

Cougar Hunting Seasons and Regulations WAC 220-415-100

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Proposed Rule change

- The cougar hunting season will begin September 1 and end March 31.
- All independent-aged cougars count towards the cougar mortality cap.
- The cap will be based on a growth rate of 13% and a cougar density of 2.3 cougars per 100 km².
- All known human-related cougar mortality (including conflict) shall count toward the cap.
- In PMUs that reach the 13% cap prior to the recreational hunting season starting, the cap will be increased to 20% of the population to provide hunting opportunity in those PMUs.
- The season shall close when mortalities in those PMUs meet or exceed 20% of the population. Additionally, if opened the season shall close within 72 hours of that number being reached. This section will sunset after the 2024-2025 season.



Public Comment - Support

- Cougars should be protected
- Protect cougars from extinction
- Cougars provide ecosystem balance
- Cougar control overabundance of deer and elk
- Killing cougars does not save deer and elk
- Killing cougars could increase conflict
- Deer and elk are plentiful
- Cougars should be managed for all people
- This proposal is science based
- Continue obtaining more data on the cougar populations
- Eliminate trophy hunting
- Require a 3-year assessment of rule
- Shorten the season length
- Adopt the regulations recommended in the original petition
- Count all ages of cats
- Don't increase the cap to 20%
- Take a 1-year break from hunting
- Use a 10% cap



Public Comment - Oppose

- Do not allow the increase to 20%
- Stop all cougar hunting
- Proposal not warranted
- No need to reduce opportunity, enough cougar to hunt more
- Punishing hunters instead of addressing conflict
- Cougar numbers are high, leads to starvation and conflict
- Remove the sunset clause on the 20%
- Use hunters for cougar conflict resolution
- Bring back hound hunting
- Feels rushed, goes further than roll back
- Goes against agency recommendation, listen to the biologists
- Propose a year-round season
- Should not use a statewide density estimate
- 13% cap too restrictive, use 16%
- Counting all mortality towards the cap needlessly reduces opportunity
- Politically driven anti-hunting agenda



Public Comment - Oppose

- Not science based
- Public safety concerns from increased conflict
- Ungulate abundance concerns
- Don't shorten the season length
- No sunset clause on cougar rule
- Don't make decisions based on lobbying groups that do not reside in WA state
- Follow the North American Model of Conservation
- Allow a second tag
- Throwing the ecosystem out of balance by reducing harvest
- Need more updated density estimates
- Commission should focus on bigger issues than annual fishing and hunting regulations
- Eroding public trust
- Mortality counts should start with the harvest season opening date
- Clearly define "all human caused mortality"
- Threatens effective management of cougar populations
- Begin the season on Aug 1 to make up for loss of April
- Maintain current season and guidelines



Motion Language

I move to adopt the proposed rule changes
as presented by Department staff.

Is there a “second”?





Questions?