

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

Species: Mountain Lion

**Hunting Districts: 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 109, 110, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 130, and Region 2
excluding Missoula Special Management Area and HD 282**

Year: 2020

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

FWP is proposing the Commission amend the regulation to allow unsuccessful applicants for a special lion license to purchase a surplus special lion license if they are available.

Special mountain lion licenses are available through a drawing. When this license structure was applied in 2006, to limit the number of applications to those truly interested in hunting special lion license areas (primarily Region 1 and portions of Region 2) lion hunters had to forfeit the ability to purchase a different lion license anywhere else in the state, even if unsuccessful in the drawing. In February 2020, the Commission adopted sex-specific licenses for certain districts within Region 1, requiring applicants to choose between a male or female license when applying. Although all licenses are likely to be distributed through the drawing process, should female special licenses fail to be fully allocated, the remainder would become available on a first-come basis as surplus licenses. Under the current regulations, an unsuccessful applicant for a special lion license would not be eligible to purchase surplus special licenses.

- 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 of this proposed amendment to the existing regulation is to allow unsuccessful applicants for special lion licenses the opportunity to purchase surplus special licenses providing for increased opportunity.

- 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 measured by issuing all the special lion license in Region 1 and Region 2 and allowing anyone to obtain a surplus license if they become available. Success would also be measured in hunter satisfaction as individuals who already made the choice to forgo hunting mountain lions in other areas of the state by applying for a special lion license would be able to purchase a special lion license if there is a surplus.

- 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).**

The number of special lion licenses available is based on a biological assessment of the lion population and public input on the level of acceptable lion harvest. This proposal would help insure that all female special licenses are sold and improve the departments ability to manage lion populations.

- 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).**

The proposal will allow both resident and non-resident hunters who are unsuccessful in the special lion license drawing to obtain a surplus special lion license. This proposal could increase opportunity if surplus licenses are available by removing the current restriction that eliminates the ability to purchase a different lion license if unsuccessful in a special lion license drawing. The 10% limit on non-resident special licenses would not apply to surplus licenses. The proposed change would allow unsuccessful applicants to obtain a surplus special lion license only and does not remove the restriction for obtaining a license in other areas of the state.

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 Region 1 sex-specific lion license proposal went through an extensive public comment period as part of the Commission process this fall and winter. The current proposal would clarify the rules so that hunters could obtain a surplus license if unsuccessful in a special lion license drawing.

Submitted by: Neil Anderson

Date: 3/10/2020

Approved:

Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by:

Name / Date

Reason for Modification: