

POTENTIAL AMENDMENT FOR AUGUST COMMISSION MEETING

1. FWP proposal to be amended?

Furbearer and Wolf Trapping and Hunting Regulations as presented

2. Proposed amendment?

The statewide wolf population is being reduced as directed by the legislature. For 2023 the quota will be 289-300 wolves statewide distributed as follows:

- Region 1 – 120-131 wolves,
- Region 2 – 91 wolves,
- Region 3 – 52 wolves,
- Region 4 – 15 wolves,
- Regions 5 through 7 – 5 wolves,
- Wolf Management Unit 313 – 6 wolves.
- A harvest of wolves within 25% of the above stated quota shall initiate a commission review with potential for rapid in-season adjustments to hunting and trapping regulations.

3. Requested by FWP? (YES/NO)

No

4. Background?

I have been contacted by several constituents especially in Regions 1, 2 and 3 expressing concern that the pace in which we reduce the population of wolves should continue as intended by the legislature, in particular in those regions where there is a clear concern regarding the sustainability of ungulates exists more rigorously. The various groups that reached out go way beyond the trappers, most were Montana sportsmen and sportsmen groups that have recognize a steady decline in ungulates especially in Regions 1, 2 and parts of 3 in particular with with mule deer, sheep and moose. I have asked for and received several different analyses from the Department, and it appears clear that continuing on the pace of using a quota of 450, we would be taking too big of a risk of going below a floor threshold. All of the projections do indicate that a targeted harvest of 300-330 would stay within a reasonable range that would not irresponsibly trigger too severe of a reduction in too short of a time span. It has been succinctly stated that the legislative intent is to move the population downward. I believe the adjustments I propose do that in a responsible manner, in particular if we employ the stopgap measures suggested as well. My motion only covers an increase in the suggested target for Region 1; I will leave the decision for the other Regions up to the respective Commissioner.