

Effective 5/12/2020

Renumbered 7/1/2023

23-16-10 Big game protection -- Director authority.

- (1) It is the policy of the state that big game animals are of great importance to the citizens of the state, the citizen's quality of life, and the long term sustainability of the herds for future generations.
- (2) As used in this section:
 - (a) "Big game" includes deer, elk, big horn sheep, moose, mountain goats, pronghorn, and bison.
 - (b) "Director" means the director of the Division of Wildlife Resources.
 - (c) "Management unit" means a prescribed area of contiguous land designated by the Division of Wildlife Resources for the purpose of managing a species of big game animal.
 - (d) "Predator" means a cougar, bear, and coyote.
- (3)
 - (a) Unless the condition described in Subsection (3)(b) is determined, the director shall take immediate action to reduce the number of predators within a management unit when the big game population is under the established herd size objective for that management unit.
 - (b) Subsection (3)(a) does not apply if the Division of Wildlife Resources determines that predators are not significantly contributing to the big game population being under the herd size objective for the management unit.
- (4) Immediate action under Subsection (3) includes any of the following management tools:
 - (a) increasing take permits or tags for cougar and bear until the herd size objective is met;
 - (b) allowing big game hunters to harvest predators with the appropriate permit during a big game hunting season, including issuing over-the-counter predator permits;
 - (c) professional trapping and predator control by the United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, private contracts, and the general public, including aerial control measures; and
 - (d) other management tools as determined by the director.
- (5) The director shall annually give a status report on predator control measures implemented pursuant to this chapter to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee and Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee.