

SENATE BILL NO. 314

INTRODUCED BY B. BROWN

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO THE HARVEST OF WOLVES; PROVIDING LEGISLATIVE INTENT; REVISING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AND AMENDING SECTION 87-1-901, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 87-1-901, MCA, is amended to read:

"87-1-901. Gray wolf management -- rulemaking -- reporting. (1) Except as provided in subsection ~~(2)~~ (3), the commission shall establish by rule hunting and trapping seasons for wolves with the intent to reduce the wolf population in this state to a sustainable level, but not less than the number of wolves necessary to support at least 15 breeding pairs.

(2) For game management purposes, the commission may apply different management techniques depending on the conditions in each administrative region with the most liberal harvest regulations applied in regions with the greatest number of wolves. In doing so, the commission may authorize:

(a) the issuance of more than one Class E-1 or Class E-2 wolf hunting license to an applicant; ~~and~~

(b) the trapping of more than one wolf by the holder of a trapping license;

(c) the harvest of an unlimited number of wolves by the holder of a single wolf hunting or wolf trapping license;

(d) during the wolf trapping season, the use of bait while hunting or trapping wolves as long as no trap or snare trap is set within 30 feet of exposed bait visible from above; and

(e) the hunting of wolves on private lands outside of daylight hours with the use of artificial light or night vision scopes.

~~(2)(3)~~ The commission shall adopt rules to allow a landowner or the landowner's agent to take a wolf on the landowner's property at any time without the purchase of a Class E-1 or Class E-2 wolf license when the wolf is a potential threat to human safety, livestock, or dogs. The rules must:

1 (a) be consistent with the Montana gray wolf conservation and management plan and the adaptive
2 management principles of the commission and the department for the Montana gray wolf population;

3 (b) require a landowner or the landowner's agent who takes a wolf pursuant to this subsection ~~(2)~~ (3)
4 to promptly report the taking to the department and to preserve the carcass of the wolf;

5 (c) establish a quota each year for the total number of wolves that may be taken pursuant to this
6 subsection ~~(2)~~ (3); and

7 (d) allow the commission to issue a moratorium on the taking of wolves pursuant to this subsection ~~(2)~~
8 (3) before a quota is reached if the commission determines that circumstances require a limitation of the total
9 number of wolves taken.

10 ~~(3)~~ (4) Public land permittees who have experienced livestock depredation must obtain a special kill
11 permit authorized in 87-5-131(3)(b) to take a wolf on public land without the purchase of a Class E-1 or Class
12 E-2 license.

13 ~~(4)~~ (5) The department shall report annually to the environmental quality council regarding the
14 implementation of 87-5-131, 87-5-132, and this section."

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