



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: August 25, 2022

Agenda Item: Classification Review Committee's recommendation to initiate rule making on classifying caracal cats as a prohibited species.

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: Any non-native wildlife species are considered "exotic wildlife" per 87-5-702, MCA and cannot be imported, possessed, or sold per 87-5-705, MCA unless allowed by law or commission rule. The Classification Review Committee (CRC) established in 87-5-708, MCA, exists to analyze classification requests and generate recommendations for classification for the Fish and Wildlife Commission. There are three possible classifications: *non-controlled species* can be imported, possessed, or sold without a permit; *controlled species* may be imported, possessed, or sold only through a controlled species permit issued by the department; and *prohibited species* cannot be imported, possessed, or sold.

On Jan. 6, 2021, the department received a petition to classify caracal cats. The petition stated that the petitioner wished to own a caracal cat as a pet but did not recommend a specific classification. Caracal cats have not been classified and meet the definition of "exotic wildlife" in 87-5-702, MCA. On Feb. 26, 2021, the CRC met and reviewed the petition and voted to move forward with developing a classification recommendation to include developing a biological and public safety analysis. On Sept. 2, 2021, the CRC committee completed the classification decision tree and biological/public safety analysis. The CRC voted to recommend to the Fish and Wildlife Commission to classify caracal cats as prohibited. The CRC's recommended classification is only a recommendation, and the ultimate classification of caracal cats is up to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The Commission voted to initiate rulemaking to propose the caracal cat as a prohibited species at its April 19, 2022 meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The rule proposal notice to list the caracal cat as a prohibited species will be published on June 24, 2022. Public comment on the proposal will be collected including a public hearing.

Alternatives & Analysis: The commission can choose whether or not to classify caracal cat as a prohibited species.