



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: August 20, 2021

Agenda Item: Fall 2021–Winter 2022 Trapping Seasons and Quotas

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

Background: The department is proposing four regulation changes to furbearers and trapping as outlined below. These regulation changes are identical to that presented to the commission in June.

Otter

- Within Trapping District 1, A) increase the total harvest quota of river otter from 28 to 40 and B) increase the personal quota from 3 to 4 otters/trapper.
- Within Trapping District 2, A) increase the total harvest quota of river otter from 25 to 40 and B) increase the personal quota from 3 to 4 otters/trapper.

Other

- Clarify that all non-target captures are to be reported to the department, including traps and snares.
- Adjust restrictions on trapping near Occupied Dwellings to read: *Killing ground sets, including all snares, set for animals larger than ground squirrels are unlawful within 1000 feet of an occupied dwelling without written notification to the inhabitant.*

Public Involvement Process and Results: The proposed changes to harvest limits were discussed with members of the Montana Trappers Association, Montana Fur Harvesters, and unaffiliated trappers prior to the June commission meeting. The department received about 98 public comments that generally related to trapping since the June commission meeting, and nine comments explicitly supported the proposed increase, whereas one comment supported an increase of a lesser magnitude. The remainder of the comment opposed the proposed increase or trapping in general.

Alternatives and Analysis: The commission may choose to adopt or amend the department proposal.

Agency Rationale and Recommendation: The department recommends adopting this proposed increase in quota for river otter in Trapping District 1 and 2. Harvest, occupied range, and professional experience indicates that the river otter population may sustain increased harvest without detrimental population effects.

Proposed Motion:

I move that the commission vote to approve the fall 2021–winter 2022 trapping seasons and quotas as presented by the department with all other aspects regarding prior seasons included, except for those influenced by routine calendar rotations or by other proposals currently before the commission.