



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: April 19, 2022

Agenda Item: 2022–2023 Mountain Lion Hunting Regulations, Season Structures, and Lion Management Unit Boundaries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 Minutes

Background: The department is proposing substantive changes to mountain lion season structure in alignment with commission direction. The proposed structure is detailed in the attached mountain lion season structure and hunting boundary change master list. These documents are presented for public review and commission action. The commission is also considering all regulations and descriptions of boundaries for the 2022–2023 mountain lion season for adoption at the April commission meeting, whether a change is proposed or not. All other regulations and descriptions of boundaries will remain unchanged unless addressed by the commission.

The proposal includes an unchanged fall season in which a general, special limited, or special unlimited mountain lion license would be valid in any open mountain lion management unit (LMU). Winter seasons in which mountain lions may be pursued with hounds would be open to 1) a limited special license that must be obtained through the draw and would be valid in a specific LMU for the duration of the season or 2) an unlimited special license that would be available at all license vendors and would be valid within a specific region, LMU, or group of LMUs as identified in the accompanying structure table; hunters could apply for a limited license or purchase an unlimited license, but applying for a limited license would preclude that hunter from purchasing an unlimited license. Likewise, purchasing an unlimited license would preclude a hunter from applying for the limited license.

Public Involvement Process and Results: Public comment was accepted through March 18, 2022, as well as at the December and February commission meetings. Any final adjustments to these recommendations based on final public comment will be made at the commission meeting on April 19.

Alternatives and Analysis: The department presented conceptual changes for each species season structure and hunting district boundaries to the public beginning in August. Some LMUs (i.e., LMUs 141, 150, 170, 211, 214, 250, 299, 309, 600, 700) do not generally reach the harvest limit due to limited access or high harvest limits to meet management objectives (such as reducing conflicts), and the commission may consider not offering special limited licenses within these areas and allowing the use of other unused licenses from the same region within these LMUs. The commission may provide additional amendments on any aspect of season structure, LMUs, or on aspects of the regulations that are not proposed to change.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale: The department recommends the commission approve the proposed 2022 and 2023 hunting regulations and LMU boundaries as presented by the department and as outlined in the attached master lists and supporting material. Any aspect unchanged from 2021 seasons will remain in effect for 2022 and 2023, except where affected by routine calendar rotations.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission vote to approve: 1) changes identified in the mountain lion boundary changes master list as presented by the department; 2) license permit type allocation as presented in the Proposed Allocation of Harvest by Lion Management Unit; 3) all mountain lion regulations contained in the 2020–2021 booklet not affected by changes in mountain lion hunting seasons in this motion; and 4)

- For all regions, during the archery only and fall season without dogs, a general license may be used in any valid mountain lion hunting district, and the district will close when the harvest reaches a number

nearest to 20 percent of the quota. In all areas, the combined archery only and fall season without dogs, male and female mountain lion harvest from all license holders will be deducted from the respective male or female mountain lion quotas or subquotas (this constitutes no changes to existing regulations).

- For all regions for the winter season, applicants can apply for either:
 - A limited special mountain lion license, issued through drawing, designating the LMU identified within the regulations for which the license is valid for the entire season, even if quotas are filled, until the season is closed.
 - An unlimited special mountain lion license designating the region, LMU, or grouping of LMUs identified within the regulations for which the license is valid until quotas are filled or until the season is closed.
- In all regions, most LMUs are quota-based with either a limited special mountain lion license or unlimited special mountain lion license for residents and nonresidents.
- Limited special mountain lion license:
 - A limited number of special mountain lion licenses are available only through a special drawing, with an application deadline of July 22.
 - Applicants must possess a current year conservation license and a base hunting license to apply for a special mountain lion license.
 - Bonus points will be offered for limited special mountain lion license applications.
 - Nonresidents are limited to no more than 10 percent of the limited special mountain lion licenses offered.
 - A special mountain lion license may be applied for online at fwp.mt.gov no later than 11:45 p.m. MDT on July 22 or an FWP office no later than 5 p.m. MDT July 22.
 - Drawing results will be available on or after July 26.
 - Successful limited special mountain lion license applicants will be notified by mail and must purchase a mountain lion license no later than Feb. 28.
 - During the archery only and fall season without dogs, a limited special mountain lion license may be used in any valid mountain lion hunting district.
 - During the winter season, a limited special mountain lion license may be used only in a specific LMU for which the limited special mountain lion license is valid.
 - For any LMU with a quota of 5 or fewer mountain lions, no special limited mountain lion license will be allocated for the LMU and harvest will be available only to unlimited mountain lion license holders that selected the region, LMU, or cluster of LMUs for that license permit type.
 - For any LMU with a quota of 6 or more mountain lions, special limited mountain lion licenses will be assigned as a percentage of the quota within a range of not less than 10% and not more than 30%, rounded to the nearest whole number based on standard rounding conventions.
- Unlimited special mountain lion license
 - An unlimited special mountain lion license is available at all department offices, license providers, or online at fwp.mt.gov. These licenses must be purchased by Feb. 28.
 - An unlimited special mountain lion license is available to resident and nonresident conservation license holders 12 years of age or older or who will turn 12 years old before or during the season for which the license is issued.
 - During the archery only and fall season without dogs, an unlimited special mountain lion license may be used in any valid mountain lion hunting district.
 - During the winter season, an unlimited special mountain lion license may be used only in the region, LMU, or grouping of LMUs identified within the regulations for which the unlimited special mountain lion license is valid.
 - An unlimited special mountain lion license may be used only in the region, LMU, or grouping of LMUs identified within the regulations for which the license is valid until quotas are filled or until the season is closed.
- Number of limited special mountain lion licenses:
 - The Commission may set aside from 10–30 percent of the quota of any LMU for the offering of limited special mountain lion licenses, for the purpose of providing a limited hunting

opportunity not subject to the quota.

- The determination of the specific number of limited special mountain lion licenses by LMU will be in conjunction with the adoption of season structure by the commission.
- Unsuccessful applicants for a limited special mountain lion license will not be eligible to purchase an unlimited special mountain lion license.
- Unsuccessful resident applicants for a limited special mountain lion license may purchase a Resident Hound Training License to only chase during the hound training season Dec. 2–April 14 in any valid hunting district statewide.
- To apply for a D-4 nonresident hound license, the nonresident must already hold a limited special mountain lion license or an unlimited special mountain lion license.
- D-4 nonresident hound licenses are limited to a maximum of two license permit type as presented by the department in the Proposed Allocation of Harvest by Lion Management Unit.