



# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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MAR 04 2014

Wildlife Division  
PO Box 200701  
Helena MT 59620-0701  
February 14, 2014

Dear Interested Person: Ravalli County Commissioners

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is requesting public review and comment on proposed 2014 – 2015 Peregrine Falcon Take, proposed amendments to the Brucellosis Work Plan in the Paradise Valley and proposed amendments to the 2014 – 2015 Bitterroot Mountain Lion Hunting Season. Additional information is below including the deadline for public comment.

## 2014 – 2015 Peregrine Falcon Take – Proposed

Elements of proposed Peregrine Falcon Take include:

- authorize resident take of 10 nestling or fledged peregrines through a quota system during the 2014-15 biennium;
- authorize non-resident take of one nestling or fledged peregrine through a 2014-15 permit;
- restrict take to June 1-Aug. 31;
- limit take to one peregrine per year per falconer;
- impose a two-year waiting period for any falconer successful in taking a peregrine;
- allow only general or master falconers to take peregrines;
- prohibit take from eastern Montana to encourage expansion of the breeding population;
- prohibit take from certain nests of high value wildlife viewing opportunity and/or part of on-going agency approved research efforts, (add the nest at Headwaters State Park to the current list of seven closed-to-take nests); and
- prohibit the sale, barter or exchange of birds from the wild.

## Amendments to the Brucellosis Work Plan in the Paradise Valley – Proposed

The wildlife sub-committee of the Upper Yellowstone Watershed group has been hosting local deliberations on proposed modifications to the current 2014 annual work plan for Elk Management options in Areas with Brucellosis. The existing work plan describes management options available to potentially adjust local elk distribution in an effort to reduce commingling with livestock and the associated brucellosis transmission risk. The local meetings have been open to any interested party with FWP assisting and Montana State University Extension (Park County) providing facilitation and other meeting logistics. If approved by the Commission, modifications generated by these Paradise Valley discussions would be available for use in 2014. The modifications include additional private land fencing efforts to separate elk and livestock and later dates for lethal removals of elk on private land. The current end date for lethal removal is April 30. Specific language from the local discussions is below.

*Recommendation 1—Reinstate the May 1-May15 dates (for lethal removal of elk) to the local work plan. The May1-15 window is a critical time period for prevention of commingling and disease transmission in Paradise Valley. Some form of lethal removal may be necessary to prevent commingling/disease transmission during this time period. Livestock producers who desire to prevent elk from commingling with cattle on private property and DNRC lands must have tools available. When hazing becomes ineffective, forms of lethal removal should include both the EMRs and kill permits.*

Recommendation 2---These recommendations are meant to be applied on private property as described in a plan developed by the property owner(s) and/or their designee(s) in conjunction with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

- A. Use large-scale fencing in suitable areas for creation of corridors to allow elk movement, but prevent comingling and disease transmission in pastures used by cattle during the risk period, and
- B. The unwritten definition of 'small-scale' should be increased to include pastures where cattle are present during the risk period, and
- C. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks should include fence modification (e.g., MSU Extension MontGuide 2014) as a method of fencing appropriate to minimize brucellosis transmission in the Paradise Valley DSA and should be responsible for the cost of materials, as in the existing game damage process.

#### **2014 – 2015 Bitterroot Mountain Lion Hunting Season – Proposed**

Based upon public inputs received during the initial timeline for 2014 – 2015 biennial season setting, a specific modification to the mountain lion hunting season in the Bitterroot Valley is being proposed for additional public review. Elements of proposed adjustments to the 2014 – 2015 Bitterroot Mountain Lion Hunting Season include:

- combine lion HD's 204, 260, 261 (excluding Missoula Special Management Area), 240, 250 and 270 into a single special lion license area;
- hunters holding this license could hunt in all 6 districts;
- the number of special lion licenses offered in this district bundle will be equal to twice the combined quotas in the six districts;
- the six districts would retain individual quotas and subquotas and each district would be closed to harvest when quotas or subquotas are met; and
- the "hybrid" season would remain in place, and unchanged.

#### **COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE AND FINAL ADOPTION MEETINGS**

The public comment period on these proposed items will extend through 5:00 PM, Friday, March 21. Final adoption on this item will be made at the April 10, 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 – 2015 Peregrine Falcon Take – Proposed**

*The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Friday, March 21.*

[fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2014\\_15ProposedPeregrineFalconTake.html](http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2014_15ProposedPeregrineFalconTake.html)

#### **Amendments to the Brucellosis Work Plan in the Paradise Valley – Proposed**

*The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Friday, March 21.*

[fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/proposedParadiseValleyBrucellosisWorkPlan.html](http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/proposedParadiseValleyBrucellosisWorkPlan.html)

#### **2014 – 2015 Bitterroot Mountain Lion Hunting Season – Proposed**

*The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Friday, March 21.*

[fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2014\\_15ProposedBitterrootLionSeason.html](http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2014_15ProposedBitterrootLionSeason.html)