

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

**Species: Moose**  
**Region: 2**  
**Hunting District: 250**  
**Year: 2021**

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

Close moose hunting in HD250. Currently there is 1 antlered bull permit.

- 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 change is to eliminate pressure from moose in HD250 and allow time for the population to recover, as well as prevent the public from drawing a difficult-to-draw permit which they then are unable to fill.

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

Moose are very difficult to monitor in HD250 and elsewhere in the Bitterroot. Success will be measured by anecdotal moose sightings by the public and during official FWP wildlife surveys, although wintertime track/scat surveys may be considered. We also hope to stay in contact with CSKT and collect observation/harvest data from them.

- 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).**

Moose are not monitored via official survey, but based on conversations with the most recent holders of the single HD250 moose permit, huntable animals have been difficult to find. The 2020 permit holder was unable to fill the tag after 48 days of hard hunting, and observed only a cow, calf, and small bull during this time. The 2018 permit-holder harvested a small bull after similarly strenuous hunting effort; this permit-holder had hunted elk in HD250 for years and was very familiar with the district, and was noted the scarcity of moose. We recognize that this kind of anecdotal/effort data is small and imperfect, but in the absence of alternatives, we feel this is the safest route to ensuring that moose are given a chance to rebound.

- 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).**

HD250 contains a very large proportion of public land. Predators are numerous, including wolves, mountain lions, and black bears. Winter weather conditions are typically more severe in HD250 than elsewhere in the Bitterroot owing to its high-elevation, mountainous terrain. Predator harvest is low, in part due to the difficulty of access, remoteness, and the fact that limited hunting opportunities for elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer have reduced the number of hunters that may opportunistically hunt predators while big game hunting.

- 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).**

Due to the timeliness required by this proposal in order to meet Commission deadlines, it has not been reviewed by many members of the public. The 2020 moose permit holder agreed that the season should close. We alerted the Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association of this proposal but did not get a response from them in time. However, we anticipate they will support it.

Submitted by: Rebecca Mowry

Date: 11/30/2020

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: Clarifications by Wakeling and Thompson 1/19/2021