



RECEIVED

JUN 18 2018

Ravalli County Commissioners



Wildlife Division  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
June 15, 2018

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is requesting public review and comment on the following items. Supporting information on this item can be found on our website under "Opportunity for Public Comment" at [fwp.mt.gov/hunting/](http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/) or directly by using the links below.

**2018/2019 Furbearer & Trapping Seasons and 2018 Quotas – Proposed**

Furbearer season structure and quotas are defined by the F&W Commission. Proposed changes for 2018/2019 are addressed below. All other season elements and quotas are proposed as unchanged from 2017/2018.

- Region 3: Decrease bobcat quota from 250 to 150.

Region 3 is proposing this change because both the juvenile:adult ratio and the number of bobcats caught per day are declining, likely indicating a declining population. Also, trappers are reporting concerns about fewer bobcats and observing fewer rabbits, the bobcats' main prey. A detailed justification for the above proposed change is in the commission packet.

FWP is proposing to clarify the definition of a center swivel on the underside of a ground-set foothold trap to be swivel within 5 chain links from the trap and the chain/swivel connected to the underside of the trap as close to the center as trap design reasonably allows.

FWP is also proposing to clarify the language about trapping within 1000' of occupied dwellings. Below is the current language with the proposed new sentence highlighted.

**Occupied Dwellings** – Ground sets, including all snares, are prohibited within 1000 feet of an occupied dwelling without written notification of the occupant(s). **This requirement does not apply to live cage traps or mouse and rat traps.**

**Swift Fox Conservation Strategy**

FWP is also asking the Commission to approve for public comment the draft swift fox conservation strategy. This document promotes swift fox conservation and management by formulating a statewide strategy that facilitates coordinated and effective efforts on the part of interested organizations. This includes development and use of the best available science and promotion of efficient allocation of resources based on common priorities.

## **Nongame Check-Off Workplan**

Under the provisions of 87-5-122, MCA, “the FWP Commission shall review and annually approve the nongame wildlife program’s projects recommended by the Department for funding from the nongame wildlife account. The commission shall provide for public comment during the review and approval process.” While final 2017 tax year donations are unknown at this time, the average received by FWP from the 2004-2016 tax years was \$30,000/year. FWP is proposing some combination of the following work in FY19 dependent on the final allocation:

- \$ 5,000** Inventory, monitoring and conservation work on Montana Species of Concern and species in need of inventory as determined through a formal ranking process.
- \$15,000** Non-federal match for a project to learn more about bat roost sites and winter hibernacula in the face of an impending disease.
- \$10,000** Wildlife viewing and outreach projects that encourage more Montanans to appreciate Montana wildlife.
- \$ 5,000** Competitive graduate student stipend for nongame research.

## **TO MAKE A COMMENT**

For further clarification or additional materials, you may call the Wildlife Division office at 406-444-2612 or email at [fwpwld@mt.gov](mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov). Comments will be accepted: online by using any of the links below; in writing sent to the address above; and by email to [fwpwld@mt.gov](mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov).

## **COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE & FINAL ADOPTION MEETING**

All proposed items will be accepting public comments until **Sunday, July 15, 2018 at 5 p.m.** with final adoption at the **August 9** Commission Meeting.

### **✓ 2018/2019 Furbearer & Trapping Seasons and 2018 Quotas-Proposed**

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2018/trappingSeasons.html>

### **✓ Swift Fox Conservation Strategy-Proposed**

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/publicComments/2018/swiftFox.html>

### **✓ Nongame Check-off Workplan-Proposed**

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/publicComments/2018/nongameCheckoff.html>