



## Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

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**Meeting date:**

June 21, 2024

**Agenda item:**

Cougar Hunting Season and Regulations

**Presenter(s):** Anis Aoude, Wildlife Game Division Manager

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**Background summary:**

This rule proposal is responding to and supporting a rule petition that the Commission accepted on December 15, 2023. The petition requests that the department revisit the cougar hunting seasons and regulations rule that was adopted in 2020. Through a motion, the Commission gave department staff specific directions to include the following aspects in the rule proposal:

1. All independent-aged cougars count towards the cougar mortality cap.
2. The cougar hunting season will begin September 1 and end March 31.
3. The cap will be based on a growth rate of 13% and a cougar density of 2.3 cougars per 100 km<sup>2</sup>.
4. All known human-related cougar mortality (including conflict) shall count toward the cap.
5. In PMUs that reach the 13% cap prior to the recreational hunting season starting, the cap will be increased to 20% of the population to provide hunting opportunity in those PMUs.
6. The season shall close when mortalities in those PMUs meet or exceed 20% of the population. Additionally, if opened the season shall close within 72 hours of that number being reached. This section will sunset after the 2024-2025 season.

**Staff recommendation:**

Briefing only.

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**Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:**

No policy issues.

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**Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:**

None.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

WDFW filed a proposed rulemaking on April 30, 2024, WSR 24–10–080. This filing initiated public comment that will close at midnight on June 21, 2024. WDFW also issued a news release as well as posts to multiple media outlets, our website, and emails. Hard copies will be sent to those who request it. WDFW Staff will consider the public comment and return to the Fish and Wildlife Commission in July asking for a decision.

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**Action requested and/or proposed next steps:**

Briefing only. If adopted the proposed amendments would be implemented for the 2024-2025 cougar seasons and be effective by the season open date of September 1, 2024. WDFW filed a proposed rulemaking on April 30, 2024, WSR 24–10–080. This filing initiated public comment that will close at midnight on June 21, 2024.

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**Draft motion language:**

Briefing only.

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**Post decision communications plan:**

Briefing only

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