

R657. Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources.

R657-10. Taking Cougar.

R657-10-1. Purpose and Authority.

(1) Under authority of Sections 23A-2-304 and 23A-2-305, the Wildlife Board has established this rule for taking and pursuing cougar.

(2) Specific dates, areas, number of permits, limits, and other administrative details which may change annually are published in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

R657-10-2. Definitions.

(1) Terms used in this rule are defined in Section 23A-1-101.

(2) In addition:

(a) "Canned hunt" means that a cougar is treed, cornered, held at bay or its ability to escape is otherwise restricted to allow a person who was not a member of the initial hunting party to arrive and take the cougar.

(b) "Compensation" means anything of economic value over \$100 that is paid, loaned, granted, given, donated, or transferred to a dog handler for or in consideration of pursuing cougar for any purpose.

(c) "Cougar" means Puma concolor, commonly known as mountain lion, lion, puma, panther or catamount.

(d) "Dog handler" means the person in the field that is responsible for transporting, releasing, tracking, controlling, managing, training, commanding and retrieving the dogs involved in the pursuit. The owner of the dogs is presumed the dog handler when the owner is in the field during pursuit.

(e) "Evidence of sex" means the sex organs of a cougar, including a penis, scrotum or vulva.

(f) "Green pelt" means the untanned hide or skin of any cougar.

(g) "Harvest objective" means an identified limit on the number of cougars that may be harvested during the season on a particular unit.

(h) "Immediate family member" means a livestock owner's spouse, child, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepchild and grandchild.

(i) "Kitten" means a cougar that has obvious spots on its sides or its back or has obvious leg barring coloration.

(j) "Location of Harvest" means the exact location that the cougar is killed. GPS coordinates are preferred.

(k) "Private lands" means any lands that are not public lands, excluding Indian trust lands.

(l) "Public lands" means any lands owned by the state, a political subdivision or independent entity of the state, or the United States, excluding Indian trust lands, that are open to the public for purposes of engaging in pursuit.

(m) "Pursue" means to chase, tree, corner or hold a cougar at bay.

(n) "Trail Camera" means a device that is not held or manually operated by a person and is used to capture images, video, or location data of wildlife using heat or motion to trigger the device.

(o) "Written permission" means written authorization from the owner or person in charge to enter upon private lands and must include:

(i) the name and signature of the owner or person in charge;

(ii) the address and phone number of the owner or person in charge;

(iii) the name of the dog handler given permission to enter the private lands;

(iv) a brief description of the pursuit activity authorized;

(v) the appropriate dates; and

(vi) a general description of the property.

R657-10-3. License for Taking Cougar.

Pursuant to Title 23A, Chapter 19 Licenses, Permits, and Tags, any person who first obtains a valid hunting or combination license may hunt, pursue, or trap cougar during the time period for which the license is valid.

R657-10-4. Hunting Hours.

Except as provided in Rule R657-11, [Taking Furbearers and Trapping](#), Cougar may be taken or pursued only between one-half hour before official sunrise through one-half hour after official sunset.

R657-10-5. Firearms, Archery Equipment, Crossbows, and Airguns.

 (1) A person may only use weapons identified in Sections R657-5-8 through R657-5-11 or;

 (2) [Rimfire firearms may be used as legal weapons if the cougar has been trapped and remains held in the trapping device.](#)

R657-10-6. Traps and Trapping Devices.

Cougar may be taken by trapping ~~provided a person complies in compliance~~ with ~~all rules set forth in~~ Rule R657-11, [Taking Furbearers and Trapping](#).

R657-10-7. State Parks.

- (1) Hunting of wildlife is allowed within the boundaries of all state park areas except for those areas and hunts specifically closed by the Division of State Parks in Section R651-614-4.
- (2) State laws regarding possession and discharge of dangerous weapons apply in state park areas open to hunting.

R657-10-8. Prohibited Methods.

(1) Cougar may be taken or pursued only during open seasons and using methods prescribed in this Rule, [Rule R657-11, Taking Furbearer and Trapping](#), and the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar. Otherwise, under [Title 23A, the Wildlife Resources Code Act](#), it is unlawful for any person to pursue, possess, capture, kill, injure, drug, rope, trap, snare or in any way harm or transport cougar.

(2)(a) A person may not pursue a single cougar in repeated pursuits such that it renders the cougar physically unable to escape.

(b) After a cougar has been pursued, chased, treed, cornered or held at bay, a person may not, in any manner, restrict or hinder the animal's ability to escape if the person does not intend to harvest the cougar.

(c) A person must make reasonable efforts to call dogs off of a cougar that has been cornered or held at bay.

(3) A person may not engage in a canned hunt.

(4) A person may not take any wildlife from an airplane or any other airborne vehicle or device or any motorized terrestrial or aquatic vehicle, including snowmobiles and other recreational vehicles.

(5) Electronic locating equipment may not be used to locate cougars wearing electronic radio devices.

(6)(a) A person may not place, maintain, or use a trail camera as prohibited in Section 23A-5-307;

(b) engage in the sale or purchase of trail camera or other non-handheld device media, including images, video, location, time, or date data to take, attempt to take, or aid in the take or attempted take of cougar; or

(c) engage in the storage and sale or purchase of stored media, including image, video, location, time or date data to take, attempt to take, or aid in the take or attempted take of cougar.

(7)(a) A person may not use any protected gps location data or protected radio collar data to locate, track, take, or retrieve or any attempt to locate, track, take, or retrieve cougar or their parts.

(b) For the purposes of this subsection, "protected" means "a [recordsrecord](#) classified as protected under the Government Records Access and Management Act, Utah Code Ann. §63G-2-305."

R657-10-9. Spotlighting.

(1) Except as provided in Section 23A-1-204:

(a) a person may not use or cast the rays of any spotlight, headlight or other artificial light to locate protected wildlife while having in possession a firearm or other weapon or device that could be used to take or injure protected wildlife; and

(b) the use of a spotlight or other artificial light in a field, woodland or forest where protected wildlife are generally found is prima facie evidence of attempting to locate protected wildlife.

(2) This section does not apply to

the use of the headlights of a motor vehicle or other artificial light in a usual manner where there is no attempt or intent to locate protected wildlife.

R657-10-10. Party Hunting.

A person may not take a cougar for another person.

R657-10-11. Use of Dogs.

(1) Dogs may be used to take or pursue cougar only during open seasons as provided in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar.

(2) A dog handler may pursue cougar provided they possesses:

(a) a valid hunting or combination license issued to the dog handler; or

(b) the documentation and certifications required in Subsection R657-10-25(2) to pursue cougar for compensation.

(3) When dogs are used in the pursuit of a cougar, the licensed hunter intending to take the cougar must be present when the dogs are released and must continuously participate in the hunt thereafter until the hunt is completed.

(4) When dogs are used to take a cougar and there is not an open pursuit season, the dog handler must have:

(a) a valid hunting or combination license; or

(b)(i) the documentation and certifications required in Subsection R657-10-25(2) to pursue cougar for compensation;

and

(ii) be accompanied, as provided in Subsection (3), by a paying client possessing a hunting or combination license.

(5) A dog handler may pursue cougar under:

(a) a valid hunting or combination license during the season and in the areas designated by the Wildlife Board in the guidebook open to pursuit; or

(b) the pursuit for compensation provisions in this rule only during the seasons and in the areas designated by the Wildlife Board in the guidebook open to pursuit.

(6)(a) An individual may not:

(i) release into the field more than the maximum number of dogs allowed in a single pursuit;

- (ii) pursue a cougar with more than the maximum number of dogs allowed in a single pursuit, regardless of whether the individual owns or controls the dogs encountered in the field; or
- (iii) harvest a cougar that was pursued using more than the allowable maximum number of dogs.
- (b) An individual may not pursue or take a cougar using more than 16 dogs in a single pursuit.
- (c) The maximum number of dogs allowed in a single pursuit is cumulative across all members of a hunting party, even if multiple members of the hunting party possess authorization to use dogs to pursue cougar.
- (7)(a) A dog handler pursuing cougar may retrieve dogs that separate from the pack, provided the dog handler:
 - (i) takes reasonable steps to keep the pack together before and during pursuit;
 - (ii) separates from the license holder exclusively to retrieve stray dogs and does not attempt to actively pursue cougar during the retrieval process; and
 - (iii) immediately releases any cougar incidentally treed or held at bay by the stray dogs.
- (b) Dogs that separate from the pack continue to count toward the maximum number of dogs allowable in pursuit.
- (c) A dog handler retrieving stray dogs under this subsection must still possess the documentation initially required to use dogs to pursue cougar as provided in this rule.

R657-10-12. Tagging Requirements.

A person may not possess a cougar pelt or unskinned carcass without a valid permanent possession tag affixed to the pelt or unskinned carcass. This provision does not apply to a person in possession of a properly tagged carcass or pelt within 48 hours after the kill, provided the person was issued and is in possession of a valid hunting or combination license.

R657-10-13. Evidence of Sex and Age.

- (1) Evidence of sex must remain attached to the carcass or pelt of each cougar until a permanent tag has been attached by the division.
- (2) The pelt and skull must be presented to the division in an unfrozen condition to allow the division to gather management data.
- (3) It is mandatory that a tooth (PM1) be removed by the division at the time of permanent tagging to be used for aging purposes.
- (4) The division may seize any pelt not accompanied by its skull or not having sufficient evidence of biological sex designation attached.

R657-10-14. Permanent Tag.

- (1)(a) Each cougar must be taken by the license holder to a conservation officer or division office within 48 hours after the date of kill to have a permanent possession tag affixed to the pelt or unskinned carcass and for the removal of a tooth.
- (b) After regular business hours, on weekends, or on holidays, a conservation officer may be reached by contacting the local police dispatch office.
- (2) A person may not possess a green pelt after the 48-hour check-in period, or ship a green pelt out of Utah, or present a green pelt to a taxidermist if the green pelt does not have a permanent possession tag attached.
- (3) The location of harvest and a tooth sample must be provided to the division during the check-in process.

R657-10-15. Transporting Cougar.

- (1) Within 48 hours of legally harvesting a cougar, a person may ~~be~~ transport the cougar if they possess a valid license.
- (2) A person transporting a cougar beyond 48 hours after legally harvesting a cougar, ~~they~~ must possess a valid license and a permanent possession tag described in Section R657-10-13.

R657-10-16. Exporting Cougar from Utah.

- (1) A person may export a legally taken cougar or its parts if that person has a valid license and the cougar is properly tagged with a permanent possession tag.
- (2) A person may not ship or cause to be shipped from Utah, a cougar pelt without first obtaining a shipping permit issued by an authorized division representative.

R657-10-17. Donating.

- (1) A person may donate protected wildlife or their parts to another person as provided in Section 23A-1-205.
- (2) A green pelt of any cougar donated to another person must have a permanent possession tag affixed.
- (3) The written statement of donation must be retained with the pelt.

R657-10-18. Purchasing or Selling.

- (1) Legally obtained, ~~green or~~ tanned cougar hides may be purchased or sold.
- (2) A person may not purchase, sell, offer for sale, or barter a tooth, claw, paw, or skull of any cougar.

R657-10-19. Waste of Wildlife.

- (1) A person may not waste or permit to be wasted or spoiled any protected wildlife or their parts.

- (2) The skinned carcass of a cougar may be left in the field and does not constitute waste of wildlife.

R657-10-20. Livestock Depredation and Human Health and Safety.

(1) If a cougar is harassing, chasing, disturbing, harming, attacking or killing livestock, or has committed such an act within the past 96 hours:

(a) in depredation cases, the livestock owner, an immediate family member or an employee of the owner on a regular payroll, and not hired specifically to take cougar, may kill the cougar;

(b) a landowner or livestock owner may notify the division of the depredation or human health and safety concerns, who shall authorize a local hunter to take the offending cougar or notify a [USDA, Wildlife ServicesUtah Department of Agriculture and Food \(UDAF\)](#) specialist; or

(c) the livestock owner may notify a [USDA, Wildlife ServicesUDAF](#) specialist of the depredation who may take the depredating cougar.

(2) Depredating cougar may be taken at any time by a [USDA, Wildlife ServicesUDAF](#) specialist, supervised by the [Wildlife ServicesLivestock Protection](#) program, while acting in the performance of the person's assigned duties and in accordance with procedures approved by the division.

(3)(a) A depredating cougar may be taken by those persons authorized in Subsection (1)(a) with:

(i) any weapon authorized for taking cougar; or

(ii) with the use of traps or snares

(4)(a) Any cougar taken under Subsection (1)(a) or (4)(a) shall remain the property of the state and must be reported to a division office or employee within 96 hours.

(b) The division may issue a cougar damage permit to a person who has killed a depredating cougar under Subsection (1)(a) that authorizes the person to keep the carcass.

(c) A person that takes a cougar under Subsection (1)(a) or (4)(a) may acquire and use a hunting or combination license in the same year.

R657-10-21. Survey.

Each license holder who is contacted for a survey about their cougar hunting experience should participate in the survey regardless of success. Participation in the survey helps the division evaluate population trends, harvest success and collect other valuable information.

R657-10-22. Taking Cougar.

(1) A person may not:

(a) take or pursue a female cougar with a kitten; or

(b) repeatedly pursue, chase, tree, corner, or hold at bay, the same cougar during the same day after the cougar has been released.

(2) Any cougar may be taken during the prescribed seasons, except a kitten or any cougar accompanied by one or more kittens.

(3) A person may not take a cougar wearing a radio or GPS collar on any unit identified in the guidebook of the Wildlife Board for taking cougar as being closed to the take of collared animals.

R657-10-23. Wildlife Management Areas.

(1) A person may not use motor vehicles on division-owned wildlife management areas closed to motor vehicle use during the winter without first obtaining written authorization from the appropriate division regional office.

(2) The division may, in its sole discretion, authorize limited motor vehicle access to its wildlife management areas closed to such use during the winter provided:

(a) the person seeking access to retrieve a cougar in the area;

(b) motor vehicle access is necessary to effectively hunt or pursue a cougar; and

(c) motor vehicle access will not interfere with wintering wildlife or wildlife habitat.

KEY: wildlife, cougar, game laws

Date of Last Change: October 1, 2023

Notice of Continuation: July 2, 2021

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: 23A-2-304; 23A-2-305