	83	134	134	134
101	34	134	135	135	134	134	134	134
102	16	33	25	17	134	40	134	134
103	42	15	36	135	134	77	134	134
104	60	134	135	135	63	134	134	134
109	134	134	135	135	134	134	134	134
110	134	14	135	60	134	134	134	134
120	11	2	135	47	134	107	134	134
121*	8	16	40	135	33	41	25	81
122**	10	11	34	41	83	33	22	134
123	134	19	135	43	134	134	85	134
124	134	38	135	37	134	40	134	134
130**	12	88	6	135	13	134	134	134
140	134	134	135	135	134	134	134	134
141	134	134	135	135	134	134	134	134
150	134	134	135	135	134	134	134	134
170	134	134	135	135	134	134	134	134
LMU Closed Prior to January 16th								
LMU Closed Prior to April 14th								
LMU Open Entire Season								

* = Male Quota Met Every Season Since LYR 2022

** = Male Quota Met in Three of Four Seasons Since LYR 2022

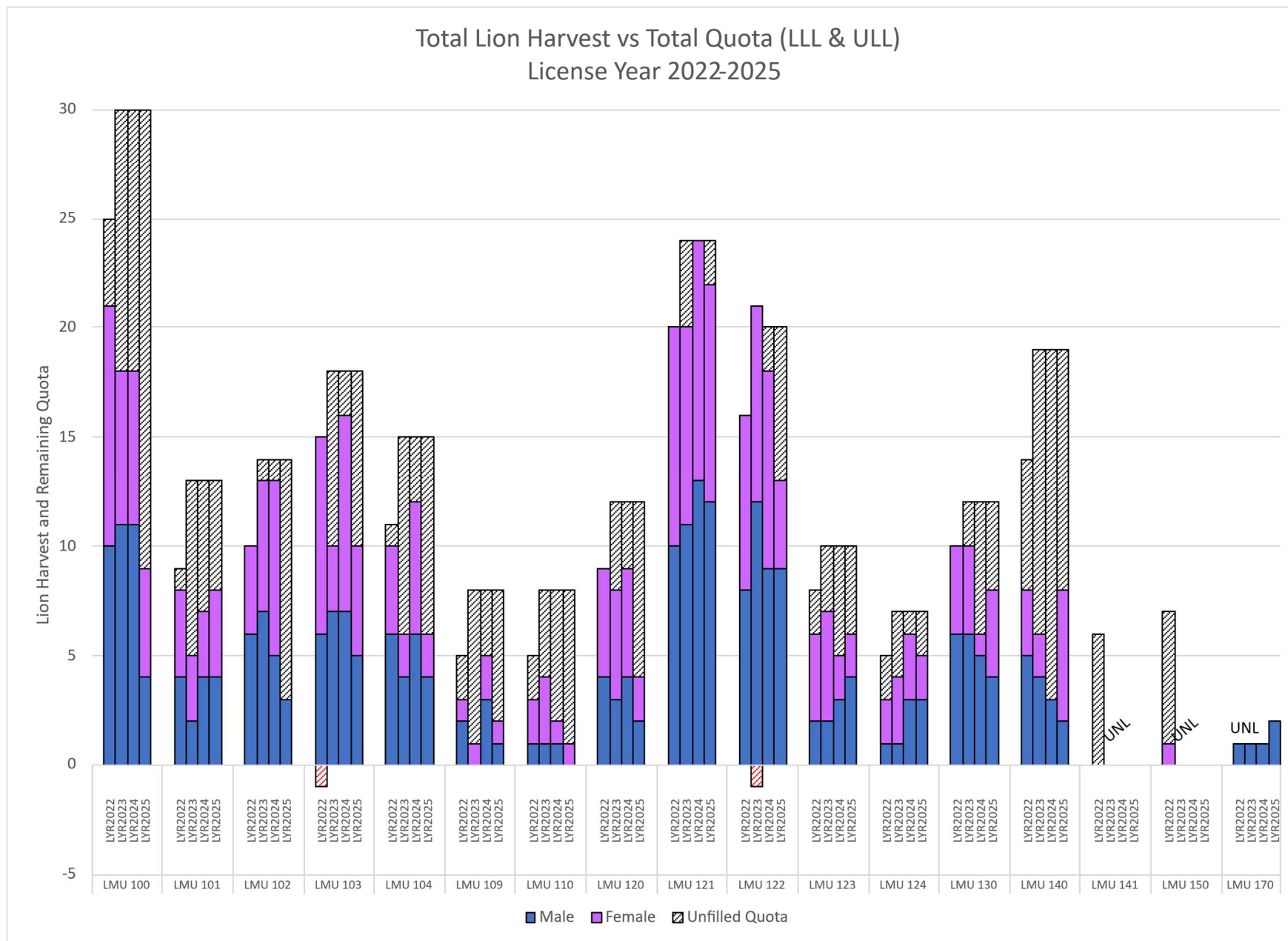


Figure 3: Total Male and Female Lion Harvest and Total Quota (Limited & Unlimited Lion License) by LMU for license years 2022-2025. Red Bars indicate quota exceedance.

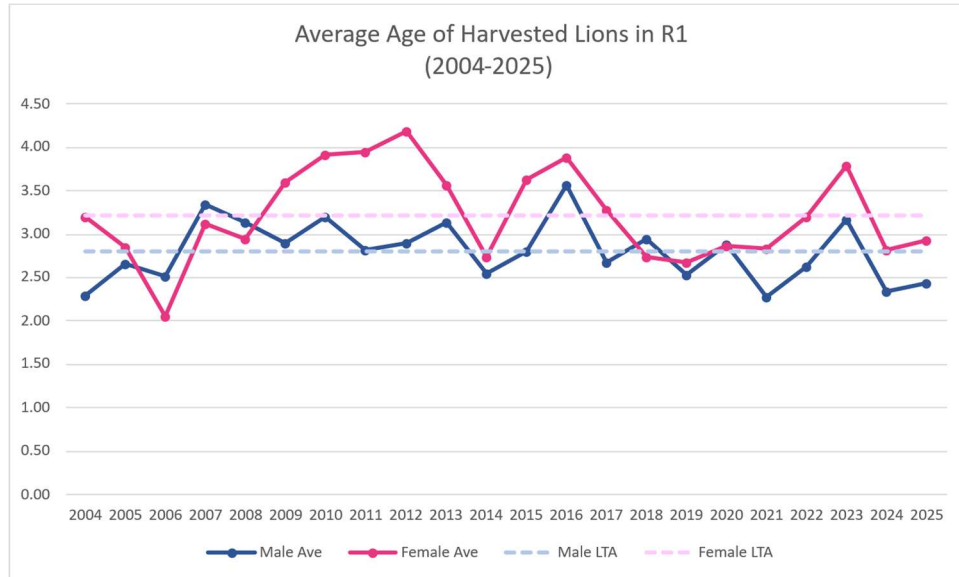


Figure 4: Average Age of Harvested Male and Female Lions (2004-2025).

Table 4: Age Structure of Mountain Lion Harvest for male and female lions (2004-2025).

Age Structure of Lion Harvest (2004-2025)

LYR	Male Harvest				Female Harvest			
	n	Max Age	% ≥ 3 yrs.	Average	n	Max Age	% ≥ 3 yrs.	Average
2004	61	7	41%	2.30	41	11	43%	3.20
2005	46	7	59%	2.65	45	10	53%	2.84
2006	48	4	32%	2.52	18	4	20%	2.06
2007	47	4	78%	3.34	17	4	65%	3.12
2008	54	9	61%	3.13	29	15	44%	2.95
2009	57	9	55%	2.89	27	15	55%	3.59
2010	70	9	59%	3.20	34	10	71%	3.91
2011	63	8	62%	2.81	33	10	81%	3.94
2012	56	7	65%	2.89	32	9	87%	4.19
2013	60	10	62%	3.13	46	10	56%	3.57
2014	35	7	63%	2.54	26	8	62%	2.73
2015	56	7	59%	2.80	35	8	67%	3.63
2016	48	6	79%	3.56	44	11	53%	3.89
2017	64	6	51%	2.67	49	10	56%	3.29
2018	61	8	64%	2.95	34	9	56%	2.74
2019	55	9	48%	2.53	39	7	58%	2.67
2020	42	8	58%	2.88	59	7	52%	2.86
2021	47	6	34%	2.28	48	9	44%	2.83
2022	62	8	54%	2.63	68	11	49%	3.21
2023	70	7	69%	3.17	60	9	68%	3.78
2024	77	6	35%	2.34	64	12	37%	2.81
2025	57	6	37%	2.44	46	11	43%	2.93

LMU 100 NORTH KOOTENAI

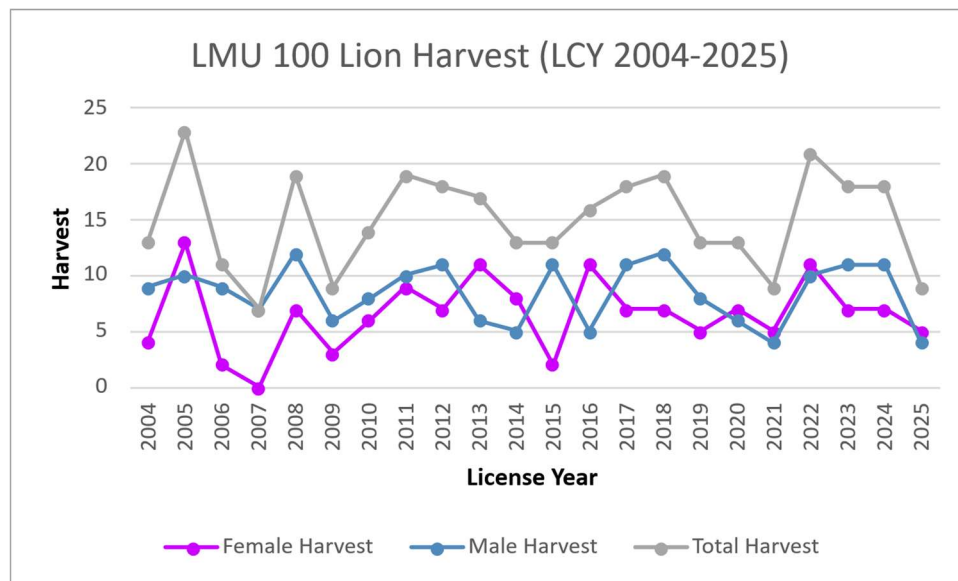


LMU 100: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

Harvest Opportunity				Harvest						
LCY	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	6	8	11	1	0	0	1	9	10	21
2023	6	10	14	1	0	1	0	9	7	18
2024	6	10	14	1	0	0	0	10	7	18
2025	6	10	14	0	1	0	1	4	3	9

= Quota Filled

Red Text = Quota Exceeded



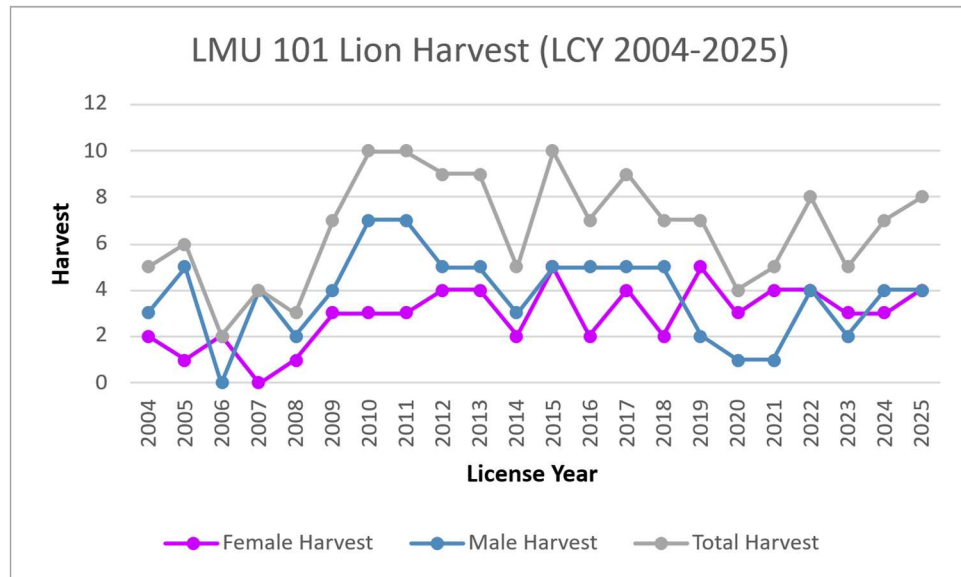
LMU 101

WEST CABINET MOUNTAINS



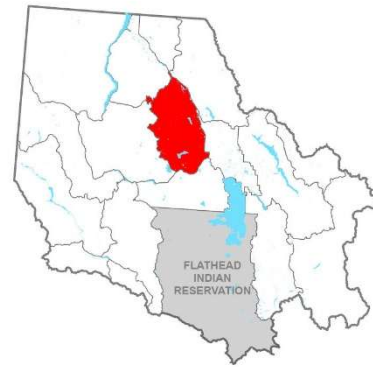
LMU 101: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	2	3	4	1	1	0	0	3	3	8
2023	2	5	6	1	0	0	1	1	2	5
2024	2	5	6	0	0	1	0	3	3	7
2025	2	5	6	0	0	0	0	4	4	8



LMU 102

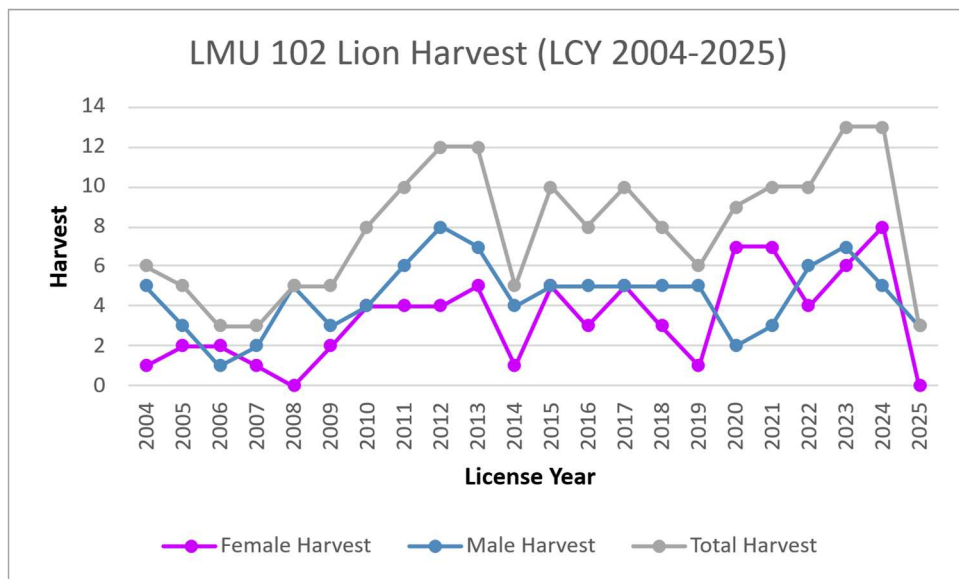
Tally Lake



LMU 102: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	2	4	4	1	0	0	1	5	3	10
2023	2	6	6	1	0	0	2	6	4	13
2024	2	6	6	0	1	0	1	5	6	13
2025	2	6	6	0	0	0	0	3	0	3

= Quota Filled
 Red Text = Quota Exceeded



LMU 103

East Fisher – Pleasant Valley

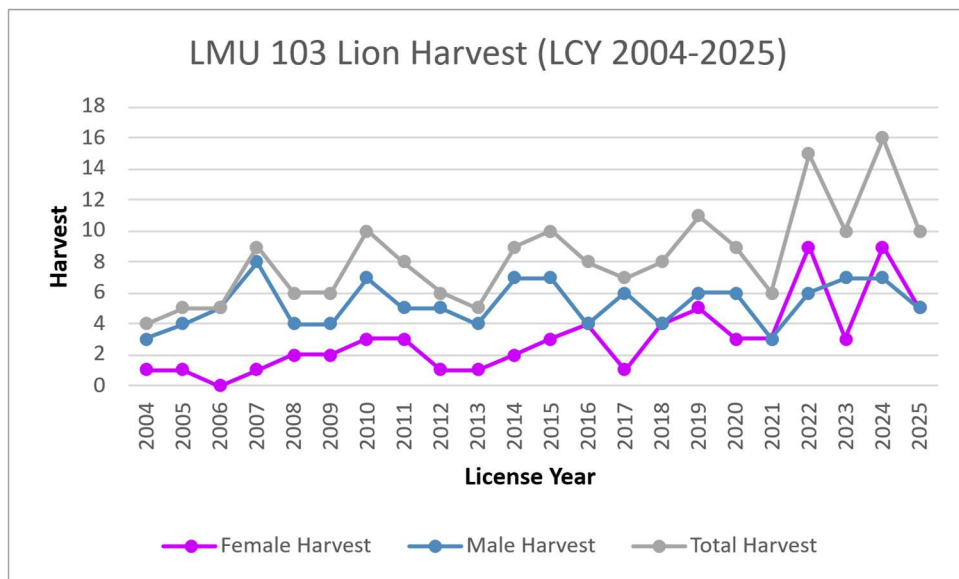


LMU 103: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	3	5	6	1	2	0	0	5	7	15
2023	3	7	8	0	0	1	0	6	3	10
2024	3	7	8	1	0	0	0	6	9	16
2025	3	7	8	0	1	0	0	5	4	10

= Quota Filled

Red Text = Quota Exceeded



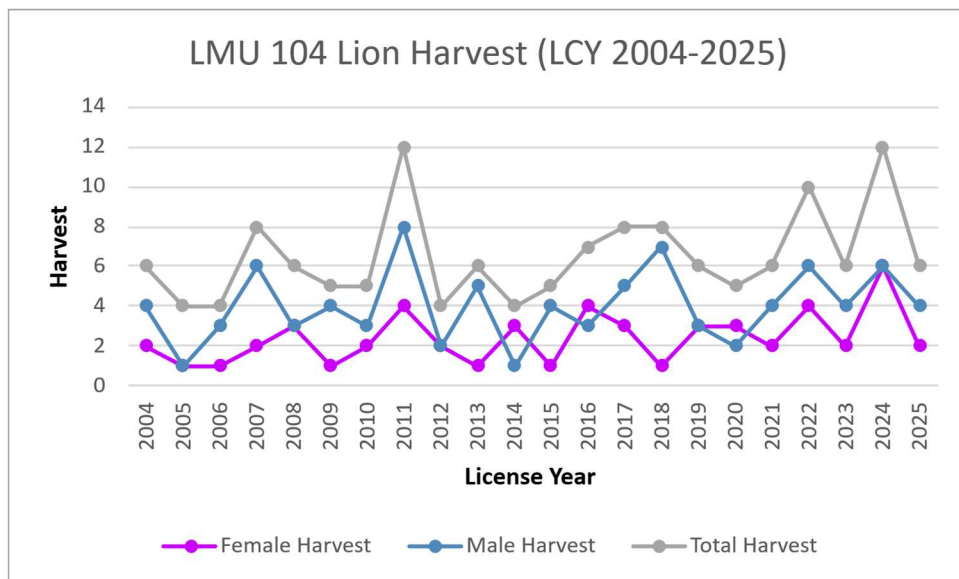
LMU 104 Cabinets



LMU 104: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	2	4	5	1	0	0	0	5	4	10
2023	2	6	7	0	0	0	0	4	2	6
2024	2	6	7	0	0	0	0	6	6	12
2025	2	6	7	0	0	0	0	4	2	6

= Quota Filled
 Red Text = Quota Exceeded



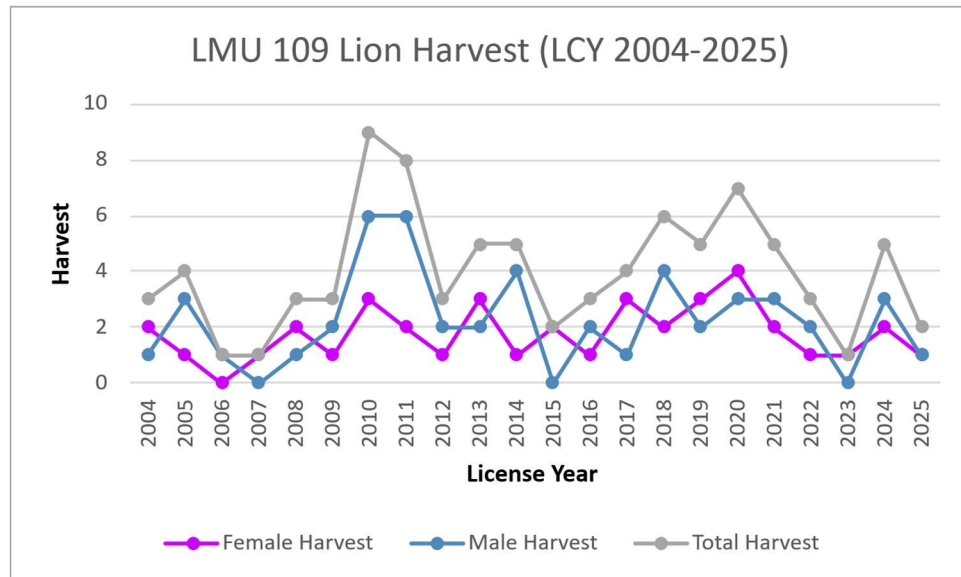
LMU 109

Ten Lakes



LMU 109: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	-	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
2023	-	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
2024	-	5	3	0	0	0	0	3	2	5
2025	-	5	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2



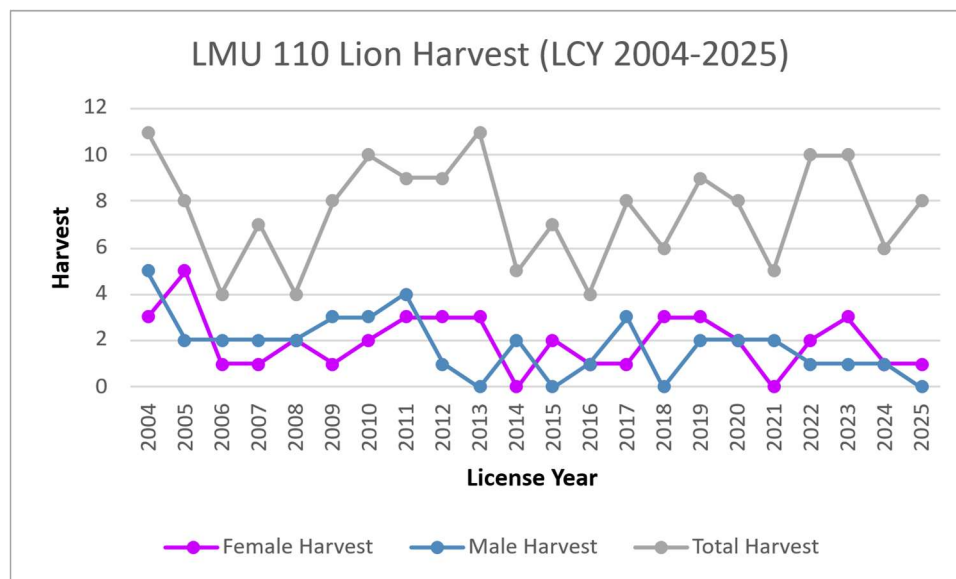
LMU 110

North Fork



LMU 110: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	-	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
2023	-	5	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
2024	-	5	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
2025	-	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1



LMU 120

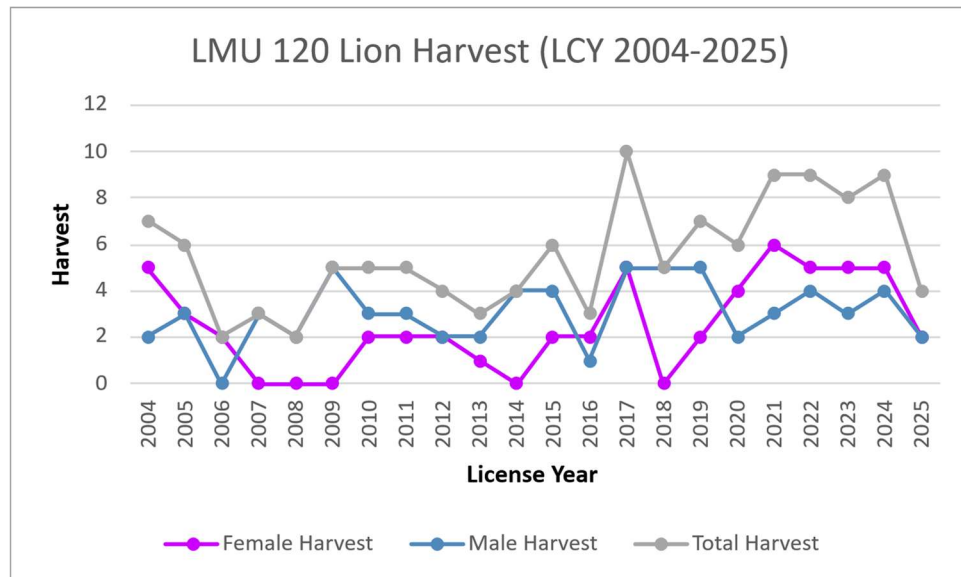
Blacktail



LMU 120: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	2	3	4	1	1	0	0	3	4	9
2023	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	3	5	8
2024	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	4	5	9
2025	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	2	2	4

= Quota Filled



LMU 121

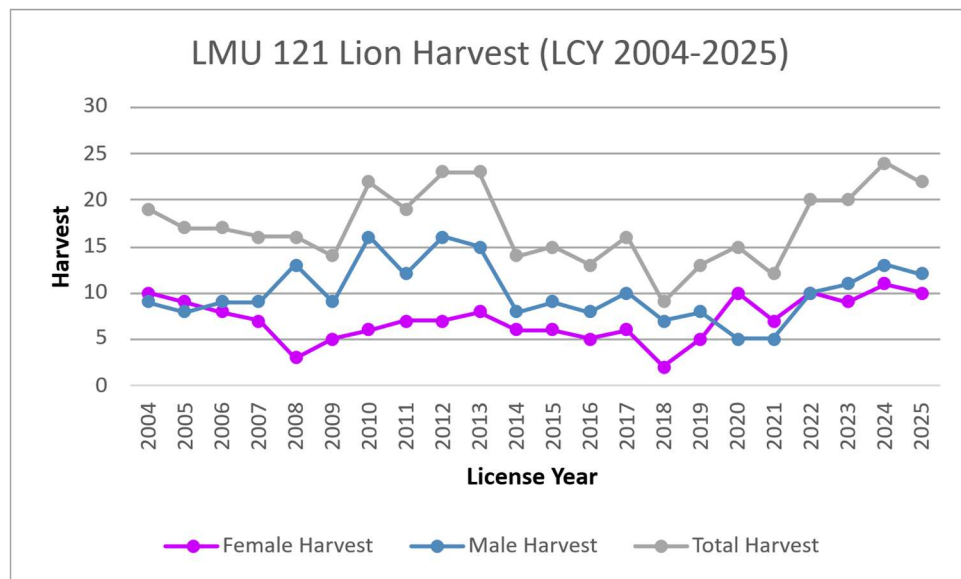
West Clark Fork



LMU 121: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

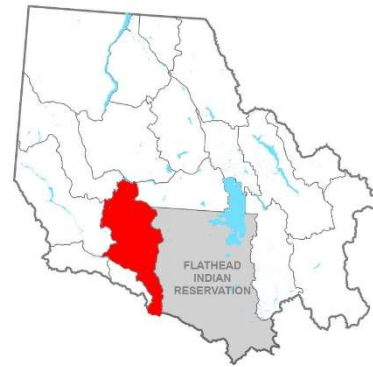
LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	5	7	8	2	1	0	0	8	9	20
2023	5	9	10	2	0	0	1	9	8	20
2024	5	9	10	1	0	0	0	12	11	24
2025	5	9	10	3	0	0	0	9	10	22

= Quota Filled
 Red Text = Quota Exceeded



LMU 122

Thompson River

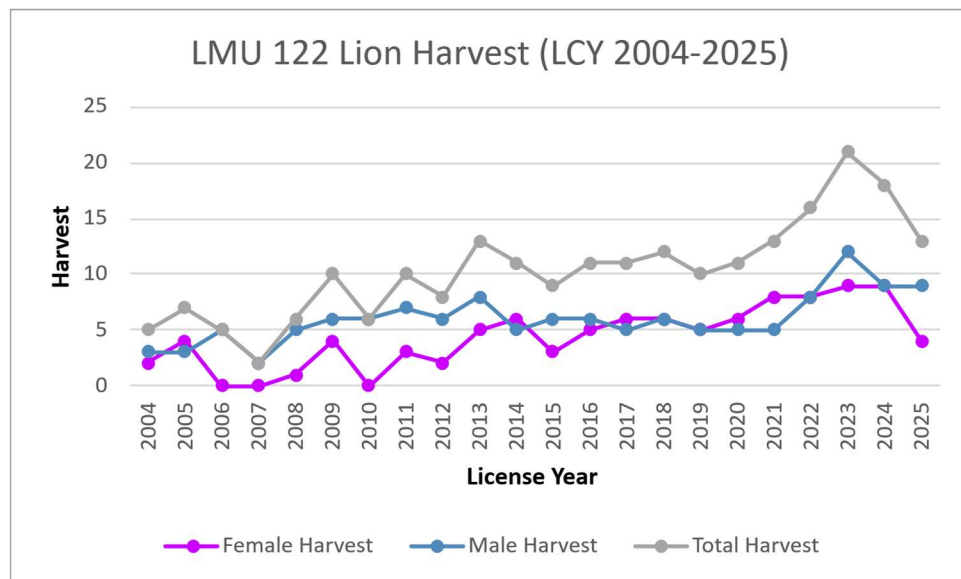


LMU 122: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	3	6	7	2	0	0	1	6	7	16
2023	3	8	9	2	0	0	0	10	9	21
2024	3	8	9	1	0	1	1	7	8	18
2025	3	8	9	1	0	0	0	8	4	13

= Quota Filled

Red Text = Quota Exceeded



LMU 123

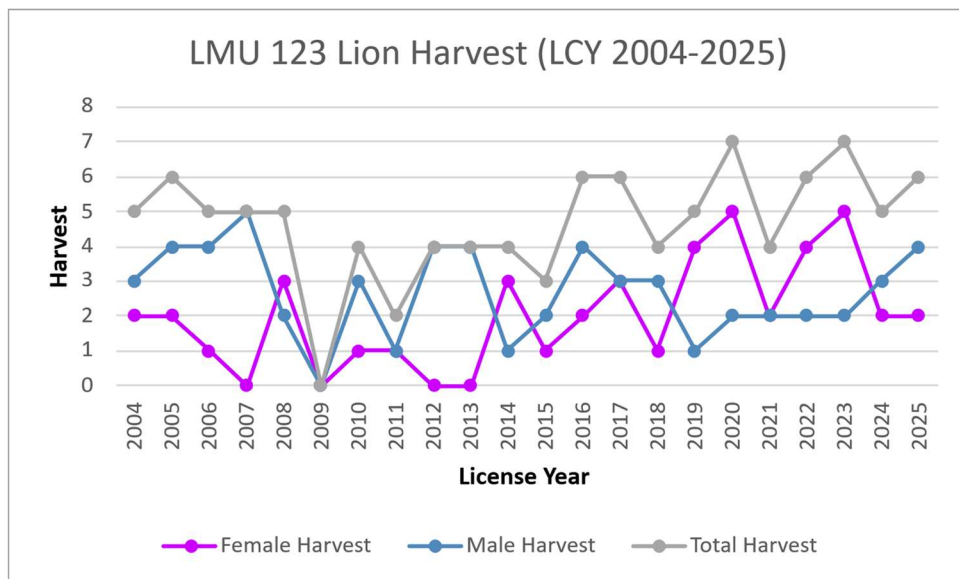
Clark Mountain



LMU 123: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	2	4	6
2023	1	4	5	1	0	0	0	1	5	7
2024	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	3	2	5
2025	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	4	2	6

= Quota Filled



LMU 124

Arvilla

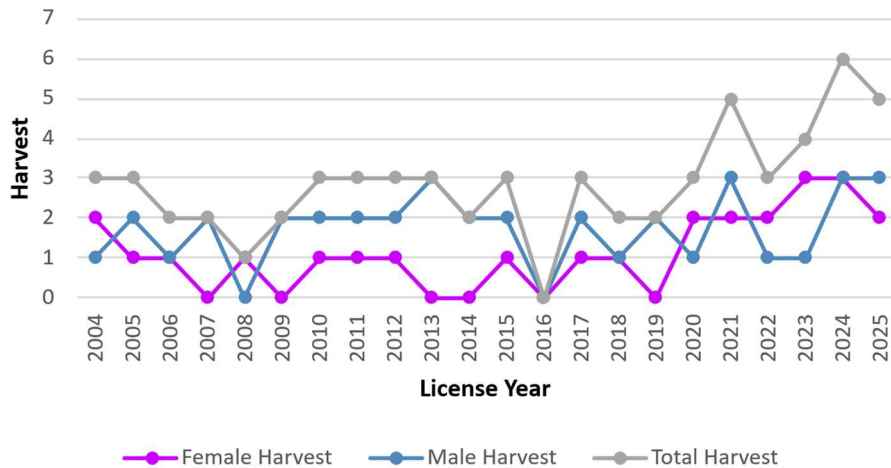


LMU 124: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	-	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
2023	-	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	4
2024	-	4	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	6
2025	-	4	3	0	0	0	0	3	2	5

= Quota Filled

LMU 124 Lion Harvest (LCY 2004-2025)



LMU 130

Swan

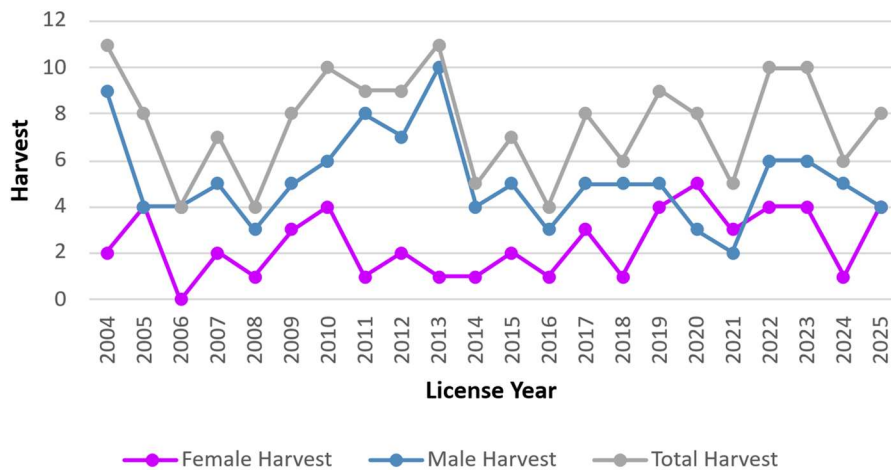


LMU 130: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	2	4	4	2	0	0	0	4	4	10
2023	2	5	5	1	0	0	0	5	4	10
2024	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	5	1	6
2025	2	5	5	0	0	0	1	4	3	8

= Quota Filled

LMU 130 Lion Harvest (LCY 2004-2025)



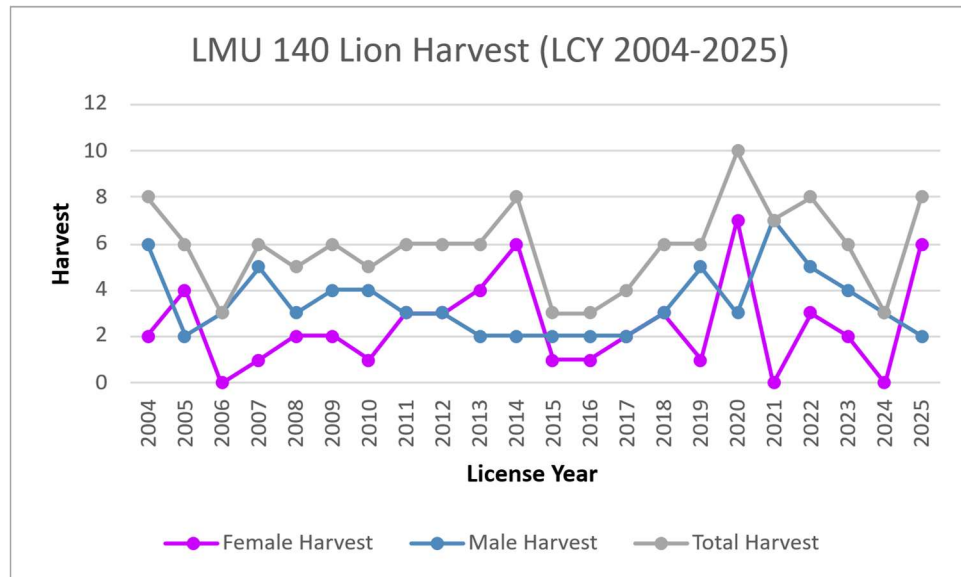
LMU 140

Lower South Fork



LMU 140: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity			Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota		Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	1	7	6	0	0	1	0	4	3	8
2023	1	10	8	0	0	0	0	4	2	6
2024	1	10	8	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
2025	1	10	8	0	0	2	5	0	1	8



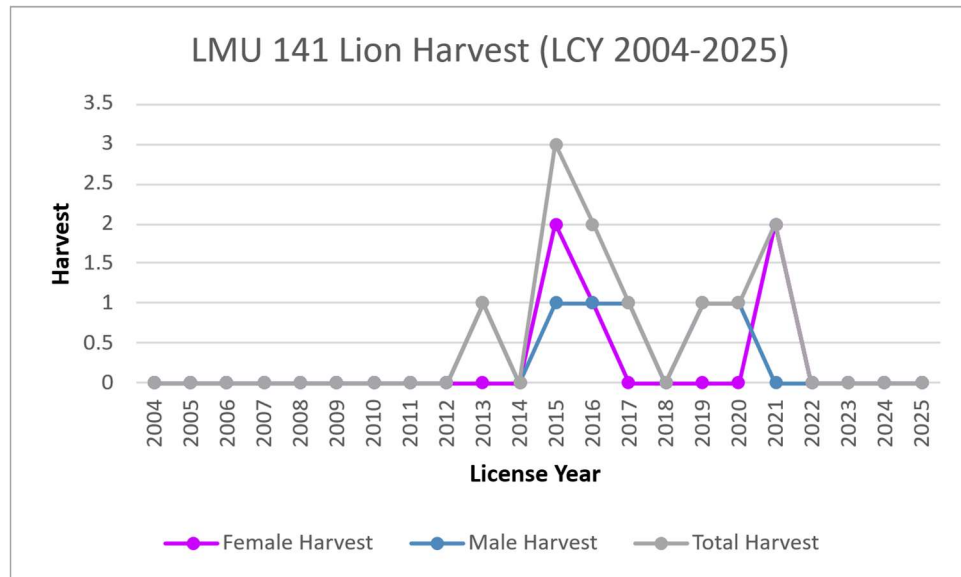
LMU 141

Lower Middle Fork



LMU 141: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity		Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota	Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	-	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



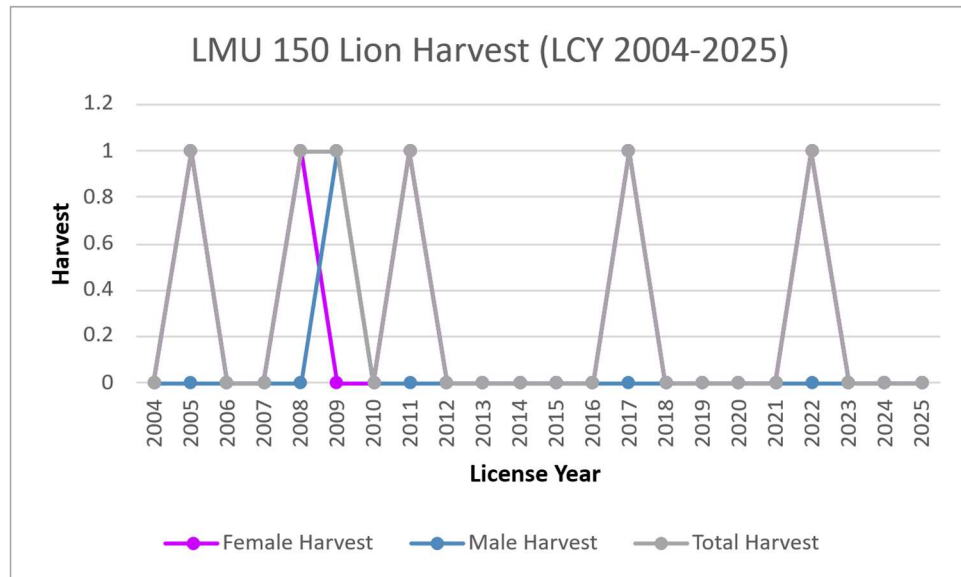
LMU 150

Upper South Fork



LMU 150: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity		Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota	Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	-	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
2023	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



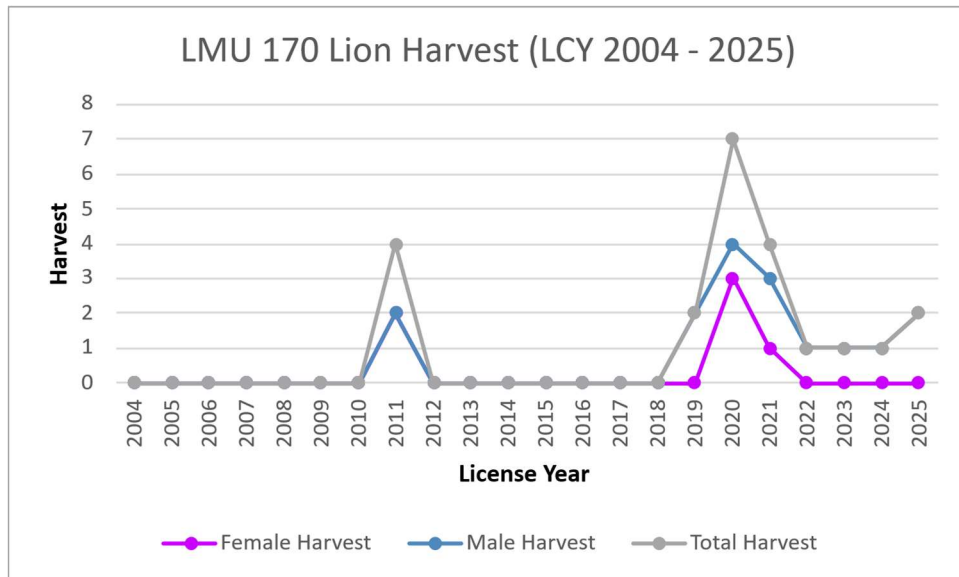
LMU 170

Flathead River



LMU 170: Harvest Opportunity Vs. Harvest (2022-2025)

LCY	Harvest Opportunity		Harvest						
	Limited Licenses	Unlimited License Quota	Limited License		Restricted OTC (General License)		Unlimited License		Total
		Male Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2022	-	UNL	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
2023	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
2024	-	UNL	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
2025	-	UNL	0	0	1	0	1	0	2





2025 Region 1 Mountain Lion Report

Version: 2026.2

Date: August 12, 2026

Prepared By: Franz Ingelfinger – Kalispell Area Wildlife Biologist

