



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: August 25, 2022

Agenda Item: Fall 2022–Winter 2023 Furbearer and Wolf Trapping and Hunting Seasons and Quotas

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 90 Minutes

Background: Due to the similarity and overlap in regulations, the department is combining the furbearer trapping and wolf hunting and trapping regulations in a single published document for fall 2022–winter 2023.

Alternatives and Analysis: Furbearer harvest is analyzed based on population and harvest monitoring data collected by the department. The first year of liberalized wolf harvest methodologies did not result in increased take, although the distribution of that harvest changed somewhat. The approach of retaining thresholds for commission review, eliminating most and retaining a single WMU, and implementing a single quota should sufficiently address wolf harvest objectives.

Agency Rationale and Recommendation: The department recommends the commission adopt the furbearer and wolf trapping and hunting regulations as presented. Below are the proposed changes to the regulations adopted last year.

- Recommend reducing the quota for bobcat within Trapping District (TD) 1 from 275 to 225.
- Recommend reducing the quota for bobcat within TD 5 from 200 to 100.
- Recommend including the opportunity to purchase a C-4 license to hunt bobcats as established by SB 60 from the 2021 legislative session. A hunter that purchases a C-4 license to hunt bobcat may harvest the per person limit under the one C-4 license. **(A hunter does not need to purchase multiple C-4 licenses to harvest more than one bobcat).**
- Recommend reinstating the requirement that trappers are required to personally present the pelts of marten for tagging to a designated FWP employee within 10 days after the close of the season (see attached for specific language).
- Recommend amending the commission regulation on pelt possession by fur dealer license holders to include tagged marten pelts (see attached for specific language).
- Recommend eliminating all wolf management units (WMUs), except for combining former WMUs 313 and 316 into a new WMU 313.
- Recommend establishing a harvest quota of 10 wolves in total for trapping and hunting in WMU 313.
- If a quota is instituted and when a season quota is reached, the trapping and hunting season will close upon a 24-hour notice, but no later than March 15, 2023 (see attached for specific language).

- Recommend establishing a total quota of 100 wolves to be authorized by the commission in increments of 25 in accordance with MCA 87-1-901 section 3(c), commonly known as SB 200.
- Recommend managing wolf harvest primarily by trapping district.
- Recommend maintaining the floating start date for wolf trapping within the identical described area last year, except within trapping districts or portions of trapping districts (rather than wolf management units) in or near occupied grizzly bear habitat (see attached for specific language).

Unchanged are recommendations for thresholds for review as approved by the commission in 2021, with the only exception being that the threshold for total harvest and harvest in TD 3 excludes those wolves harvested within WMU 313 (see attached for specific language).

Public Involvement Process and Results: Meetings at which department personnel have been invited to discuss aspects of the trapping and hunting of furbearers and wolves include regional Montana Trappers Association meetings, Yellowstone National Park administration, and Wolves of the Rockies. Public comment will be solicited for a 4-week period starting June 23, 2022. Public comments will be posted online and provided to commissioners at least two weeks prior to the August commission meeting.

Proposed Motion: I move that the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the fall 2022–winter 2023 furbearer and wolf trapping and hunting seasons and quotas as presented by the department including boundary changes, with all other aspects regarding prior seasons and regulations included, except for those influenced by routine calendar rotations.