

**2016/2017
Black Hills Mountain Lion Season:
Hunter Survey Results**

HD-3-17.AMS

**Cynthia L. Longmire, Ph.D.
Human Dimensions Specialist
South Dakota Game, Fish, & Parks**



Longmire, C. L. 2017. Black Hills Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results. Report ID# HD-3-17.AMS. Pierre, SD: South Dakota Game, Fish, & Parks.

This report summarizes results from the South Dakota GFP's hunter survey for the 2016/2017 Black Hills (including Custer State Park) mountain lion season. A mix-mode survey using both Internet and mail was administered to all licensed mountain lion hunters. Overall, 1,733 hunters completed surveys for a total response rate of 68%.

KEYWORDS: mountain lions; Black Hills; Custer State Park; hunter survey

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in survey comments are the views of the commenting respondent(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks or the author(s) of this report. Neither the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks nor the author(s) guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of any opinion or view expressed in respondents' comments. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks reserves the right, but not obligation, to remove at its discretion any language which discloses personally identifiable information about respondents or any other individual, as well as language which is obscene, profane, offensive, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory or otherwise unlawful.

“Authorized Use – This data is the property of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks. No part of this report may be used (including but not limited to use in publications and/or presentations), redistributed, copied or reproduced in any form, without the prior written consent of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks. Any use, redistribution, copying or reproduction of the data appearing in this report without the prior written consent of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks is expressly prohibited.”

Published by:
SD GAME, FISH AND PARKS
PIERRE, SD

August 2017

For Additional Copies:
SD GAME, FISH AND PARKS
Human Dimensions
523 E. Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Visit our homepage at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/>

Executive Summary

2016/2017 Black Hills Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results

HD-3-17.AMS

Cynthia L. Longmire, Ph.D.

- 2,561 total licenses sold as of March 31, 2017
- 57 total permits issued for Custer State Park (CSP)
- 1,733 survey responses received
- 68% total response rate (75% CSP response rate)

BLACK HILLS



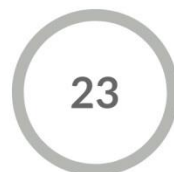
Of license holders spent time hunting lions in Black Hills, excluding CSP



Estimated number of hunters during Black Hills season, excluding CSP



Average number of days lion hunting in Black Hills, excluding CSP



Number of lions harvested in Black Hills, excluding CSP (13 female; 10 male)

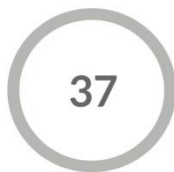


Satisfied with the season, excluding CSP (36% neutral; 18% dissatisfied)

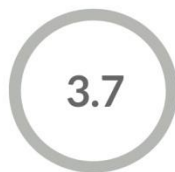
CUSTER STATE PARK



Of permit holders spent time hunting lions in CSP



Estimated number of hunters in CSP (26 boot; 11 hound)



Average number of days lion hunting in CSP (3.4 boot; 4.3 hound)



Number of lions harvested in CSP (3 female; 4 male) *all harvested w/hounds



Satisfied with the season - 51% boot; 80% hound (17% neutral & 20% dissatisfied)

LION POPULATION



On average, South Dakota mountain lion license holders want to see the mountain lion population decrease a little over the next five years. The percentage of hunters who want to see the population decrease has dropped from 64% in 2012/2013 to 38% in 2016/2017. Those who want the population to stay the same has increased from 23% in 2012/2013 to 38% in 2016/2017; and those who want to see it increase has grown from 9% in 2012/2013 to 16% in 2016/2017.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ii
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	vi
Introduction	1
Methods	2
Results.....	3
Black Hills.....	3
Harvest Per Unit Effort	4
Custer State Park (CSP)	5
Satisfaction & Population Preference	7
Trend Data	10
Comments	15
References	15
Appendix A	17
Appendix B	22

List of Figures

Figure 1: Hunter satisfaction with the 2016/2017 Black Hills mountain lion season	8
Figure 2: Mountain lion hunters' preferences for lion populations	10
Figure 3: Black Hills mountain lion season participation and license sales, 2005-2017	11
Figure 4: Mean days spent hunting mountain lions during Black Hills season, 2009-2017	12
Figure 5: Harvest per unit effort for Black Hills seasons, 2009 to 2017 (excludes CSP)	13
Figure 6: Hunter satisfaction with the Black Hills mountain lion season, 2005-2017	14
Figure 7: Lion hunters' preference for mountain lion populations over the next 5 years.....	14

List of Tables

Table 1: Estimated hunter success statistics for 2016/2017 season (excludes CSP)	3
Table 2: Reported number of days hunting mountain lions (excludes CSP)	4
Table 3: Harvest per unit effort for Black Hills, 2008/2009 to 2016/2017 (excludes CSP).....	5
Table 4: CSP mountain lion season reported participation by permit period.....	6
Table 5: Reported number of days hunted in CSP	6
Table 6: Reported mean days hunted by CSP permit period.....	7
Table 7: Hunter success statistics for 2016/2017 CSP mountain lion season.....	7
Table 8: Hunters' mean satisfaction with 2016/2017 Black Hills mountain lion season.....	8
Table 9: Hunter satisfaction with 2016/2017 CSP mountain lion season	9

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK

2016/2017 Black Hills Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results

HD-3-17.AMS

**Cynthia L. Longmire, Ph.D.
Human Dimensions Specialist
South Dakota Game, Fish, & Parks**

Introduction

South Dakota has held a resident-only mountain lion season since 2005/2006. The 2016/2017 mountain lion season offered an unlimited number of licenses and included a limited access season within Custer State Park (CSP). Residents were allowed one mountain lion license valid for taking a single lion during the 2016/2017 season. Inside the Black Hills Fire Protection District, the season dates were set to run from December 26, 2016 to March 31, 2017, or until reaching the maximum harvest limit, whichever occurred first. The maximum harvest limit was set at 60 mountain lions or 40 female mountain lions. On land located outside the Black Hills Fire Protection district (statewide season), the 2016/2017 mountain lion season was open year round.

Beginning in March of 2015, resident hunters were allowed to use hounds to pursue mountain lions year-round on private land outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District with permission of the landowner or lessee. Except for specified hunting intervals in CSP that allowed hunting with hounds, the use of hounds to hunt lions within the Black Hills Fire Protection District is prohibited. The use of traps or bait to hunt mountain lions is prohibited in South Dakota. Other restrictions include no taking of lions traveling together or spotted lions (kittens); no releasing hounds on tracks indicating multiple lions traveling together; and a mandatory check-in of harvested lions within 24 hours of the kill. In addition, hunters using dogs

in CSP must attempt to harvest the first legal mountain lion they have a reasonable opportunity to harvest, except where the lion pursued shows obvious signs of lactation.

A limited number of free access permits to hunt mountain lions within CSP during specified hunting intervals were issued through a random drawing. The interval structure in 2016/2017 consisted of a total of seven hunting intervals. Four of the intervals had three permits each and allowed the use of hounds. The remaining 3 intervals had 15 permits each and excluded the use of hounds. Once an individual harvested a mountain lion or their designated hunting interval passed, their CSP Access Permit expired. If the Black Hills mountain lion season closed prior to the March 31st end date, mountain lion hunting within CSP also closed.

The 2016/2017 Black Hills mountain lion season ran for the full 96 days and closed on March 31, 2017. A total of 30 lions were harvested, 16 of which were females. This report summarizes results from the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) 2016/2017 Black Hills lion hunter survey, including CSP hunters. Survey responses were collected in spring and early summer and covered hunting participation, satisfaction with the hunting season, and opinions regarding mountain lion populations. Information pertaining to mountain lion mortality and mountain lion harvest locations can be found on GFP's website, and subsequently will not be covered in this report.

Methods

All licensed mountain lion hunters at the time of season closing (N=2,561) were surveyed regarding their hunting experiences during the 2016/2017 Black Hills mountain lion season, including CSP (appendix A). Hunters with a valid email address in the 2017 GFP license database (n=2,142) were sent an email invitation to complete the lion hunter survey via the internet using Qualtrics Insights Platform. The online survey non-respondents and hunters without an email address were mailed a short questionnaire following the Tailored Design

Method (Dillman et al. 2014). All survey data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software package.

Results

A total of 1,733 responses were received. Adjusting for undeliverable addresses, the total survey response rate was 68 percent.

Black Hills

There were 23 mountain lions harvested inside the Black Hills, excluding CSP, during the 2016/2017 season. Success per licensed hunter (includes all hunters with a mountain lion license regardless of participation in the hunting season) was 0.9 percent (table 1). A total of 45 percent of license holders reported spending some time hunting for mountain lions within the Black Hills Fire Protection District, not including CSP, during the 2016/2017 season. Based on this participation rate, a total of 1,153 hunters were estimated to have hunted mountain lions in the Black Hills during the 2016/2017 season. Half of active lion hunters¹ (49.6%) reported hunting 4 days or fewer (table 2). On average, respondents hunted 6.9 days. The estimated hunter success for active lion hunters was 1.99 percent. On average, hunters who were successful in harvesting a mountain lion in the Black Hills reported hunting three days longer than unsuccessful hunters (9.8 versus 6.8 days).

Table 1: Estimated hunter success statistics for 2016/2017 season (excludes CSP)

2016/2017 Black Hills Success Statistics¹	
Per licensed hunter	$(23/2,561)*100 = 0.90\%$
Estimated number of active lion hunters	$2,561*0.450 = 1,153$
Estimated success per active lion hunter	$(23/1,153)*100 = 1.99\%$

1. Estimated hunters success statistics are calculated using the known total harvest of 23 lions (based on mandatory check-ins) and not the reported number from survey respondents.

¹ Active lion hunters are defined as licensed lion hunters who spent some time hunting mountain lions in the Black Hills Fire Protection District during the 2016/2017 season.

Table 2: Reported number of days hunting mountain lions (excludes CSP)

2016/2017 Black Hills Season ¹		
Days	Active Hunters	Percent
1	67	8.7
2	144	18.7
3	98	12.7
4	73	9.5
5	98	12.7
6	49	6.4
7	25	3.2
8	23	3.0
9	3	0.4
10	70	9.1
11 to 20	86	11.1
21 to 30	24	3.1
31 or more	11	1.4
Total	771*	100.0

	Hunters	Mean Days	SE _{mean}	95% CI
Active lion hunters	771	6.9	0.283	(6.3,7.5)
Did not harvest a lion	748	6.8	0.286	(6.2,7.4)
Harvested a lion	23	9.8	—	—

1. Numbers in table are based on the reported figures. Not all hunters returned a harvest card, and not all respondents answered every question.

*Note: 8 respondents did not include number of days hunted.

Harvest Per Unit Effort – Harvest per unit effort (HPUE) is a method used to indirectly measure changes in species’ population levels. Factors other than population density may affect HPUE (e.g., snowfall, road density, harvest regulations); however, trends in the HPUE may signify changes to species’ population levels. Whereas a dropping HPUE is taken to signal decreasing population levels, and a rising HPUE as a sign of increasing population levels. In 2008/2009, GFP began collecting, the number of days hunted per lion hunter. This information is used along with the total number of lions harvested to calculate a HPUE value. In 2016/2017, the HPUE value was 2.89 mountain lions harvested per 1,000 man-days hunted (table 3). This is a 10

percent decrease from the 2016 value of 3.22 mountain lions harvested per 1,000 man-days hunted.

Table 3: Harvest per unit effort for Black Hills, 2008/2009 to 2016/2017 (excludes CSP)

Year	Season Length (Days)	Lions Harvested	Licenses	Active Hunters	Average # Days	Man-Days Hunted	Harvest Per 1,000 Man-Days	% Change from Previous Yr
2008/2009	45	26	2,428	1,646 (1,594, 1,698)	6.5	10,698 (10,003, 11,404)	2.43 (2.28, 2.60)	-
2009/2010	41	40	2,082	1,468 (1,423, 1,513)	6.2	9,100 (8,535, 9,678)	4.40 (4.13, 4.69)	81%
2010/2011	52	47	2,325	1,790 (1,749, 1,831)	6.6	11,814 (11,128, 12,508)	3.98 (3.76, 4.22)	-9%
2011/2012	61	69	3,482	2,646 (2,591, 2,701)	7.1	18,787 (17,831, 19,749)	3.67 (3.49, 3.87)	-8%
2012/2013	96	54	4,351	2,872 (2,804, 2,940)	7.3	20,966 (19,799, 22,143)	2.58 (2.44, 2.73)	-30%
2013/2014	96	44	3,293	1,861 (1,796, 1,925)	6.9	12,841 (11,920, 13,775)	3.43 (3.19, 3.69)	33%
2014/2015	96	38	3,210	1,689 (1,620, 1,758)	7.1	11,992 (11,053, 12,953)	3.17 (2.93, 3.44)	-8%
2015/2016	97	35	3,102	1,529 (1,462, 1,596)	7.1	10,856 (9,972, 11,759)	3.22 (2.98, 3.51)	2%
2016/2017	96	23	2,561	1,153 (1,093, 1,213)	6.9	7,956 (7,204, 8,727)	2.89 (2.63, 3.19)	-10%

*Note: Numbers in parentheses represent 95% confidence intervals

Custer State Park (CSP)

A total of 57 access permits were issued for mountain lion hunting in CSP: 45 permits for boot hunters (3 intervals; 15 per interval) and 12 permits for hunters using hounds (4 intervals; 3 per interval). All 57 hunters who received a CSP access permit were surveyed regarding their hunting experiences inside the state park. A total of 43 access permit holders responded to the survey accounting for 75 percent of the permit holders. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of CSP permitted lion hunters spent some time hunting mountain lions in CSP during the 2016/2017 season (table 4). Based on this reported rate of participation, a total of 37 hunters were estimated to have actively hunted lions in CSP during the 2016/2017 season. Over half (57%) of boot hunters and 90 percent of hunters using hounds reported participating in the CSP season,

making an estimated total of 26 boot hunters and 11 hunters using hounds. Boot hunters averaged 3.4 days hunting mountain lions in CSP, and hunters using hounds averaged 4.3 days (table 5). Over half (57%) of active CSP lion hunters hunted 3 days or less during the 2016/2017 season. On average, CSP hunters who were successful in harvesting a mountain lion reported spending 3.4 days hunting lions. Table 6 shows the breakdown of mean days spent hunting lions in CSP by hunting intervals.

Table 4: CSP mountain lion season reported participation by permit period

2016/2017 CSP Lion Season	Hunting Interval							TOTAL
	Dec. 26 Jan 8 ^a	Jan 9 Jan 22	Jan 23 Feb 5 ^a	Feb 6 Feb 19	Feb 20 Mar 5 ^a	Mar 6 Mar 19	Mar 20 Mar 31 ^a	
Did Not Participate	—	7 (50%)	—	3 (27%)	—	6 (50%)	1 (50%)	17 (36%)
Participated	3 (100%)	7 (50%)	3 (100%)	8 (73%)	2 (100%)	6 (50%)	1 (50%)	30 (64%)

Estimated number of active permitted hunters: $57 \times 0.64 = 37$
 Estimated number of boot hunters: $45 \times 0.57 = 26$
 Estimated number of active hunters using hounds: $12 \times 0.90 = 11$

a. Hunting with hounds allowed

Table 5: Reported number of days hunted in CSP

2016/2017 Custer State Park Season			
Days	Active Hunters	Percent	
1	9	30.0	
2	3	10.0	
3	5	16.7	
4	4	13.4	
5	2	6.7	
6	1	3.3	
7	3	10.0	
8	1	3.3	
9	1	3.3	
10	1	3.3	
Total	30	100.0	
	Hunters	Mean	SE 95% CI
Active lion hunters	30	3.7	0.485 (2.7,4.7)
Did not harvest a lion	23	3.7	0.534 (2.7,4.7)
Harvested a lion ¹	7	3.4	— —
Boot hunters	21	3.4	0.509 (2.4,4.4)
Hunters using hounds	9	4.3	1.118 (2.16,6.5)

1. Mean is population parameter: all successful CSP hunters reported days hunted

Table 6: Reported mean days hunted by CSP permit period

2016/2017 CSP Lion Season	Mean Days Hunted							TOTAL
	Dec. 26	Jan 9	Jan 23	Feb 6	Feb 20	Mar 5	Mar 19	
	Jan 8 ^a	Jan 22	Feb 5 ^a	Feb 19	Mar 4 ^a	Mar 18	Mar 31 ^a	
N	3	7	3	8	2	6	1	30
Mean	3.7	2.3	5.3	5.0	5.5	2.5	1.0	3.7
SE	—	0.360	—	1.035	0.5	0.563	—	0.485
95% CI	—	(1.4,3.2)	—	(2.6,7.4)	(0.0,12.0)	(1.1,3.9)	—	(2.7,4.7)

a. Use of hounds allowed

Seven mountain lions were harvested inside CSP during the 2016/2017 season. Success per permitted hunter (includes all hunters with access permits regardless of participation) was 12.3 percent (table 7). The estimated hunter success for active CSP lion hunters (includes hunters with hounds) was 18.9 percent. Hunters using hounds within CSP were more successful than boot hunters. All seven lions were harvested by hunters using hounds (63.6% success rate).

Table 7: Hunter success statistics for 2016/2017 CSP mountain lion season

2016/2017 Custer State Park Success Statistics	
Estimated success per permitted hunter	(7/57)*100 = 12.3%
Estimated success per active permitted hunter	(7/37)*100 = 18.9%
Estimated success per active boot hunter	(0/26)*100 = 0.0%
Success per active hunter using dogs	(7/11)*100 = 63.6%

Satisfaction & Population Preference

All licensed mountain lion hunters were asked to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the 2016/2017 Black Hills mountain lion season. In addition, all lion hunters holding a CSP access permit were asked their level of satisfaction with the structure of the 2016/2017 CSP season. Respondents' satisfaction was measured using a seven-point Likert scale.² Approximately 12 percent of all licensed lion hunters indicated they were dissatisfied with the 2017 Black Hills mountain lion season; over half (56%) were neither dissatisfied nor

² Scale: 1 Very Dissatisfied; 2 Moderately Dissatisfied; 3 Slightly Dissatisfied; 4 Neutral; 5 Slightly Satisfied; 6 Moderately Satisfied; 7 Very Satisfied

satisfied, and one-third (33%) were satisfied with it (figure 1). Overall, hunters who successfully harvested a mountain lion (excluding CSP) were more satisfied with the season than Black Hills lion hunters who did not harvest a lion. Seventeen percent of successful Black Hills hunters were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied while 13 percent were either slightly or moderately satisfied. The remaining 70 percent were very satisfied. On average, all licensed hunters and active lion hunters were slightly satisfied and successful hunters were very satisfied (table 8).³

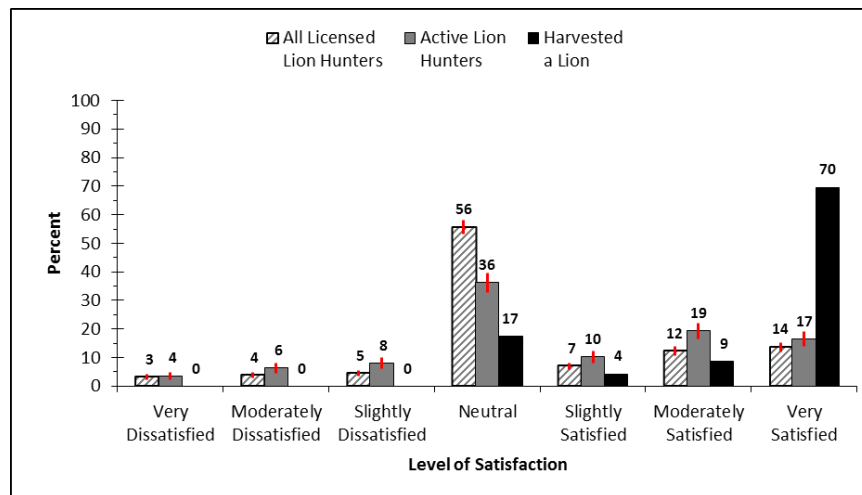


Figure 1: Hunter satisfaction with the 2016/2017 Black Hills mountain lion season
 *NOTE: figures for successful hunters represent population parameters; Error bars represent 95% confidence interval

Table 8: Hunters' mean satisfaction with 2016/2017 Black Hills mountain lion season
2016/2017 Black Hills Mountain Lion Season

	All Licensed Lion Hunters	Active Lion Hunters	Harvested a Lion ¹
N	1,661	778	23
Mean	4.51	4.67	6.30
SE	0.035	0.057	—
95% CI	(4.4, 4.6)	(4.6, 4.8)	—

1. Represents population parameter; *NOTE: scale: 1 very dissatisfied; 2 moderately dissatisfied; 3 slightly dissatisfied; 4 neutral; 5 slightly satisfied; 6 moderately satisfied; 7 very satisfied

³ Scale mean interpretation: very dissatisfied (1.00 to 1.86), moderately dissatisfied (1.87 to 2.73), slightly dissatisfied (2.74 to 3.60), neutral (3.61 to 4.47), slightly satisfied (4.48 to 5.34), moderately satisfied (5.35 to 6.21), and very satisfied (6.22 to 7.0).

Fifty-seven percent of hunters with a CSP access permit were satisfied with the structure of the 2016/2017 CSP mountain lion season; approximately 28 percent were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, and 15 percent were dissatisfied with the season (table 9). Successful CSP hunters indicated they were satisfied, with 57 percent being very satisfied. CSP hunters using hounds were more satisfied than those without hounds (80% compared with 51%).

Table 9: Hunter satisfaction with 2016/2017 CSP mountain lion season

2016/2017 Custer State Park Hunter Satisfaction					
	All CSP Access Permit Holders	Active CSP Hunters	Harvested a Lion	Boot Hunters	Hunters using Dogs
Very Dissatisfied	2.1	3.3	—	2.7	—
Moderately Dissatisfied	6.4	6.7	—	5.4	10.0
Slightly Dissatisfied	6.4	10.0	—	5.4	10.0
Neutral	27.7	16.7	—	35.1	—
Slightly Satisfied	8.5	10.0	14.3	8.1	10.0
Moderately Satisfied	17.0	23.3	28.6	16.2	20.0
Very Satisfied	31.9	30.0	57.1	27	50.0
<hr/>					
Mean	5.13	5.13	6.43	4.97	5.70
SE	0.25	0.33	—	0.28	0.58
95% CI	(4.6,5.6)	(4.5,5.8)	—	(4.4,5.5)	(4.6,6.8)
N	47	30	7	37	10

*NOTE: figures for successful hunters represent population parameters. Scale mean interpretation: very dissatisfied (1.00 to 1.86), moderately dissatisfied (1.87 to 2.73), slightly dissatisfied (2.74 to 3.60), neutral (3.61 to 4.47), slightly satisfied (4.48 to 5.34), moderately satisfied (5.35 to 6.21), and very satisfied (6.22 to 7.0).

Finally, all licensed mountain lion hunters were also asked to indicate the direction they would prefer to see the mountain lion population in South Dakota go over the next five years. Hunters' preferences were measured using a five-point Likert scale.⁴ In addition, hunters were provided the opportunity to indicate they were unsure, if applicable. Over one-third (38%) of licensed mountain lion hunters would like to see the population decrease, 38 percent want the population to stay about the same, and 17 percent want to see it increase (figure 2). Seven

⁴ Scale: 1 Decrease a lot; 2 Decrease a little; 3 Stay about the same; 4 Increase a little; and 5 Increase a lot

percent of licensed lion hunters indicated they were unsure. On average, South Dakota mountain lion hunters want to see the mountain lion population decrease a little over the next five years.⁵

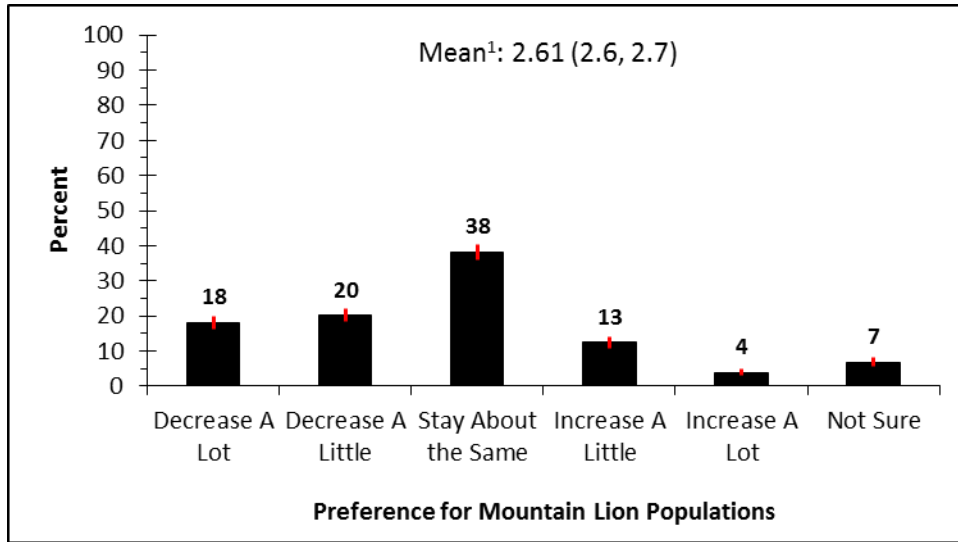


Figure 2: Mountain lion hunters' preferences for lion populations
 1. Scale: 1 Decrease a lot; 2 Decrease a little; 3 Stay about the same; 4 Increase a little; and 5 Increase a lot (95% confidence interval); Not sure excluded from mean calculation
 *NOTE: Error bars represent 95% confidence interval

Trend Data

South Dakota has had an annual mountain lion season in the Black Hills since 2005. As part of the evaluation of this hunting season, hunter surveys have been administered to all licensed mountain lion hunters at the close of each season. Many of the questions have remained consistent across all 12 years, while others have been included occasionally across the years. The following figures illustrate trends seen in hunters' participation, success, overall satisfaction, and population preferences for mountain lions in South Dakota.

⁵ When calculating the scale average *not sure* responses were excluded. Frequency distribution of responses when *not sure* is excluded: decrease a lot (20%), decrease a little (22%), stay the same (41%), increase a little (13%), and increase a lot (4%). Scale mean interpretation: decrease a lot (1.00 to 1.81), decrease a little (1.82 to 2.62), stay the same (2.63 to 3.43), increase a little (3.44 to 4.24), increase a lot (4.25 to 5.00).

Historically, the majority of licensed mountain lion hunters have participated in lion hunting during each of the Black Hills mountain lion seasons, ranging from a low of 53 percent in 2014/2015 to a high of 77 percent in 2010/2011 (figure 3). In 2015/2016, however, participation dipped below half of licensed hunters with 49 percent. The 2016/2017 season saw participation continue to drop to 45 percent, marking 2016/2017 as having the lowest participation rate. The 2009/2010 season had the lowest licenses sales with 2,082 licenses, and 2012/2013 had the highest number of licenses sold (4,351). License sales in 2016/2017 were lower than sales in 2015/2016 (2,561 and 3,102, respectively). The lower participation rate during the Black Hills season may be explained in some part by hunters purchasing licenses for use in the year-round season outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

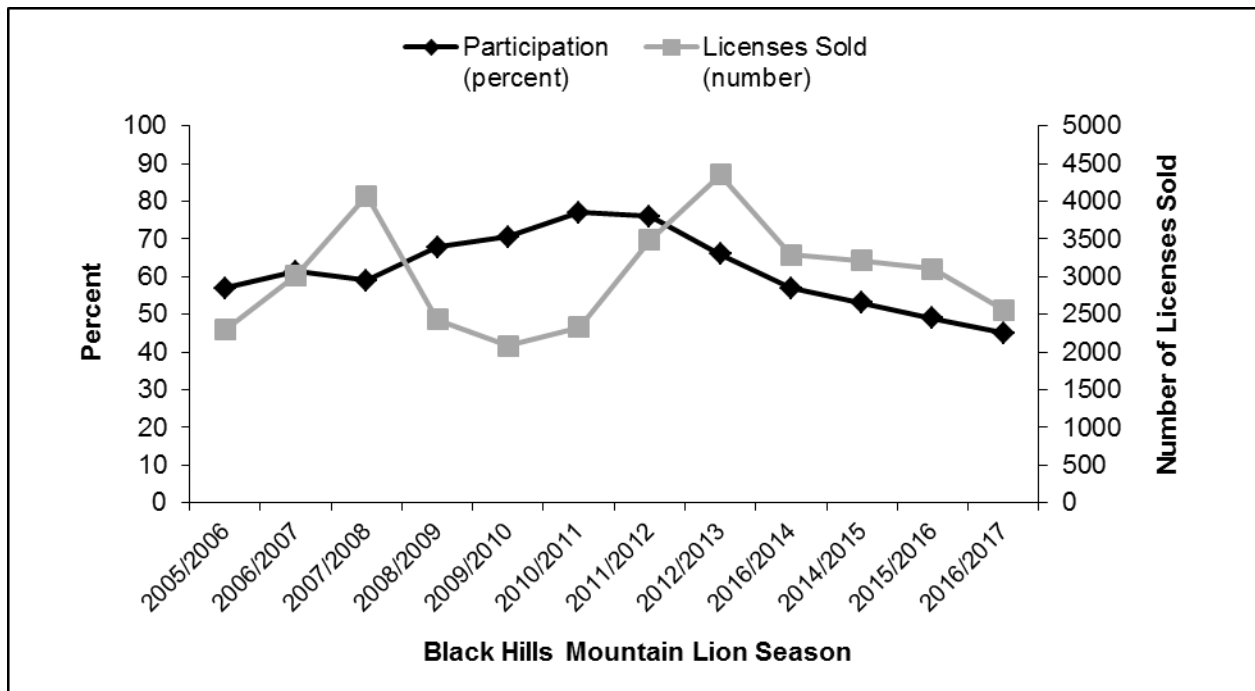


Figure 3: Black Hills mountain lion season participation and license sales, 2005-2017

Starting in 2008/2009 survey data was collected on the number of days hunters spent hunting mountain lions during the Black Hills season. The average number of days has remained relatively consistent ranging from 6.2 to 7.3 days (figure 4). Hunters who successfully harvested a mountain lion have consistently spent more days, on average, hunting lions during the season than unsuccessful hunters.

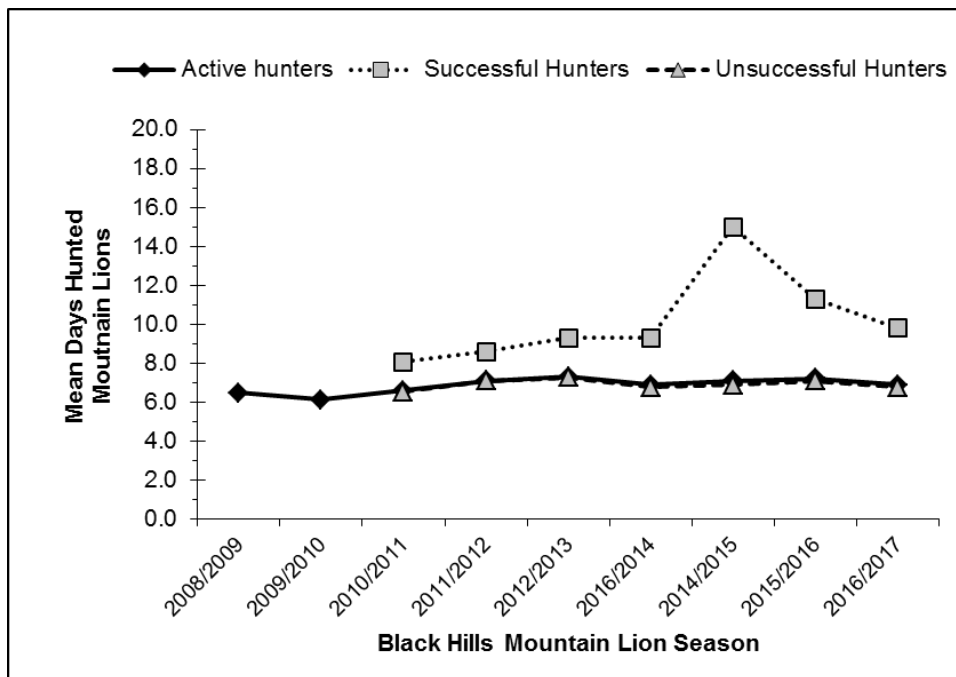


Figure 4: Mean days spent hunting mountain lions during Black Hills season, 2009-2017

Since GFP started collecting data on number of days lion hunting, the HPUE in 2009/2010 was the highest at 4.39 (figure 5). The 2016/2017 HPUE is a 34 percent decrease from the 2010 value.

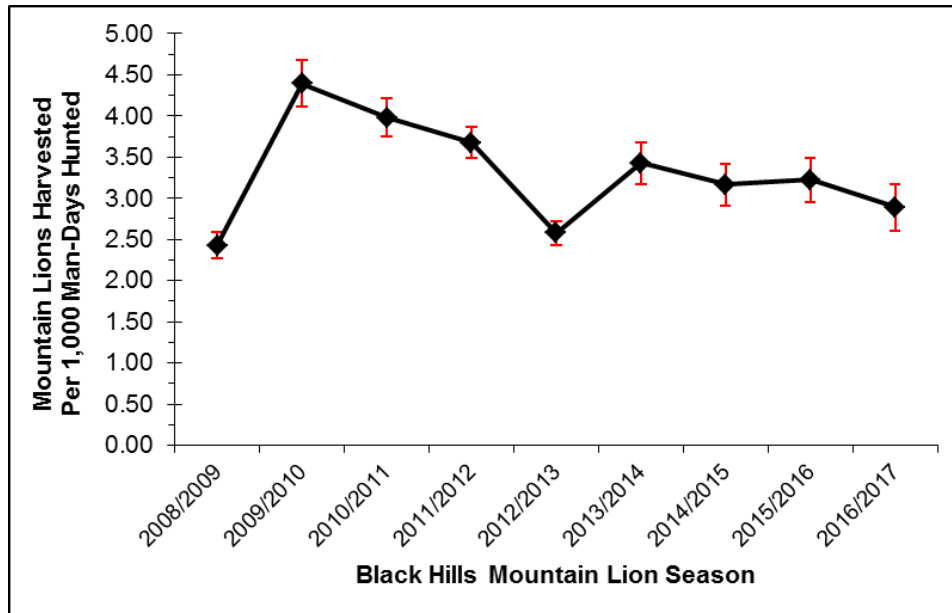


Figure 5: Harvest per unit effort for Black Hills seasons, 2009 to 2017 (excludes CSP)
 *Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence interval

On average, hunters' overall satisfaction has remained fairly consistent over the past 12 seasons (figure 6). The average satisfaction level for all licensed hunters has been slightly satisfied; however, licensed hunters' average satisfaction score has been decreasing over the past 12 seasons from 5.31 in 2005/2006 to 4.51 in 2016/2017.⁶ Hunters who were successful in harvesting a mountain lion have consistently been more satisfied than unsuccessful hunters, with satisfaction ranging from moderately to very satisfied.

Starting in 2012/2013, all lion hunters were asked to indicate their preference for the direction South Dakota's mountain lion population goes over the next five years (figure 7). Over the past five seasons the percentage of lion hunters who want to see the mountain lion population in South Dakota decrease has dropped from 64 percent in 2012/2013 to 38 percent in 2016/2017. While the percentage of hunters wanting the population to stay about the same

⁶ Scale: 1 Very Dissatisfied; 2 Moderately Dissatisfied; 3 Slightly Dissatisfied; 4 Neutral; 5 Slightly Satisfied; 6 Moderately Satisfied; 7 Very Satisfied. Scale mean interpretation: very dissatisfied (1.00 to 1.86), moderately dissatisfied (1.87 to 2.73), slightly dissatisfied (2.74 to 3.60), neutral (3.61 to 4.47), slightly satisfied (4.48 to 5.34), moderately satisfied (5.35 to 6.21), and very satisfied (6.22 to 7.0).

has grown from 23 percent in 2012/2013 to 38 percent in 2016/2017, and hunters wanting to see the population increase has gone from 9 percent in 2012/2013 to 16 percent in 2016/2017.

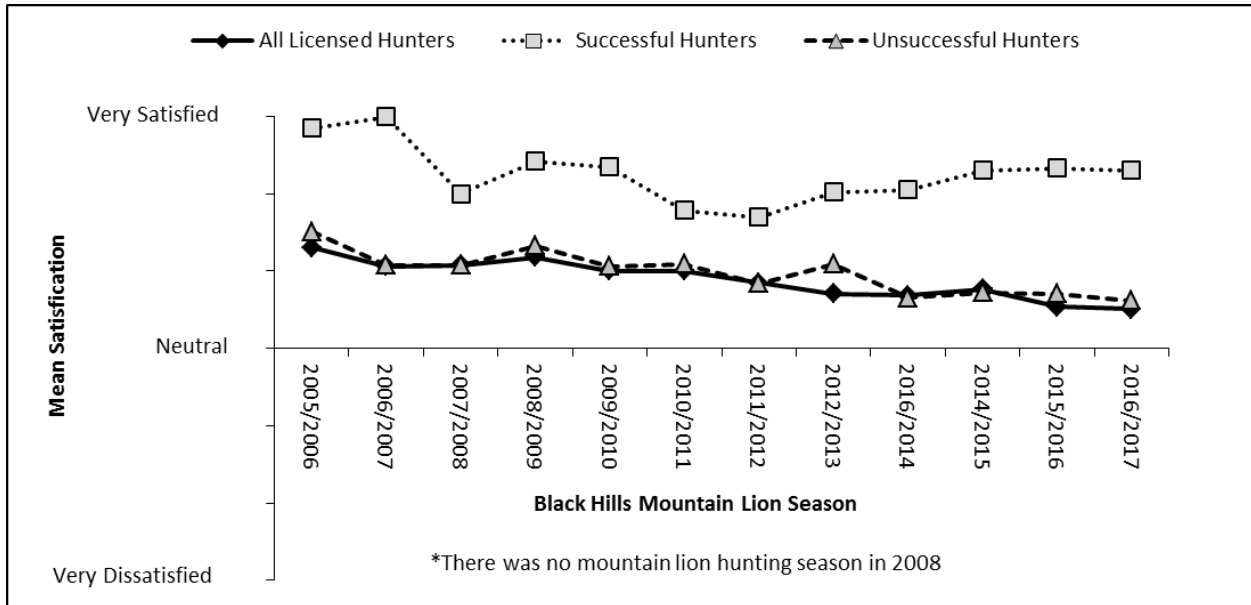


Figure 6: Hunter satisfaction with the Black Hills mountain lion season, 2005-2017

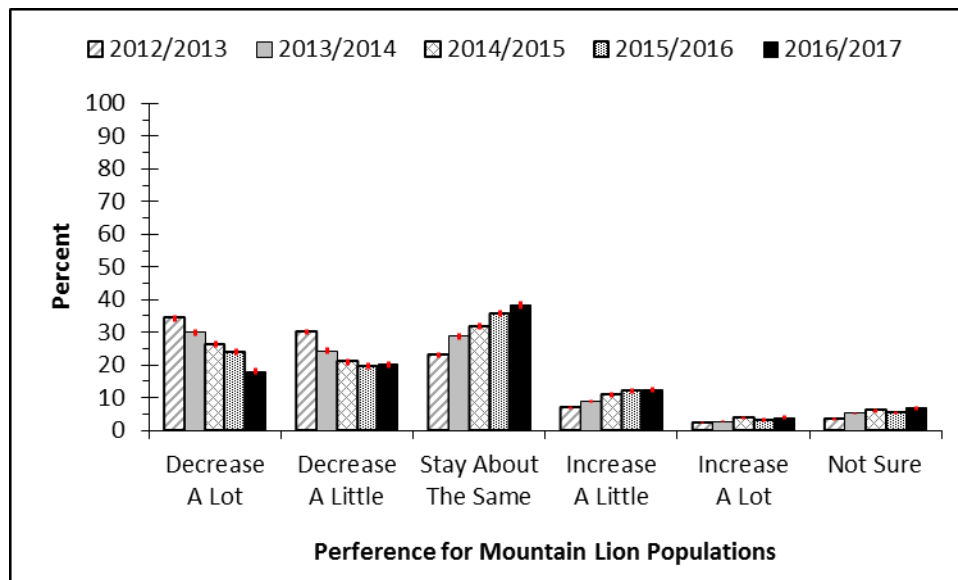


Figure 7: Lion hunters' preference for mountain lion populations over the next 5 years
 *NOTE: error bars represent 95% confidence interval

Comments

Many of the respondents to the Black Hills mountain lion hunter survey provided additional comments with their completed questionnaires. These comments provide a qualitative description of hunters' opinions related to mountain lion management and concerns. These comments did not have to be specific to any question asked on the survey, but rather hunters were free to provide additional comments at the end. Comments are included in appendix B.

References

- Dillman, D.A., J.D. Smyth, and L.M. Christian 2014. *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Gigliotti, L.M. 2011. *Evaluation of the 2011 Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey*. Report ID# HD-8-11.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2010. *Evaluation of the 2010 Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey*. Report ID# HD-8-10.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2009. *Evaluation of the 2009 Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey*. Report ID# HD-3-09.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2008. *Evaluation of the 2007 Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey*. Report ID# HD-4-08.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2007. *Evaluation of the 2006 Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey*. Report ID# HD-4-07.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2006. *Evaluation of the 2005 Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey*. Report ID# HD-3-06.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- Longmire, C.L. 2016 *Black Hills Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results*. Report ID# HD-4-16.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2015 *Black Hills Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results*. Report ID# HD-4-15.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2014. *Black Hills Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results*. Report ID# HD-3-14.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2013. *Black Hills Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results*. Report ID# HD-6-13.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks: Pierre, SD.
- 2012. *Evaluation of the 2012 Mountain Lion Season: Hunter Survey Results*. Report ID# HD-3a-12.AMS. South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks: Pierre, SD.

APPENDIX A

2017 BLACK HILLS MOUNTAIN LION SURVEY

Dear Hunter:

Our records indicate you purchased a South Dakota mountain lion hunting license for 2017. The 2017 season within the Black Hills Fire Protection District closed March 31st. The purpose of this survey is to collect information about your hunting experiences and general opinions about mountain lion management in South Dakota. This information is collected every year as an evaluation of the mountain lion season from the hunters' perspectives, and is important in making future decisions about the Black Hills mountain lion season.

PLEASE RESPOND at your earliest convenience. Our goal is to receive a response from each survey recipient. Thanks to you, we believe we have one of the most accurate harvest surveys in the nation.

Thank you for being a part of wildlife management in South Dakota. We look forward to hearing from you.

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

Hunter ID:



gfp.sd.gov/surveys

Please consider completing your survey online to help reduce postage and date entry costs.

**Appendix A
Survey Instrument (format adjusted)**

2017 BLACK HILLS MOUNTAIN LION SURVEY

This survey only pertains to the 2017 mountain lion hunting season within the Black Hills Fire Protection District (December 26 to March 31), excluding Custer State Park

1. Did you hunt the 2017 South Dakota Black Hills mountain lion season, excluding Custer State Park (December 26 to March 31, 2017)?
 NO – Skip to Q4
 YES
2. How many days did you hunt mountain lions in the Black Hills during the 2017 season: _____ days
3. Did you harvest a mountain lion in the Black Hills during the 2017 season?
 NO
 YES
4. How satisfied/dissatisfied were you with the Black Hills mountain lion season as conducted in 2017? Please circle one:

Very Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Satisfied
				Neutral				
5. Over the next 5 years, would you prefer to see the mountain lion population in South Dakota... Please circle one:

Decrease A Lot	1	2	3	4	5	6	Not Sure
		A Little	The Same	A Little	A Lot		



Department of Game, Fish and Parks
Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182



Survey ID:

May 01, 2017

Our records indicate you purchased a South Dakota mountain lion hunting license for 2017, and received a Custer State Park mountain lion hunting access permit. The 2017 season within the Black Hills Fire Protection District and Custer State Park closed March 31st. The purpose of this survey is to collect information about your hunting experiences and general opinions about mountain lion management in South Dakota. This information is collected every year as an evaluation of the mountain lion season from the hunters' perspectives. The information you provide is important in making future decisions about the Black Hills and Custer State Park mountain lion seasons.

Please take a few minutes to answer this short survey and return it using the pre-paid envelope provided. The ID number on your survey is used to identify hunters who have responded so we can check your name off the mailing list when you return your survey.

Please answer your survey even if you did not hunt during this season. We would like everyone selected to participate, even if you did not hunt during this season because your responses will represent that segment of licensed mountain lion hunters.

Thank you for being a part of wildlife management in South Dakota!


Cynthia L. Longmire
SD Game, Fish, & Parks
Human Dimensions Specialist

2017 Black Hills and Custer State Park Mountain Lion Hunter Survey

This survey only pertains to the 2017 mountain lion hunting season within the Black Hills Fire Protection District and Custer State Park (December 26 to March 31).

Q1a. Did you spend any time hunting for mountain lions within the Black Hills Fire Protection District, *excluding* Custer State Park, during the 2017 Black Hills season?

Yes, how many days did you hunt for mountain lions? _____ Days

No  **If NO, please skip to Q2a.**


Q1b. Did you harvest a mountain lion in the Black Hills, not including Custer State Park, during the 2017 season?

No

Yes

Q2a. Did you spend any time hunting for mountain lions in Custer State Park during the 2017 season?

Yes, how many days did you hunt for mountain lions? _____ Days

No  **If NO, please skip to Q3.**

Q2b. Did you use hounds while hunting mountain lions in Custer State Park during the 2017 season?

No

Yes

Q2c. Did you harvest a mountain lion in Custer State Park during the 2017 season?

No

Yes

Q3. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the Black Hills mountain lion season, *excluding* Custer State Park, as conducted in 2017?

Please circle only one response.

<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Moderately Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Slightly Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Slightly Satisfied</u>	<u>Moderately Satisfied</u>	<u>Very Satisfied</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q4. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the structure of the Custer State Park mountain lion season as conducted in 2017? *Please circle only one response.*

<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Moderately Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Slightly Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Slightly Satisfied</u>	<u>Moderately Satisfied</u>	<u>Very Satisfied</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q5. Over the next five years, would you prefer to see the mountain lion population in South Dakota...
Please circle only one.

<u>Decrease A Lot</u>	<u>Decrease A Little</u>	<u>Stay About The Same</u>	<u>Increase A Little</u>	<u>Increase A Lot</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank You!

Thank you very much for your valuable time completing this survey.

If you have comments you would like to share with us, please use the space below. These comments will be put into a report and given to the Game, Fish, & Parks Commissioners, wildlife managers and administrators, and made available to the public. **Electronic comments may also be sent to SDGFPINFO@state.sd.us.**

APPENDIX B

Appendix B Additional Comments

The views expressed in survey comments are the views of the commenting respondent(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks or the author(s) of this report. Neither the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks nor the author(s) guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of any opinion or view expressed in respondents' comments. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks reserves the right, but not obligation, to remove at its discretion any language which discloses personally identifiable information about respondents or any other individual, as well as language which is obscene, profane, offensive, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory or otherwise unlawful.

* Note – Respondents' comments did not have to be specific to any question asked on the survey but rather they were free to provide additional comments at the end. Text which appears inside brackets [] has been added to clarify respondents' reference to specific survey questions, identify parts of comments which were illegible, or in some cases to indicate where personally identifying information or expletives has been omitted.

- 103 If your goal is to have as few mountain lions in the park as possible, then you are hunting the park in the correct way. We covered nearly every inch of the park every day for 6 days and only cut tracks of the other hunters killed lions (we even walked all of French Creek and didn't even see old sign after there had been 5 inches of fresh snow for 5 days). Really, with the population of lions that appeared to be in the park, no more than 3 tags should have been issued, and the season should be longer so when the 2 resident lions are killed you aren't praying for a passerby within a short 5 day period. We went out the last weekend of my hunt and did find some old tracks but they were zigzagging in and out of the park. The biggest thing that you need to realize is that hounds should be used in all of the hills on a preference system, as currently kittens are shot where that would never happen with hounds and the population could be more properly managed with hounds. Stop thinking money!
- 122 Please allow boot hunters to finish hunting Custer State Park before allowing hounds. Hounds chase the lions out not give boot hunters a fair chance.
- 124 Question: Does the biological survey population data for mountain lions support the hunt limit of 60 cats for the season? It appears for the last two seasons, the amount of actual cats taken was roughly half of the total allowed. Many hunters are not even seeing signs of the cats as in years past, understanding of course that cat population levels have been trimmed since the first authorized hunt 5 or 6 years ago. Thanks.
- 130 had a great hunt in custer park. thank you very much for the access pass
- 131 With perfect snow conditions in 6 days we never had a legal lion track to pursue. There are very few lions compared to 3 years ago.

- 141 The weather did not cooperate (warm without snow) during my Custer State Park season.
- 143 Enjoyed my hunt in the park. What a wonderful place it is, just could have used a little more snow.
- 145 Fun to the beautiful Black Hills. Thanks
- 146 My hunting experience this year in Custer State Park was poor for hunting but beautiful in terms of spending time in the park. The weather was 75 degrees which made for great hiking and viewing vistas but not so good for hunting mountain lions. Best time to hunt is when you have the time to do it. Weather is beyond our control. The park was in excellent shape, believe we saw nearly every kind of wildlife with the exception of mountain lions and all looked healthy. No lion but still a successful trip. Thanks.
- 148 Would like to see the season extended during years when snow fall is low due to its relationship to locating tracks and locating lions. And opening more fire trails logging roads during the season, areas are not very accessible during the mountain lion season
- 153 Open the rest of BH to use of hounds.
- 154 Weather during my March CSP hunt was very warm and no snow making the hunt more difficult. I still appreciate the opportunity to explore more of CSP and acknowledge it as a great recreational resource. I believe the GF&P are getting closer to a regulated population of mountain lions, but have not quite achieved that goal. Hunting needs to continue to keep the population in check and control the predation on the other wildlife resources. It is a difficult balance.
- 1002 I believe the population is down. I've hunted the same area for a number of years on foot, in closed to vehicle areas. I did not see any lion tracks this year, old or fresh! I hunted several days when the snow was fresh. Saw lots of deer and deer tracks along with a few elk tracks. I love the challenge of mountain lion hunting! If possible, I recommend not changing a thing!
- 1012 I think that the mountain lion population steadily decreases in the black hills in the deer and elk populations are maintaining or progressing I think that the wrong type of lions are being killed and I would like to see a higher female sub quota put on and less mountain lions killed
- 1015 I think it is very important to have very FEW mountain lions in the Black Hills or in SD in general.
- 1018 Only bought to support lion hunting. Wish there was more opportunities for houndsman. I am not interested in opening the hills to hounds. Maybe more csp permits. Or a tree in season.
- 1021 Keep season as is no dogs
- 1034 It would be nice if the season started a little earlier. Perhaps only archery and muzzle-loader lion hunting would be allowed for lion hunting when the pre-season starts, proposing Dec. 1-Dec. 25 until rifle lion season opens, which is typically Dec. 26th. The

lions switch to "winter-mode" well before Dec. 26th. More snow in the northern hills would have helped tremendously, especially in north Lawrence County.

- 1068 OPEN ALL YEAR LONG. IT'S A PREDATOR, LIKE A COYOTE, FOX, OR BADGER
- 1094 Let us hound guys gets better chance in the park. Seems like population to done. Stop killing females
- 1105 I only purchase the Mt Lion tag hoping I draw the CSP hound access permit.
- 1116 Year round tag for Lawrence County allowing harvest within the same regulations as the current season. A higher fee for this license is acceptable.
- 1127 Unfortunately, due to illness I was unable to hunt Mountain Lion this season. Hopefully next year. I am hoping I get the opportunity to archery Elk this fall.
- 1140 Allow dogs in the black hills fire protection district
- 1152 I think the mountain lion numbers have decreased a lot, or they have become more difficult to locate because the hunting seasons have made them a lot more wild,
- 1158 Would like to see the use of dogs for out of the park. Why can't you have a drawing for out of the park like you do for in the park? I don't think that is fair why we can't hunt with dogs outside of the park in the hills. Thanks
- 1164 A little disgusted with tracking down a lion to find its home area to be privately owned in a large parcel and close to a town and asking permission the landowner seems to like the lions to be there so being a landowner myself apparently not all landowners want the lions controlled sad!
- 1166 I live in East Pennington County. I buy a license in case I have an opportunity to harvest a mountain lion in ranch country.
- 1178 we need to be able to use dogs for everything
- 1180 The Custer State Park mountain lion season should be used as an example on how mountain lions could be managed in the whole Black Hills. Boot hunters and hound hunters should have equal opportunity; the CSP season has made it very clear that there is a huge demand for hound hunting in South Dakota. Hounds would be useful for lions that use residential areas frequently and in years with less than favorable conditions. Opening the hills completely to hounds would probably not work but allowing a few hunters a chance at an once in a life time tag would allow more South Dakota residents a chance to affordably hunt our rare and highly sought after trophy. Odds are it'll be 100 years before I can hunt one of the first 2 hound seasons in csp. Boot hunters can share our natural resources, as a state we accommodate all other ethical hunting practices except for hounds on lions.
- 1193 I would prefer that the season remains residents only and not allow the use of dogs to harvest

- 1200 Tough year. I think you should allow dogs for certain weeks in the Black Hills like you do in the park.
- 1201 Only unsatisfied due to poor weather for hunting. But that's the nature of the game
- 1214 start the season in October
- 1215 I was under the impression that the season lasted until a certain amount were killed except for the Custer state park area.
- 1217 Run hounds the last month of season to meet quotas
- 1227 Time hasn't allowed me to take advantage of the season as much as I'd prefer. But I appreciate having the opportunity to hunt lions. I also believe in balance and feel predators need to be managed just as much as any game species. Some would prefer there be no lions and by extension more deer and elk. I can sympathize with that feeling but still like the ability to hunt lions if I choose to.
- 1229 It's time to use Dogs west of Hwy 385. set up units with quota's for each unit like every other State.
- 1233 Nice job with management
- 1247 Need to be able to access more trails with track machines (snowmobiles or 4 wheel track machines). Should not close trails to 4 wheel track machines if you allow snowmobiles in the hills.
- 1262 I would really like to see larger private properties that lie along the edge of the hills be excluded from the fire protection rule. This would allow these property owners the ability to use hounds for the removal of problem cats.
- 1266 Open the season during deer season to fill quota!
- 1271 I will not actually go hunting for these unless I draw a dog permit.
- 1283 I don't lion hunt that much but I do bobcat hunt a lot and compared to 3 years ago I see maybe a 1/4 of the amount of tracks.
- 1296 Love the dog tags in csp! Wish there were more tags or another area to use dogs in the black hills
- 1307 Need to allow use of dogs in black hills outside of CSP
- 1308 Need to have a season to allow use of dogs in black hills
- 1309 Need to have a season that allows use of dogs in black hills outside of CSP
- 1310 Dog use in black hills outside of csp should be allowed.
- 1315 With conditions that have to be on point in order to hunt these animals and having select days to do it. Consideration to possibly introduce tags for hunting with dogs in the Black Hills would be great.

- 1323 Season dates are perfect. Please keep it the same. Please don't allow hound hunters in the hills.
- 1339 I saw lots of lion activity this year due to having more snow than last year. I came across 3 fresh deer kills and was able to pursue from 2 of the kills. Being only my second year of lion hunting I'm positive I lacked the experience to fully sneak up on the lion once I got close. I spent too much time looking at the tracks and not enough time looking at my surroundings. Overall I learned a lot about their behavior and had a blast this season.
- 1343 Lion hunting in the black hills is a joke! Look at all the female, subadult and kittens that are killed out there over the years and I don't believe you can blame the hunters for the simple fact most people have never seen a lion before and more than likely they have to make a split second decision and they would be exited and in the heat of the moment most people won't evaluate the situation as it should be. the use of hounds would help hunters take more mature animals just my opinion
- 1347 the only reason I bought a permit is so I could apply for the Custer State Park season. This should be changed
- 1355 I was not able to hunt because I broke my leg. Will try again in 2018.
- 1369 My only complaint about the lion season is people using motorized vehicles on closed roads. I know enforcement does not fall on the SDGFP in regards to this issue. However, it is truly astonishing how many people drive on closed roads. It is getting absolutely ridiculous! I do not see the point of having laws and regulations on the books that rarely get enforced. It is a free for all!
- 1370 Hunt with dogs
- 1374 I put in so I can apply for Custer state park where you can use dogs I wish you could use them out of the park as well
- 1384 We found a kill but no tracks to follow because of lack of snow
- 1385 We called and had no luck
- 1400 Have a pursuit season with hounds in the black hills fire protection district.
- 1401 I would like to see the use of dogs at some point in the season to help reduce the number of mature cats. The older cats are not being harvested often, not because they are not present but because they are smart and educated.
- 1407 this is a great opportunity for hunters to get out late in the year and hunt for this illusive animal, I hope they leave it as a no dog hunting experience outside of Custer Park to allow more people the chance to hunt on their own without interference of hounds.
- 1410 It was fun, got on a couple and got out smarted. Very fun and we always enjoy our time in the hills
- 1413 Allow use of dogs to hunt lions in all of the Black Hills; not just Custer park.

- 1420 offer more dog hunts.
- 1422 I am sorry I did not get a chance to hunt this year, I have some lung issues and I am very limited at times of what I can do, Thanks again! You folk's do a great job!
- 1437 I do believe that the harvest limit of Mountain Lions needs to be lowered. Mountain Lions are the top apex predator above Coyotes and Bobcats that are capable of taking down Deer (next to hunters) and keeping the ecology of the hills in check from spiking deer populations.
- 1448 The only reason I bought a tag was to apply for the park. A change needs to be made with the killing of kittens for sure that is ridiculous killing something that small. Also think the female harvest needs to be less.
- 1449 I will again point out how poorly our lion population is managed in our state, with the extreme over population of the cats in our state and the low harvest numbers year after year with a large portion of the cats taken being females we are not going in the direction we should be with the proper management of our cats, the only effective way to the lion population and reduce the number of males is to allow the use of hounds like every other state with a lion season allows, the only ones benefiting from the current regulations are the state through a high number of unfilled tag sales and the state of Wyoming where our cats are migrating to, and then being hunted by South Dakota resident's with a high nonresident tag fee this can be seen easily by looking at the harvest reports there, the black hills of Wyoming had a harvest quota of 24 the largest limited area in the state and harvest was met by early December, I've hunted cats in several States and have never seen an over population like we have I spent 2 days hunting in the hills this season and found over 10 different lion tracks in a 15 mile area, I'm afraid it's going to take a human fatality by a lion before the proper management is taken seriously and I hope that's not the case and something is done soon to properly conserve all our wildlife including our Lions, if my opinion is wanted or needed in this matter feel free to contact me [number omitted]
- 1466 I think the game fish and parks has been doing an excellent job managing the mountain lion population!
- 1481 Too many tags for the number of lions actually out there.
- 1483 I think your management plan is working well. I was very satisfied with the deer tag i drew this year and saw many more elk and deer than in previous years. I also noticed less lion tracks than i have seen in the past. In my opinion job well done getting the lion population back in check.
- 1487 Tougher year for tracking as there was too much snow that stayed. Still enjoyed my time out even though it wasn't many days Saw mostly multiple sets of tracks then single cat tracks
- 1491 1st time hunting Mountain Lions. Will definitely do it again. Thank you for all the GFP does for hunting and fishing!

- 1494 I hope you devise a plan to begin managing the mountain lions. This plan needs to be aggressive. Why not allow hunting lions with dogs? This would be much more feasible. You are entrusted with a valuable asset!
- 1500 Open more roads during the season. Keep dogs out of the hills hunting
- 1501 Opening more roads would help during the season. Keep dogs in the park only
- 1505 Try and work to be able to use dogs outside of the park
- 1548 Bad year for weather is all
- 1558 It would be nice to leave the season open longer. If the quota is supposed to represent some semblance of maximum or near-max sustainable harvest, it seems that setting an appropriate quota and leaving the season open until that quota is actually reached would allow some hunters more opportunity to pursue a mountain lion harvest. Either way, it's still a pretty wonderful opportunity, so thank you very much for your help with this season.
- 1567 Allowing the use of dogs state wide would allow hunters to pick and choose the cat they harvest better... It would take away from the smaller cats being harvested
- 1574 We need to hunt lions with hounds in the National Forest.
- 1582 I was serving in Pierre in the Legislature so had much of season being in Pierre. Snow days determine Lion kills. Not a lot of snow days this year. I very much enjoy the lion season and hope it continues!!
- 1600 More hound hunting
- 1615 Only reason I bought a tag was to enter the Custer dog hunt for lions.
- 1621 Still plenty of cats. Here is an idea to increase hunter participation: Award a bonus preference point for the season of the hunter's choice for any hunter that harvests a lion
- 1631 It is best to have favorable weather for hunting lions. Snow for tracking. I am in favor of using hounds to hunt lions. Using hounds would be better for being selective on the lion you harvest. You would not get the small lions or very few females.
- 1638 Plenty of mt lion tracks but impossible to hunt without the use of hound dogs
- 1640 We need to be able to hunt with hound dogs.
- 1662 In 6 days hunting and 6 nights driving roads looking for tracks I cut 28 different sets of lion tracks. Tracked cats every day. Found several old kill sites and one fresh elk kill. There are too many lions in the southern hills and they are destroying the deer and elk herds.
- 1665 Please allow mountain lion hunting year round in the black hills until a specific quota is reached.

- 1666 The lion population seems to be about right. Deer and elk population are rising again & I haven't seen nearly as much lion sign the past couple seasons as say 5-6 years ago when lions were everywhere. Given that the deer and elk have rebounded I think the lion numbers must be pretty neutral right now.
- 1671 keep a license also for farm use year round
- 1672 No snow to track lions
- 1684 Yes, two days is all I was able to hunt, pathetic I know. I will try harder next year, Thanks for the opportunity of the mountain lion hunting season. It's much appreciated.
- 1691 The weather was uncooperative regarding tracking lions this season without the aid of dogs.
- 1701 I believe the Mt. Lion population is still strong but with the season being Jan thru March there just isn't the hunters out in the woods like they are in November. Hunters like myself are purchasing tags just in case they get a chance to get out and hunt but never do.
- 1714 Please create a limited draw lion hunt with the use of hounds. It will generate more preference point dollars, trophy opportunities and help with more specific harvest goals.
- 1718 I did not get out hunting much this year, but I very much enjoy the chance to hunt mountain lions and I like the current format, which gives everyone that wants to hunt a long season and a chance to pursue such a great animal.
- 1728 I would like to see the use of hounds opened to the entire Black Hills Fire Protection Unit.
- 1731 I wish the state allowed the use of dogs to hunt mt. lions. I am disappointed that I have to purchase a mt. lion tag before applying for the dog permit in CSP.
- 1733 would be good to make sure the snowmobiles and the 4-wheelers stay OFF the closed roads!!!
- 1734 I honestly didn't hunt very hard this year so not a good assessment. I didn't see one fresh track or signs at all.
- 1744 I didn't get a chance to get out this year. I hope to next season.
- 1755 There needs to be a decrease in the population of mountain lions to prevent the decrease in other wildlife.
- 1757 I'm hoping for one out of the black hills all year long.
- 1758 NEVER RECIEVED MY TAG IN MAIL! PAYED FOR IT.
- 1763 They only reason i bought a tag is because your system forces me to before i apply for a csp dog week. I would like to see a large western portion of the black hills on the Wyoming line area set aside for the use of hounds in say late November and dec with an application tag. And let sd have a chance at those cats before they migrate west to

Wyoming or east to the eastern portions of the black hills because of the large snow events

- 1782 Hunt with dogs in the National Forest
- 1783 I would love to see a low quota hound season for the entire Black Hills.
- 1785 Lions are getting smarter you should have a smaller quota allowing dogs. More males would be shot and more females could live and keep the population stabilized. I would rather drive over to Wyoming to use dogs. I am burned out on trying to call in lions. Does any other state not allow dogs?
- 1811 It's about time to start harvesting the humane way with dogs
- 1825 I do like that it is easy to obtain a tag, & it is so great hunting them, but #s in the southern hills seem low. Please continue to ban dogs from being used.
- 1853 There needs to be special lottery season in hills just like in the park, to use hounds on limited number of cats!
- 1855 There are plenty of cats. Seen plenty of tracks people complain about no cats but they don't pay attention. They are a little smarter now. Seen some hound tracks where they didn't need to be also
- 1858 Understandably we need to control the mountain lions for a lot of reasons and I say control not get rid of them by no means. But 100 years ago they controlled them and they did a good job because they are still here. How they did this was when there was a problem they went after that lion and tried to control them. And one of the ways they did is with hounds this is why God made hounds, God made man to control the earth it is a balance which man is to keep control over. I know you gentlemen try to do this the best way you think possible but we are not the only state with these issues with predators. As a hounds man I put a lot of foot prints in these hills and see firsthand thing that most people will never see, lion kills. But there are lion kills for them to live off of then just like a pack of wild dogs lions will kill just to kill maybe eat a little then move on. Can't tell you how many covered deer, elk, and small animals including pets I found. And when you are leaving the forest at the end of the day and you know and can feel them watching you and following you, it's a feeling you don't forget. In closing all I got to say is we have a problem now what is going to be done?? It's only a matter of time before they grab someone's small child and at that time you will have a real problem on your hands. And God have mercy on that child and there family to drug of and eaten alive. And also for the person whom finds this it will be something they will never forget as long as they live, I know see I serve my Country and seen more than I would like to remember. We need to protect the lions but if we put enough pressure on them they will, move back into the hills where they belong and we can all live in peace the way God intended. Thanks for your time.
- 1870 it's hard to know as far as increasing or decreasing as I really don't know how many are in the hills. What does GFP think for count?

- 1876 I thought we had wonderful weather for hunting this year. A lot of fresh snow. I worked an area not far from Sheridan Lake and never found a track. I was wondering if numbers are just down. A lot of deer and cover but no cats.
- 1877 It is a very special experience to hunt big cats and even though I have yet to harvest one I greatly enjoy the hunt each year.
- 1878 I wish we could use dogs, but then there wouldn't be that many tags sold would there. But i would pay a lot more for a drawing chance at a dog tag. Thanks!
- 1888 it's was good
- 1890 I am still learning how to do this sport. It's very challenging and seems to involve a lot of luck. It would be helpful to take some sort of class or teaching seminar to learn more about this new and exciting sport. I am also glad that South Dakota has a limited dog hunting law in this state. This makes it a very unique hunting experience. Thanks for the opportunity
- 1891 I have small children and it is scary to have my children playing outside at night. From inside my home's kitchen, I have heard mountain lions killing turkey behind my home and it is frightening for my kids to have such predators out and about.
- 1897 we got the tags just in case we saw one while hunting for cow elk
- 1898 hunted cow elk and got lion tags just in case we saw one
- 1903 I love that we have the opportunity to hunt different animals in the hills but for lions I really hope we can keep the population up and hunting limited. They are gorgeous animals and since we are in their territory its only right to respect them. I do appreciate the opportunity to hunt different animals though and hope we can continue to keep the population up and the hunting opportunities open.
- 1911 Still too many lions in the Black Hills. Might need to consider more use of dogs, or starting the season earlier to coincide with deer and/or elk seasons.
- 1912 did not have a chance to hunt
- 1918 With that much snow this year couldn't get off the main roads to cut a track.
- 1922 You should be able to use dogs in and out of the park.
- 1939 I am not sure if it is the lion population increase that has led to the deer herd decrease or not. I have hunted deer in the black Hills since 1962. The deer herd has decreased in the Lakota Lake, play house road, Spokane mine area and in the Black Hawk area where I have been hunting since 1962, at the same time the Mt. lion population has been expanding in these areas. Over the years I have found several Mt. Lion kills, the majority of them have been fawns and yearlings.
- 1946 This year was more difficult than previous years, primarily due to lack of trail access to prime lion areas. I know the seasonal road closures are a National Forest issue and will need to be addressed with them. However the closures seem to be getting more and

more widespread and in the end, ends up hampering lion hunters such as myself. A lot of hunters spend their falls hunting other animals and looking for lion activity in these areas before the season begins. Once the lion season opens however these areas are now closed off to motorized vehicles. Instead of going right out and hunting in these areas where we know there are lions. We end up spending hours hiking several miles into and out of these areas, leaving little time in the short days to actually hunt and track lions.

- 1948 I was wanting to get into the hills to hunt but the area I had staked out and hike a lot in was closed off this winter for the first time. I know there are mountain lions in that particular area as I have seen them and their tracks frequently. To say I was extremely disappointed would be an understatement. The Forest Service pretty well put an end to my season. FYI there are several lions around the popular hiking trail by Slate Creek Dam.
- 1949 Allowing dog use at least in less populated areas would help a lot.
- 1950 The question on satisfaction is very ambiguous. There are MANY reasons why I would choose one way or the other, but the question leaves it open for me to interpret and decide how to answer based in my own criteria (for example, weather, snow, temps...etc. Might be better off asking a more pointed questions.
- 1953 this season just sucked
- 1955 We are starting to see a slight increase in our deer and elk numbers in our area. Lion harvest does have an impact on these numbers.
- 1974 Well I have decided the cats are a lot smarter than we give them credit for. I have one I am after and I have decided it's a race before one of us dies of old age. I had fun, was great exercise a got close twice what more can you ask for. It's all about the hunt
- 1976 Please consider the use of hounds in the Hills.
- 1984 There should be a limited number of lion hunting 'with dogs' tags made available through a lottery to help raise funds for the department. It works in Custer State Park so certainly a few tags wouldn't hurt outside of the park, too.
- 1992 The past couple years the quota was not reached. This was my 7th season with no success, with ongoing back issues and not able to track, wish baiting was allowed, might make your quota then.
- 1994 Please continue a season outside of the Black Hills area including east river.
- 1995 Good amount of snow made it tough to track lions this year. If the decision is made to allow the use of dogs, it should be set as a low quota and run similar to the current season, and concurrently.
- 1997 Where do you get your data from on lion population? This year you could not even get close to the harvest quota. I think the lion hunt has run its course in the Black Hills. Look at your permit requests lately from east river. They have dropped significantly in the recent past. Change your hunting regs if you want this to continue. I have been there for

the last four years, dropped plenty of money out there, with little to show for it. I don't expect it to be easy but I would bet that the cats that are harvested are taken by a high percentage of locals. Publish who took the cat and where. It is pretty sad when these young ones under 80 lbs are taken, especially female. What is going on?

2002 Great work the habitat and game staff!

2015 Me & my hunting partner are both 66 years old and disabled since forest service closed a lot of places we could go we can't hunt lions. We can't walk the hills etc. We will probably keep putting in but it's too bad GFP can't help us old, retired, disabled, men who brought our sons and grandsons and other up hunting so we can keep this heritage going. Mad as hell but GFP don't care.

2019 I just didn't have time to hunt this year.

2020 we need to use dogs in the BH lion season. I saw just as many tracks as I did 5 years ago. in 2016 I got 5 different cat pics on my game cameras in a 5 mile ratios. we don't have enough hunters to harvest or make the quota. a quota is made to be met and using dogs would get those. gfp wants more mule deer in the BH, harvest more cats.... WY ID MT and UT all are doing their part in harvesting more cats to get the mule deer population up when are we. also the cats are adapting to the calling, it is getting a lot harder to call in a cat that it was 4 years ago

2025 No Dogs!!!

2029 You suck at managing elk! 21 years of applying. [expletive deleted]! I am done giving you money! Get a clue, people are sick of you [expletive deleted] not getting this.

2030 My answer to the last question was that I'd like to see the population of mountain lions in the Black Hills to increase slightly. This is mainly because I question the estimated population that currently exists here. I only went out a few times, but always after fresh snow, and it was difficult to impossible to even find tracks that MIGHT have been a mountain lion. The limits set for the season haven't been met for the last couple of years (not even close, really), and so those two things make me think that the population is less than estimated. Or, maybe I'm just doing it wrong. Thanks!

2039 I want to hunt more but due to an ankle medical problem I was unable to hunt. I had been hunting near Hill City and had seen many track and sign of the cats.

2040 I wish the weather would have been more corporative. It's had to hunt lion without fresh snow and when there was fresh snow it was during the work week. But that's the roll of the dice.

2041 With the short hunting season, annually declining numbers of hunters, incredible numbers of miles of USFS roads that have been closed to hunters during the lion season, and poor tracking conditions for the majority of days during the past several seasons, I can tell you one thing that you can take to the bank. Under the current season structures and hunting rules, boot hunters cannot and will not be effective in keeping this population under control. I feel like I am peeing in the wind though, as the current Big Game Management staff is going to do what they are going to do, whether it makes sense or not.

- 2042 As I live in Eastern SD, I have never seen a Mt.Lion. I like to have the basic lion license, in the event I run across one. Thank you
- 2048 Need to use dogs
- 2067 Thanks you!
- 2077 I obtained a tag but did not hunt due to a persistent bronchial cough I've had for four months
- 2078 I appreciate the opportunity to hunt these creatures. They a lot of fun to hunt and I hope we continue to limit the use of dogs for the regular hills season. Thanks!
- 2087 I haven't really hunted much for the last few years but the population in the northern hills is dramatically lower that it was 4 years ago based on tracks and sign found. I did however manage to call in my 24th lion this year and missed him. Only one I have been tempted to shoot at since #1!
- 2094 I believe that the Black Hills season should be longer for residents and that it should be open to non-residents for a two week period. More revenue could be made by having a two week nonresident season which would run concurrently with the resident season. Not to mention the revenue that would be generated for local economies. i.e. hotels, restaurants, gas, etc.
- 2100 MAKE THE SEASON YEAR ROUND. LET'S TALK
- 2102 My opinion predators and commercialization are my biggest concerns for the sportsmen's of this state. Mountain lions are a problem, our elk pollution is down 60% from 10 years ago as well as our deer in the Black Hills. As soon as the lion population boom the elk and deer dropped. The lions are capitalizing on our elk, deer & turkeys. My opinion is the lion should be hunted year round like coyotes.
- 2125 continue limited hunts with hounds in Custer State Park only. thankyou
- 2128 I would like to see the season begin earlier. Sometime in November, perhaps.
- 2129 Hard to locate lions with little snow and didn't get out so much when it was so cold.
- 2141 It would be nice to start the season in early December when employers give more vacation time.
- 2142 Unable to hunt many area's because the snow was to deep.
- 2164 Thank you for this necessary opportunity to manage mountain lion.
- 2177 Keep up the good work.
- 2178 I was not able to continue to hunt beyond the one time due to a medical condition that came up. I was not disappointed or dissatisfied with the season, just my circumstances.

- 2183 No snow we need to be using dogs to keep cat population down like all other states with cat hunting. Why does SD GF&P have to be so different than other states with Mt Lion hunting.
- 2184 I believe deer population is up and lion population is being controlled well.
- 2201 In all the days hunting in various locations the only sign of a mountain lion was a track I saw once.
- 2214 Need to add a law prohibiting driving vehicles with dogs caged in the back down numbered trails. Feel this breaks the intent of not using dogs in the Black Hills.
- 2223 I only got to hunt about three hours on the next to the last day. I was in the Tinton road and Higgins gulch area. I saw several deer and even some elk tracks which was good. There was no snow left in that area so it was hard to tell if there were any cats or not. I checked all the mud and around water holes and never saw any sign of any cat tracks. It was a beautiful day and I had a most enjoyable hike through the woods. Hopefully I will be back next year. Thank you so much for the opportunity !!!!!
- 2229 Would like to see the season extended.
- 2239 Keep the dogs out of the forest.
- 2240 Get a tag in case I see one while working on my land in Bison, SD. Eventually I'll retire and hope to have the same opportunities that one has currently to hunt them in the winter (when I retire).
- 2246 The reason for being slightly dissatisfied result from so many trails with gates locked. I'm of the opinion that the ATV drive through gates could remain OPEN while closing (LOCK) the larger truck drive through gates? WHAT SAY YOU?
- 2248 I just didn't have time to hunt this season.
- 2263 Season start early like December 1.
- 2280 Weather was in the cats favor during my hunt. Thanks
- 2288 I have mountain lions all year long on my property but since my property is on the Black Hills side of interstate I can't harvest year round. I would like to see this changed.
- 2313 Like to be able to use dogs to hunt mt lions in bighorn sheep areas. Elk Mtn would be a great place since half the Mtn is Wyoming where they can use dogs. This would help save the bighorn sheep population. Thanks for your time and consideration.
- 2317 would like the use of dogs to be considered. thanks.
- 2319 Lawrence County, Maitland Road. Having sighted a lion on my back porch and tracks indicating visits on two additional occasions I purchases a license in case I had the opportunity to shoot one on my property. Did not actively hunt a lion.
- 2320 Lions should be listed as varmits. I only want hunters killing our deer.

- 2331 snow conditions were crappy this year the snow we had was not helpful for tracking
- 2345 just didn't get out much . my own fault
- 2349 Season should be year round. Treat them as if they were coyotes. Lost a pet to a predator.
- 2363 Deer, elk and turkey populations are way more important to me and my family than the mountain lion population. The Black Hills is not a large wilderness area than can support any population of large predators.
- 2370 Season should start Sept 1 along with the hunting seasons when everyone is out hunting.
- 2385 Third year in a row coming off a major surgery so unable to hunt
- 2386 Dang ole kitties are hard to find in them there hills.
- 2392 Hunted many areas with many different methods, only found one set of tracks.
- 2394 Due to health issues I was unable to hunt more this season. I wish there was a way to better inform hunters about the size/age cats so that the really small ones would not be taken/shot.
- 2414 I think the lion harvest has reached the point where it is self-regulating based on hunter interest/effort in combination with the lion harvest. I think it would be interesting to drop the harvest limit in 2017-18 and see how many lions are taken.
- 2417 It was disappointing to see the minimal punishment that was given the two characters southwest of Rapid City that baited and killed a cougar. It seemed the GFP did a masterful job of catching them, and then the court system didn't see fit to really punish them. There should be a mandatory stiff penalty and fine for such behaviors. As it is, a guy catching a fish 1/16th of an inch below the limit gets a big fine and characters (you can't really call them hunters) like these two, get a slap on the wrist. Disappointed
- 2427 There's a lot more cats out there than people think
- 2437 I buy my tag in case I see a lion on the prairie. I do not hunt the Hills area.
- 2454 Because of lack of snowfall, tracking was impossible.
- 2476 I would like to see the season be all year round. Like this year the snow was a major issue in tracking mountain lions and if the season was all year long it would give us a better chance of harvesting a mountain lion.
- 2481 I would recommend changing it back to coincide with Deer and Elk Season. We harvested more cats.
- 2491 I tracked three single cats and founder a mother cub pair. Though I did not harvest a lion, I believe there is a good population. Further, if we could use dogs in the last month of the season we, hunter, could harvest the full limit. This would also stat making the Lions not harvested more afraid of dogs and help prevent them from entering cities.

- 2492 dogs for all :)
- 2500 Keep up the good work!
- 2506 Extended the season into November!
- 2513 Please never allow hunting with hounds!
- 2520 I personally think the price on the tag is a little steep for the odds.
- 2523 the benefits of a decreased mountain lion population are beginning to show with an increase in elk, mule deer and bighorn sheep in the Black Hills. We are nearing a good long term management balance in the Black Hills of a sustainable mountain lion population and thriving big game populations as well.
- 2532 poor snow cover in the areas i hunted. Still have a problem with mountain lions in the black hills. Too many deer and turkeys being taken out by these creatures.
- 2534 Need to allow dogs and start the season earlier if u want quotas met
- 2537 you guys lower the quota every year cuz we did not reach the quota, in fact there are tons of lions in my area, but we never have enough snow to stay on them very long. when we get a good tracking snow,{not 20 inches that blows all the access shut}...we kill a bunch of lions....snow melts, bam....down to nothing, good snow again..bam...more lions. it doesnt take a rocket scientist to figure this out...i've had out of state bowhunters at my house that are appalled at the amount of lion sign and sightings.me and my buddies put a lot of boots on the ground and it is unbelievable the number of dead deer and elk we find.. you all need to adjust the season to maintain a higher kill to keep them in check. if you want to hear some stories, call anytime [number omitted]
- 2545 Please do not allow hound hunting throughout the Black Hills.
- 2551 I love the hunt as it is set up now. I would consider myself an advocate against dogs in the hills. Guys like me wouldn't be able to afford to do it anymore if they allow dogs. SD is one of the last areas where they don't allow dogs. It definitely adds to the hunt and sportsmanship in my opinion.
- 2554 Make 22 WMR legal to hunt Cougars.
- 2556 Access difficult due to weather and road closures.
- 2557 When you allow dogs for hunting bobcats in the northern hills. Guess what happens, suddenly lots of "bobcat" hunters are treeing mountain lions. It's a loop hole. Needs fixed Thanks.
- 2571 Seemed to be less tracks then previous years. The tracks we did find were in very remote areas away from well-traveled roads. Snow conditions were better than previous years and there were several opportunities to search for tracks. I tried calling a couple days with and without prior knowledge of Lions in area and was unsuccessful. There are usually multiple lions that cross where we live in the Black Hills between Keystone and Hill City, but this year I only saw one track that did lead to a mostly ate deer carcass.

Usually I find multiple kills. There are more deer and turkey in our area since 2007 so I think the lion population has become manageable so that is why I voted to keep it the same on your survey. Thanks.

- 2572 I could not hunt because of back surgery hope everyone else had fun!!!!
- 2578 I believe that a zone hunting system needs to be put in place focusing on increasing the elk population and primarily decreasing the deer population. Of course human interaction complaints have to be addressed as they pop up. For example the deer population in whitewood valley area is roaring again and a few more Mtn Lions would help sustain a balance there. So zone a none season accordingly. Understand the areas they can cover but look at it.
- 2580 Please consider lengthening the mountain lion season to include at least part of the deer and elk seasons in the later fall. I believe a fair number of lions are seen by hunters during these seasons which can't be harvested, however it would help to be able to harvest them during these seasons for at least a few reasons. First, an increased harvest would bring the desired number of lions actually harvested closer to the established goal of 60. As you know, this is necessary to provide less predation on the deer, elk, mountain sheep, and other animals which will help increase their already low numbers. Second, more hunters would likely purchase a lion tag if they are allowed to harvest one during their fall season hunts, which will increase the GF&P revenues. Otherwise, short of lengthening the seasons, the only way to reach the desired goal of 60 lions harvested will be to legalize the use of dogs throughout the black hills area, which doesn't seem too plausible given the current climate of public opinion. THANK YOU for requesting our input in this very important matter.
- 2584 Start season earlier
- 2601 Allow dogs
- 2603 Thanks
- 2625 Didn't go out & hunt this year - weather was crazy this fall/winter & didn't have the opportunity to get out.
- 2627 Should be able to shoot a lion any time you see one just like a coyote
- 2669 I didn't have a chance to hunt this year but I hope to next year
- 2679 Would like the season to start with deer season
- 2713 the rules of engagement for lion hunting should be relaxed, certain types of baiting should be legal, spotted cats cannot be harvested, but lions in multiplies without spots should be legal
- 2738 Cannot control the weather
- 2744 weather had a lot to do for harvesting a lion. Too warm not enough snow.

- 2766 Failure to allow hound hunting in the Black Hills is still a problem. With the quota of available tags some could be allotted to hound hunters. The excuse given by the Game and Fish of too much private land in the Hills is simply a cop out. Conservation officers don't want to deal with complaints, well then maybe they should find another line of work as this is part of their job. Good hounds are expensive, people aren't just going to turn them loose all over the Black Hills and risk losing dogs. Yes there will be irresponsible hound owners and they can and should be dealt with. Just as there are currently irresponsible hunters roaming the hills as the season is currently set. I don't know why hound hunters are discriminated against in the lion season. Responsible hound hunters are the best management tool the state could use to manage the lion population. The "slippery slope" theory of landowner complaints is nothing but pure laziness on the State's part.
- 2785 Do not allow dogs into the black hills hunting district. Stop allowing the use of dogs in the black hills hunting district for hunting bobcat(s).
- 2786 I live in the middle of the Hills with a good size chunk of land. We used to have herds of elk come through and hang out here. Now we have herds of lions come through and no elk ! We lose livestock and pets all the time in this area now. I have lived here my whole life, 55 years, and we have never had problems with lions like we have now. From 1968 to 1983 my family and neighbors seen 6 cats up here. Now we see or hear about that many over a weekend, and they are different cats ! Hunted 1 full day in the area and found 4 different sets of tracks, a dead cub that was killed by another lion and 7 dear carcasses, 2 that were fresh kills. It's getting ridiculous on how many you see and hear about in the area. There is a video of 6 cats feeding on a dear by Hisga on YouTube. Let us hunt year around in the Hills and use dogs to get the numbers down where they should be. You guys know as well as I do, it's just a matter of time before a kid or grownup is going get mauled or killed by one and then you know what's gonna hit the fan! Just saying.
- 2788 Please consider lowering the limit
- 2837 I think we over harvested lions a few years back and they have not been able to recover. If we cannot harvest the quota, I think the quota is too high. I feel that we should lower the quota to less than the last year's harvest and give the population a chance to recover
- 2839 Wish we could use dogs.
- 2862 I am still hunting on my own land.
- 2871 I buy the license for the statewide hunting, not the hills. I have considered hunting the hills but have not as of yet. I see tracks and scat on a couple of places I hunt deer and other game, so that is why I have the license in the hopes of coming across a big cat sometime.
- 2874 I own property on the Terry Peak back Summit Road. I normally have cougars in that area and Rasberry Gulch. I saw no sign of cougar activity in these areas all winter this year.
- 2875 I am for year round hunting outside the black hills, it makes good sense for the future mountain lions.

- 2884 Should allow dogs to be used the last two weeks of season if quota is not met.
- 2898 it would be nice to see some beavers, porcupines and grouse back in the hills again with fewer lions!
- 2899 We were not successful due to the lack of snow when we were out. We enjoy tracking and did see signs of cats, prints in mud where ever we went. Just hard to call them and tracking needs snow. We do feel there is still to many cats. Please note: we did however see coyotes in 3 different locations but, was not able to get a shot. Thanks
- 2900 I would much rather be able to hunt deer and elk in the black hills
- 2923 Lack of fresh snow made hunting difficult. I do not understand why dogs with their trainers/guides are not allowed? Please explain. They are in other states such as MT.
- 2927 purchased license mainly because there has been a lion spotted several times in my home county of Hanson close to my home.
- 2965 I do not hunt the Black Hills.
- 2975 I think a Mt. Lion informational seminar would be a great thing , did not see Many hunters this year, I think it would increase the success rate.
- 2977 Rather see more elk and deer than lion. Let us hunt with dogs special draw in hills.
- 3000 Only were able to find one set of tracks and it was a double set, so not able to track. Are the mountain lion numbers really down in the hills or am I just that terrible of a hunter??
- 3002 Every time a lion kills a deer or elk it takes an opportunity away from a hunter and it is the hunter who pays for the lions share.
- 3004 we didn't make it out with a fresh snow but i am happy with the deer and elk population from what i have seen, so i believe the lion population is right where it needs to be! thank you
- 3008 I didn't get a chance to hunt this year so I don't have much input this year.
- 3028 Open more trails.
- 3029 Season in line with deer season
- 3037 Would like it open during deer season like it used to be.
- 3038 I purchase the tag in case I have one on my land.
- 3040 I purchased this license as we have spotted lions and tracks on our land in Hand County. Livestock are being harassed by them so I purchased the license on the off chance I spit one. I think it's great they populate the Hills. When they get in his area, it's too populated. My uncle found tracks and scat in his barn for heaven's sake!
- 3042 I hopeful they've not bee OVER hunted.

- 3051 Saw 5 but couldn't get a shot at one too far away 2 were together both large could have shot, but law doesn't allow.
- 3057 I've heard rumors that animal activists are putting in for limited-draw mountain lion hunts (i.e. dog hunts in Custer) without the intent to fill the tag, or even try. I find this very much along the lines of strategically interfering with a legal hunt. If true, I request that the impact of any activities along these lines be identified and compensated for by increasing the number of tags offered for those opportunities. In truth, I choose not to hunt with dogs and was still successful this season, I just think that it is a shame that hunters who choose to use dogs could possibly miss a fair chance to hunt because of subversive activists.
- 3069 Weather and lack of snow to locate a cat was mostly a factor.
- 3084 was a bad year for me did not have any time to hunt
- 3102 It must be noted that I did not have time to hunt mountain lions this season, although I purchased a tag.
- 3108 The lion population around Rochford seems to have leveled out and is about right. We are seeing plenty of deer this year which is a good sign the lions are not as numerous.
- 3113 Thanks for conducting the season and survey. I think Dogs should be allowed for Mt Lions all over the state as it makes for a more successful hunt as well as limiting the younger cats from being taken.
- 3127 The way the hunt is set up now it is an extermination hunt taking too many females and young. Won't take long before SDGF&P is in court over the hunting season. What happens when numbers are so low that they are put on the state list for species of concern. They no hunting number jump way up then you are back where you started 10 years ago with the elk calves being taken out same mess all over again.
- 3150 I only managed to hunt a few areas during the season, but I did manage to find tracks multiple times.
- 3160 Move the start date to beginning of December or even into November. Fresh snow cover is vital to harvest success and March snow fall amounts are nowhere near what the Hills receive in mid November thru Christmas.
- 3169 Please keep the dogs out of the black hills. I'm ok with using hounds in custer state park but not the rest of the black hills. It will ruin any chance us boot hunters will have of harvesting a fair chase lion. Give us a longer season and maybe open up some better access to closed areas to give us a better chance at keeping up with the quota. Why can't we hunt lions during deer and elk seasons before all the roads are snowed in?
- 3171 Excellent job of Management
- 3180 I was not able to hunt because of a gun malfunction but look forward to next season.
- 3197 I believe the mountain lion season is important, thank you for continuing it.

- 3199 I purchase a SD mountain lion tag mainly to be able to kill a lion statewide if I were to encounter one. Also to be able to apply for Custer State Park. Mountain lions need to continue to be controlled to a level that they do not affect big game populations so drastically in many areas. Are Custer State Park mountain lion hunting statistics available to the public?
- 3201 Unless it is hurting deer & elk to the point then I would say decrease.
- 3207 Since I don't hunt just for them but I have a license just in case I see & have the chance to take one. I feel that GF&P needs the money for other things also, not that I have a surplus of cash but I think this is the right thing to do, plus I enjoy hunting & your services & personnel. Wonderful people, kind, cordial, knowledgeable & happy.....
THANK YOU
- 3215 Keep season as is no dogs
- 3232 Too much snow cover. Got stuck and couldn't get around. I like the opportunity to try to hunt them but I don't want to hurt the elk, deer, mt goat, big horn populations.
- 3257 Thanks for the opportunity SDGFP
- 3259 Being a landowner near Oral I always know when there's a lion around. The turkeys & deer head for the Prairie. Being able to hunt lions with dogs is a HUGE success. If the lion numbers ever get high again in the Black Hills, I hope dogs will be considered.
Thank you!
- 3269 I did not hunt because of weather & no partner
- 3283 Rather hunt deer elk sheep goats than my lion. Appreciate the lion numbers being lower than 6_7 years ago.
- 3291 Allow Dogs in the Hills. Do not change and adopt deer management plan. Leave it the way it is.
- 3317 I didn't get out there but one day during the season. I have been out a few days since the season closed hunting turkeys and I still see a lot of cat sign plus two maybe three kill sites. I don't feel they have been over hunted by no means but I don' know the animal enough to really say. Thanks.
- 3331 I think lions should be removed from protection and be allowed to be killed year round the same as coyotes by any method. This needs to be done to give the lions more fear of humans to prevent attacks on humans. We have been playing with fire on this issue.
- 3355 I am an older hunter.....wind and cold weather plus the lack of snow were issues that discouraged me from being in the field.
- 3379 I saw lots of fresh tracks saw one lion but was unable to get a clean enough view to take a shot gives me hope for next year
- 3381 I bought the tag for western South Dakota just in case I see a cat on the ranch I hunt

- 3401 temps were overly warm we still had a good time that is all that matters. we went at the middle of march but you never know about the weather
- 3409 I only get a tag for the chance to shoot a mt. lion in my property east river. Maybe sell a tag for non-fire district land at reduced price.
- 3414 Too much snow in the higher hills was somewhat of a detriment to successful hunting for me. Also the Forest service has too many trails blocked which hinders access to prime lion hunting areas. Doesn't seem to be much of an open forest like it once was. Probably require an act of congress to change it. Louis Huffman
- 3442 Season needs to be longer
- 3448 I have not hunted yet going to hunt prairie in Oct/Nov!
- 3482 i purchase the tag every year just in case i happen to see one this fall hunting the prairie.
- 3483 I am a rancher on the plains of western South Dakota and bought the license because we were suspicious that we have had a mountain lion around. We are in the middle of calving and I felt it would be in my best interest to have a license in case we had a problem.
- 3492 i hunted late season. there was no snow. this made hunting almost impossible. still had a good time in the Black Hills with family.
- 3502 Only got a tag the last day of the season to use on my prairie ranch during the year if opportunity presents. The lions in the northern hills appear to be reduced to more acceptable levels. Cats still come down the creek bottoms and leave tracks on the porch, but not seeing the level of tracks on the ridges to encourage much hunting on my part. I think the hunt has been effective at reducing the population in my area, and we still see a cat on occasion.
- 3504 I would like to see more tags let out in certain areas in around South Dakota that has high number of lions from what I have seen our predators have increased over the last 2 to 5 years just last week me and my wife was out driving around in the national forest we came across a spike elk that was killed by a lion not too far from a ranch that has cows so if gfp could or would look in to all the big game that has been killed by lions I think it would be appropriate that more time and tags should be offered for hunters