

# Carnivore Rulemaking



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# COUGAR RULES

WAC 220-415-100 Cougar hunting seasons and regulations

WAC 220-400-050 Pelt sealing and biological sample collection



**WAC 220-415-100**  
**Cougar hunting seasons and regulations**

# WAC 220-415-100

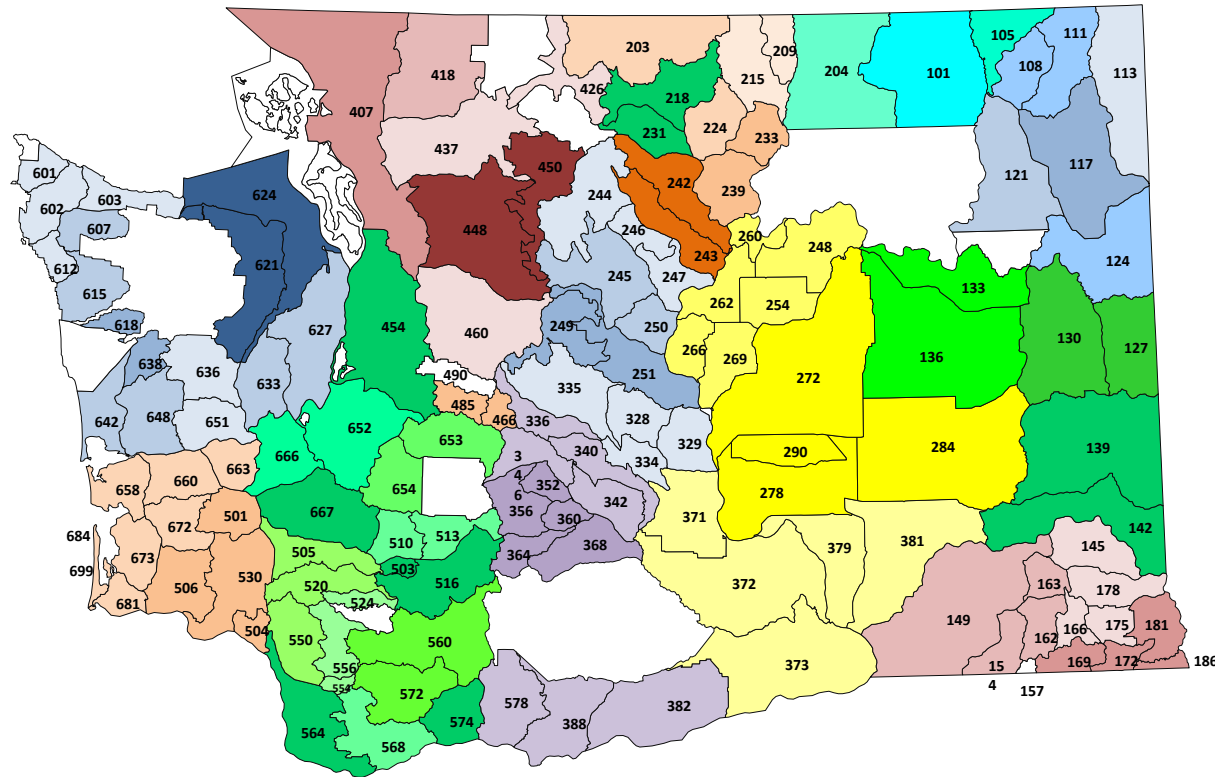
## Cougar hunting seasons and regulations

The proposed changes to this WAC are:

- to list the harvest caps for cougar harvest seasons by Cougar Hunt Management Unit (previously PMUs),
- to confirm that the season shall close in Cougar Hunt Management Units once the cap has been reached, or by March 31, whichever comes first,
- to specify that all independent-aged harvested or conflict-removed cougars shall count towards the total cougar mortality cap and that conflict removals will be counted toward the cap beginning April 1 of the current hunt year, and
- to specify that the cougar hotline and website will be updated for closures weekly on Thursdays throughout the harvest season, which begins September 1 and runs through March 31.



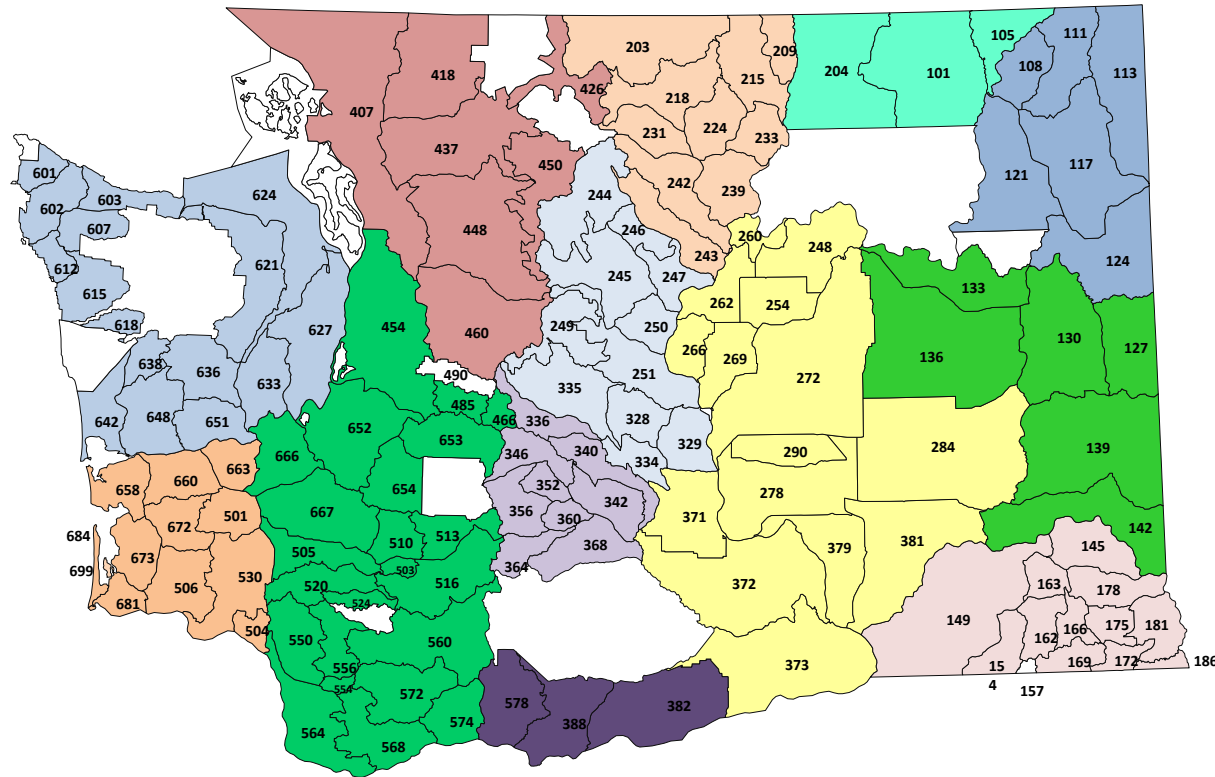
# Cougar Hunt Management Units (CHMUs)



Harvest caps are limits set on cougar mortality by **Cougar Hunt Management Unit (CHMU)**.



# Cougar Data Analysis Units (CDAUs)



**Cougar Data Analysis Units (CDAU)** are large, population-scale areas in Washington being used to analyze mortality at the cougar population level rather than at the Hunt Management Unit level.





# Harvest Framework (presented in Dec)

Caps are set using the following structure:

- In **CDAUs** where the total cougar mortality exceeds 16% when averaged over the prior complete three-year period, the **CHMUs** within that **CDAU** that are over 16% receive a 10% cap until the next three-year season setting period; the remaining **CHMUs** receive a 16% cap.
- In **CDAUs** where the total cougar mortality remains below 16% when averaged over the prior complete three-year period, the **CHMUs** within those **CDAUs** will receive a 16% cap.

Caps will be reevaluated at the next three-year season setting period.



# Cap Table

CDAU Name	CHMU	Hunt Area	Cap	Cap %
Okanogan Highlands	1	GMU 101	10	16%
Okanogan Highlands	2	GMU 105	3	16%
Northeast	3	GMUs 108, 111	4	10%
Northeast	4	GMU 113	7	16%
Northeast	5	GMU 117	5	10%
Northeast	6	GMU 121	4	10%
Northeast	7	GMU 124	3	10%
Columbia Basin East	8	GMUs 127, 130	4	16%
Columbia Basin East	9	GMUs 133, 136	5	16%
Columbia Basin East	10	GMUs 139, 142	1	16%
Southeast	11	GMUs 145, 166, 175, 178	3	10%
Southeast	12	GMUs 149, 154, 162, 163	4	10%
Southeast	13	GMUs 169, 172, 181, 186	3	10%
Okanogan	14	GMU 203	6	16%
Okanogan Highlands	15	GMU 204	9	16%
Okanogan	16	GMUs 209, 215	5	16%
Okanogan	17	GMUs 218, 231	6	16%
Okanogan	18	GMU 224	3	16%
Okanogan	19	GMUs 233, 239	5	16%
Okanogan	20	GMUs 242, 243	6	16%
Central Cascades East	21	GMUs 244, 246, 247	7	16%
Central Cascades East	22	GMUs 245, 250	7	16%
Columbia Basin West	23	GMUs 248, 254, 260, 262, 266, 269	8	16%
Central Cascades East	24	GMUs 249, 251	7	16%
Columbia Basin West	25	GMUs 272, 278, 284, 290	5	16%
Central Cascades East	26	GMUs 328, 329, 330, 334, 335	8	16%
South Cascades East	27	GMUs 336, 340, 342, 346	7	16%
South Cascades East	28	GMUs 352, 356, 360, 364, 368	7	16%
Columbia Basin West	29	GMUs 371, 372, 373, 379, 381	3	16%
South Cascades Southeast	30	GMUs 382, 388	3	10%

CDAU Name	CHMU	Hunt Area	Cap	Cap %
North Cascades West	31	GMU 407	6	16%
North Cascades West	32	GMU 418	6	16%
North Cascades West	33	GMUs 426, 437	9	16%
North Cascades West	34	GMU 448	10	16%
North Cascades West	35	GMU 450	3	16%
South Cascades West	36	GMU 454	2	16%
North Cascades West	37	GMU 460	7	16%
South Cascades West	38	GMUs 466, 485	2	16%
Willapa Hills	39	GMUs 501, 504, 506, 530	11	16%
South Cascades West	40	GMUs 503, 505, 520, 550	8	16%
South Cascades West	41	GMUs 510, 513	4	16%
South Cascades West	42	GMU 516	5	16%
South Cascades West	43	GMUs 524, 554, 556	3	16%
South Cascades West	44	GMUs 560, 572	10	16%
South Cascades West	45	GMU 564	1	16%
South Cascades West	46	GMU 568	3	16%
South Cascades West	47	GMU 574	2	16%
South Cascades Southeast	48	GMUs 578	2	10%
Olympic Peninsula	49	GMUs 601, 602, 603, 612	7	16%
Olympic Peninsula	50	GMUs 607, 615, 618	6	16%
Olympic Peninsula	51	GMUs 621, 624	7	16%
Olympic Peninsula	52	GMU 627	2	16%
Olympic Peninsula	53	GMU 633, 636, 651	8	16%
Olympic Peninsula	54	GMUs 638, 642, 648	8	16%
South Cascades West	55	GMUs 652, 666	4	16%
South Cascades West	56	GMUs 653, 654	6	16%
Willapa Hills	57	GMUs 658, 660, 663, 672, 673, 681, 684, 699	13	16%
South Cascades West	58	GMU 667	4	16%



# Implications

This proposed management framework is based on Washington cougar research and was created through a collaborative effort including regional biologists, species specialists, management staff, and scientists.

If adopted, these amendments provide a more robust framework for WDFW to manage cougar populations to maintain population stability and adult male territoriality.



# Public Comment Themes

- Public comment closes at midnight Monday 03/24/25
- Themes in Support: N/A
- Themes in Opposition:
  - General opposition
  - Conflict mortalities should not count toward the cap
  - There are too many cougars – ungulate decline, human safety concern
  - Year-round cougar season, or start season August 1
  - Special permit hound hunt, bring in \$ for conflict
  - Do not drop the cap to 10%
  - Caps are not set equitably, counting conflict is unfair to sportsmen and eliminates opportunity
  - Don't feel like their comments are being heard



# Public Comment Themes

- Opposition
  - Caps should not apply to human populated areas, or increase the cap to reduce conflict
  - If conflicts are closing units to harvest, the population is too high
  - No cap, or use a higher cap (20% +)
  - Manage at the GMU level
  - CHMU caps are too low and will close before the season starts
  - The science is flawed, insufficient
  - Mortality types should be counted and managed separately
  - Licensed cougar hunters should be used for conflict removal
  - Bring back hound hunting for controlled harvest management
  - Density should be managed based on prey availability, not habitat area





# Questions?





**WAC 220-400-050**  
**Requirements for sealing of pelts**  
**and collection of biological**  
**information for river otter,**  
**cougar, lynx, and bobcat**



# WAC 220-400-050

## Requirements for sealing of pelts and collection of biological information for river otter, cougar, lynx, and bobcat

The proposed COUGAR changes to this WAC are:

- to require that cougars must be sealed within 3 days of the harvest (barring holidays and weekends) and must have proof of sex attached at time of sealing, and
- to remove the cougar hotline reporting language requirements.

The proposed BOBCAT and RIVER OTTER changes are:

- to specify the information and details needed for submitting a bobcat or otter pelt for sealing, and
- to make it possible for taxidermists/fur buyers to receive sealed bobcat pelts for later jaw submission by the hunter, which is what we are currently practicing.





# Implications

If adopted, these amendments will allow WDFW to remove the cougar reporting hotline, which was hardly being used, and require cougars be brought in for sealing within 3 days of harvest. This shortens the total reporting time required by hunters but allows staff to account for cougar mortality at a faster and timelier rate. Many hunters were already getting their cats sealed within 3 days and before calling the hotline, which had a 3-day reporting requirement.

These amendments will also clarify the rulemaking around collecting lower bobcat jaws for assessing the population's status, and specify what information is needed to get bobcat and otter pelts sealed.



# Public Comment Themes

- Public comment closes at midnight Monday 03/24/25
- Support
  - Agree with removing the hotline requirement
- Opposition
  - General opposition
  - 3 days to seal cougars is too extreme
  - Department staff aren't available enough for a 3-day sealing window
  - Require a 10-day pelt sealing window for cougar
  - Don't collect lower jaws





# Questions?







# BEAR RULES

WAC 220-415-090 Fall black bear hunting seasons and regulations



**WAC 220-415-090**  
**Fall black bear hunting seasons**  
**and regulations**

# WAC 220-415-090

## Fall black bear hunting seasons and regulations

The proposed changes to this WAC are:

- to specify the black bear hunting season dates and bag limits for the 14 Black Bear Management Units (BBMU),
- to identify where it is illegal to harvest black bear in Washington,
- to make it unlawful to kill cubs (less than one-year old) and females with cubs,
- to identify the list of GMUs where the Bear ID Test will be required, and
- to specify that mandatory bear tooth samples must be submitted to the Department by December 1 of the current hunt year.





# Washington's Proposed Framework (presented in Dec)

Objective → Manage for stable bear populations at the BBMU-scale

female mortality rate  $\leq$  female intrinsic growth rate

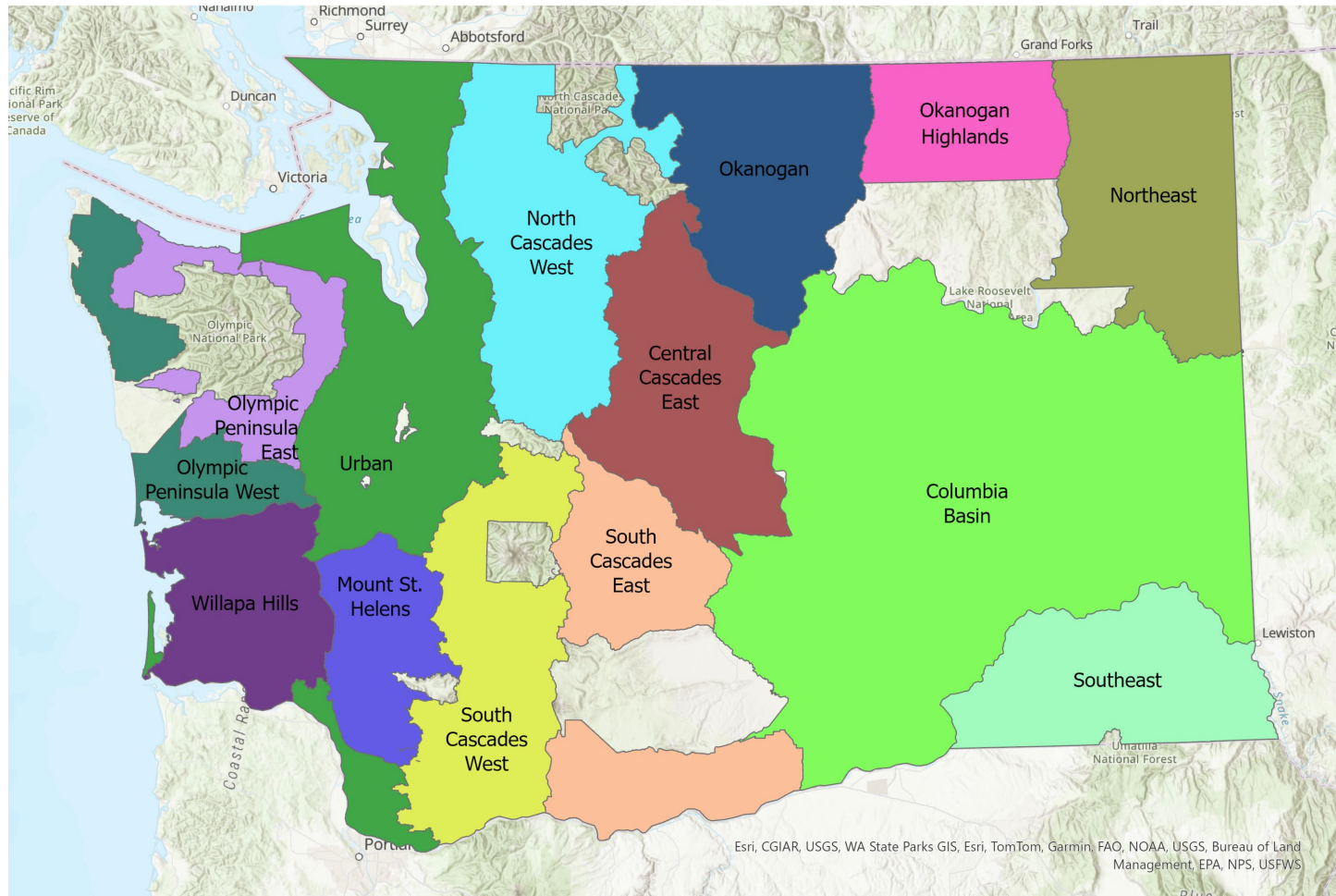
Female Intrinsic Growth Rate = 8%  
(Statewide Average)

If mortality rate  $>$  intrinsic growth rate when averaged over the prior complete 3-year average, then decrease the season length by 2-week increments starting with the opening date and reduce bag limit to 1 bear.



# BBMUs

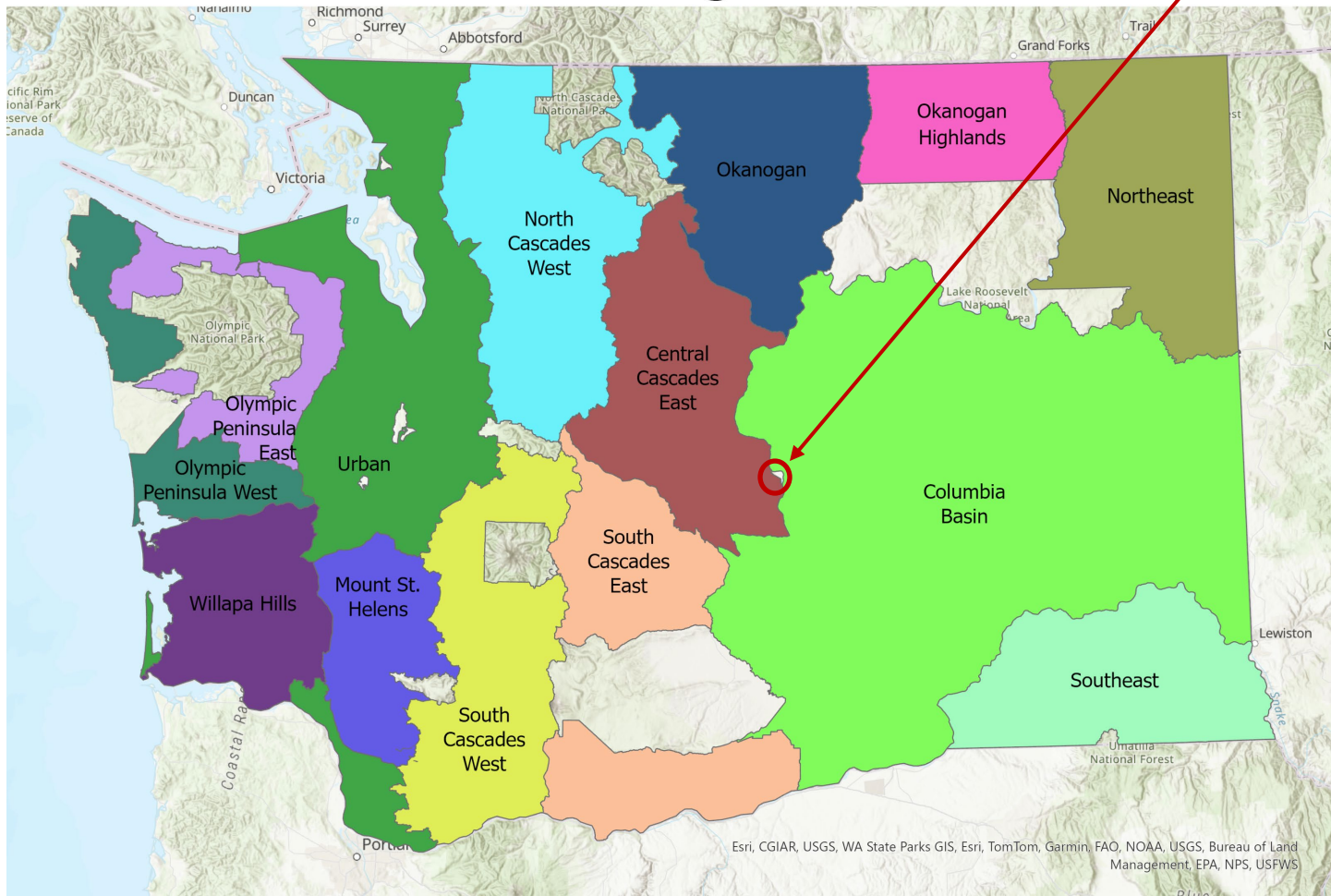
## Black Bear Management Units



# BBMUs

**Recommended Adjustment:**  
Add GMU 330 to the Central  
Cascades East BBMU

## Black Bear Management Units



# Recommended Season Setting by BBMU

BBMU	Female Mortality Rate	Bag Limit	Season Dates
Northeast	5%	2	August 1 - November 15
<i>Columbia Basin*</i>	NA	2	August 1 - November 15
Southeast	7%	2	August 1 - November 15
Okanogan Highlands	6%	2	August 1 - November 15
Okanogan**	7%	1	August 15 - November 15
Central Cascades East	6%	2	August 1 - November 15
South Cascades East	5%	2	August 1 - November 15
North Cascades West	5%	2	August 1 - November 15
<i>Urban*</i>	20%	2	August 1 - November 15
South Cascades West	6%	2	August 1 - November 15
Mt. St. Helens	7%	2	August 1 - November 15
<b>Willapa Hills</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>August 15 - November 15</b>
Olympic West	8%	2	August 1 - November 15
Olympic East	5%	2	August 1 - November 15

\*BBMUs are not being managed at the intrinsic growth rate in urban or non-habitat areas

\*\*A lower density was estimated based on site-specific observations; District Bio recommended conservative decision

+No bear harvest in GMUs 157, 410-417, 419-424, 490, 522, and 655



# Bear ID Test

Bear ID test required in GMUs:  
101, 105, 108, 111, 113, 117,  
121, 203, 204, 209, 215, 218,  
224, 231, 242-244, 418, 426,  
437, and 450.



- Online
- 10 questions
- Must score 80% or higher
- Must carry proof of test completion while hunting



# Implications

If adopted, these amendments provide a more robust framework for WDFW to manage black bears in Washington to maintain stable populations, except in urban areas where the social carrying capacity for bears is lower.

These amendments allow the department to protect cubs and females with cubs, to require the bear ID test in all potential places where a grizzly bear may disperse, and to make tooth submission enforceable by adding a deadline.





# Public Comment Themes

- Public comment closes at midnight Monday 03/24/25
- Support
  - Minimal support with adjustments
- Opposition
  - General Opposition
  - No changes necessary
  - Create a spring bear permit system as a management tool
  - Too many bears – ungulate declines, increased conflict, timber damage
  - Previous management was sustainable
  - No one purposely shoots cubs or sows with cubs, not necessary, overreaching, already a common practice
  - Making it illegal to kills cubs or sows with cubs will increase violations and non-reporting



# Public Comment Themes

- Opposition
  - Use hound hunting for controlled harvest management
  - Data supports a spring season to maintain stable population
  - Allow specific bait types for bear for more controlled harvest management
  - Too difficult to identify if sow has cubs when afield without the use of hounds or bait, increases noncompliance rate unnecessarily
  - Increase predator control
  - No need to prohibit bear hunting on the islands
  - Use a September season opening date, or use an Aug 1 opening date for ALL units
  - Don't close roads for Grizzly bears when an ID test is already required
  - Don't require bear ID test in unnecessary GMUs
  - Manage at the GMU level





# Questions?

