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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

APR 22 2014

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Wildlife Division
PO Box 200701
Helena MT 59620-0701
April 15, 2014

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is requesting public review and comment on proposed 2014 Mountain Lion quotas, 2014 Moose/Sheep/Goat license quotas outside biennial quota ranges, and a Region 6 bighorn sheep/domestic sheep commingling management area. Additional information is below including the deadline for public comment. Note different comment deadlines for these topics.

2014 Mountain Lion quotas- Proposed

Hunting districts list below have proposed changes from 2013 mountain quotas and subquotas. All other quotas/subquotas not listed are proposed to be unchanged from 2013 levels. Quotas apply to "any legal lion" unless otherwise noted and as influenced by female subquotas.

HD 121: decrease male subquota from 11 to 8

HD 122: decrease male subquota from 6 to 5

HD 300/302/328/329: increase total quota from 4 to 6 any legal lion and the female subquota from 2 to 3

HD 318/335: increase total quota from 4 to 6 any legal lion and the female subquota from 1 to 2

HD 319/341: increase female subquota from 1 to 2 and keep total quota at 4

HD 320/333: increase total quota from 4 to 6 any legal lion and keep female sub-quota at 2

HD 321/332/334: increase total quota from 2 to 3 any legal lion and keep female subquota at 1

HD 322/326/330: increase total quota from 4 to 6 any legal lion and keep female sub-quota at 2

HD 323/324/325/327: increase total quota from 4 to 6 any legal lion and keep female sub-quota at 2

HD 331: increase total quota from 5 to 7 any legal lion and the female subquota from 2 to 3

HD 339/343/388: increase total quota from 6 to 8 any legal lion and the female subquota from 1 to 2

HD 390/391: increase total quota from 6 to 8 any legal lion and increase female sub-quota from 2 to 4

HD 410/417/419/426: increase female quota from 6 to 8 and leave male quota at 3

HD 422/423/424/425/442: increase female quota from 3 to 4 and increase male quota from 9 to 11

HD 530/590: increase total quota from 5 to 8 any legal lion

Region 7: increase the region-wide total quota from 35 to 45 any legal lion

2014 Moose/Sheep/Goat license quotas outside biennial quota ranges – Proposed

Biennial license quotas for moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat licenses were adopted as final in February 2014. That adoption set minimum and maximum numbers of licenses that may be annually issued without additional commission review for any single license type. Field survey efforts, however, have identified one sheep license type listed below where the prescribed 2014 quota is outside the adopted range. To address this, the following proposed adjustment to 2014 bighorn sheep quota is proposed for annual adoption. Functionally, this change would also result in an adjusted quota range from 15 to 25. Other changes and/or maintenance of 2013 quotas will take place within the established quota ranges.

Proposed Adjustment to 2014 Sheep License Quota: *Increase ewe sheep licenses 622-30 from 10 to 25.*

Region 6 bighorn sheep/domestic sheep commingling management area– Proposed

An applied bighorn sheep management strategy is to maintain wide separation between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats where possible. To prevent the possibility of commingling and disease transmission between wild and domestic sheep, FWP is proposing a defined management area which would encompass land well outside of bighorn sheep habitat and in areas domestic sheep are known to occur in Region 6. Wild sheep that wonder into this area could be dispatched by FWP to prevent the possibility of commingling and disease transmission from domestic herds to existing wild bighorn populations. *This commingling management area would be all lands in Region 6 outside of bighorn sheep HD 680 and deer/elk HDs 621, 622, 631 and 632.* In unique circumstances, FWP may authorize a landowner to dispatch a bighorn sheep in this area when FWP isn't able to immediately respond. Based on experience, only small numbers of bighorn sheep in isolated circumstances would be lethally removed. While limited lethal removal of bighorn sheep in these circumstances is not a new management element, this pre-defined management area is meant to minimize response times when commingling events are identified.

COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE AND FINAL ADOPTION MEETINGS

The public comment period on the proposed 2014 Mountain Lion quotas will extend through 5:00 PM, Thursday, May 29. Final adoption on will be made at the June 12, 2014 Commission meeting.

The public comment period on the proposed 2014 Moose/Sheep/Goat license quotas outside biennial quota ranges and Region 6 bighorn sheep/domestic sheep commingling management area will extend through 5:00 PM, Monday, May 19. Final adoption on will be made at the May 22, 2014 Commission meeting.

TO MAKE COMMENT

For further clarification, you may call the Wildlife Bureau office at 406-444-2612. To submit comments electronically, this letter with the imbedded links below can be found under "Opportunity for Public Comment" on the Hunting home page at the fwp.mt.gov website. Written comments can be sent to: FWP – Wildlife Bureau, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701.

2014 Mountain Lion quotas– Proposed

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Thursday, May 29.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2014proposedMountainLionQuotas>

2014 Moose/Sheep/Goat license quotas outside biennial quota ranges – Proposed

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Monday, May 19.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2014proposedMsgLicenseQuotas>

Region 6 bighorn sheep/domestic sheep commingling management area– Proposed

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Monday, May 19.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2014proposedR6SheepComminglingManagementAreas>