

Amendment to Fall 2022–Winter 2023 Furbearer and Wolf Trapping and Hunting Seasons and Quotas Submitted by Commissioner Byorth

I move that the Commission adopt a quota of four wolves in the new, combined WMU 313.

Statement of intent: Having reviewed Department recommendations and literature, it appears that a quota of four wolves ensures opportunity for hunters and trappers consistent with historic harvest, without creating undue pressure on wolves that occasionally travel outside Yellowstone National Park. This quota enables hunters and trappers to harvest approximately 20 to 25% of the estimated resident wolf population in the Gardiner basin, the level of harvest identified by researchers as adequate to sustain or slightly decrease wolf populations.

FWP Evaluation: This amendment to reduce the wolf quota in proposed WMU 313 from 10 to 4 will not biologically influence the trajectory of the wolf population in Montana. The iPOM model that is used to estimate the wolf population at the end of December and estimate the effect of hunting seasons on state and regional population levels cannot estimate wolf populations in such a small area, but the change in potential harvest of four wolves statewide will have no biologically meaningful effect. As stated in the justification, based on wolf population data from 2011–2015, the period when most recent data are available, the average number of wolves in the proximity of proposed WMU 313 is 29 (range 18–40). Research has shown that harvest must exceed 29 to 48 percent of a wolf population before a decline is observed (Adams et al. 2008, Gude et al. 2012). The amendment will cause no biological harm or effect on statewide or regional management