

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Species: Furbearers and Trapping and Wolf trapping
Region: All
Hunting District: All
Year: 2019

1. **Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

FWP proposes to:

1. Require furbearer and wolf trappers to report all non-target captures that cannot be lawfully trapped and define “Animals that May be Lawfully Trapped”, and
2. Remove the word “incidental” from the regulations and replace with the more accurate “excess take” defined as the take of a legally-harvestable species after the season is closed or an individual’s possession limit has been met.

This proposal would make the wording about non-target captures in both the Furbearers and Trapping regulations and the Wolf regulations identical and read:

Non-target Captures – The capture of any animal that cannot be lawfully trapped, including domestic animals, must be reported to FWP within 24 hours. Any such animal that is uninjured must be released prior to the trapper leaving the trap site. If unable to safely release the animal, call FWP. **Exception:** Any such animal that is injured or dead must promptly (with little or no delay) be reported to FWP to determine disposition and/or collection of the animal.

Animals that May be Lawfully Trapped

- A licensed trapper may trap furbearers or wolves for which the season is open and their individual possession limit has not been reached. Furbearers include beaver, otter, muskrat, mink, marten, fisher, wolverine, bobcat, lynx and swift fox.
- Nongame wildlife – Any wild animal not otherwise classified by statute or FWP regulation such as badger, raccoon, red fox, hares, rabbits, squirrels, prairie dogs, marmots and others. LICENSE REQUIRED FOR NONRESIDENT TRAPPERS ONLY.
- Predators – Coyote, weasel, striped skunk and civet cat (spotted skunk). LICENSE REQUIRED FOR NONRESIDENT TRAPPERS ONLY.
- A trapper may NOT trap any game animal, game bird or migratory bird.

At present, furbearer trappers are only required to report all lynx, dogs, or protected animals that cannot be released uninjured. This means that protected species that are judged by the trapper to be uninjured can be released on site and do not require reporting. This leads to an undercount of the incidents of non-target captures. In addition, it is not consistent with similar requirements for wolf trapping. Wolf trappers are presently required to report injured and uninjured non-target captures.

This proposal will simplify and clarify the regulations by replacing five often confusing paragraphs in the current Furbearer and Trapping Regulations with the above two more accurate and easily-understood paragraphs. It will also simplify and clarify the Wolf regulations.

The above proposed changes would have to appear in printed regulations, on paper harvest report forms, in call-in center notes and questions, and in the Mandatory Reporting Record Entry (MRRE) interface for FWP employees.

2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.

The objective relative to non-target captures is to simplify and clarify trapping regulations and make the reporting of such captures more complete and more consistent for furbearer and wolf trapping. This will provide a more complete tally of non-target captures so that discussions of the impacts of non-target captures are more informed.

At present, "incidental" is commonly used in other ways that can mean different things, which leads to confusion. By providing the more precise words "excess take" trappers, the public, and FWP employees will have a clearer and more consistent way to discuss and document these occurrences.

3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.

Success will be shown with the establishment of clear, consistent language and a more complete tally of unlawful non-target captures and excess take.

4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).

Not applicable.

5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).

Not applicable.

6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).

The non-target capture issue was identified during reviews of data forms and processes for recording non-target captures along with preparation of reports of non-target captures. In their review of the trapping regulations, the citizen-member Trapping Advisory Committee identified the need for these changes.

Submitted by: Bob Inman

Date: 5/2/2019

Approved: _____
Regional Supervisor / Date

Modified by: John Vore / May 9, 2019
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: Rearranged some portions and changed some language for clarity.