ALBERTA
Forestry and Parks

Office of the Minister
MLA, Central Peace - Notley

AR-19399

MAY - 7 2024

Devon Earl, Conservation Specialist
Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA)
455 - 12 Street NW
Calgary AB T2N 1Y9

Dear Devon Earl:

Thank you for your letter regarding the cougar hunting quota increase late in the winter of 2023-2024. As Minister of Forestry and Parks, I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

In Alberta, cougar management is complex with the potential to affect diverse stakeholder groups. Staff from several ministries, including Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Services, Fish and Wildlife Stewardship, and Hunting and Fishing Branch, work together to address stakeholder needs and ensure the sustainable management of cougars.

Provincial cougar management objectives aim to maintain healthy populations, reduce human cougar conflicts, and provide recreational hunting opportunities. For the past number of years, the focus of cougar management has been to support an older age structure in the population while also maintaining females for population sustainability. However, some stakeholders believe cougar numbers are unacceptably high, resulting in unwanted predation on caribou, bighorn sheep, and other big game species. As the species' range expands into new, mostly human-dominated landscapes, there are concerns for continued public safety regarding cougars.

The current human-caused mortality rate estimate is about 11 per cent of the total population, well within the acceptable rate of less than 20 per cent. The late season quota increase resulted in the harvest of two additional female cougars in management areas that had previously closed. Forestry and Parks will continue to monitor cougar harvest and other sources of mortality to make recommendations for the sustainable management of the species.

Sincerely,

Honourable Todd Loewen
Minister
Forestry and Parks

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