

WAC 220-415-100

Cougar Seasons



Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

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Current Season Structure

- Early season: Sept 1 – Dec 31
- Late season: Jan 1 – Apr 30
- Any legal weapon in both seasons

Washington's 2017 Big Game Hunting Seasons & Regulations

Effective April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018

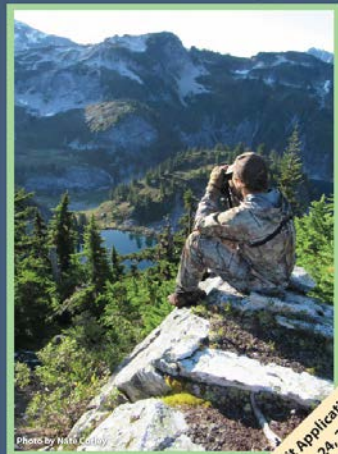


Photo by Neta Corbin



Special Permit Application Due
May 24, 2017

2017 Washington Deer by Deer License Type/Region

General Cougar Seasons

General Seasons:

- Early hunting season: Sept. 1 - Dec. 31
- Late hunting season: Jan. 1 - Apr. 30 or when the harvest guideline is reached, whichever occurs first. A 2018 cougar license tag is required in hunt cougar in April 2018.

Harvest guideline system:

- In hunt areas with a harvest guideline, the cougar late hunting season may close on or after January 1st, or on or more CMTs if cougar harvest meets or exceeds the guideline.
- Starting January 1, hunters may hunt cougar until the hunt area harvest guideline has been reached, or April 30th, whichever occurs first.
- All cougars killed by licensed hunters during the early and late hunting seasons, and seasons authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Commission shall be counted toward the harvest guideline.
- It is each cougar hunter's responsibility to verify if the cougar late hunting season is open or closed in hunt areas with a harvest guideline. Cougar hunters can verify if the season is open or closed by calling the toll free cougar hunting hotline or visiting the Department's website. The hotline and website will be updated weekly beginning January 1.

License/Tag Required:

A valid big game license, which includes cougar as a species option.

ATTENTION - A 2018 cougar license/tag is required to hunt cougar in April 2018.

Bag Limit:

One cougar per license area, including cougar management areas authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. It is unlawful to kill or possess spotted cougar kittens (usually <80 lbs.) or adult cougars accompanied by spotted kittens. Spotted cougars are solitary, observing multiple tracks suggests a female with offspring. However, smaller kittens may not be visible to hunters so please observe and be patient before shooting.

Hunting Methods:

Hunters may use any legal weapon for hunting cougar.

Hunting with Dogs:

The use of dogs to hunt cougar is prohibited statewide except during cougar management areas authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Mandatory Reporting and Weib-Sealing Requirements:

All successful cougar hunters must report cougar harvest to the hotline within 72 hours and must contact a WDFW office or call (see page 3 for regional office phone numbers) to set up an appointment to have the pelt sealed within 7 days of the notification. The skull and tail (both non-forelimb) must be preserved as north and biological samples can be taken. Placing a tick or wedge in the cougar's mouth after harvesting it, aids in the removal of teeth. Excess pelt of skin is left attached to the pelt. No one may possess an open WDFW cougar seal unless it has been cut by a licensed taxidermist or the dealer who has received and inspected the pelt for processing.

Hunt Area	Harvest Guideline	Hunt Area	Harvest Guideline	Hunt Area	Harvest Guideline
GR01-011	3.0	GR03-016, 042, 043, 046	5.0	GR03-022, 030	8.0 ^a
GR01-012	3.0	GR03-017, 018, 048, 049, 050	5.0	GR03-023, 031	8.0
GR01-013	3.0	GR03-019, 020	5.0	GR03-024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 032	8.0
GR01-014	3.0	GR03-021	8.0 ^b	GR03-033	8.0
GR01-015	3.0	GR03-027, 028, 029	5.0		
GR01-016	3.0	GR03-034, 035	5.0		
GR01-017	3.0	GR03-036, 037, 038	5.0		
GR01-018	3.0	GR03-039, 040, 041, 044, 045, 046, 047, 048, 049, 050, 051, 052, 053, 054	5.0		
GR01-019	3.0	GR03-055, 056, 057, 058	5.0		
GR01-020	3.0	GR03-059, 060, 061, 062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 071, 072, 073, 074, 075	5.0		
GR01-021	3.0	GR03-076, 077, 078, 079	5.0		
GR01-022	3.0	GR03-080, 081, 082, 083, 084, 085, 086, 087, 088, 089, 090, 091, 092, 093, 094, 095, 096, 097, 098, 099, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000			

Footnotes:

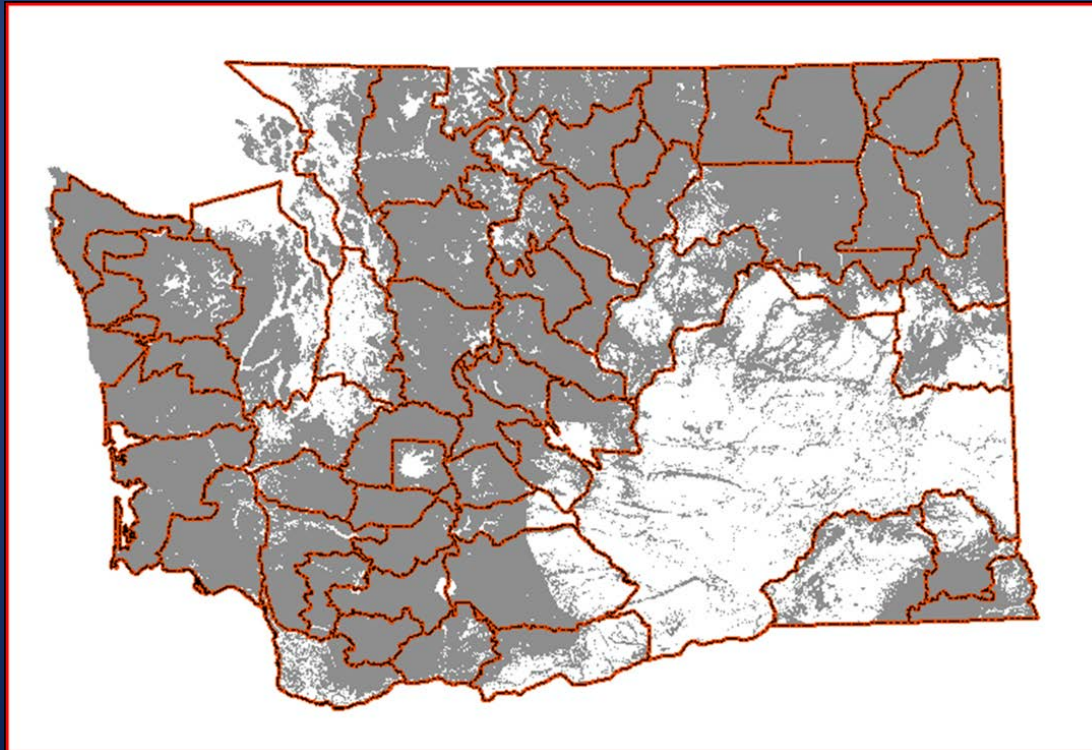
- Only those hunters who have been shown for a quality deer or elk permit on GR03-033 can hunt cougar in this area.
- These units have no harvest guideline.

All hunters who harvest a cougar are required to report their harvest to the Cougar Hotline at: 1-866-364-6858 within 72 hours (press 1 after greeting).

The hotline can also be used to check if Cougar Hunt Areas are open or closed (press 2 after greeting) or go online at: wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/cougar

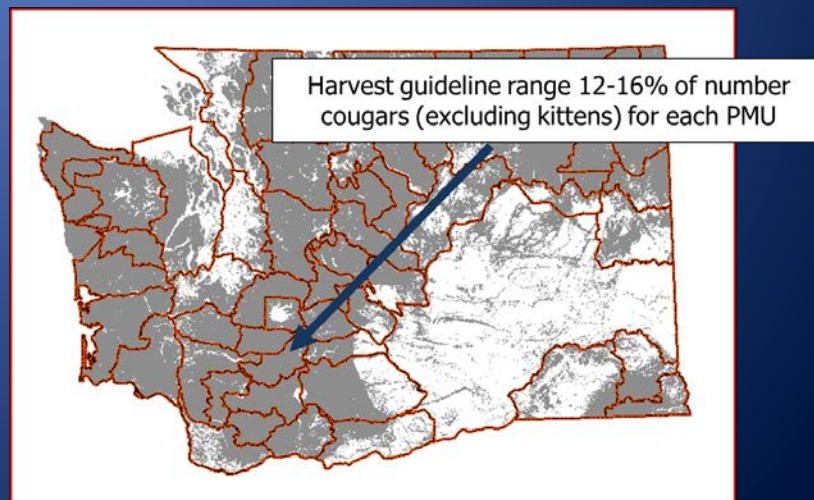
Current Season Structure

- 50 population management units (PMUs) or hunt areas have been identified

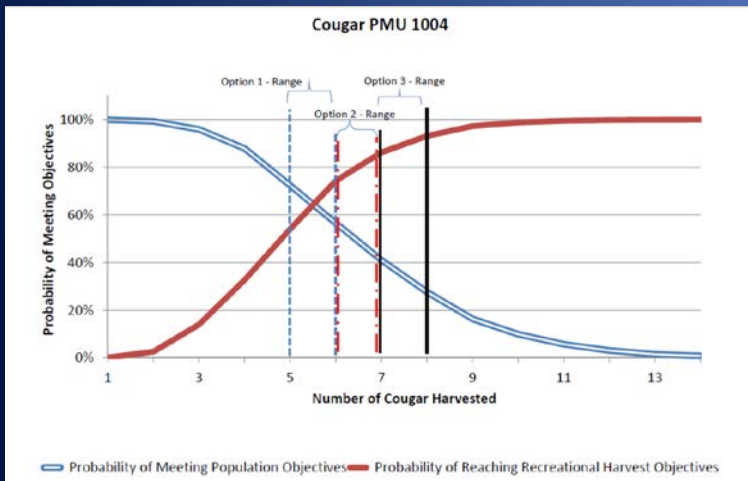
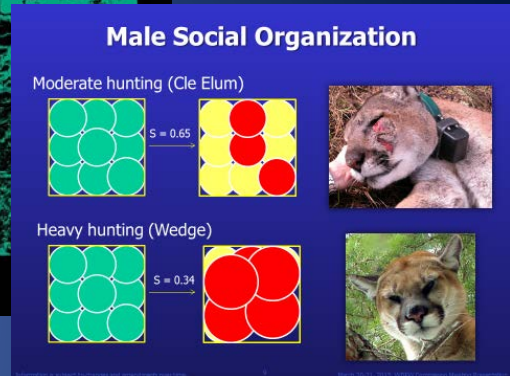
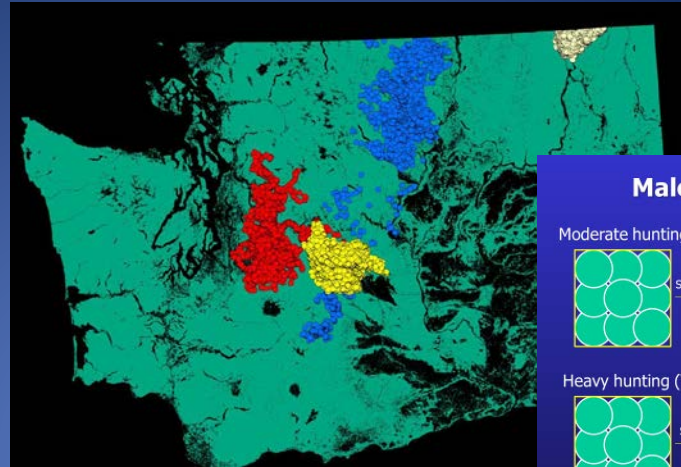
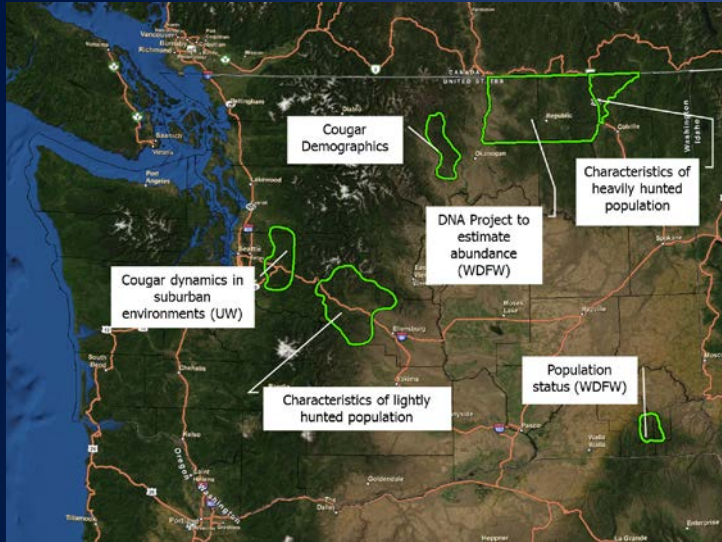


Current Season Structure

- Each PMU has a harvest guideline corresponding to 12-16% of cougar population (excluding kittens)
- Starting Jan 1, the department may close hunt areas that meet or exceed the harvest guideline
 - Cougar Seasons 2015 – present: ~20 PMUs reach the quota and close each year



Guidelines Based on Research



Ecology and Evolution

Open Access

Effects of hunting on cougar spatial organization

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Contents lists available at [Sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Biological Conservation

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/bcon

Wildlife Society Bulletin, DOI: 10.1002/wsb.299

Keywords: Cougar, home range, spatial organization, trophic cascades

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Article history: Received 17 May 2013; Accepted 9 July 2013

Abstract: Cougar populations are often small, which suggests that the survival and population growth of individuals may be affected by hunting pressure. We used a spatially explicit model to evaluate the effects of hunting on cougar spatial organization. We found that hunting pressure can lead to a breakdown of social structure, resulting in smaller home ranges and increased dispersal. This breakdown of social structure may have implications for cougar population viability.

In My Opinion

Research to Regulation: Cougar Social Behavior as a Guide for Management

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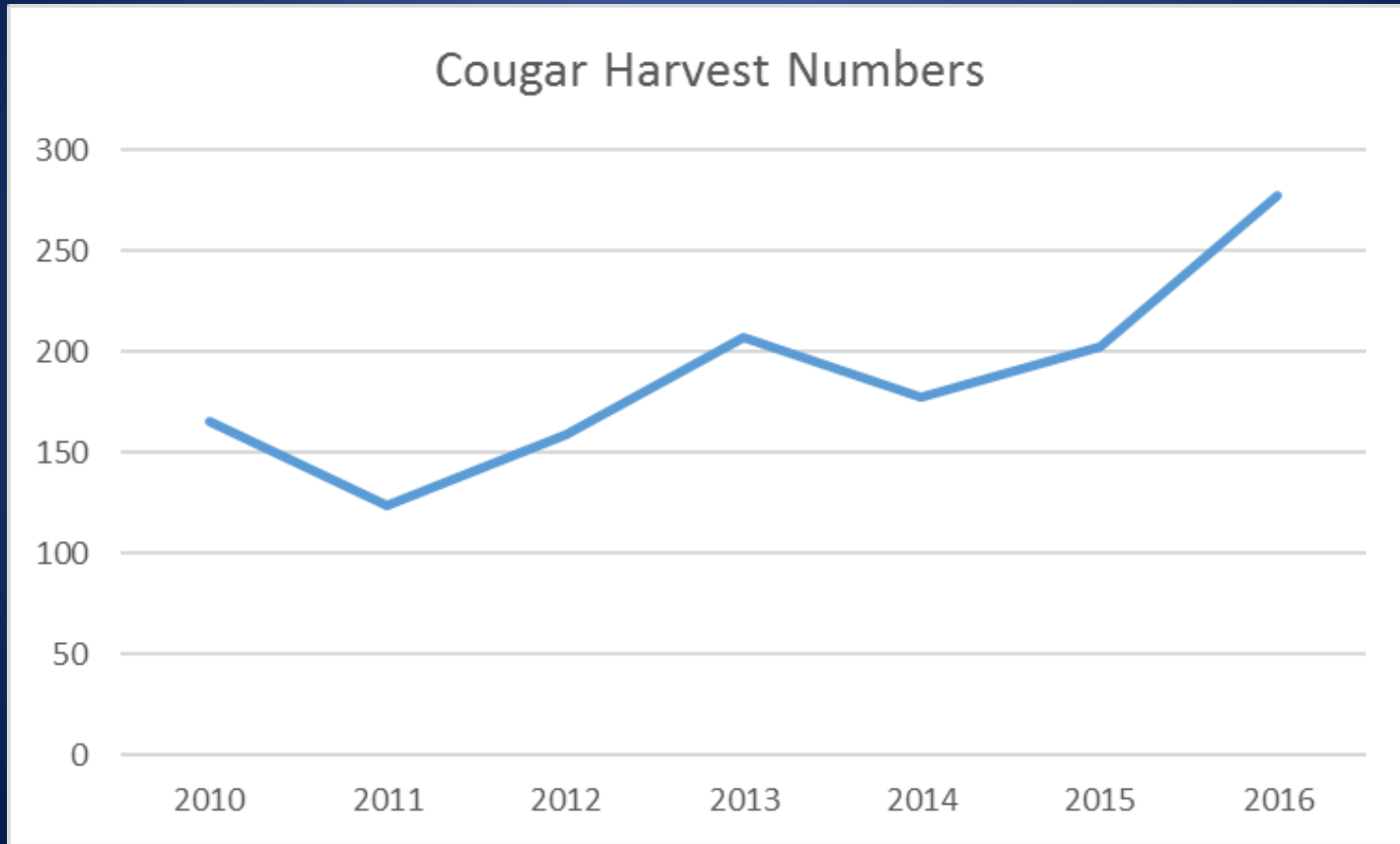
ABSTRACT: Cougar (*Panthera amurens*) populations are a challenge to estimate because of low densities and the difficulty of marking and monitoring individuals. As a result, their management is often based on imperfect data. Current strategies rely on a source-sink concept, which tends to result in spatially clumped harvest within management zones that are typically approximately 10,000 km². Agencies often implement quotas within these zones and designate management objectives to reduce or maintain cougar populations. We propose an approach for cougar management founded on their behavior and social organization, designed to maintain an older age structure that should promote population stability. To achieve these objectives, hunter harvest would be administered within zones approximately 1,000 km² in size to distribute harvest more evenly across the landscape. We also propose replacing the term "quota" with "harvest threshold" because quotas often assume a harvest target or goal rather than a threshold not to exceed. In Washington, USA,

Information

- Cougar populations grow about 14% annually
- Cougar density varies slightly across the state with a median of about 2.2 cougars/100 km² (not including kittens)



Recorded Harvest



Proposed Changes WAC 220-415-100

Cougar Hunting Seasons and Regulations

- Changes: Season dates to reflect 2018-2019 and 2019-2020; harvest guideline remain status quo
- Rationale: Correctly identify season dates



Public Comments

- Cougar Seasons: 118 received
 - 14 Support
 - Most did not expand; suggestions: raising quotas, lengthen season, amend reporting requirement and close the season
 - 7 Neutral
 - 98 Opposed
 - Most provided suggestion: expand the season and increase the quotas. Other suggestions: allow night hunting, allow hounds, allow year round hunting, conduct more research, create one season versus early and late seasons

Questions?

