



# COLORADO

## Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Wildlife Commissioners

FROM: Jeff Davis, Director

DATE: December 29, 2023

SUBJECT: April 2024- March 2025 Mountain Lion Harvest Limit Recommendations

This memo summarizes Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) staff recommendations for mountain lion harvest limits for the April 2024- March 2025 season.

#### Regular Lion Season

Staff recommends a statewide harvest limit of 674 mountain lions for the April 2024- March 2025 season. This represents the same level as the 2023-2024 season harvest limit. Staff proposes no change to harvest limits (status quo) for all of Colorado's eight lion Data Analysis Units (DAUs, Map 1).

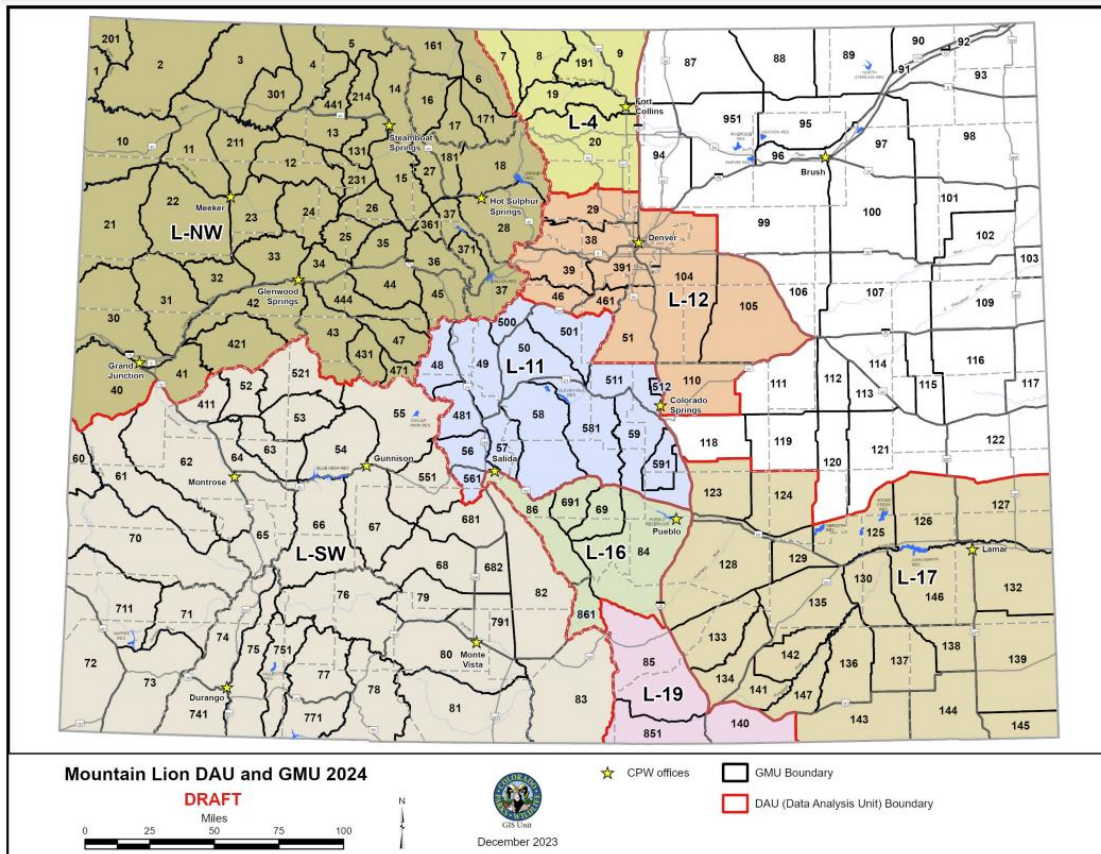
#### April Lion Season

An April lion season has been in place in some DAUs since 2014. In 2021, with the initiation of the West Slope Mountain Lion Management Plan, April seasons were closed in all the West Slope units except four GMUs around Glenwood Springs. In 2023, open April seasons were further restricted based on harvest levels on the East Slope.

Given the very low harvest rates in April, the desire for annual consistency in lion season dates for outfitter and participant planning, as well as the administrative burden required to set an April season opening date in just two remaining open DAUs and two GMU groups, CPW is recommending closing the April season in the remaining unit groups that were open in 2023 (L-12, L-17, Glenwood SMA GMUs and the open portion of L-11). This recommendation would close the April season statewide for April of 2024.



Map 1. Map of Colorado mountain lion management areas (Data Analysis Units- DAUs).



### Summary of Lion Harvest and Mortality

A summary of 3-year averages (2020-2022) for harvest, total human-caused mortality and total female or adult female composition is presented below for each 2024-2025 lion DAU (Table 1). These metrics are evaluated annually against the respective DAU objectives and are used as the basis for harvest limit recommendations.

In last year’s April 2022- March 2023 lion season, hunters in Colorado harvested 502 lions, including 298 males and 204 females. The proportion of total females (**adults and sub-adults**) in statewide harvest was under 41%, which is below the maximum threshold of 45% used in all “stable” management strategy East Slope DAUs. In the two DAUs governed by the West Slope Lion Plan and its newer monitoring metrics, **adult female** composition in total harvest was well below the 22% monitoring threshold. Additionally, statewide harvest mortality and human-caused mortality totals did not exceed objectives.

Table 1. 2024-2025 Mountain Lion Harvest Limit Recommendations by Data Analysis Unit

2024-2025 Colorado mountain lion recommendations, harvest, total human-caused mortality and female proportion data for harvest limit recommendations																		
Region	DAU	DAU Mgmt. Strategy	Harvest Limit				Harvest					Total Human-Caused Mortality				2024 April status recommendation		
			Current Year '23-'24	Proposed Apr '24- Mar '25 Rcmmdtn	Change	'24-'25 Predicted Harvest	3-Year Harvest Average	THRESHOLD		3-Yr Avg % Female in Harvest	Proportion of ADULT FEMALES in prior year harvest	THRESHOLD		3-Year Total Human-Caused Mortality Average	3-Yr Avg % Female in Total Mortality		THRESHOLD	
								DAU Harvest Objective or Threshold				Female Harvest Composition Threshold (Adult F in NW, SW, L19)					Total Human-Caused Mortality Threshold	Female Total Human-caused Mortality Composition Threshold
NW	NW	Stable	243	243	0	200	200	243	NA	16.7%	Not to exceed 22% ADULT FEMALE in H in any year	221	NA	269	NA	Closed		
NW	NW	Glenwood SMA	33	33	0	16	16	33	NA	NA	NA	22	NA	NA	NA	Closed		
SW	SW	Stable	185	185	0	149	149	185	NA	13.3%	Not to exceed 22% ADULT FEMALE in H in any year	193	NA	284	NA	Closed		
NE	L-4	Stable	30	30	0	21	21	18	38%	NA	not to exceed 45% FEMALES in Harvest	37	49%	20	50%	Closed		
SE/NE	L-11	Stable/Research	43	43	0	36	36	Research Obj.	33%	NA	not to exceed 45% FEMALES in Harvest	45	35%	45	50%	Closed		
NE	L-12	REDUCE	41	41	0	19	19	23	NA	NA	none	38	NA	30	NA	Closed		
SE/SW	L-16	Stable/Research	35	35	0	16	16	Research Obj.	38%	NA	not to exceed 45% FEMALES in Harvest	21	38%	40	50%	Closed		
SE	L-17	REDUCE	25	25	0	14	14	22-28	NA	NA	none	14	NA	28	NA	Closed		
SE/SW	L-19	Stable	34	34	0	35	35	34	NA	10.0%	3-yr ADULT FEMALE % in harvest not to exceed 20%	41	NA	41	NA	Closed		
NE/SE	L-99	n/a	5	5	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	Closed		
STATEWIDE TOTALS:			674	674	0	506	506					632						
<i>Total Human-caused mortality includes harvest, control (CPW, APHIS, landowner), roadkills</i>																		

**No Changes in Harvest Limits**

Staff recommends no change in the statewide 2024-2025 harvest limits from the previous year.

Two figures have been included for your information and review as part of this memo:

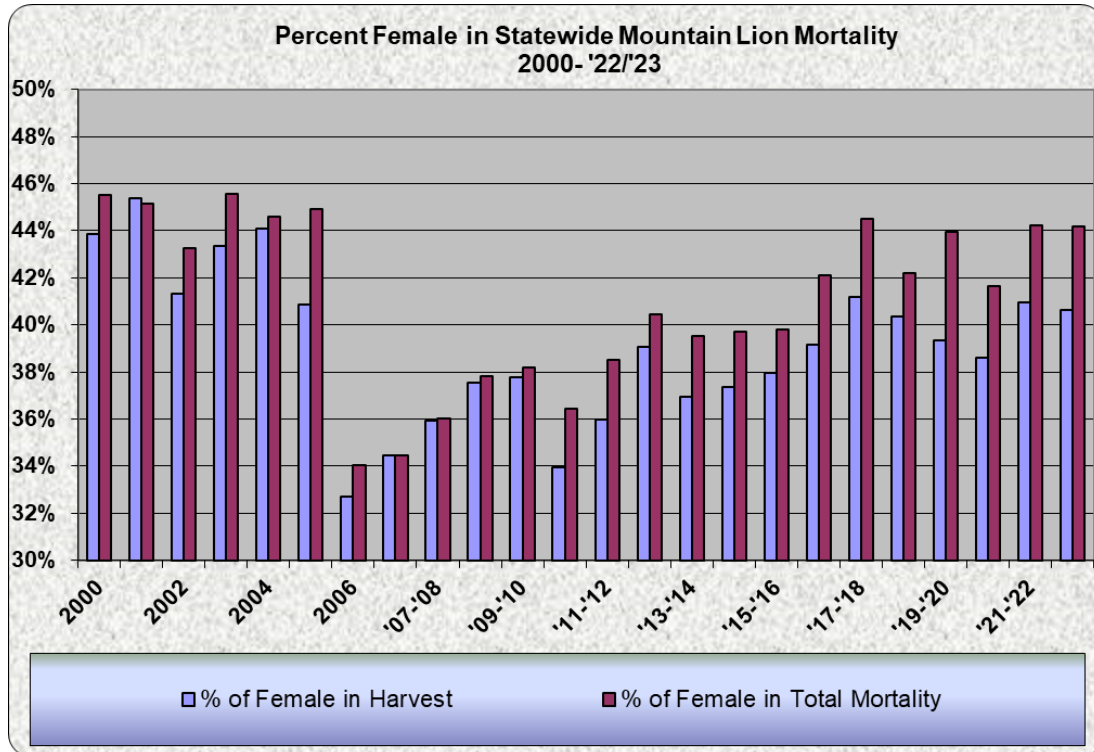


Figure 1. Annual historic female composition in harvest and total mortality. Outreach efforts to voluntarily reduce female harvest began in late 2005.

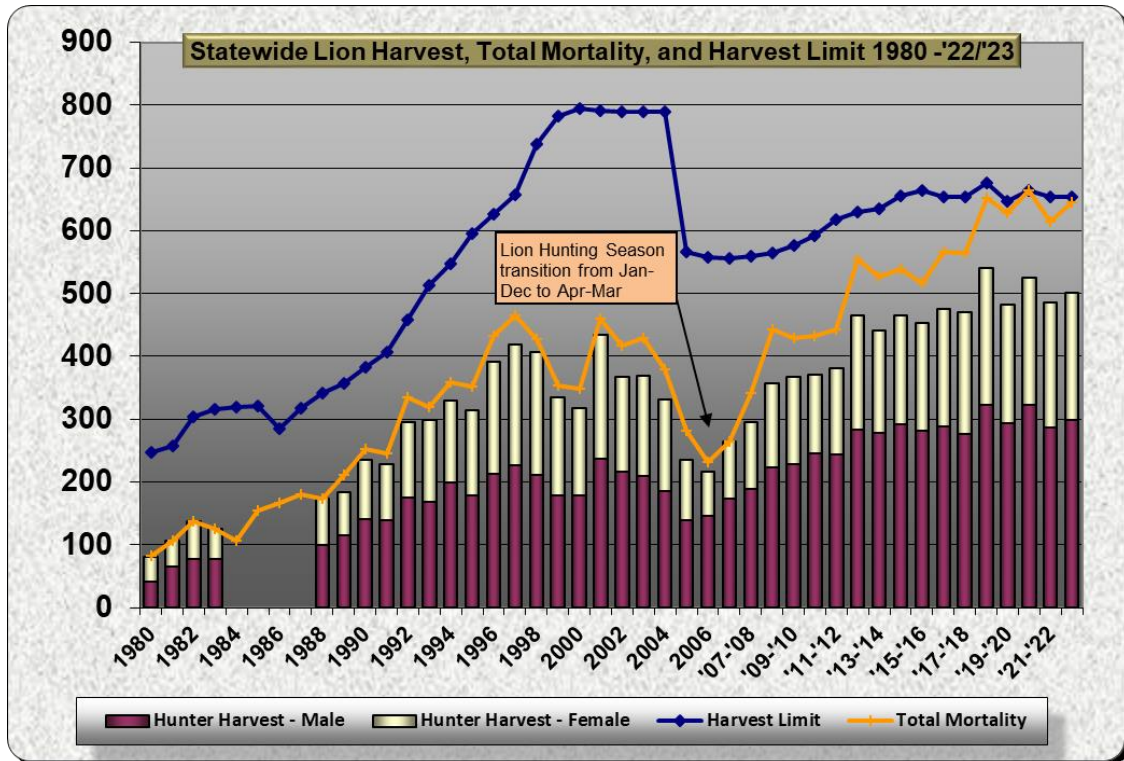


Figure 2. Historic mountain lion harvest limits and reported mortality (1980-present). All Lion Management Plans (LMPs) were revised in 2004 affecting harvest limit levels from 2005-present.