



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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Meeting Date: February 4, 2022

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

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 Minutes

Background: Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially by the commission for public comment in December with final adoption in February for most game species. The department is proposing some substantive changes to that adopted for public comment in December. The proposed changes to mountain lion seasons are detailed in the attached mountain lion hunting master lists, and hunting boundary changes are referenced in individual proposals. The proposed changes to boundaries are detailed on the attached mountain lion boundary change master list. These lists are presented for commission action and public review. The commission is also considering all regulations and descriptions of boundaries for the 2022–2023 mountain lion season for adoption at the February meeting, whether a change is proposed or not. All other regulations and descriptions of boundaries will remain unchanged unless addressed by the commission.

The department is providing the commission with three alternatives from which to select a season structure. These structures include a straight quota structure, a hybrid structure that includes a license followed by a general license with a quota limit, and a hybrid that includes a special draw license and a general license with a quota limit structure that occur at the same time. More detail is provided in the mountain lion hunting master list and accompanying support material. Quotas recommended by the department in master lists are identified for reference, but quota recommendations will be provided at a later commission meeting. Quotas are intended to be harvest limits that address harvest objectives.

Public Involvement Process and Results: Public comment was accepted through Jan. 21, 2022. Based on the substance of public comment received through Jan. 14, the department is recommending some substantive changes to the mountain lion seasons adopted in December, as well as other minor adjustments and corrections which are noted in the master lists as well. Any final adjustments to these recommendations based on final public comment will be made at the commission meeting on Feb. 4.

Alternatives and Analysis: The department presented conceptual changes for each species season structure and hunting district boundaries for public discussion and feedback beginning in August. The proposals being presented to the commission include changes incorporated in response to that feedback. The commission may provide the department with additional amendments on any aspect of season structure, quota, or hunting district for any species and 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 district boundaries as presented by the department and as outlined in the attached master lists and select the appropriate season structure for implementation. 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 master list and the mountain lion boundary changes master list as presented by the department; 2) season structure [1, 2, or 3 or as otherwise described by the commission]; and 3) all other mountain lion regulations contained in the 2020–2021 booklet to be adopted for the 2022 and 2023 mountain lion hunting seasons and hunting districts.