

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Mountain Lion Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:61

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	July 20, 2023	Chamberlain
	Public Hearing	Sept 7, 2023	Watertown
	Finalization	Sept 7-8, 2023	Watertown

SEASON INFORMATION

Duration of Recommendation: 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 hunting seasons

Season Dates: Black Hills Fire Protection District:

December 26, 2023 – April 30, 2024

December 26, 2024 – April 30, 2025

Outside Black Hills Fire Protection District:

December 26, 2023 - Dec. 25, 2024

December 26, 2024 – Dec. 25, 2025

Open unit: Statewide

Licenses: Unlimited (1 license per individual), residents only

Harvest Limit: Black Hills Fire Protection District: 60 mountain lions or 40 female mountain lions (includes Custer State Park)

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. No person may harvest more than one (1) mountain lion in a season.
2. No person may hunt mountain lions with the aid of traps or bait.
3. Shooting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.
4. No mountain lion with a spotted coat (kitten) and no mountain lion accompanying another mountain lion may be harvested.
5. A person may use an electronic call to hunt mountain lions.
6. All firearms, muzzleloaders, and archery equipment must meet the same minimum requirements as established in administrative rule for deer hunting.
7. The Game, Fish and Parks Commission, by resolution, may authorize the mountain lion season to extend beyond April 30.
8. The use of dogs to hunt mountain lions is only allowed during those specified hunting intervals in Custer State Park that allow for the use of dogs and outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District on private land with permission of the landowner or lessee. However, pursuit of a mountain lion by dogs that originates on private land may cross over or culminate on private land, with permission from the landowner or lessee, or on public land, unless expressly prohibited by the managing entity.
9. In Custer State Park, a person using dogs shall attempt to harvest the first legal mountain lion they have a reasonable opportunity to harvest, except under the condition where the lion pursued shows obvious signs of lactation.
10. Licensed hunters must accompany the dog handler when the dogs are released and must continuously participate in the hunt thereafter until the hunt is completed.
11. Custer State Park is closed to mountain lion hunting except for 75 mountain lion licensees who possess a valid mountain lion license and a temporary access permit structured to include:
 - (a) Four hunting intervals each having 15 access permits in which hunting with dogs is not allowed.
 - (b) Five hunting intervals each having three access permits in which hunting with dogs is allowed.
 - (c) Hunting in Custer State Park shall begin with an interval that allows the use of dogs and rotate every 14 days with an interval that does not allow the use of dogs until the

- lion season closes in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. The temporary access permits are issued free-of-cost and may be issued by a random drawing.
12. All mountain lions harvested within the Black Hills must be presented to a department representative at the Rapid City Regional Office or Custer State Park Headquarters within 24 hours of harvest for inspection. Any person who harvests a mountain lion outside of the Black Hills region must present the mountain lion to a department representative within 24 hours of harvest.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Recommended changes from last year: None

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Using the population estimate of 361 in 2021/22, the mountain lion population was expected to decrease to 274 by 2022/24 based on a female mountain lion harvest of 25 each year. Twenty-five females were harvested in the Black Hills in 2021/2022 (42 total harvest) and twenty-six females were harvested in 2022/2023 (44 total harvest). The population estimate in 2022/23 was 275 (Figure 1). If another 26 females are harvested next year, the population is expected to decrease to just over 200. Alternatively, if the harvest limit is achieved and 40 females are harvested next year, the population is expected to decrease to under 200 mountain lions, and below the population objective of 200 to 300 (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Lincoln-Peterson mark-recapture population estimates for mountain lions in the Black Hills from 2009/2010 to 2022/2023 (blue line with 95% confidence intervals). The gray shaded region indicates the Black Hills mountain lion population objective.

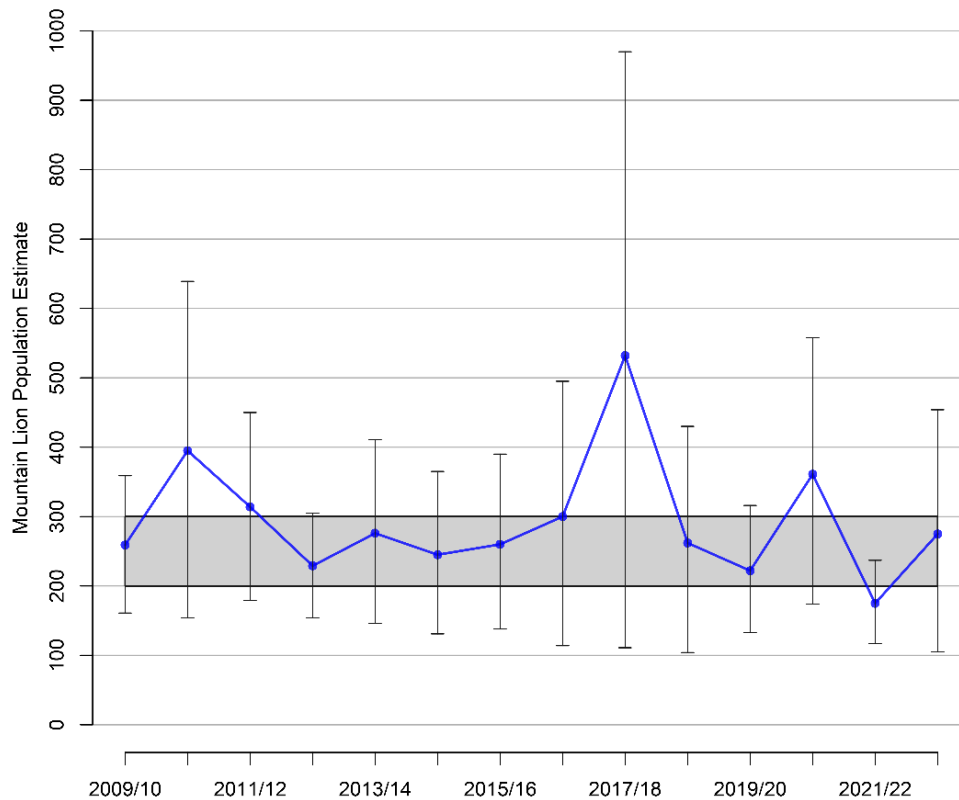
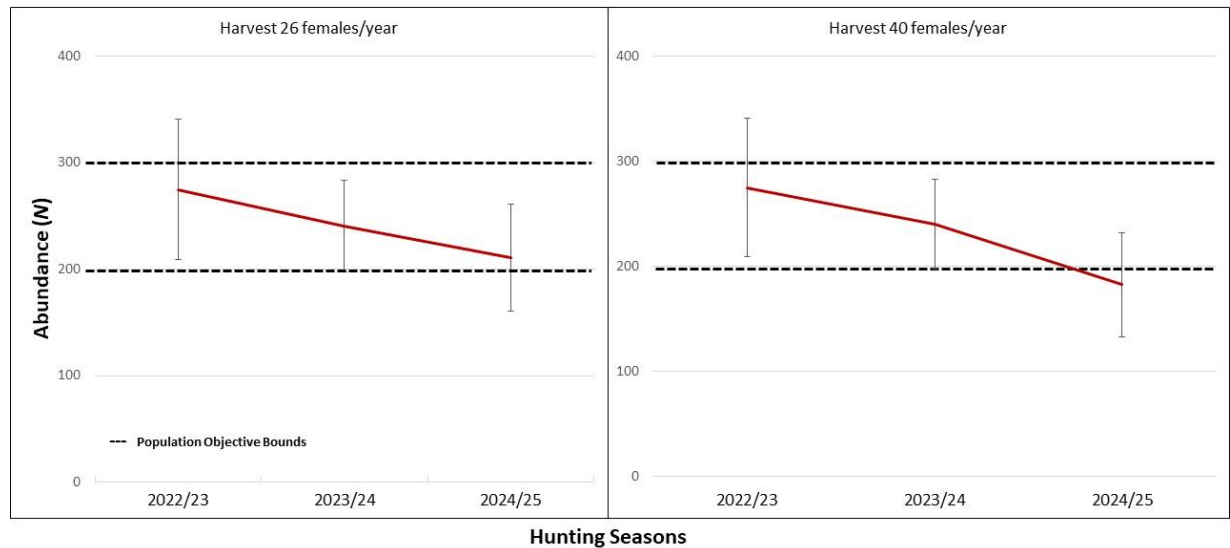


Figure 2. Projected Black Hills pre-2024/25 hunting season population estimate (red line with 95% confidence intervals) based on harvest of 26 (left panel) or 40 (right panel) female mountain lions in 2023/2024. The Black Hills population objective is the area between the dashed black lines.



RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue – NA
2. Historical Considerations – NA
3. Biological Considerations – NA
4. Social Considerations – NA
5. Financial considerations – NA

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? NA
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable.

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____