July 24, 2013

Board of Commissioners
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
2200 N. 33rd St.
Lincoln, NE 68503

RE: Mountain Lion Season Rule Proposal, July 2013

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you in advance for your service to Nebraska. It is rarely easy to sort out the complexities of natural resource issues and to find the best compromise between conflicting opinions regarding wildlife management. We appreciate your efforts to make the best possible decisions that you can.

I have had opportunity to discuss the proposed mountain lion season with a wide variety of people interested in conservation in Nebraska. While I am certainly not speaking on behalf of anyone other than Audubon Nebraska, what I will say is that in general, even though some have heartburn about a hunting season, most are willing to go along with it in recognition that others disagree and that the policy can be based on the best science available.

The point that folks are reacting most negatively about is the proposal to have unlimited hunting in the Prairie Unit. To have the genetic mixing that will need to take place in order to have viable populations in the future, travel between the units must occur. Unlimited hunting of lions that wander outside the units threatens future recreation opportunities for citizens that like to hunt, and the future possibility of glimpsing one of these magnificent creatures for the rest. If hunted, best practices would have that it be professionally managed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marian Langan
Executive Director
RE: Mountain Lions and Cherry County Property

Dear Director Douglas,

The Nebraska Wildlife Federation is a statewide conservation organization affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation. We have been involved in fish and wildlife conservation in Nebraska for more than 40 years. We are dedicated to preserving, enhancing, and maintaining our native flora and fauna and the natural systems that support them, including our state’s streams, rivers, prairies and forests. With respect to two items on the July 26 Commission agenda, we offer the following comments:

Item 12, Mountain Lions

We reviewed the earlier draft rules to allow for the harvest of mountain lions in Nebraska, as well as the most recent revisions. From all accounts, the letters and testimony have been all over the map, from those who would exterminate all mountain lions in Nebraska to those who don’t want any of them harvested or harmed. We don’t believe either approach is appropriate.

We think that wide divergence of opinions reflects the lack of consensus in Nebraska (and perhaps within the Commission) on the appropriate goals and objectives for managing mountain lions. The draft rules themselves do not appear to clarify what those goals are, how future decisions about harvest limits would be made, or what criteria would be used to measure these management actions.

We urge the Commission to craft and approve a management plan for mountain lions in Nebraska, based on the best available science, before taking action to approve a hunting season. That written management plan should include:

- An evaluation of suitable habitat for mountain lions in Nebraska;
- Current population estimates by habitat area based on the best science available;
- Plans for additional and ongoing population surveys to track lion population;
- Management goals, such as expansion or maintenance of population levels by habitat area which are designed to ensure viable populations long-term;
- Specific objectives for habitat protection, restoration and management;
- Specific objectives for managing conflicts between humans and lions.

We believe the appropriate hunting areas, hunting seasons and limits will be more readily apparent and acceptable if they follow logically from an approved management plan. Part of the development of the plan would include outreach and public education.

July 22, 2013

Jim Douglas
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503
along with public input, which should help craft a more acceptable management plan and result in more public acceptance of the final product.

Item 18, Cherry County Wildlife Land

We were delighted to learn that Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is considering the purchase of a 460 acre tract of land in Cherry County on the Niobrara River. The current owners are very conservation minded, and the property itself contains a substantial amount of valuable habitat along with river frontage on a part of the Niobrara River where additional river access would be very valuable.

We were very disappointed that an earlier effort for the Commission to acquire Snake River Falls did not succeed. The Cherry County property is not a replacement for the Falls, but given the value of its fish and wildlife resources and Niobrara River frontage, we think the property would be a wonderful addition to the Game & Parks inventory of wildlife land. If this area is not secured for the public interest, it could be lost to development.

We urge the Commission to approve the acquisition of 460.5 acres of wildlife land in Cherry County and to move forward with funding for this acquisition.

Yours in Conservation,

Duane Hovorka, executive director

Cc: Other NGPC Commissioners
To: Nebraska Game and Parks Commissioners, and NGPC Staff

Re: Refinement of Regulations Involving Mountain Lions in Nebraska

I was one of only four representatives of organizations and landowners who testified with qualified support of LB 928 at the Unicameral last year, on February 2, 2012. As manager of the 5,000-acre Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary I testified on behalf of our Board of Trustees, conservation partners and many supporters from throughout Nebraska and surrounding states. Many of these folks are hunters and anglers, some own ranches or farms, and all support wildlife and habitat conservation in a diversity of ways. My/our statement is attached.

We have documented the presence of a Mountain Lion within or near our property on occasions between May 2010 and March 2012. We supported the legislation because we were convinced that NGPC administrative staff and professional biologists (most specifically Sam Wilson) were prepared to develop research and management strategies that would implement Mountain Lion "management and conservation" in a manner that would include establishment of carefully designed, science-based and limited hunting restricted to areas with sustainable populations.

The NGPC has a stellar record of management strategies involving many game and nongame species. These include management of Elk that have naturally reoccupied some areas, recovery of Pronghorns which have at times been extirpated or nearly wiped out in the past, reintroduction of Bighorn Sheep, River Otters and Wild Turkeys in areas where they had disappeared. The NGPC's conservation efforts on behalf of Sandhill Cranes and many other species, as part of the state's Watchable Wildlife are also greatly appreciated.

Prior to the bill there was the lingering threat that the legislature would remove all protection of Mountain Lions statewide. There is always political pressure from individuals and organizations that would prefer that there not be any Mountain Lions, Pronghorns, deer or many other forms of wildlife. We viewed the prospect of progressive management by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as an alternative to the limbo status that Mountain Lions previously existed under. However, supporting LB 928 may prove to have been a mistake if it now results in total removal of protection for Mountain Lions throughout most (possibly 85 %) of the of the state of Nebraska.

The proposal for the “Prairie Unit” is the ONE egregious aspect of the proposal being considered. Please reject any major changes that would totally remove all protection of Mountain Lions outside of the three “management units” (Pine Ridge, Keya Paha or Upper Platte). Please reject the “Prairie Unit” and the unlimited, senseless killing of Mountain Lions throughout most of the state—where they may be traveling between “management units,” temporarily living in other areas of suitable habitat, or dispersing to other areas in adjacent states.
There are several compelling reasons why unlimited killing of Mountain Lions in the “Prairie Unit” should be rejected.

We are not opposed the concept of Mountain Lion hunting in Nebraska and we thought the proposal developed by the department for consideration at the May meeting was reasonable in most respects. However, we cannot endorse the unlimited killing now proposed in the “Prairie Unit.” Please return to the “Prairie Unit” plan—which did not include unnecessary killing—presented by the department for consideration at the May commission meeting. The proposal for that unit has been turned upside down. If the “Prairie Unit” becomes a killing ground for all Mountain Lions at any time in the vast majority of Nebraska it will have the effect of:

(1) **Undermining Law Enforcement**: Establishment of a vast area with unlimited killing of Mountain Lions will make law enforcement challenging at best, and almost impossible for wardens to determine where a lion was killed. It will open the floodgates for the small (but determined) number of hunters who violate game laws. This porous regulatory loophole will allow poachers to kill Mountain Lions within the “management units” (both the one with a quota, and the others where the season is closed) and take it nearby or some distance to the “Prairie Unit” to claim that it was killed there. This prospect undermines the whole concept of establishing a limited quota and population management anywhere in the state. Imagine how it would cripple law enforcement if Bighorn Sheep or Elk were dispersed over large areas and if a state wildlife agency allowed unlimited year-round hunting everywhere except in three small “management areas.” With this plan wildlife conservation officers would have to become forensic investigators with extensive time and unbelievable financial resources to solve questionable claims of where Mountain Lions were killed.

(2) **Undermining Conservation and Management of Mountain Lions**: Establishment of the areas surrounding and between the three designated habitats as open-range killing zones may eventually result in the near-extirpation of Mountain Lions everywhere in Nebraska. The “Prairie Unit” threatens to transform the Mountain Lion from a species with ecological value as part of the state’s wildlife heritage—and a charismatic species with potential for a managed level of sustainable hunting—to that of a rare species that will likely become increasingly extirpated and eventually **endangered or extinct as a breeding species** in Nebraska.

Travel corridors between core habitats are important for many wildlife species. With more areas of South Dakota and Wyoming becoming unlimited killing zones for Mountain Lions, the prospect of recruitment from those states is becoming less likely and that may result in almost no successful dispersal of young females to the Nebraska population(s) from other source areas. Without recruitment the loss of every “resident” female may be critical to reproduction, and without sufficient interchange between the designated “management areas” within Nebraska and from other populations there is a high prospect that a genetic bottleneck may further depress prospects of limited reproduction. That became a critical factor with Florida Panthers and the only solution available required release of eight female Texas Mountain Lions within the population to rescue it from inbreeding, restore genetic variability and vitality.
There may be a place for special permits to allow the taking of problem Mountain Lions suspected of livestock depredations or when present in an unsuitable location. However, the idea of killing all of the Mountain Lions everywhere else in the “Prairie Unit” is somewhat akin to the actions of those in the 19th century who killed American Bison, Eskimo Curlews, Passenger Pigeons and numerous other wildlife species without regard for any other consideration. Please allow people to experience the thrill of a glimpse of a shy species that historically graced the wildlife heritage of the entire country, most recently just the west. Allow dispersing Mountain Lions to follow the Platte, Niobrara, Missouri and other river and stream systems.

We believe that positive conservation, research and management programs should be implemented for Mountain Lions in Nebraska, Kansas and other Great Plains states. To a large degree co-existence with Cheetahs has been achieved with ranchers and farmers in Namibia, in southern Africa, leading us to believe that it can be accomplished in parts of the Great Plains of America. Achieving co-existence with and management of Mountain Lions will require continued educational outreach and public understanding—and the leadership of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. It won’t be without challenges and all stakeholders will have to work together to make it possible. But it will hopefully result in additional support for the agency, and for all wildlife conservation activities.

We thank you for considering our requests.

--Ron Klataske

Enclosed: February 2, 2012 statement
July 19, 2013

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
2200 N. 33rd Street
Lincoln, NE 68503

RE: Proposed Mountain Lion Hunting Season
Position: OPPOSED

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of ourselves and our Nebraska-based membership, the Mountain Lion Foundation, a national wildlife conservation organization dedicated to protecting America's lions and their habitat, vehemently opposes the Nebraska Department of Game and Parks proposal to implement a hunting season on mountain lions.

Any reputable biologist will tell you that a population base of "possibly" twenty or so animals, and only one identified breeding female, is too small to accept additional human induced mortalities. To even consider hunting such a tiny grouping of animals flies in the face of all logic. Consider for a moment that as Federal taxpayers Americans have now spent millions of dollars over more than thirty years to protect Florida's struggling population of only 100 to 160 lions. Why should Nebraska's returning lions deserve any less?

Nebraska extirpated its indigenous mountain lion population more than a hundred years ago. Steps should be taken to protect and nourish Nebraska's new fledgling lion population not implement plans to wipe it out.

These special creatures are a valuable natural resource that, as commissioners, you are suppose to manage for the public trust. That means for all Nebraskans. Placating the unreasonable fears of a few vocal citizens would be a betrayal of that trust.

Sincerely,

Tim Dunbar
Executive Director
From: spatzcat61@gmail.com

Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2013 1:48 PM

To: Paice, Sandra

Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: Christopher Spatz <spatzcat61@gmail.com>

Address: 60 Sawdust Ave.
     Kingston, NY 12401

Phone: 845-658-2233

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information
Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
2200 North 33rd Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68503

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Cougar Rewilding Foundation's officers, directors and members, I would like to thank the Commission for this opportunity to comment on the proposed Nebraska Mountain Lion Hunting season.

The revised proposal for taking four cats with a two-female sub quota (18-27% of the total population estimate) in the Pine Ridge National Forest with the goal of reducing the population, while instituting an unlimited year-round season for 85% of the rest of the state, is a recipe for increasing the very conflicts the proposal wishes to contain: conflicts with pets, livestock, people and mountain lions.

The Large Carnivore Lab at Washington State University has determined from fifteen years of research that taking more than 14% of a mountain lion population (greater than the average reproduction rate) disrupts mountain lion social order. Their peer-reviewed
research concludes that the safest way to manage any mountain lion population is to leave it alone - mountain lions police themselves - taking problem individuals out at the source: the current Nebraska protocol. Washington State has adopted the Large Carnivore Lab's 14ake recommendation: has adopted 21st century, peer-reviewed mountain lion management.

Nebraska Game and Parks' 2013 Recommendations for Mountain Lion Hunting conclude with this sentence:

"The Commission intends to manage mountain lion populations over time with consideration given to social acceptance, effects on prey populations, depredation on pets and livestock, and human safety."

Public attitude surveys measuring the social acceptance of mountain lions in Nebraska are absent from the Recommendations.

Research on the effects of mountain lion predation on prey populations in Nebraska are absent from the Recommendations.

Data on mountain lion predation on pets and livestock in Nebraska are absent from the Recommendations.

Data on the threat of mountain lions to human safety in Nebraska is absent from the Recommendations.

Absent any examples in the Recommendations of "considerations" informing the proposed mountain lion hunting season, following is our brief review of the relevant research on these subjects:

From our survey of public attitude studies in states with established mountain lion populations - including South Dakota and the residents of the Black Hills - the general public demonstrates wide majority support for mountain lion recovery and for not reducing mountain lion numbers.

Mountain lion predation is not mentioned in any of the agency's deer reports as a population pressure.

Neither Nebraska Game and Parks' nor the Cougar Network's data on mountain lion confirmations document a single incident of pet or livestock depredation in Nebraska.

There have been no confirmed mountain lion attacks on a person in any of the Prairie mountain lion colonies east of the Rocky Mountains.

Absent such examples from the Recommendations - after twenty years of managing mountain lion dispersal/recolonization in Nebraska - begs us to ask just when the Commission plans to begin to manage mountain lions based on the "considerations?"

Nebraska is now targeting for reduction a stable (by definition a population with little conflict) and recovering mountain lion population that has conducted itself admirably for a generation.

The Cougar Rewilding Foundation is not opposed to hunting based on sound science. But the hunting proposal for the Pine Ridge National Forest - a national forest owned by every United States taxpayer, not just Nebraskans - ignores both science and experience.
Why mess with a stable population?

The Cougar Rewilding Foundation urges the Commission to reject the Recommendations and adopt a proposal based on the peer-reviewed population take, including every cat taken in Nebraska for safety/control reasons.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Spatz, President
Cougar Rewilding Foundation
Rosendale, NY
www.cougarrewilding.org
Please, see attachment. Please, protect cougars, don't kill them. Thank you!

Eva Benavides
Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for accepting these comments regarding the Proposed Regulations (Title: 163, Chapter: 4, 037 - Mountain Lions) governing Nebraska’s first mountain lion hunting season.

I was very surprised and extremely disappointed to see that these latest Proposed Regulations open up over 85 percent of Nebraska to a year-round mountain lion killing season bolstered by an unlimited quota and the sale of an unlimited number of permits (Information taken July 5, 2013 from Nebraska Game and Parks web site: Wildlife Species Guide: Mountain Lion and Nebraska Administrative Code: 163, Chapter 4, 037 Mountain Lions). This is a shocking, unprecedented and unjustified shift from the previous Proposed Regulations that provided full protection for mountain lions in over 95 percent of the state. It is apparent that the State’s mountain lion management philosophy has shifted from one of allowing non-problem lions to live and move safely throughout nearly all of the state to a regulation encouraging the killing of any and all lions in over 85 percent of the state in addition to subjecting the only “resident” mountain lion population (Pine Ridge Management Unit) to suffer the killing of as many as 4 of its estimated 22 individuals. These proposed management regulations must be denied.

The drastic changes to the management proposal are arbitrary and not supported by science or logic. First, the estimated 22 mountain lions residing in the Pine Ridge Management Unit (roughly one per 140 square miles) is the same as the previous estimate, suggesting that the population is stabilizing. Second, the mountain lion population for the remainder of the state is described by “92 confirmations outside of Pine Ridge population”, confirmation meaning “fur, tracks, scat or photos...”, up from 83 confirmations posted earlier. This information is accompanied by the following statements: “...one animal can account for multiple confirmations.” and, “Most outside of Panhandle appear to be dispersing males (not residents)” (Nebraska Game and Parks web site:...
Wildlife Species Guide: Mountain Lion Frequently Asked Questions. As reviewed 07/05/2013).

It appears the only change in Nebraska’s mountain lion population in the past year is the 10 percent increase in presence confirmations made outside of the Pine Ridge area. What is unknown is the number of individuals comprising these confirmations, how much of the reported increase represents a real increase in lion numbers, and how much of the increase can be attributed to heightened surveillance and public attentiveness. This lack of specificity should be enough to negate any thoughts of a significant rise in the state’s mountain lion population and thus should be cause enough to NOT open the vast majority of the state to un-capped lion killing.

The previously referenced web page goes on to state that there has been no documented mountain lion attack on humans in Nebraska and that there is no documentation of livestock being attacked by mountain lions in the state. Clearly no purpose or need has been established to respond to either human safety concerns or the need for greater protection of private property by initiating an indiscriminate, sport hunting season. In fact, the current agency protocol of removing individual lions identified as exhibiting threatening behavior (to humans or livestock) is the only reasonable management action. This agency policy of selectively removing problem lions is proving to be most effective in preventing already very rare conflicts as documented in other states with robust mountain lion populations.

Recent peer-reviewed studies make strong cases against the random and indiscriminate killing of mountain lions through sport hunting. Such indiscriminate killing of lions may actually increase the possibility of problems because of the instability it creates within the population, which can then lead to more young lions roaming in search of territories and encountering humans or their livestock.

Because lions can breed any time of year, about 50 percent of all adult females will have dependent young (less than 12 months of age). Killing females with dependent young nearly always results in the death of the newly orphaned kittens (usually 2 to 3 young per litter) through starvation, predation, or because of getting into conflict situations with
humans. The year-round open season with no quotas proposed for 95 percent of the state will eventually result in the killing of adult females with dependent young, thus leading to the slow, torturous death of her kittens. The same tragedy can be anticipated in the Pine Ridge area where the proposal allows for the taking of one female. The state "sanctioned" death of dependent young is unethical and goes against the best of what is traditional sportsmanship. Females should not be hunted at any time anywhere in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission report: Big Game Guide, 2013 provides the following summary of the state's deer populations: "Whitetail buck harvest was down 30 percent in 2012 due to EHD (Epizootic Hemorrhagic disease). Mule deer buck harvest is down 20 percent from three years ago, most likely due to brain worm mortality. The 2012 harvest was the eighth highest harvest on record for mule deer and white-tailed deer, and number of older age bucks the past three years has never been better." (p. 20). The summary of the same document states: "...whitetail and mule deer harvest was in the top 20 percent of all years:..." (p. 1).

As if acknowledging the robust nature of the state's deer population, Legislative Bill 928, signed by the Governor on April 17, 2012 allows for the secretary of the commission (Game and Parks Commission) to "...designate special deer depredation seasons or extensions of existing deer hunting seasons..." "...whenever he or she determines that deer are causing excessive property damage." (LB 928, Section 3. 37-448 (1)). The bill also allows for the Commission to "...provide for an unlimited number of free (emphasis added) permits for the taking of antlerless deer upon request to any person owning or operating at least twenty acres of farm or ranch land within the geographic area in which hunting will be permitted and to any member of the immediate family of any such person..." (LB 928, Section 3. 37-448 (2)).

Clearly, the recent drop in deer numbers is a result of disease outbreak and the on-going drought. Predation is not mentioned in any of the published reports as a significant factor. Department predictions are that the deer population will rebound within four or five years- weather permitting. It seems obvious that Nebraska's very modest, re-colonizing mountain lion population is having little to no impact on Nebraska deer
numbers. Protecting game species cannot be used as a reason to approve the aggressive killing program outlined in the proposed regulations.

Recommending any level of hunting of a re-colonizing native species when its resident numbers are fewer than two dozen and its total population, including transients, may very well be fewer than 100 is ludicrous and unprecedented in the annals of science-based, mission-driven wildlife management. Some would even argue that the proposed regulations before you are immoral in their unstated but clearly intended goal of virtually eliminating a rare and significant native wildlife species from the great State of Nebraska.

I strongly urge the Commission to deny the proposed mountain lion regulations and not allow any sport hunting of mountain lions in the entire state of Nebraska.

Thank you for your consideration.
RE: Mountain Lion Season Rule Proposal July 2013

Dear Commissioners,

We thank you for the opportunity to comment in writing.

We are a SD conservation group, located in western SD. Our President, Nancy Hilding, attended the Chadron meeting to testify at the May Commission hearing and handed out some graphic resources to Commission.

Totally Object to the Prairie Unit

We object to the "Prairie Unit" -- the year-long, unlimited quota cougar hunting season, with hunting by dogs allowed for part of the time. No hunting should be allowed outside of the Pine Ridge Area in Nebraska.

Pine Ridge as Source Population

We object to the staff's objective to reduce the Pine Ridge population and thus make it a "sink". In May at Chadron, we objected to Nebraska Game and Parks' previous cougar management objectives of maintaining the population as a "stable" population. We wish the Pine Ridge to be managed as a "source" population not a "stable" or a "sink" population.

Want "Upper Platte" and "Keya Paha" Protected

Thanks for making "Upper Platte" and "Keya Paha" off limits to recreational hunting.

Fundraising with minimal hunt and "source" objectives acceptable

To maintain a cougar source population and also to meet the desire of some outdoor recreators for a big game hunt and also fund raise, we could support the recreational hunt killing of one lion either sex in the Pine Ridge. This support would be conditional on an auction or lottery, whose additional objective is to aggressively raise via license/permit sale money for costs of mountain lion research and management in Nebraska and/or for depredations payments, (if such payments are ever needed.)

We believe the license application fee of $15 is too small. This does not reflect the value and rarity of these animals. We believe the fee in SD is $25 and SD has a lot more cougars. However we think the $25 dollar fee in SD is also too small. We request you increase the application fees.

Connectivity to Known Areas
We wish the Pine Ridge to be a "source" population to continue to help with the recovery at the Scottsbluff (Upper Platte) and Niobrara (Keya Paha) areas.

The Niobrara (Keya Paha) and Scottsbluff (Upper Platte) area shows breeding age female lions that have bred and/or evidence of family genetics indicating some breeding is occurring in those areas. Smaller areas of suitable habitat are capable of supporting genetically viable populations if they are connected by corridors to other viable breeding areas, so that dispersing subadult males can reach them. These smaller areas will need protected corridors. We don't believe you can depend on other states to supply the necessary immigrating lions.

We believe the authorized cougar hunts in SD and Wyoming, both in the Black Hills and the prairie areas that surround Hills will make immigration from those areas to Nebraska unlikely. The Black Hills are aggressively managed as a "sink" in both states and will absorb many migrating lions in the region. The prairie units surrounding the Black Hills in Wyoming and SD have unlimited quotas. Migration may still occur from Wyoming and Colorado along the Northern and Southern Platte, but those immigrating lions must cross the Nebraska "prairie unit" to supply Pine Ridge and Niobrara Breaks/Valley area.

Connectivity to Unknown and not yet Identified Nebraska Areas

We have concern that there are other areas in the state that can support breeding populations, besides the three your staff has identified. In specifically, we ask that Nebraska Game and Parks look more carefully at:

1). The Nebraska National Forest Lands in the Bessey Ranger District near Halsey.
2). We also see a potential area with trees on hills and valleys, that is primarily in Custer and Valley County, but also in Loop and Garfield County. We have heard this area called the Sargent area.

Both of these areas are identified as a possible lion habitat area in a 2012 book: Phantoms of the Prairie: The Return of Cougars to the Midwest by John W. Laundre. You can learn about this book at: http://www.amazon.com/Phantoms-Prairie-Return-Cougars-Midwest/dp/0299287548. We believe Helen McGinnis sent you a letter with an excerpted page from Laundre's book, showing Nebraska's potential habitat areas denoted on a map.

We ask the Nebraska Game and Parks Department to look more carefully at these areas and re-evaluate if any could host breeding populations, especially if corridors of immigration and migration are identified and protected from hunting. Lion habitat areas can be smaller, if protected corridors to source populations are maintained. We request you have no hunt in these areas while you investigate this further and the effects of protected corridors on small populations.

Niobrara/Missouri Confluence

We also believe there is a potential breeding habitat in SD in Gregory County and Charles Mix County in SD (along the Missouri above Pickstown). A connection along the Niobrara and Missouri Rivers could help with that area's recovery. Maintaining a river connection from Niobrara Valley (Keya Paha) population to the "living rivers" area of the Missouri would be desirable. We request that Nebraska look at the Niobrara & Missouri confluence area in relationship to habitat in SD and look at connectivity from a two state prospective.

Compromise Prairie Unit

While we totally object to and are in no way support the unlimited, year-long kill in the Prairie Unit, if you have such a "sacrifice area", you should at least excise the above areas (all potential recovery areas) and allow full conductivity with a "no hunt" zone between them and along river corridors.
Protection of Migration to Out of State

Habitat for lions exists in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri. We hope you allow for migration along your rivers heading east and south and help with recovery in these and other eastern areas.

Shift in Sex/Age Structure or Extirpation?

We include the link to the Wielgus video below and hope the Commission watches the video. Our President discussed this video in testimony at Chadron hearing in May. In Washington State areas with existing lion source populations are more extensive than in Nebraska, so we are not sure how the research translates to a more isolated cougar population of Nebraska.

However, if it translates to the semi-isolated Nebraska populations, then aggressive sport hunting results in a change of the sex/age structure of the population. It trades adult male and females for teenage males, which are more likely to have conflict with humans and their domestic animals. Thus aggressive hunting of lions (when they can be resupplied with immigrants) does not achieve the objective of reducing human and lion interactions and the hunt does not do what many people think it will do.

If Nebraska is too isolated and enough lions are not migrating to your areas to resupply it with the "teenage" migrants, then you risk faster extirpation of your populations with your aggressive hunt policy.

Wielgus Video Link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_ZD-PAKhSo,
Published on Dec 20, 2012, Presented by Washington State University Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Large Carnivore Lab director Dr. Rob Wielgus at the 2012 International Conference of the Wildlife Society. "This presentation offers 15 years of research in 15 minutes," says Dr. Wielgus.

Hunt Not Sustainable?

We believe the Nebraska’s Pine Ridge population is estimated by staff at 15-27 lions, with a mid point of 22. We believe the estimate for a sustainable harvest in May 2013 was 1-3. A harvest of 4 is not sustainable if continued over time. It will result in extirpation of lions from Nebraska. Such deaths are additive to other deaths. Also of concern are lions killed incidentally, such as in traffic or by landowners due to fear for human or domestic animal security. Also of concern would be disease.

Nebraska National Forest Limits

We believe the Pine Ridge population overlaps the Nebraska National Forest (NNF). Irrespective of the goals of Nebraska Game and Parks, the Forest Service planning regulations require Forest Service units to maintain sustainable populations of wildlife and we don’t believe that the NNF can continue to allow its lands to be open to hunting if the wildlife management policy of the state will likely lead to extirpation of the lion from the NNF lands in Nebraska. We are also concerned with the potential for recovery of Mountain Lion in other NNF units in Nebraska if proper corridors for migration are not maintained.
Following SD timing of season to protect kittens.

Orphaned kittens starving and/or becoming "conflict lions" is part and parcel of cougar hunts and can't be escaped or avoided.

Lions give birth to kittens year round, but more kittens are born from May to November than are born in Dec to April. Kittens leave mom at 10-18 months old. About 55-85 percent of adult females are raising dependent kittens at any time. The research on how old a kitten must be to when it's orphaned to survive, is limited in sample sizes of orphans studied, but SD believes some can survive if orphaned at 6 months. If you have the season in Jan-March, you don't stop the orphaning of young dependent kittens, which will starve or become "conflict lions", you might mitigate the starvation occurrences a little.

Hound Hunt

We object to the use of hounds on the "Prairie Unit." If you have some unknown females out there the hounds are more likely to find them than in a boot hunt. We also object to the hound hunt for private land trespass, animal cruelty (both to lions and dogs) and "fair chase" issues.

An argument offered for the hound hunt is that hound hunters can select for males and avoid females. We believe a female quota, not a hound hunt is what protects females. If you want hound hunters to forgo killing females you must offer them a "carrot or a stick" and educate them. We believe that in MT and CO, hunters must pass an online course on how to sex cougars. We believe the policy is somewhat successful in protecting females. However when you have small number of lions and many hunters, there is little incentive not to kill the treed female before someone else gets a lion and surpasses quotas.

Specific suggestions for rule rewrite:

Hounds: 037.10 It shall be unlawful to:

We request that an additional provision be added to the hound hunt section 037.10, to mimic SD's rule. SD forbids hound hunters from following tracks of multiple lions. We assume this is to prevent them from chasing a female with kittens. During such chases the kittens could be mauled or separated from mom.

If you allow hound hunting in the "prairie unit" we suggest you forbid hound hunting in areas without trees or ledges for the lions to be treed on. This protects both lions and dogs from damage and hurt.

Landowners only: 037.04C Prairie:

We object to the Prairie Hunt, but if you have one anyway, we request you change the rule to only allow landowners or land renters/lessors to obtain a Prairie Unit permit. SD did this during its earlier years of managing its Prairie Unit.

Clarity, - 037.03B Pine Ridge:

We don't support this Pine Ridge season of 4 lions, but we believe the text of rule is confusing. If you persist with it, you should clarify that the quotas for the two seasons in the Pine Ridge are separate and not cumulative (i.e. each season has its own quota which is separate from the other season's quota)

Clarity - 037.10G

037.10G says that persons may not obtain more than one mountain lion permit per calendar year. We assume that as the Pine Ridge lottery occurs first, if they receive a permit for
hunting in the Pine Ridge, they may not apply to hunt in the "Prairie Unit' that year.

Sincerely,

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

I attachment

To the version e-mailed to the Department we attach the page of Laundre’s book
From: tjk427@hotmail.com [mailto:tjk427@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 8:06 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: Tera Kuhr <tjk427@hotmail.com>
Address: 1704 Park Street
          Blair, NE  68008
Phone: 4024262265

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I'm completely opposed to allowing a hunting season specifically on mountain lions. This would be a travesty on an already depleted animal. If there were thousands roaming this stats being nuisance animals that would be one thing, but there aren't enough of them to hunt to be gin with. Please don't allow hunting of mountain lions.
This reckless hunting proposal threatens the estimated 20 mountain lions left in Nebraska! Despite there being no science or cases of conflict between mountain lions and people, a small group of trophy hunters are pressuring the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to open season on this fragile species. Please maintain important protections for mountain lions! Predators are an important part of our ecosystem!
Comments From:

Name: dawn a. pointer  
Address: 7031 south 31st place  
lincoln, ne 68516  
Phone: 913-991-8514  

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037  

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013  
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM  

Comments:

please do not allow hunters to legally shoot mountain lions. let the mountain lions (cougars) stay here and help regulate the enormous deer population!  
Let Nature run its course!
Comments From:

Name: Rebecca Hanse <rebecca@epayne.net>
Address: 1128 S 6th St
Lincoln, NE 68502
Phone: 402-570-9765

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I can't believe government resources are being wasted even considering this ridiculous change so a handful of trophy hunters can go after a handful of mountain lions that have not harmed anyone or anything in this state. Don't do it.
Wilson, Sam

From: Paice, Sandra
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2013 2:27 PM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

From: kwdubas@windstream.net [mailto:kwdubas@windstream.net]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 6:46 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: Keith Dubas <kwdubas@windstream.net>
Address: 1712 E Street
          Lincoln, Ne  8508
Phone: 402 438 0171

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I oppose this proposed regulation finding it hysterical in its reaction to what has not been proven to be a significant problem of mountain lions. What is the real point of this proposal? Is it to protect the public? Has the public been excessively bothered by mountain lion sightings? Is it to increase revenue for a state agency? The mountain lions have a right to exist. They have had a presence prior to human settlement. If it weren't for human encroachment into their environments there would be far fewer sightings. Again, I strongly oppose this regulation.
Comments From:

Name: Bill Richman <bill@geektrap.com>
Address: 1801 SW 50th Street
Lincoln, NE 68522
Phone: 4024776377

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Please don't remove what little protection mountain lions have left. There are so few of them in Nebraska, and those few that remain deserve to be allowed to live in peace. Don't let a bunch of psychologically damaged individuals who seem to think that being able to kill anything they please proves how "manly" they are sway your decision. Protect the animals.
From: lknight2006@yahoo.com [mailto:lknight2006@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 6:09 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name:  Jessica Knight  <lknight2006@yahoo.com>
Address:  717 N 77th Avenue
          Omaha, NE  68115
Phone:  402-926-9091

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I strongly oppose this regulation. I find it to be cruel and it makes me embarrassed to be a Nebraska native.
Comments From:

Name: Kerri Ferguson  <ferguson_kerri@yahoo.com>

Address: 14810 Corby Street
           Omaha, NE  68116

Phone: 402-502-5269

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Please consider protecting the remaining mountain lions in Nebraska. They are a part of the original ecosystem that man keeps trying to alter. I always find it interesting how people say deer hunting is necessary because they have no natural predators around here. How about we quit trying to eradicate one predator that they do have and let mountain lions live the life they're meant to.
Wilson, Sam

From: Paice, Sandra
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2013 2:28 PM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

From: r l wright@hotmail.com [mailto:r l wright@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 5:49 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: Rebecca Wright <r l wright@hotmail.com>
Address: 1545 c #3
Lincoln, NE 68502
Phone: 402-555-9087

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163 Chapter(s): 004 Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I'm 100 against hunting mountain lions in the state of Nebraska. There isn't sufficient reason beyond the act of sport, which is rather pathetic.
Comments From:

Name: Betty Foster  <Bateach3@aol.com>
Address: 13920 Lisa Circle
Omaha, NE 68138
Phone: 402-933-6283

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

There is no reason to have a season to hunt NE mountain lions. The 20 reported to live in NE have NOT seen a problem or hurt people. There are other species with high numbers that can still be hunted and not wipe them out.

Hunting just so someone can have a head or body mounted for display....is what museums are for. Hunting to extinction of these animals will leave only museums for my great grand children to visit and see what was wiped out.
From: loracs56@aol.com [mailto:loracs56@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 5:15 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: carol miller <loracs56@aol.com>
Address: 6354 Baldwin Ave
        lincoln, ne 68507
Phone: 40 464-5003

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

please, please do not allow eradication of the mountain lions in Nebraska!
Wilson, Sam

From: Paice, Sandra
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2013 2:26 PM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

From: duganbkind2animals@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 8:17 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: LINDA DUGAN <duganbkind2animals@gmail.com>
Address: 2420 W 12TH ST
HASTINGS, NE 68901
Phone: 4024622643

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

We need to protect mountain lions in NE not kill them for sport. I oppose any kind of trophy hunting of my state's mountain lions. If they are posing no danger to humans they need to be left alone.
Comments From:

Name: Nancy D. Hilding <nhilding@rapidnet.com>
Address: 6300 West Elm
Black Hawk,, SD  57718
Phone: 605-787-6466

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Dear Commission

These are my personal comments submitted by myself for myself as an individual, and not on behalf of any group.

This a letter against the hunt you propose

I live in Western SD and have been following the cougar management and hunting debate in SD since 2005.

A mountain lion planning effort is needed. I read the Nebraska Wildlife Federation's letter that asked for a Mountain Lion Management Plan, using best available science, with public meetings, public outreach and education. I agree this planning effort should happen before you set the first season.

However if you don't delay and decide on Friday:

I object to the year round, unlimited "prairie unit" hunt. I object to the use of hounds in the "prairie hunt". My largest fear is that you have not identified all the potential breeding places for lions and may be killing female lions, specifically in two places: the Nebraska National Forest of the Bessey District and an area in Custer,
Valley, Loup and Garfield Counties, near town of Sargent. You also need protected connectivity between the three units with breeding females.

I object to the overly aggressive 4 lion, with 2 female sub-quota hunt at Pine Ridge. I would accept a hunt, if the objective is to manage the population as a source population; I believe a one lion quota might do so, assuming you do in fact have as many as 15 cougars.

However, after 8 years of watching SD Game, Fish and Parks predict cougar populations, I have become cynical about the ability of state game agencies to estimate cougar populations. It is my understanding you are using scat hunting dogs and DNA analysis. It is my understanding that an uncertainty with this method, is you may have proved a lion was once there, but not that it is still there, as it may have migrated or died. This uncertainty is made worse by the fire, which happened post inventory and may have displaced or killed inventoried cougars that you inventoried.

Nebraska's inventory methods may have greater room for error than SD's collared lions and Lincoln-Peterson methods. SD also uses other models beside Lincoln-Peterson to estimate trends and populations. However SD's estimates of cougar populations and trends contradict each other from year to year. The different models to estimate trends and populations also contradict each other within a year.

Given that you are having your first season, you should err on the side of a conservative beginning. I suggest you may have a hunt, but not 4 lions. Please start small and conservative.

Thanks,

Nancy Hilding
Comments From:

Name: J. Rak  <Rakjl@cox.net>
Address: 3104 s 93 ave
Omaha, Ne 68124
Phone: 402-212-5613

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Please ensure the protection of these beautiful majestic animals (mountain lions)! Very few have been a threat to humans and I believe hunting them for sport is an extreme gesture. My father David J. Rak was an avid hunter and strong advocate for wildlife preservation and education in Nebraska. I grew up with the understanding of why it is necessary for some animal populations to be kept under control by hunting, though I still didn't like it. I find hunting is not the answer to any issues involving the mountains lions. If safety is the issue, I would think that there are many other options that could be discussed to deter these animals from populated areas. Making it legal to openly shoot and kill these animals in cases that are not related to immediate safety, is sad and weak, and makes us look like a bunch of rednecks. We are smart enough to find a better solution!

Thank you,
Jennifer Rak
Omaha, NE
From: Anne DeVries [mailto:annemdevries@me.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 11:07 PM
To: Armbruster, Tausha
Subject: Kill the "Prairie Unit" proposal

Please pass on my support for all that Ron Klataske has to say about the Prairie Unit. I regard Ron highly and think that the Commission should put a large weight on what he says.

Thanks for your time in forwarding my opinion to them.

Anne DeVries
Cortland, NE
Hello, I'm urging you to deny the request of a small group of trophy hunters that want to open season on the fragile mountain lion population. There is no science or cases of conflict between mountain lions and people. This is a reckless hunting proposal that will punish and harm animals so this small group of trophy hunters (who aren't real hunters) can kill a mountain lion. I ask you and the Commission to maintain important protections for mountain lions, not strip them.

Thank you.
Comments From:

Name: Carrie Hansen  <carriekhansen@gmail.com>
Address:  6531 Franklin Street
          Lincoln, NE  68506
Phone:  308.380.7650

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information
Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

With so few mountain lions in the state, and in consideration of the fact that they are very, very rarely a threat to humans or livestock, there's really no reason to open a hunting season on mountain lions. They do serve a purpose in the local ecology, hunting squirrels, possums, rabbits, raccoons, and the like. The sale of permits won't have a significant impact on the state economy, either; just because surrounding states might be doing the same doesn't mean that we have to "keep up with the Joneses" in this matter.

Please stand behind the protected status of mountain lions, and reject any action which will result in hunting them. Very sincerely yours,

Carrie Hansen
Some of the most beautiful cats in the world live in Nebraska, bobcats, mountain lions etc.. Are you seriously going to just butcher these animals for no reason? What have they done to you? Seriously, you people are mad! They were here before us, and we have no right to take their lives! Please don't let anyone hurt these animals, they have a right to live and breathe just as we do... We have a responsibility to God and ourselves to make sure these beautiful creatures live and thrive, just as the wolves in Yellowstone park... It should be illegal to kill these cats anywhere, I don't care where you live! Please don't pass this measure, they're here because they've been pushed out from somewhere else... What would you do if humans came into your world and took over? Just ask the native americans, they can tell ya! I've said enough, please don't kill them, please! Thanks for listening.
Comments From:

Name:  Kellid Pietramale  <kpietramale@cox.net>
Address:  1515 S 181st Street
          Omaha, NE  68130
Phone:  402-655-5555

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on:  Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Please do NOT allow people to hunt Mountain Lions. I don't want to see this state move backward instead of forward.
From: celestial_chic45@hotmail.com [mailto:celestial_chic45@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 3:35 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: shelly kudera  <celestial_chic45@hotmail.com>
Address: 609 south 14 st
           norfolk, ne 68701
Phone: 4028416197

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW THIS TO PASS! WHAT A TRAGEDY! THANK YOU!
Dear Mr. Secretary,

I have some unique perspective to share in the matter of whether any type of hunting season for mountain lions should be enacted in Nebraska. I hope you will take a few moments to consider my point of view.

My father, Ralph Block, was a trapper for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for over 30 years. Among other areas, he served any rural residents who needed assistance with control of predators in Dawes County and surrounding areas, including a great deal of the Pine Ridge area.

My father trapped and hunted all kinds of animals as needed, but primarily coyotes. Every now and then he would bring home a bobcat. As a young child, I once asked him if bobcats killed humans or livestock. He told me they rarely did, but he just killed them because he liked to. I asked if mountain lions killed people or livestock, and he replied that they were very shy and avoided humans altogether, but he would kill one if he could, just to say he did.

Even as a child, I remember looking at the dead bobcat draped over the side of his truck and wondering why he needed to kill it if it was unlikely to do harm to humans. As it so happens, as far as I know he wiped
out all the bobcats in the area just south of Chadron.

There are between 22 and 26 mountain lions alive in the state of Nebraska. They hunt rabbits, mice, raccoons, possum, and will kill a deer if they can. Instances of a mountain lion attacking livestock or humans are virtually nonexistent.

I am not opposed to reducing numbers of predatory animals who have been proven to be a consistent threat to the lives or livelihoods of Nebraskans. However, opening a hunting season on mountain lions, even a limited lottery-style one, is senseless with such small numbers of the animal in our state.

Further, with so few hunting permits to issue, the state does not stand to gain financially from the venture.

Should hunters desire the big-game experience, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado are all close by and have established and successful lion hunting seasons.

I urge you to reject any action which will result in mountain lions being hunted in Nebraska, and to stand behind their protected status.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

April Block
From: Kml042782@hotmail.com [mailto:Kml042782@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 3:31 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: Kristin Aliano <Kml042782@hotmail.com>
Address: 5405 N. 126h St
Omaha, NE 68164
Phone: 402-709-5274

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

This shouldn't even been discussed there less then 20 Moutain lions left in NE. We are killing them off please say no to this before it's to late.
Comments From:

Name: Alan Bartels <abartels@nebraskalife.com>
Address: P.O. B. 102
Farwell, NE 68838
Phone: 308-381-5054

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

July 21, 2013

Commissioners,

At the May hearing in Chadron concerning the development of a cougar hunting season in Nebraska, I was dismayed to see that the long-standing bias against the cougar that is well-known from the American West is strongly apparent in my home state. Most of the tone of the hearing echoed one man’s comment when he said (I paraphrase from memory) “My grandfather hated cougars and I hate cougars."

Of all of the citizens that spoke in favor of a season, nobody suggested that a cougar had taken even one livestock animal, and no depredation has been documented to have occurred here since the confirmed return of the cougar to Nebraska in the 1990s. Likewise, nobody suggested that a cougar had attacked a person. But, this bias led several of the people that testified to suggest that when cougars run out of porcupines, they’ll begin eating cattle and children. This misguided attitude is more reminiscent of handed down bias rather than biological fact. Your own biologists will confirm that cougars and their prey animals have existed side by side for thousands of years and longer.

I can speak from experience considering that my mother taught me to hate snakes. For years I did, too, and killed those that I encountered,
but, have since come to see their beauty. Despite my best efforts to
dissuade her, she still hates snakes. That doesn’t mean that slaughtering
them is necessary.
Several people emphatically complained at the hearing of seeing cougars or their tracks.
With no instances of livestock
predation or attacks on humans -- what exactly is the problem?
What is needed is for the NGPC to educate the public as to the role of
predators in the ecosystem, not to demonstrate that just because the legislature
authorized the commission to implement a season that it needs
to be done at this time. I wonder, will the commissioners cave, and
out of fear, create a season. With an estimated population of 22 or fewer
cougars in the region where hunting would be allowed, what sort of
message does this send to our future generations?
Several of those that testified mandated that we need to put the fear of man into these
animals and control them. With several being shot by law enforcement
and the public each year, and with some showing up as road kill, and
considering that there have been no attacks on people or livestock-why
are we discussing this now? With the NGPC having the legislature-given
authority to set a season and with the public and law enforcement already
legally entitled to kill those that “pose a threat,” is there really
any further management needed at this time? No, there is not. Is
it not time now to allow this animal to re-establish a viable population?

At the hearing, it was noted that all of the testimony sent by mail
or electronically was in opposition to a season. Then it was noted
that only some of these were from Nebraska residents. Then, commission
biologists repeatedly selectively cited studies from South Dakota, Wyoming
and elsewhere. It was said these animals came from source populations
in these other states. Cougars can have a home range of 400 sq.
miles, meaning that some Nebraska cougars cross state boundaries during
their normal travels, making this not only a Nebraska issue and I don’t
believe giving credence to Nebraska residents only is sound, scientifically
or otherwise, especially since the commission is relying on
information from other states.
Several people selfishly testified on behalf of their own financial wants. Outfitters
from western Nebraska
wanted their piece of the cougar pie.
One man stated that when he was a hunting guide in Wyoming that predators eliminated the
mule deer in
his area and forced him out of the business. If we are giving credence
to studies from out of state, please note that in a recent study in
northern Utah where lions and coyotes were removed, there were no noted
increases in the big game animal population. Evidence is mounting from
other studies that sport hunting destabilizes lion populations, potentially
leading to an increase of human-cat conflict. This reminds me
of ground breaking studies that revealed that in coyotes, when the alpha
pair of an area is disrupted (killed), this causes subordinate animals
to begin mating, causing a huge increase in the population. For
decades coyotes have been pursued in the name of population control, when
in reality and scientifically, leaving them alone would be the most
efficient control measure. A recent Washington State University study
found that hunting of cougars increases human-cat conflicts. When looking
at the numbers concerning livestock depredation elsewhere, the percentage
of livestock taken in states that allow hunting is not consistently
lower than in states that don’t allow hunting. Science repeatedly
shows that when it comes to management of cougars, a hands-off approach
is the best approach if the goal is reducing conflict.

Others representing their own interests at the hearing wanted cougar hunting
expanded to their parts of the state. Some wanted more permits issued
so they could guide hunters for their own financial gain. A trapper wanted
trapping to be allowed. Dog hunters wanted their interests accommodated
as well. Again, even though no livestock have been lost to cougars,
one rancher boldly stated that proceeds from the permits should benefit ranchers. Although the minutes of the meeting do not reflect it, she cited the tough economy due to drought as the reason.

Those that sent in testimony in opposition overwhelmingly stated leaving orphaned kittens as a major concern. Considering that science has shown that adult female cougars are either pregnant or caring for young for 73% of their lives, the probability is high that a Nebraska cougar season would result in the starvation deaths of young cougars. Chances of conflict with humans and livestock is magnified when adolescent cougars that are not yet capable hunters of big game and are orphaned due to a hunt, find themselves suddenly on their own. If we are hoping to minimize human/cat and livestock/cat issues, how does orphaning animals through a hunt demonstrate proper management by the NGPC?

Science has proven that:
- Hunting does not reduce human-cat or livestock-cat conflicts
- Hunting does not increase big game populations
- Cougars can breed any time of year and females are pregnant or caring for young 73% of their lives

Commissioners, will you make your decision based on misguided notions, long-standing biases, myths and commentary from the loudest voices. Or, will you make an informed decision based on sound, proven science and common sense?

Alan Bartels
P.O. Box 102
Farwell, NE 68838
Comments From:

Name: James A. Prohaska <j.a.prohaska@gmail.com>
Address: 4015 Burt street
omaha, ne 68131
Phone: 773-936-5677

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

There is absolutely NO NEED to implement a hunt on wild mountain lions in Nebraska. There are 5,100 active lions alive in Oregon and close proximity to that number in California and Wyoming. The mere 20 lions in Nebraska pose no threat to human beings and do not threaten our livelihood in any way shape or form.

This is nothing but an excuse for those that want a big game trophy on their mantle. Isn't deer, elk, antelope and waterfowl enough??

Nebraska should be proud that this animal (almost pushed into extinction) is back and here in our state. This majestic beast deserves the right to live and thrive in our wilderness, I can't see why we would want to implement a hunt on an animal with such a small population in order to "control" it. This is ridiculous. If and when the mountain lion population does reach the levels to that of Oregon and Wyoming, then yes, by all means allow controlled hunts but until then please leave this beautiful animal at peace.
Proposing an open season on these beautiful species is irresponsible. The fact that humans have such a problem with large carnivores is deplorable and detrimental to our ecosystem. DO NOT PASS THIS!
Comments From:

Name: Joyce Wheeler <jcwheeler2930@yahoo.com>
Address: 5959 Bridle Lane
        Lincoln, NE 68516
Phone: 402-423-1529

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Trophy hunters and poachers are hunting many species to extinction or near extinction. Let common sense prevail. These magnificent big cats should be safe unless they are imminently and directly threatening the lives of humans or livestock.
Comments From:

Name: Sarah Bush <sallyh7671@windstream.net>
Address: 2635 S. 15th
Lincoln, NE 68502
Phone: 4027425745

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163 Chapter(s): 004 Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Please do not allow any hunting of this fragile species! The breeding pool in our state is very limited and certainly does not need further dilution by hunters.
From: rallaina92@gmail.com [mailto:rallaina92@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 2:24 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: Allaina Klein <rallaina92@gmail.com>
Address: 205 Miller St.
         Dix, NE 69133
Phone: 3082410199

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Protect the beautiful creatures. They are not harming anything, just living life. Protect, don't hand them over. They deserve the protection that can be offered. They have no voices, we must speak out for them.
Comments From:

Name: Shari Coup <sharicoup@yahoo.com>
Address: 3121 South 16th Street
Omaha, Ne 68108
Phone: 4022129689

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information
Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Make it ILLEGAL to Hunt these animals. If it has to be State or Federally Protected then please do so.
824 "K" Street  
Geneva NE-USA 68361

Telc: 402-759-3597  
E-mail: rangifer@windstream.net

25 July 2013

Mr. Norris Marshall  
Chairperson  
NE Game and Parks Commission  
2200 North 33rd Street  
Lincoln NE-USA 68503

Re: Proposed Mountain Lion Regulations-26 July 2013 NGPC Meeting

The stated objective for the Prairie (Mountain Lion Management) Unit (PU), and, I quote, is "...to provide an unlimited opportunity to hunt mountain lions in the portion of the State where the establishment of a breeding population is unlikely." Hunting would be permitted throughout the year and an unlimited number of permits would be available. One must have purchased the $15.00 permit at least 24 hours prior to making a kill, and, dogs can be used to aid and abet the hunt between 01 January and 31 March.

While being one who had serious reservations when a mountain lion hunting season was being originally proposed for the State of Nebraska, the creation of the currently proposed Prairie Management Unit only legitimizes those apprehensions. The proposed PU generates either one of two impressions, neither of which reflects wise and prudent conservation and management principles: Either the PU is inhabited by such an overwhelming abundance of mountain lions that the numbers are virtually too numerous to count, or, the more likely underlying, but unstated, intent is to allow, if not encourage, the complete removal and elimination of the few lions that are currently found in the area. Quite definitely, the regulations pertaining to the PU will only discourage the establishment of breeding population in the PU; and, serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy for the stated objective.

The simple practical fact is no dependable statistical estimates are available for the number of mountain lions occupying the PU. While sightings are reported and mountain lion have been killed in the Unit, the sightings and kills are relatively few, and, because of being relatively few, are still cause for stirring public interest. A farm and ranch insurance agent in south-central Nebraska recently reported that after 15 years in the business he had only one instance, approximately 10 years ago, of any livestock being attacked by a mountain lion, and, that cow was not killed, but, survived quite well after receiving veterinary attention for the lacerations. Although, reported sightings are more common, mountain lions are capable of wide-spread travel and movements, multiple sightings do not automatically translate into multiple different lions.

The most probable intentions for the PU are political subterfuge attempting to compromise the best interests for good and wise conservation efforts. The political
effort is to eliminate all lions in the PU, with the only acceptable number being zero – and no further sightings or kills. It really does not matter if none at exists, because, much like black-tailed prairie dogs, we do not want them anyway. In the political theatre, appearance and impressions trump reality at almost every turn. What is matters far less than what appears to be; and, it appears the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission really does not care if there is any mountain lions in the PU, which constitutes the greatest proportion of the entire State.

That attitude definitely challenges the definition for “wise and prudent mountain lion and wildlife conservation and management”, and, the principles espoused by both the late President Theodore Roosevelt and Dr. Aldo Leopold – both of whom were principled leaders for land and resource conservation ethics.

I oppose this proposed Prairie Mountain Lion Management Unit, and, request that it be withdrawn from the regulations.

Thanking you for your time and consideration, I remain...

Sincerely,

Stu Luttich

cc: Mr. Jim Douglas, Director
Comments From:

Name: Melissa Frazell  <bluefairy74@gmail.com>
Address: 5406 Orchard Avenue
          Omaha, NE  68117
Phone: 402-305-3060

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Please do not allow mountain lions to be hunted. There is absolutely no reason behind this. They are already endangered and haven't harmed anyone. I can't even believe there is a chance of this becoming a possibility. Please do the right thing.
From: Paice, Sandra
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 1:47 PM
To: Taylor, Scott; Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

From: jldavis1@windstream.net [mailto:jldavis1@windstream.net]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 1:35 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: Jackie Davis  <jldavis1@windstream.net>
Address: P.O. Box 373
Nebraska, NE  68956
Phone: 402-752-3347

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Is this really necessary? This is trophy hunting at it's worst. I grew up in a family of hunters, landowners, cattle growers and still am. My son continues to hunt on our land. Leave the cats alone.
Comments From:

Name: Debra Bos <bosdebra@yahoo.com>
Address: 1340 Meadow Dale Drive
          Lincoln, , NE  68505
Phone: (402)467-4238

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

These Mountain Lions have never harmed anyone in Nebraska. They have as much right to live as we do. There are only 20 left surviving in Nebraska. They deserve to be protected and not hunted down and killed for trophies. Please protect their species.
From: countrycatlady6835@yahoo.com [mailto:countrycatlady6835@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 1:19 PM
To: Paice, Sandra
Subject: Online Comment on Proposed Regulation

Comments From:

Name: michele kelley  <countrycatlady6835@yahoo.com>
Address: 6835 s 176
walton, ne 68461
Phone: 402-782-2338

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I am against any laws that allow additional hunting in Nebraska. This state already allows people to kill almost every wild animal. Do we really need to encourage more?
Comments:

Please maintain the important protections for mountain lions in Nebraska. They should be allowed to live freely among us. It is time we stop killing animals for sport and start allowing nature to be nature. They are an important part of the food chain and help control the deer population without human intervention. Hunting these animals is not a solution to a problem because there is no problem at all.
Less than 24 hours remain to speak out against a reckless hunting proposal that threatens the estimated 20 mountain lions left in Nebraska! Despite there being NO science or cases of conflict between mountain lions and people, a small group of trophy hunters are pressuring the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to open season on this fragile species.

Please stop this nonsense, and realize that the needs of the MANY outweigh the wants of a few. Special interest groups that promote destruction and violence have no place in Nebraska laws.

I am FIRMLY AGAINST
----- Forwarded Message ----- 
From: Patricia Halderman <crowruns@yahoo.com>
To: "sos.rulesregs@nebraska.gov" <sos.rulesregs@nebraska.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2013 10:31 AM
Subject: mountain lion hunting regulations

Dear Nebraska Games and Parks,

Here is my opinion on the proposed allowed hunting of Mountain Lions in Nebraska. I am firmly against it. If hunting regulations are passed there should be only "shooting allowed" of the mountain lion. The baiting or trapping is an extremely cruel and unnecessary way of killing any animal.

The Cougar-Rewilding Foundation featured a report in their 2012 newsletter titled "Cougar Mortalities in Central North America and the Evidence Against Recolonizations East of the Prairie Colonies." The publication reviewed data from the years 2000 through June of 2012. Based on this information, CRF reached the assessment of the future for lions in the Midwest.

CRF's report says that "Sightings alone are unreliable in determining a number for how many lions are actually in the Midwest. Along its journey, a single lion will leave hundreds of signs, (tracks, scat, cached prey, hair samples, etc) and may result in dozens of samples submitted to researcher. These duplicate accounts are misleading and without DNA analysis to identify individuals, the number of transient Midwest lions may be drastically inflated."

CRF also believes the increase in sightings isn't the result of anything new, but instead is a response to something started decades ago when western game managers started regulating the killing of lions. They also state that young male lions are traveling long distances looking for mates, but takes this as evidence that true recolonization (breeding pairs, not just long treks by males) is a slow process of incremental advances. "It took 20 years of dispersal from the Black Hills to establish a breeding colony 100 miles to the southeast in the Nebraska Pine Ridge.

The report also said that current lion hunting policies in "breeder" states could threaten 40 years of species recovery and stop the eastern expansion of the species.

Remember, the number of sightings does not necessarily equate to the number of lions. The overwhelming majority of sighted lions are young transient males and not breeding pairs. The natural return of lions to their historic range is threatened by human policies.

Excessive hunting quotas in South Dakota and that state's game commission, that wants to eradicate the species, have created a situation where resident lions and migrant male populations have been devastated. Wyoming has decided to follow suit. I am hopeful that Nebraska will not follow this trend!
I would like to remind everyone that the Mountain Lion is shy and elusive and live solitary lives. Males and females only interact for breeding and the female breed at about two and a half years old. The give birth every two years and usually only one or two kittens survive. They stay with the mother for about 18 months. You can see that it will take many many years for a population of Mountain Lions to recover from this attempt to eradicate the species. Having a healthy population of Mountain Lions is vital for a healthy ecological system of prey and predators.

I am a mountain trail runner and have had many magic up close and personal experiences with mountain lions. In each incident the lion and I were surprised at our encounter and each of us went our separate ways. I ask that Mountain Lion hunting not be allowed in Nebraska.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

Patricia Halderman
3180 S 72nd St
Apt 288
Lincoln, NE 68506
The remaining mountain lions in the state should be protected not allowed to be hunted to extinction. The state would do well to preserve wildlife for tourism - people love to take pictures of wildlife and would come to the state if we had any wildlife left. Mountain lions should be protected!
Comments From:

Name: Nelli Falzgraf <NelliF@cox.net>
Address: 414 Ridgewood Drive
         Bellevue, NE 68005
Phone: 402/292-9687

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I object to the proposed unlimited "Prairie Unit" hunt of mountain lions and oppose sport hunting of lions anywhere in Nebraska.
I also object to the proposed mountain lion hunting quota of 4 lions in the Pine Ridge area because it's too aggressive. It'll reduce an already small population and could place the lion recovery in Nebraska at risk.
Comments From:

Name: cynthia weitzel <missinglink5@hotmail.com>
Address: 901 lincoln st.
        overton, NE 68863
Phone: 308-987-2339

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

What the NG&P Commission is proposing for mountain lions is simply unconscionable. With NO attacks, it is clear that cougars have been behaving very well in our state. If the Commission and its biologists cannot demonstrate a clear need for setting in motion a plan that will basically eliminate this species from our state then it is nothing short of government corruption. The idea to hunt cougars came from a western senator who noticed one on his property, who then built on the long-held prejudices against cougars in that part of the state, and the plan went from allowing some hunting of the Pine Ridge colony, to (in a matter of 2 months) hunting any cougar (or all) in roughly 85% of our state, and increasing the quota in the Pine Ridge by 33%. The science is being ignored as to what any hunting at all will do to a species still struggling to stabilize itself--maybe 100 animals in Nebraska including transients, and only 15-22 animals in the Pine Ridge area. Cougars are especially difficult to manage by hunting because females can breed any time of the year, and are either pregnant or caring for young 73% of their lives. Male and females are difficult to tell apart, and since females often hide their young while they hunt, the issue of shooting females and leaving dependent young to a slow death, puts the state in a position of sanctioning the deaths of dependent young. Other hunted species are given protection from this. It is easy to conclude that no females should be killed and by extension that sport hunting of cougars at all should not be allowed.
To the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission:

I write in vehement opposition to the ridiculous proposal to allow a "hunt" of mountain lions in Nebraska and am especially opposed to the Prairie Unit portion that would allow unfettered hunting of cougars throughout 85% of the state, all year long, even using hounds. This is not a hunt; this is a massacre. There are barely enough mountain lions in the state as it is, and we need more natural predators, not less, especially to control the deer population. Allowing even a few cougars to be killed will have a long-term impact on their survival in this state and cannot lead to a sustainable population. But perhaps that is the goal, and if it is, it is reprehensible and unconscionable.

Any reputable biologist will say that a population base of maybe 20 animals (and even less if you're unknowingly counting the same individuals more than once), and only one identified breeding female, is too small to allow ANY to be killed. And think about this: American taxpayers have spent millions of dollars over 30+ years to protect Florida's struggling population of only 100-150 cougars. And you're considering allowing a hunt for 10 animals? There is no logic in this proposal.

Caving in to the handful of people who are itching to kill a mountain lion or who have irrational fears about them is NOT sound management policy. Time and again biologists testify to the health of ecosystems when top natural predators are present (humans aren't included in this category). How can anyone in good conscience decimate a species that should be protected?
As you can probably tell, I'm upset about this proposal. One of the items on my bucket list is to see a mountain lion in the wild, but I fear I never will because of backward policies like this. If this plan goes ahead, mountain lions will once again be extirpated from Nebraska, to our detriment.

I hope you will take my comments to heart and ditch this plan. Mountain lions deserve our respect and protection; anything less is a crime.

Thank you.

Jane Wilson  
603 N. 36 St.  
Omaha, NE 68131  
402-345-6317
Commissioners:

I would like to make a comment on the proposed mountain lion hunting season in this state.

I am opposed to such a plan. I think it would have a negative effect on public safety, and the balance of nature in this state.

The greatest threat to human and life and property in this state posed by wildlife is, in my opinion, the whitetail deer. This animal causes a great many auto accidents every year, with attendant loss of life, injury, and property damage.

Mountain lions are apex predators. They are designed to feed on whitetail deer. With the low numbers of mountain lions, the whitetail deer population has gotten out of hand and presents a real threat to the public.

Mountain lions are making a comeback nationwide. They are re-occupying areas where they were once thought to be extinct. I think this is a good sign, evidence of a healthy ecosystem. To encourage hunting of these cats would be counter-productive to the good they do.

The mountain lions need large hunting territories. They are by nature solitary. The males need larger hunting territories than do the females. Therefore, it would not take the elimination of many of these cats to throw the natural balance out of whack and leave the deer with no natural predators.

Respectfully Submitted,

Les Foran
503 East 4th St.
Ogallala, NE 69153
308-289-1866
Comments From:

Name: patricia fuller  <patriciafuller1@hotmail.com>
Address: 26 Pickard Lane
Council Bluffs, IA  51501
Phone: 712-366-0423

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Again I urge you to follow the recommendations of the Cougar Rewilding Foundation and base your hunting permits on sound science. Since there is no urgency and immediate threat from the existing small cougar population, I suggest that you take time and view Washington State University’s Effects of Sport Hunting video.

Public attitude surveys about cougars in Nebraska are absent from the Recommendations. Cougar deer predation data is absent from the Recommendations. Data on pet and livestock damage from cougars is absent from the Recommendations (there have been no incidents of predation on pets or livestock documented in Nebraska). There are no incidents of a cougar engaged in predation of a person documented in Nebraska (there have been no confirmed human incidents in any of the Prairie cougar colonies east of the Rockies).

Absent any examples of conflict in the Recommendations, the Cougar Rewilding Foundation has requested information on all these stated “considerations,” but Nebraska Game & Parks has provided none. They didn’t even respond.

Absent any examples of conflict in 20 years of peaceful co-existence with cougars, Nebraska is now targeting for reduction a stable (by definition a population of little conflict) and recovering cougar population that has conducted itself admirably for a generation. Why mess with it?

The agency has revised their previous proposal to take two males or one female from a breeding population of 15-22 cats
up to 4 cats with a 2 female sub quota (18 27f the total estimate) in the Pine Ridge National Forest, with the stated aim of reducing the Pine Ridge population, while instituting an unlimited year-round season for 85f the rest of the state, further reducing chances for cougar dispersal and recolonization eastward.

Taking more than 14f a cougar population (average yearly reproduction rate) disrupts cougar social order, increasing the likelihood of the very things the Nebraska proposal wishes to contain: conflicts among pets, livestock, people and cougars. The safest way to manage any cougar population is to leave it alone - cougars police themselves - taking problem individuals out at the source.

I ask again that you follow the recommendations of the Cougar Rewilding Foundation, that any hunting permits be based on sound science. I would further suggest that use of dogs and predator calls puts the cougar at a distinct disadvantage. You have a state hunting proposal in a national forest - a national forest owned by every US taxpayer, not just Nebraskans - that ignores science.
Comments From:

Name: Pam Sorrell <psorrell@cox.net>
Address: 5030 S. 79th Ave.
         Ralston, Ne 68127
Phone: 402-551-2909

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Can't we wait until we have a viable population before having a sport hunting season on these animals? It's as though we want to ensure their extinction. We all know the importance of balance between predators and prey in the wild. We have way too many deer because we've decimated the predator populations. I think we should stay with the present standard of allowing mountain lions to be killed only when they are encroaching on populated areas or attacking livestock.
Hi, I see that Nebraska is trying to get a mountain lion hunting season. Between 1890 to current only 20 fatal cougar attacks in N. America, yet humans have for sport killed 100,000's of cougars. The number of cougars are determined by the number of herbivores. There is no justification for sports hunting them, it is purely killing for fun w/ a negative conservation value as the largest of the species are targeted weakening the entire gene pool.

Please don’t establish a Mountain Lion hunting season.

Sincerely,
Dillon
Dear Sirs,

Twenty mountain lions is not enough to start killing them again. Nebraska’s lion population needs to be protected NOT HUNTED!!

Sincerely,

Martie Felts

Proud to Support our Troops
To the Nebraska Wildlife Commissioners
jim.douglas@nebraska.gov; Sam.Wilson@nebraska.gov; scott.taylor@nebraska.gov

Re: The Proposed 2014 Mountain Lion Season and Quotas.

With the possible exception of a one-lion quota in the Pine Ridge, mountain lions should remain protected in Nebraska except for lions depredating on livestock and those presenting a clear threat to human safety. I make 5 points:

(a) Instituting a lion hunt in the Pine Ridge is more likely to initiate conflicts with humans than reduce that possibility;

(b) Initiating a lion hunt in Nebraska will increase conflicts between humans—between those who want a hunt and those who do not, and between those who want small quotas and those who want large or unlimited quotas, taking up staff time within the Department that could be spent more productively;

(c) Opening most of the Prairie for a year round hunt with an unlimited quota would be a mistake;

(d) Commissioners should base their management decisions on facts, not biases and misinformation.

(e) We found multiple and conflicting information on how to submit comments that the commissioners can read before the meeting this coming Friday, July 26th. I am concerned none of them will be read.

Instituting a lion hunt in the Pine Ridge is more likely to initiate conflicts with humans than reduce that possibility. Ongoing research by Dr. Robert Wielgus and his students in the Large Carnivore Lab at Washington State University - http://nrs.wsu.edu/research/Carnivore/ - is demonstrating that sport hunting of lions increases conflicts with humans. I’m sure others who write to you will discuss this research.
Among states with demonstrated lion populations, sport hunting is banned only in California. Since Proposition 117 was passed in 1990, there have been only 3 fatal and 9 nonfatal attacks, despite the state’s enormous human population and very large areas of public land open for outdoor recreation - http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/lion/attacks.html

In contrast, the most attacks on humans, year after year, occur on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. I have not been able to find an estimate of the lion population on the island or the number harvested, but I do know that they are aggressively hunted and that in part of the island, there is a quota of two per hunter. As far as I know, it’s the only state/province in North America with such a quota. A possible reason for the high incidence of attacks is that the population is very young. Young and subadult cougars, lacking the size and experience to kill their normal prey, are more likely to attack people and pets.

Initiating a lion hunt in Nebraska will increase conflicts between humans—between those who want a hunt and those who do not, and between those who want small quotas and those who want large or unlimited quotas, taking up staff time within the Department that could be spent more productively. It appears the Commission is thinking of using South Dakota’s mountain lion management in strategy as a model. Such a decision would be a mistake. Ever since a lion hunting season was begun in the fall of 2005, there has been continual strife, starting with a lawsuit brought by the Mountain Lion Foundation in the late summer of 2005. As you probably know, the Governor of South Dakota has contracted with the Wildlife Management Institute to study the Department of Game, Fisheries & Park’s big game management policies. Their lion management policies are a significant component of that investigation. I don’t know how much staff time is taken up with the lion controversy, but it could be significant.

Opening most of the Prairie for a year round hunt with an unlimited quota would be a mistake. Again, this provision would emulate South Dakota’s policy, where there is now essentially open season on lions outside the Black Hills and probably in parts of the Indian reservations. What are the problems with such a policy?

First, Nebraska has at most three small, widely separated lion populations. To maintain genetic diversity, lions need the ability to disperse between them.

Second, outside the Pine Ridge and Wildcat Hills, most lion confirmations are along rivers flowing east. Nebraska has the potential of being a source of recolonizers in the Midwest and East. It may already be playing that role.

Third, other relatively small areas probably could be recolonized within Nebraska. I am attaching a map prepared by John Laundré for his book PHANTOMS OF THE PRAIRIE (2012). He seems to be correct so far in his predictions of future recolonization sites. Note he designates what appears to be the Bessey District of the Nebraska National Forest and another to the west as
future homes for small populations. A year-round season with an unlimited quota could prevent recolonization.

Commissioners should base their management decisions on facts, not biases and misinformation. They should not kowtow to misinformation, even when it is espoused by influential people. Cougars are perceived to be extremely dangerous to humans and significant livestock depredators, but these perceptions are not true.

We found multiple and conflicting information on how to submit comments that the commissioners could read before the meeting this coming Friday, July 26th. I am concerned none of them will be read. I am emailing this letter to multiple people hopes that the commissioners will have the opportunity to read it. Our difficulties make me wonder if the commissioners want comments from the outside world, or if they simply rely on “good old boy” networks.

Thanks you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

Helen McGinnis
FIGURE 11. Existing forest and wooded areas in Nebraska and South Dakota (South Dakota is included because of its role in cougars in Nebraska). Potential areas where cougars could live in Nebraska are indicated by ellipses and discussed in the text. (Modified from data available from U.S. Geological Survey, Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center, Sioux Falls, SD.)
From: Douglas, Jim  
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 2:03 PM  
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott  
Subject: Fwd: Urge denial of proposed mountain lion regulation

--- Original Message ---
Subject: Urge denial of proposed mountain lion regulation  
From: Nancy Armitage <nancearm@yahoo.com>  
To: "Gale, John" <john.gale@nebraska.gov>, sam.wilson@nebraska.gov,"Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>  
CC:

I urge the commission to deny the proposed mountain lion regulation and not allow sport hunting of mountain lion in Nebraska. Unlimited hunting is not supported by logic or science.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nancy Armitage  
Omaha, NE
Wilson, Sam

From: Taylor, Scott  
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 2:23 PM  
To: Wilson, Sam  
Subject: FW: PROTECT THE MOUNTAIN LION

From: Douglas, Jim  
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 6:48 AM  
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott  
Subject: Fwd: PROTECT THE MOUNTAIN LION

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: PROTECT THE MOUNTAIN LION  
From: Scott Erickson <yogaflyer1@yahoo.com>  
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>  
CC:

Dear Sir,

I ask that you refrain from hunting mountain lions and protect them.

Respectfully,

Scott Erickson  
8002 Harney Street  
Omaha, NE 68114  
402-408-5941
Wilson, Sam

From: Taylor, Scott
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 2:23 PM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Nebraska's Recent Lion Hunting Proposal

From: Douglas, Jim
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 6:46 AM
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott
Subject: Fwd: Nebraska's Recent Lion Hunting Proposal

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Nebraska's Recent Lion Hunting Proposal
From: Leslie Alexander <buckskingirl070859@gmail.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Dear Mr. Douglas:

I am writing on behalf of the endangered Mountain Lion and the upcoming proposal to increase the quota to be killed in the prairie region this year. Nebraska's latest lion hunting proposal increases the quota, authorizes the use of hounds, and allows an unlimited number of lions to be killed in the prairie region, year round. The state's 22 lions don't stand a chance if this proposal passes. Please, let's set aside a sanctuary for these precious lions that deserve to live, flourish and continue for their lives and for our children to honor and enjoy. We are all sacred and here for a reason.

I implore you to do whatever you can in your power to see that these precious lives are not taken but, given the chance to roam free. America stands for freedom, not fear and killing of it's most precious resources, it's wildlife.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie Alexander
608 Roosevelt Ave.
Glenside, PA  19038
From: Paice, Sandra  
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 1:48 PM  
To: Taylor, Scott; Wilson, Sam  
Subject: FW: A Hunting Season for Mountain Lions? 

Follow Up Flag: Follow up  
Flag Status: Flagged

-----Original Message-----
From: Boesiger, Bess  
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 12:16 PM  
To: Paice, Sandra  
Subject: FW: A Hunting Season for Mountain Lions? 

-----Original Message-----
From: issyco@cox.net [mailto:issyco@cox.net]  
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 12:15 PM  
To: Boesiger, Bess  
Subject: A Hunting Season for Mountain Lions? 

Dear Sirs:

I see from the newspaper (OW-H) today, July 22nd, 2013, that you are considering having a hunting season for Mountain Lions.

Since I assume you would not eat them, what is the point of shooting them? For sport? In Florida, the Mountain Lion is all but gone, thanks for farmers' fields encroaching on their habitat and cars zooming by and killing them on the nearby highways, not to mention those who just shoot them for the fun of it. They are endangered and supposedly protected down there. Why not here? I thought killing wild animals for sport went out when the Endangered Species Act came in. How many Mountain Lions are actually native to Nebraska? It was my understanding that they are just passing through, looking for new habitat, when they are spotted here.

Please, for the sake of the few wild things we have left in our state, set an example by not opening a hunting season for these fantastic lions. Instead, how about giving them more habitat to live in?

I would appreciate a response to my plea to leave them be.

Thank you,

Isabel R. Cohen  
1518 S. 32 Avenue  
Omaha, NE 68105-2502  
402-332-6385
Mr. Wilson, After reading the proposed mountain lion hunting season I'm very concerned that the opinions of a few are making the rules, while I'm opposed to any season I know that is not going to happen. I only hope that the Game and parks will use common sense and not wipe out these incredible cats. I would hope that we learned from our mistakes of the 19th century, I would only ask that you keep the quota low and not use hounds to at least give these cats some kind of sporting chance and please don't have an unlimited prairie season. These cats should be a permanent part of our environment. Thank you for your time, Donald King
Comments From:

Name: Duane Kingston <dkingston@wildblue.net>
Address: 13335 355th Rd
Amherst, Ne  68812
Phone: 308-826-2057

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I have trail cam pictures of a mountain lion in Valley County along the Middle Loup River (2011). I have seen deer kills (partially buried carcass) there, as well. I would definitely like to see a mountain lion season. A quota kill type season similar to most of the Western States (when the "quota" number of lions killed is reached the season is over!) Unlimited tags available, gives everyone an opportunity for this most RARE opportunity!! North and South Dakota are good representative States of a fair system that is working there. Thank you.
Comments From:

Name:  Jana Osborn  <janajearyb@gmail.com>
Address:  1112 Meadowlark  
Alliance, NE  69301
Phone:  3087623173

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information  Hearing Date: 07-26-2013  
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

A hunting season for mountain lions should not be allowed. I believe the current law of shooting if in personal danger should remain. An addition to that law would be if livestock were being threatened.
Proposed changes to allow year-round and nearly state-wide hunting of mountain lions are reprehensible. 
Please don't change the law to allow greater slaughter of mountain lions. 
We have already greatly reduced the number of this vital part of the ecosystem. 
We would be greatly impoverished if they disappeared.

Scott Kemper
402-981-7819

"Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth." -- Albert Einstein
Mr. Sam Wilson,

My name is Amy Gromowsky and I am a resident of Elkhorn, NE. I am emailing to urge you to not allow the sport hunting of mountain lions in our state. I know that there are many people (hopefully!) emailing you long letters detailing why the sport hunting of mountain lions is not only unnecessary but morally wrong. It doesn't aid in wildlife management (the mountain lions actually serve a purpose!) and it would potentially wipe out a native species to our state.

I vote, I am active in my community, I am active in my church and I strongly feel that our wildlife and natural environment need to be valued. Hunting mountain lions is just wrong.

Thank you for reading this email. I hope to read that the Commission of Game and Parks does not allow the sport hunting of mountain lions.

Sincerely,

Amy Gromowsky

Elkhorn, NE 68022
Comments From:

Name: Cecilia Sherwin <jsherwin99@hotmail.com>

Address: 9725 Park Dr. #3
          Omaha, NE 68127

Phone: 402-505-6162

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163 Chapter(s): 004 Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

Mountain Lion population estimates are just that. There just isn't enough evidence that these mammals have made a substantial recovery to open hunting to them. We also have to overcome prejudices and educate the public and ranchers so they don't haphazardly begin operating their own private vigilante type of hunting parties.
Mr. Wilson, I read that there will be a meeting to determine a season on mountain lions, while I feel that there should be no season, but to hold it Chadron is unfair. Ranchers I've talked to want them all killed and nobody on the other end of the state will have any say in the matter. This meeting should be in a neutral location. While I know quite a few people in that area I also know that they feel everything out there is there's and the only thing the land is for is cattle. They complain there's too many deer and elk, then they complain there's too many cats, there are other people in the state who's opinion matters also. I do ask if there is a season to please not base it on the failed policies of So. Dakota and allow an all out slaughter. Thanks for your time, Tad King
Wilson, Sam

From: Taylor, Scott
Sent: Saturday, July 20, 2013 5:29 AM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: Fwd:

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

------- Original Message -------
Subject: Fwd:
From: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
To: "McCoy, Tim" <tim.mccoy@nebraska.gov>, "Taylor, Scott" <scott.taylor@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

------- Original Message -------
Subject: 
From: jwanberg52@gmail.com
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Please stop the insanity and cruelty, don't allow these horrific hunting seasons to happen. Let our beautiful mountain lions survive in peace.!!!

Sent from Windows Mail
Dear Sir,

There are not enough lions to be hunted or killed for trophies and excitement in the first place, therefore by setting unlimited year round hunting of lions by dogs? And baits? Such methods are unethical and down right shameful to you and to the hunters!

The proposals and your way of thinking are not better than those corrupted officials in those living and ruling in those third world poor and uneducated countries!

If the mind set of those who are in charge of fish and game is not improved, there will be zero wild game for those who love to shoot or kill any animal so long they can pay some low fee license given by corrupted and bias decision makers.

Sincerely

sauwah
Dear Mr. Douglas,

I've thought long and hard about sending comments to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission regarding the cougar hunting season proposal but have finally decided that speaking from a position of experience with cougar management in South Dakota might better aide the State of Nebraska arrive at a good decision with regard to managing cougars in the State.

I first would like to commend the staff of Nebraska Game and Parks for their highly considerate and stewardly accumen in the approach to Nebraska's first cougar management hunting season. Based on not less than 10 years of experience with cougars in South Dakota, I must state that Nebraska's cautious and sensitive approach to hunter harvest of cougars is a strong sign of honest and genuine interest in the ecological sustainability of cougars in Nebraska.

On that note, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the Commission, the State of Nebraska, and the staff of the Game and Parks Department to avoid any influence or recommendation the State of South Dakota might exert on your process of managing cougars. Having been fully involved in the initial research, planning and setting of hunting seasons for cougars in South Dakota for 5 years, I can categorically state that the direction South Dakota has taken has not only been a failure but it has exacerbated problems with the species in the Black Hills Region to a significant degree. Extreme changes in population demographics, age and sex ratios, and behaviors have increased the conflicts with human populations and their domestic animals as well as thrown the entire Black Hills big game picture into disarray. Please do not follow in South Dakota's footsteps in any fashion. The conflicts, added expense and public dissatisfaction with management will not be worth the effort.
At the time of our first cougar hunting season proposal, our Game, Fish and Parks Commission was on the right track by planning a highly selective, cautious and responsible harvest approach that was fully intended to avoid compromising ongoing research as well as potentially increasing conflicts with the animals in urban, suburban and agricultural environments. Staff here recommended highly restrictive hunting season harvest quotas and a season design that would have permitted careful evaluation of the effects of hunting on the status, movements, demographics and impacts on big game. It would have also been highly sensitive to the essential research being done on cougars. That approach was quickly scattered to the four winds by a collection of people that had no understanding of cougar behavior, demographics, or management. Fear mongering, speculation, and outright intimidation of staff and Commission by politically inspired people changed the entire complexion of the management effort and as a result, management succumbed to viral political views, (none of which were rational or reasonable) and progressed from there. I would like to encourage this Commission to reconsider its original proposal for Cougar management that was presented to the Commission last month as well as abandon thoughts of creating areas of unregulated take, closed areas and areas where harvest is highly selective. I would like to encourage Nebraska to simply open the western 1/2 of the state to cougar hunting with an established quota of just three animals of which two are female. I would also very much encourage the state to consider protecting, in every way possible, adult, territorial male animals because they are the ones that have the ability to better regulate population density, distribution and reproduction; much more so than any hunting season can ever accomplish. Great care must be taken not to remove animals of either sex that demonstrate desirable behavior and add stability to the population parameters. I think it important to understand that the risk of exacerbating problems caused by cougars is great when harvest quotas are enlarged and it must be stressed that hunting seasons can not and do not reduce risks to livestock and human populations. They increase them. The Black Hills is a stark example of that. We are spending large sums of money, time and effort in response to cougar issues which could have been largely avoided by a more reasoned, cautious, and selective cougar harvest. That consideration has likely not been fully explained to you but it is none the less a reality that we deal with almost monthly. I would also like to confirm to the Commission that cougars do not represent additive mortality on well managed, diverse and viable deer herds. In spite of what you might have heard about deer and elk in the Black Hills, you should know that the cougar had nothing whatever to do with the declines in those species. The Cougar Management Guidelines are more than clear in that regard and something tells me that Nebraska has better managed deer herds than what we now have in Western South Dakota. Neither do cougars represent any significant threat to livestock populations. Small animals like sheep, goats, dogs, cats and the occasional domestic fowl, yes, but not cattle or horses. Do not allow any of those suggestions to influence your thinking. You may also wish to consider that in the presence of a viable and stable cougar population, your conflicts with coyotes will diminish!

I also recommend that you implement a mandatory cougar hunting training course for prospective hunters, licensing and regulation of houndsmen and their dogs, and that any intentional or unintentional removal of problem animals be included in the harvest quota. It is very important also to keep your season short, perhaps during a month or month and one half when there is likely to be snow on the ground. Late season hunting of any kind exacerbates problems with wintering wildlife and depredation issues as well as cattle operations. Wyoming starts their season early and their quota is usually met without snow on the ground. Most of all, I would implement rules that make certain that hunters are highly selective in their harvest and their ability to identify and target the sexes. Hound hunters should be required to develop those skills through a chase season if necessary at other times of the year.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely yours,

John M. Wrede
Regional Wildlife Manager Retired
2002 Westgate Drive
Rapid City, South Dakota 57702
From: Taylor, Scott  
Sent: Saturday, July 20, 2013 6:10 PM  
To: Wilson, Sam  
Subject: Fwd: Pease turn down the proposal to add a season on mountain lions They re not a problem and are a rare animal; thank you. Jeff Mollring

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Fwd: Pease turn down the proposal to add a season on mountain lions They re not a problem and are a rare animal; thank you. Jeff Mollring
From: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
To: "McCoy, Tim" <tim.mccoy@nebraska.gov>, "Taylor, Scott" <scott.taylor@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Pease turn down the proposal to add a season on mountain lions They re not a problem and are a rare animal; thank you. Jeff Mollring
From: Jeff Mollring <jemollring@gmail.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:
--- Original Message ---

Subject: From California
From: donna gatts <djg769@yahoo.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Hello
I write to you to urge you to not pass this new legislation on Mountain Lions and urge you to help us save the Mountain Lions.
Thank you for your time
Donna Gatts
3009 Flora Vista
Alameda, Ca 94502
Hello Mr. Douglas:

I am writing in concern of the apex predator Puma Concolor, cougar, or mountain lion. It has come to my attention that the Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners will soon decide on the hunting regulations of this animal. My allowing an unlimited number of cougars to be killed, and the utilization of dogs, this Commission is guaranteeing that Nebraska will no longer hand cougar's to hunt. As this predator is reestablishing itself in the area, and acting as a protector of native plantlife by regulating the consumption of plants by deer and other ungulates, the hunting of this animal should be limited, not expanded at this time.

The decision to expand the opportunity to hunt the cougar into extirpation once more is an irresponsible conclusion on the part of this Commission. Please reconsider the proposed expansion of cougar hunting, keeping the allowed numbers under 4 per year.

Thank you for you time,

Marissa L. Hill
As a member of a family whose members have suffered permanent damage from Lyme disease, I respectfully ask your negative vote on the upcoming legislation to allow mountain lion hunting in the prairie region. I realize that this is a polarizing issue, but mountain lions perform a valuable service to mankind in the ecosystems in which they live. Overabundance of deer due to the extermination of apex predators has resulted in property damage and suffering for residents in many states, not just in deer-car collisions, but also tick-bourne diseases, the most serious of which is Lyme disease. Lyme is treatable if one tests positive, but the test is unreliable and the disease is frequently undetected until irreversible damage has occurred.

Thank you.

Grace Clark
Wilson, Sam

--- Original Message ---
Subject: Mountain lion proposed regulations
From: Jimmy Funkhouser <jimmyfunk22@gmail.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Jim et al.,

I'm extremely disturbed that the commission is considering measures that replace the originally proposed annual quota of only three lions or one female with a more aggressive quota. The support of hunting small population apex predators defies all logic and is unbecoming of anyone that has a basic knowledge of large-scale ecology maintenance. To take a more aggressive stance when all of the facts demonstrate that this could be disastrous is a complete farce. I apologize for my colorful language, but this nonsense is so comical that can think of no other way to address the issue satisfactorily.

The State of Nebraska should be honored to be one of the few homes of this majestic species. Don't squander this opportunity. The mountain lion is America's big cat, and should be revered and protected. Not just for vanity's sake, but because the existence and proliferation of this animal encourages a wholesome and healthy ecosystem. The commission has an OPPORTUNITY to do the right thing with this decision, not only for the cat, but for the community.

This concerned citizen asks that you do just that. Protect America's lion.

Sincerely,
Jimmy Funkhouser
(317)507-3784

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID
Wilson, Sam

From: Taylor, Scott
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 8:06 AM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Mountain Lions

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Douglas, Jim
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 11:04 PM
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott
Subject: Fwd: Mountain Lions

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Mountain Lions
From: Rebecca Ritter <rebecca@pawsofftools.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

I look forward to the day when our Government starts protecting our wildlife and not trophy hunters...

Paws Off Brand, LLC
Post Office Box 1937
Healdsburg, CA 95448
http://youtube/TZhyYQ61
T.707.637.9564
F.707.723.0318
Wilson, Sam

From: Taylor, Scott
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 8:05 AM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Mountain Lions

From: Douglas, Jim
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 11:04 PM
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott
Subject: Fwd: Mountain Lions

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message -------
Subject: Mountain Lions
From: Teresa <cillwonagent@aol.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Mr. Douglas the citizens of this country are concerned about the total lack of regard towards conservation. This hunt, if allowed, will most certainly kill off the states 22 mountain lions in the blink of an eye. I predict trophy hunters will come from all over and pay a pretty penny to shoot one of Nebraska's noblest and rarest creatures. Ask yourself. Who will this benefit? The majority? Heck no. Practically no one. There is no point. Please don't be responsible for decimating Nebraska's lions.

Teresa Penner
310.849.3930 cell
Prudential Malibu Realty
Associate Manager
Topanga Division
540 S. Topanga Cyn Blvd.
Topanga, Ca 90290
www.TeresaPenner.com
From: Douglas, Jim  
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 11:04 PM  
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott  
Subject: Fwd: Your reasoning, please?

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

--------- Original Message ---------
Subject: Your reasoning, please? 
From: Sandra Gray <sandegray@gmail.com>  
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>  
CC:  

Dear Governor,

I understand that Nebraska plans to implement a hunting season on Mountain Lions. I cannot think this action is anything but questionable at best--and negligent at the least--since at last count the entire State of Nebraska had only 22 Mountain Lions. Considering the size of Nebraska, that hardly seems justifiable as an overpopulation that requires culling. Are any of these 22 lions actively threatening people or livestock? If so, considering the low numbers would it not be within the responsibility of Nebraska Fish and Wildlife to remove the renegade lion rather than open a season on the other 21 non-offending lions?

Surely the Nebraska Fish and Game has provided you with some semblance of reasoning as to why they are advocating this kind of irrational action at this time? I am therefore requesting copies or citations of the studies they are using for same. I assume--since their salaries are subsidized by taxpayers specifically for their scientific knowledge--such a program must be mandated as founded in sound scientific fact, correct? If so, what are those facts? (And please note: I hardly think lobbying by hunters would fit into that category in light of the pathetically low total number of Mountain Lions in your state.)

I will look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours // Sandra Gray

Sandra Gray

"What if the question is not why am I so infrequently the person I really want to be, but why do I so infrequently want to be the person I really am?" Oriah Mountain Dreamer
Wilson, Sam

From: Taylor, Scott
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 8:02 AM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: New regulations on Mountain Lion hunting.

From: Douglas, Jim
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 11:02 PM
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott
Subject: Fwd: New regulations on Mountain Lion hunting.

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: New regulations on Mountain Lion hunting.
From: Mackenna Carr <physcoinsanity@hotmail.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Hello,

I understand the policies in which Mountain lions are being hunted is on the table and possible for change. I don't understand why Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners would allow them to be persecuted more by allowing the counties in the Prairie Management Unit to hunt them unlimitedly all year round and believe they should not be hunted at all. Mountain lions are already a threatened species and have very little habitat left that they can live peacefully on without threat of hunting. In order for the ecosystem to thrive and be stable there must be an apex predator to keep the balance and by killing so many you are tipping that delicate balance. If the Department really cared for the survival of this species they would look for alternative, humane ways to reduce the population, if it needed to be and possibly relocate the said Mountain lions to areas that have a dwindling population instead of killing them off.

Also I would like to bring up that hunting any big game with dogs inhumane. Not only can the dogs get lost during tracking (and sometimes left behind because hunters can't find them) but dangerous for both the dog and big game animal. It is an unfair fight between a group of dogs and wild animal, that leaves the animal not only terrified from being chased but ripped apart in the end by the dogs.

I hope the board takes these facts into consideration and changes their mind about hunting Mountain lions, especially with dogs. It is not only detrimental to the Mountain lions but you are affecting the other animals that thrive in that habitat as well.

Best Regards,

Mackenna Carr.
------ Original Message ------
Subject: Mountain Lion Carnage: Last of a breed
From: Thomas Derr <tdeIT67@bvu.net>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

1. Don't allow it, (Wild Lion Hunting), rescind all mandates, plans, orders, and permits. Don't be an idiot. If your plan follow thru, the bloodthirsty hunters will eliminate the last = of an indigenous species in this Country. All Police, ParkRangers should be accompanying and guarding these creatures-around-the-clock, with tasers-stun guns, flash bangs, bright lights aimed @ deviousious, corrupty evil hunters. Your job is to provide a $afe habitat for these harmless creatures @ your Expense, and Nebraska Wildlife game and fisheries. Your job is to preserve All Wildlife+eliminate hunters and poachers....
2. No wild Cat, lemurs, cantamount, painters, cougars, mtn. lions hunting, no bob cat hunting, No mountain Lion Hunting under punishment of arrest, trial, imprisonment, forfeiture of all weaponry, voting rights, A Felony.
3. Smarten Up, or Resign Your Post.
4. let Mountain Lion Confederation Control Hunting Rights
Wilson, Sam

From: Taylor, Scott
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:56 PM
To: Wilson, Sam
Subject: FW: Title 163, Chapter 4, 037 Mountain Lions

From: Douglas, Jim
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:24 PM
To: McCoy, Tim; Taylor, Scott
Subject: Fwd: Title 163, Chapter 4, 037 Mountain Lions

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Title 163, Chapter 4, 037 Mountain Lions
From: Jeff M <jeffian.meyers@gmail.com>
To: "Douglas, Jim" <jim.douglas@nebraska.gov>
CC:

Dear Director Douglas:

I respectfully write to implore you to deny the passing of the unlimited year round hunting of lions for the counties within the Prairie Management Unit. Doing so will decimate the lion population of your state.

Having studied mammalian carnivores extensively during the course of my master’s degree I cannot overemphasize the importance of a healthy population of apex predators for any ecosystem. Lions are THE apex predator in your region of the country and therefore represent a critical component of a healthy prairie ecosystem.

Again, I urge you to vote against this new appeasement to the Department staff. As I am sure you are already well aware, humans have already so marginalized almost all mammalian carnivores in all shared habitat. Eliminating your own population of lions seems rash, irresponsible, and unsustainable.

Please reconsider allowing such a proposal to pass into law.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jeff Meyers, M.Sc.

"The good thing about science is that it’s true whether or not you believe in it."
— Neil deGrasse Tyson
I would urge the
1. I have a lifelong veteran
   fishing permit I cannot
   use because of the big
cats in the area.

   Don & Dixie Heinrichs
   2247 Road 5000
   Davenport, NE 68335-3029

   Dear Game Commissioner,
   They are increasing all
   the time and are not
   needed in this part of the
   US or Nebraska.
   I have fished along the
   Little Blue River for many
   years but have not seen
   the last several years because
   everyone know the big
cats are in the area.
   I also have Grandchildren
   who live in a nearby area
   near the Little Blue who
   play in the trees and
   it is possible a big cat
   will someday show up and
   I know all about how some
   people think they are sure
   a beautiful animal, and
FYI

From: Julie Patrols [mailto:speak4animals2@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2013 3:08 AM
To: Waller, Donna
Cc: Angell, Herb; Zegar, Bob; Nelson, Stephanie; Kapeller, Peggy; Fuller, Jim
Subject: Mountain Lions

Nebraska’s lion population needs to be protected: NOT HUNTED!

Any reputable biologist will tell you that a population base of “possibly” twenty animals, and only one identified breeding female, is too small to accept additional human induced mortalities.

To even consider hunting such a tiny grouping of animals flies in the face of all logic. Consider for a moment that as Federal taxpayers Americans have now spent millions of dollars over more than thirty years to protect Florida’s struggling population of only 100 to 160 lions. Why should Nebraska’s returning lions deserve less?

Julie English
Comments From:

Name:  Kyrn Waugh <lilly1875@comcast.net>
Address:  521 Logan St
Denver, CO 80203
Phone:  303-698-2546

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

The very small number of Mountain Lions in Nebraska must be protected and not hunted. It shows health in an ecosystem if a previously persecuted species has the stamina to return. Predators are an extremely important part of a healthy environment and must be maintained. Please do not allow 'hunters' to destroy a positive change. Using 'dogs' for such a hunt is vicious, cruel, cowardly and must be Disallowed. Please stand up against the retrograde hunter forces that want to destroy a species for no good reason. Do not allow any hunting of Mountain Lions; your state will benefit from a better reputation as a safe place for wildlife with resultant increased tourist interest and travel.
Second, the mountain lion population for the remainder of the state is described by "...92 confirmations outside of Pine Ridge population", up from 83 confirmations posted earlier.

It appears the only change in Nebraska’s mountain lion population in the past year is the increase in presence confirmations made outside of the Pine Ridge area. What is unknown is the number of individuals comprising these confirmations, how much of the reported increase represents a real increase in lion numbers, and how much of the increase can be attributed to heightened surveillance and public attentiveness. This lack of specificity should be enough to negate any thoughts of a significant rise in the state’s mountain lion population and thus should be cause enough to NOT open the vast majority of the state to un-capped lion killing.

The previously referenced webpage goes on to state that there has been no documented mountain lion attack on humans in Nebraska and that there is no documentation of livestock being attacked by mountain lions in the state. Clearly, no purpose or need has been established to respond to either human safety concerns or the need for greater protection of private property by initiating an indiscriminate, sport hunting season.

In fact, the current agency protocol of removing individual lions identified as exhibiting threatening behavior is the only reasonable management action. This agency policy of selectively removing problem lions is proving to be most effective in preventing already very rare conflicts as documented in other states with robust mountain lion populations.

Recent peer-reviewed studies make strong cases against the random and indiscriminate killing of mountain lions through sport hunting. Such indiscriminate killing of lions may actually increase the possibility of problems because of the instability it creates within the population, which can then lead to more young lions roaming in search of territories and encountering humans or their livestock.

Because lions can breed any time of year, about 50% of all adult females will have dependent young (<12 months of age). Killing females with dependent young nearly ALWAYS results in the death of the newly orphaned kittens through starvation, predation, or because of getting into conflict situations with humans.

The year-round open season, with no quotas for 95% of the state will eventually result in the killing of adult females with dependent young, thus leading to the slow, torturous death of her kittens. The same tragedy can be anticipated in the Pine Ridge area where the proposal allows for the taking of one female. The state sanctioned death young is unethical and goes against the best of what is traditional sportsmanship. Females should not be hunted at any time anywhere in Nebraska!

Recommending any level of hunting of a re-colonizing native species when its resident numbers are fewer than 2 dozen and its total population, including transients, may very well be fewer than 100 is ludicrous and unprecedented in the annals of science-based, mission-driven wildlife management. Some would even argue that the proposed regulations before you are immoral in their unstated but clearly intended goal of virtually eliminating a rare and significant native wildlife species from Nebraska.
Comments From:

Name: Mark Schafer <yote69301@yahoo.com>

Address: 1229 Yellowstone
          Alliance, Ne 69301

Phone: 308-760-7070

Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I attended the last Commissioners meeting in Chadron and was pleased with the Commissioners decision to table the Game and Parks recommendations until this meeting. In fact I believe the commissioner that recommended it said that we need to get this right the first time.

I believe that this proposal is worse than the first and please hear me out and let me explain why. I testified at the Chadron meeting that I was not for a auction and lottery type system and I will still hold to that today. I have e-mailed Sam Wilson who is the head of furbearer management for Nebraska and have talked to local biologists. I have been told by some of our local guys who should have greater input than the eastern part of the state on this matter that the auction and lottery ideas have come from higher up than them and from some of the dept. heads in Lincoln.

The game and parks has a program called the Angler and Hunter retention and recruitment program and the name is self explanatory. Auctions and lottery’s do absolutely zero to recruit or retain hunters. Unlimited tags do. With unlimited tags every Nebraskan has the opportunity to buy a tag and be in the outdoors.

If the season has been modeled to raise money then someone has severely miscalculated the funding. Let me start with an auction tag. A person can go anywhere
in the country on a guided lion hunt for around $3,500. The tag being auctioned is not a guided hunt so it should bring far less than that. Now for a lottery. Common sense will tell you that more over the counter tags will be sold than people putting in for and wasting money for a chance at drawing a tag. Let me propose another scenario. Do you really thing that landowners in this area will put in for a lottery tag and waste their money to do so or would they be more inclined to purchase an over the counter tag? Now if they had the option of purchasing an over the counter tag, the lions they killed would be counted towards the quota vs. the same old shoot shovel and shut up, and the state never knows about it.

Another problem with this ne proposal is it sure seems to favor the auction and first lottery permit holders. Why do they get to hunt both seasons, use dogs, and their permits carry over till next year if they don't fill their tags?

I am not against the use of dogs to hunt lions by any means but with a quota of 4 total lions I think that for now the use of dogs should be saved for a later date if we should have trouble filling the quota.

So in closing I would ask that this proposal also be tabled until we can get the auction and lottery system out of the proposal, and maximize a resource for all of Nebraskans. This would be the right way to do this season.

Just for example, in this household there are 4 hunters. If over the counter tags were issued, more than likely all four of us would purchase a permit. If a lottery, auction system stays in place then only 1 would apply for a permit and that is a big maybe.

So please consider my thoughts and work for all of Nebraskans and not just the higher ups and the Lincoln guys. Whoever they may be.

let's get this right the first time and support our Angler and Hunter Retention and Recruitment program by providing opportunity for everyone who wants to enjoy the outdoors. Unlimited tags and when the quota is met then the season is over.
I was very surprised and extremely disappointed to see that these latest Proposed Regulations open up over 85% of Nebraska to a year round mountain lion killing season bolstered by an unlimited quota and the sale of an unlimited # of permits.

This is a shocking, unprecedented and unjustified shift from the previous Proposed Regulations that at least provided full protection for mountain lions in over 95% of the state. It's apparent that Nebraska's mountain lion management philosophy has shifted from one of allowing non-problem lions to live and move safely throughout nearly all of the state to a regulation encouraging the killing of any and ALL lions in >85% of the state. The only "resident" mountain lion population in the Pine Ridge Mgt Unit will suffer the killing of as many as 4 of its estimated 22 individuals.

These proposed management regulations must be denied. The drastic changes to the mgt proposal are arbitrary and not supported by science or logic.

First, the estimated 22 Pine Ridge Mgt Unit mountain lions are the same as the previous estimate, suggesting that the population is stabilizing.

Second, the mountain lion population for the remainder of the state is described by "...92 confirmations outside of Pine Ridge population", up from 83 confirmations posted earlier.

It appears the only change in Nebraska’s mountain lion population in the past year is the increase in presence confirmations made outside of the Pine Ridge area.

What is unknown is the number of individuals comprising these confirmations, how
much of the reported increase represents a real increase in lion numbers, and how much of the increase can be attributed to heightened surveillance and public attentiveness. This lack of specificity should be enough to negate any thoughts of a significant rise in the state’s mountain lion population and thus should be cause enough to NOT open the vast majority of the state to un-capped lion killing.

The previously referenced webpage goes on to state that there has been no documented mountain lion attack on humans in Nebraska and that there is no documentation of livestock being attacked by mountain lions in the state. Clearly, no purpose or need has been established to respond to either human safety concerns or the need for greater protection of private property by initiating an indiscriminate, sport hunting season.

In fact, the current agency protocol of removing individual lions identified as exhibiting threatening behavior is the only reasonable management action. This agency policy of selectively removing problem lions is proving to be most effective in preventing already very rare conflicts as documented in other states with robust mountain lion populations.

Recent peer-reviewed studies make strong cases against the random and indiscriminate killing of mountain lions through sport hunting. Such indiscriminate killing of lions may actually increase the possibility of problems because of the instability it creates within the population, which can then lead to more young lions roaming in search of territories and encountering humans or their livestock.

Because lions can breed any time of year, about 50% of all adult females will have dependent young (<12 months of age). Killing females with dependent young nearly ALWAYS results in the death of the newly orphaned kittens through starvation, predation, or because of getting into conflict situations with humans.

The year-round open season, with no quotas for 95% of the state will eventually result in the killing of adult females with dependent young, thus leading to the slow, torturous death of her kittens. The same tragedy can be anticipated in the Pine Ridge area where the proposal allows for the taking of one female. The state “sanctioned” death young is unethical and goes against the best of what is traditional sportsmanship. Females should not be hunted at any time anywhere in Nebraska!

Recommending any level of hunting of a re-colonizing native species when its resident numbers are fewer than 2 dozen and its total population, including transients, may very well be fewer than 100 is ludicrous and unprecedented in the annals of science-based, mission-driven wildlife management. Some would even argue that the proposed regulations before you are immoral in their unstated but clearly intended goal of virtually eliminating a rare and significant native wildlife species from Nebraska.
I strongly urge the Commission to DENY the proposed mountain lion regulations and DO NOT ALLOW ANY sport hunting of mountain lions in the ENTIRE state of Nebraska.
Comments From:

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Proposed NAC Changes Being Commented on: Title: 163  Chapter(s): 004  Section(s): 037

Hearing Information Hearing Date: 07-26-2013
Hearing Time: 8:45 AM

Comments:

I am a little taken aback by the proposed mountain lion season in Nebraska. I am against this at this time as are several of my outdoor friends and neighbors. What studies other than collecting scat have been done to determine a viable and hunttable population? What other evidence do you have to substantiate a viable population exist to sustain hunting pressure. Are we losing livestock? Are peoples lives being threatened? Are we that intolerable to a native species trying to reestablish itself here. If I read correctly you determined you have habitat to support 27 lions in the pine ridge, but yet you only can estimate the state has 22 lions. So I ask you why would you propose 100 permits to be given to hunt 22 lions? Also allowing dogs to hunt such a small population of lions seems like a really unsportsmanlike method on such a small and concentrated population. Most of us are enjoying the return on this magnificent animal to our landscape. It adds a great dynamic to the hunt. I will leave with this thought. It sure seems early familiar of a time when you led efforts to eradicate the elk when they also tried to come back to Nebraska...