



GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BRIAN C. STEED
Executive Director

Division of Wildlife Resources

MICHAL D. FOWLKS
Division Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board/Regional Advisory Council Members

FROM: Darren DeBloois, Predatory Mammals and Furbearer Program Coordinator

DATE: July 9, 2020

SUBJECT: 2020-21 COUGAR PERMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of new legislation implemented in 2020, some actions have taken place under authority of the Division Director. These actions include predator management plans for several of the designated cougar hunting units in the state. Cougar units with predator management plans in place will be open for unlimited year-round harvest to decrease cougar population densities. The objective of this management action is to lower predation rates on mule deer and big horn sheep populations that have seen significant declines in recent years. Units under predator management plans are included in the attached chart with the hunt strategy listed as "PMP".

Additionally, the Division Director has declared a fall spot and stalk season for cougars beginning August 1, 2020 and ending December 31, 2020. Hunters who want to take advantage of this hunt may purchase a \$30 permit over the counter and take a cougar without the use of dogs during this season.

The above actions have been implemented and will be presented as informational items during this years RAC and Board process.

The following recommendations will be presented for public input and Wildlife Board consideration:

Permit and harvest objective recommendations can be found in the attached chart. If the listed hunter strategy is HO (harvest objective) the recommendation is for a quota, if it is Split the recommendation is for permits available through the draw. We have made these recommendations taking into consideration cougar harvest data from 2017-2020, prey population dynamics for mule deer and bighorn sheep, and using the Utah Cougar Management Plan. Adjustments to permits are within the parameters set out in the Utah Cougar Management Plan, and will help ensure healthy cougar populations while addressing local issues of concern including impacts to specific prey populations, livestock depredation and maintaining cougar hunting opportunities across the State.

The recommendation table includes several categories of management actions that a cougar unit can fall into depending on how the three-year average of harvest parameters aligns with the

management goals for the unit. The table divides cougar units into those categories and indicates under the “Plan Action for Permits/Quota” column the options for permit or quota changes spelled out in the plan. You will also find a column for the difference from last year’s permits/quota which shows how this year’s recommendation compares to last year.

Recommended season dates are as follows:

Split

Limited entry portion: November 4, 2020 through February 21, 2021

Harvest objective portion: February 27, 2021 through May 31, 2021

Mt Dutton: February 27, 2021 through November 2, 2021

Harvest objective and unlimited: November 4, 2020 through November 2, 2021

La Sal; San Juan, Mountains; and Book Cliffs, East: no dogs April 15 through November 2, 2021

(This restriction is recommended because of bear hunting restrictions at the same time on these units)

Pursuit season: November 4, 2020 through May 31, 2021

La Sal; San Juan, Mountains; and Book Cliffs East units November 4, 2020 through April 15, 2021

Restrictions on the La Sal; San Juan, Mountains; and Book Cliffs, East are to avoid confusion during non-resident bear hunting restrictions on those units. Hunters with valid bear permits during this time frame can use dogs to pursue and/or hunt bears but not for cougar hunting. Cougar take during this time frame on these units tends to be low.

We are recommending some changes to cougar rule (R657-10). First, we recommend increasing the season take limit from one to two cougars between July 1 and June 30 or the following year. Second, we clarify when it would be illegal to take a collared cougar. If the Division decides to limit the take of collared cougars, units where this would be prohibited will be listed in the cougar guidebook. We are not recommending any restrictions currently. We are adding language that exempts cougar hunters from wearing hunter orange during other center fire rifle hunts. Details of these changes can be seen in the red-line rule included with this packet.

Unit Number	Unit Name	Summary of Harvest Data from last 3 Years					Plan Permit/Quota Adjustments	Permits/Quota Recommendation	Hunt Strategy	Recommended Permit/Quota Change
		Males	Females	Total	% females (Target <40%)	% >5 yrs old (Target 15 - 20%)				
1b	Box Elder, Desert	20	12	32	38%	21%	Maintain or increase	18	HO	0
1c	Box Elder, Pilot Mtn	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	biologist discretion	6	HO	0
6	Chalk Creek	30	17	47	36%	14%	maintain or increase	30	HO	0
27	Paunsaugunt	10	2	12	17%	30%	maintain or increase	14	HO	4
30a	Pine Valley, North	30	10	40	25%	24%	maintain or increase	20	HO	4
9bcd	South Slope, Bonanza/Diamond Mtn/Vernal	37	22	59	37%	15%	maintain or increase	24	HO	0
17a4	Wasatch Mtns, Salt Lake	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	biologist discretion	6	HO	0
19a	West Desert, Mtn Ranges	7	3	10	30%	10%	maintain or increase	8	HO	0
22a	Beaver, East	30	11	41	27%	38%	maintain or increase	30	Split	7
1a	Box Elder, Raft River	15	5	20	25%	11%	maintain or increase	10	Split	0
16a	Central Mtns, Nebo (excludes West Face)	31	10	41	24%	13%	maintain of increase	15	Split	0
5	East Canyon	17	8	25	32%	9%	maintain	10	Split	0
5a	East Canyon, Davis	9	5	14	36%	8%	biologist discretion	5	Split	0
25a	Fish Lake	27	16	43	37%	9%	Increase	12	Split	0
7	Kamas	2	1	3	33%	33%	Maintain or increase	7	Split	5
23	Monroe	30	5	35	14%	17%	Increase	22	Split	-1
4	Morgan-South Rich	27	19	46	41%	15%	biologist discretion	22	Split	-1
24	Mt Dutton	15	12	27	44%	8%	decrease	14	Split	-1
18a	Oquirrh-Stansbury, East	14	7	21	33%	18%	maintain or increase	12	Split	4
28	Panguitch Lake	28	11	39	28%	16%	maintain or increase	18	Split	6
17a3	Wasatch Mtns, West-Strawberry	25	4	29	14%	10%	maintain or increase	11	Split	0

19b	West Desert, Tintic-Vernon	10	4	14	29%	23%	biologist discretion	12	Split	0
10b/11b	Book Cliffs, Rattlesnake Canyon/Nine Mile, South	0	3	3	100%	0%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
26	Kaiparowits	3	3	6	50%	20%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
14b	San Juan, Desert	0	2	2	100%	0%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
12	San Rafael	1	1	2	50%	50%	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	
STATEWIDE TOTALS		990	551	1,541	36%	17%		326		27

Predator Management Plan Units (Informational)

Unit Number	Unit Name	Summary of Harvest Data from last 3 Years					Plan Permit/Quota Adjustments	Permits/Quota Recommendation	Hunt Strategy
		Males	Females	Total	% females (Target <40%)	% >5 yrs old (Target 15 - 20%)			
2	Cache	39	41	80	51%	14%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
16a1	Central Mtns, Nebo-West Face	20	9	29	31%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
16b2	Central Mtns, Northeast Manti	20	12	32	38%	32%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
16b1	Central Mtns, Northwest Manti	19	11	30	37%	8%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
16c2	Central Mtns, Southeast Manti	35	11	46	24%	22%	Unlimited	PMP deer	PMP
16c1	Central Mtns, Southwest Manti	34	15	49	31%	12%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
21a	Fillmore, Oak Creek	4	3	7	43%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
21b	Fillmore, Pahvant	34	13	47	28%	28%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
15	Henry Mtns	10	7	17	41%	6%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
13	La Sal	13	7	20	35%	5%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
11a	Nine Mile, North	41	31	72	43%	10%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
8ab	North Slope, Summit/West Daggett	14	6	20	30%	5%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
8c	North Slope, Three Corners	6	2	8	25%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
3	Ogden	25	24	49	49%	21%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
18b	Oquirrh-Stansbury, West	8	8	16	50%	42%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
30b	Pine Valley, South	12	6	18	33%	14%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP

25c	Plateau, Boulder	29	12	41	29%	26%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
25b	Plateau, Thousand Lakes	1	5	6	83%	20%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
14a	San Juan, Mountains	28	17	45	38%	24%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
9a	South Slope, Yellowstone	12	10	22	45%	13%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
20	Southwest Desert	17	14	31	45%	16%	Unlimited	PMP Deer	PMP
17bc	Wasatch Mtns, Avintaquin/Currant Creek	46	17	63	26.98%	18.42%	New Boundary	PMP BHS	PMP
17a2	Wasatch Mtns, Cascade	7	7	14	50%	20%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
17a1	Wasatch Mtns, Timpanogos	9	9	18	50%	19%	Unlimited	PMP BHS	PMP
29	Zion	34	24	58	41%	18%	Unlimited	PMP BHS/Deer	PMP