

HOUSE BILL NO. 258

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO WOLF HUNTING SEASON;  
SETTING WOLF HARVEST QUOTAS AND BAG LIMITS ; REQUIRING THE FISH AND WILDLIFE  
COMMISSION TO AUTHORIZE A WOLF HUNTING SEASON; EXTENDING THE WOLF HUNTING SEASON  
TO ALIGN WITH THE SPRING BEAR HUNTING SEASON; AND AMENDING SECTION 87-1-304, MCA."

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

**Section 1.** Section 87-1-304, MCA, is amended to read:

**"87-1-304. Fixing of seasons and bag and possession limits.** (1) Subject to the provisions of 87-5-302 and subsections (7) through ~~(9)~~ ~~(10)~~ ~~(11)~~ (10) of this section, the commission may:

(a) fix seasons, bag limits, possession limits, and season limits;

(b) open or close or shorten or lengthen seasons on any species of game, bird, fish, or fur-bearing animal as defined by 87-2-101;

(c) declare areas open to the hunting of deer, antelope, elk, moose, sheep, goat, mountain lion, bear, wild buffalo or bison, and wolf by persons holding an archery stamp and the required license, permit, or tag and designate times when only bows and arrows may be used to hunt deer, antelope, elk, moose, sheep, goat, mountain lion, bear, wild buffalo or bison, and wolf in those areas;

(d) subject to the provisions of 87-1-301(6), restrict areas and species to hunting with only specified hunting arms, including bow and arrow, for the reasons of safety or of providing diverse hunting opportunities and experiences; and

(e) declare areas open to special license holders only and issue special licenses in a limited number when the commission determines, after proper investigation, that a special season is necessary to

1 ensure the maintenance of an adequate supply of game birds, fish, or animals or fur-bearing animals. The  
2 commission may declare a special season and issue special licenses when game birds, animals, or fur-bearing  
3 animals are causing damage to private property or when a written complaint of damage has been filed with the  
4 commission by the owner of that property. In determining to whom special licenses must be issued, the  
5 commission may, when more applications are received than the number of animals to be killed, award permits  
6 to those chosen under a drawing system. The procedures used for awarding the permits from the drawing  
7 system must be determined by the commission.

8 (2) The commission may adopt rules governing the use of livestock and vehicles by archers during  
9 special archery seasons.

10 (3) Subject to the provisions of 87-5-302 and subsection (7) of this section, the commission may  
11 divide the state into fish and game districts and create fish, game, or fur-bearing animal districts throughout the  
12 state. The commission may declare a closed season for hunting, fishing, or trapping in any of those districts  
13 and later may open those districts to hunting, fishing, or trapping.

14 (4) The commission may declare a closed season on any species of game, fish, game birds, or fur-  
15 bearing animals threatened with undue depletion from any cause. The commission may close any area or  
16 district of any stream, public lake, or public water or portions thereof ~~thereof~~ of any area or district to hunting, trapping,  
17 or fishing for limited periods of time when necessary to protect a recently stocked area, district, water, spawning  
18 waters, spawn-taking waters, or spawn-taking stations or to prevent the undue depletion of fish, game, fur-  
19 bearing animals, game birds, and nongame birds. The commission may open the area or district ~~upon~~ on  
20 consent of a majority of the property owners affected.

21 (5) The commission may authorize the director to open or close any special season ~~upon~~ on 12  
22 hours' notice to the public.

23 (6) The commission may declare certain fishing waters closed to fishing except by persons under  
24 15 years of age. The purpose of this subsection is to provide suitable fishing waters for the exclusive use and  
25 enjoyment of juveniles under 15 years of age, at times and in areas the commission in its discretion considers  
26 advisable and consistent with its policies relating to fishing.

27 (7) In an area immediately adjacent to a national park, the commission may not:

28 (a) prohibit the hunting or trapping of wolves; or

1 (b) close the area to wolf hunting or trapping unless a wolf harvest quota established by the  
2 commission for that area has been met.

3 ~~(8) DURING A WOLF HUNTING SEASON, THE COMMISSION SHALL :~~

4 ~~(A) SET A QUOTA OF TWO WOLVES AND A BAG LIMIT OF ONE WOLF WITHIN 15 MILES OF THE BORDER OF~~  
5 ~~YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK. ILLEGALLY HARVESTED WOLVES MUST COUNT AGAINST THIS QUOTA.~~

6 ~~(B) SET A QUOTA OF TWO WOLVES AND A BAG LIMIT OF ONE WOLF FOR WITHIN 15 MILES OF THE BORDER~~  
7 ~~OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK. ILLEGALLY HARVESTED WOLVES MUST COUNT AGAINST THIS QUOTA.~~

8 ~~(8)(9)~~ (8) The commission may authorize a wolf trapping season that opens the first Monday  
9 after Thanksgiving and closes March 15 of the following calendar year, except that the commission may adjust  
10 the dates for specific wolf management units based on regional recommendations.

11 ~~(9)(10)~~ (9) The commission shall authorize a wolf hunting season that ends in concurrence with  
12 the spring bear hunting season, except that the commission may adjust the dates for specific wolf management  
13 units based on regional recommendations.

14 ~~(9)(10)(11)~~ (10) There is established a special muzzleloader heritage hunting season that begins on the  
15 second Saturday after the end of the regular season and lasts 9 days. During this season, subject to the  
16 provisions of 87-6-401(1)(i) and rules adopted by the commission, a person may take a deer or elk with a valid  
17 license or permit using plain lead projectiles and a muzzleloading rifle that is charged with loose black powder,  
18 loose pyrodex, or an equivalent loose black powder substitute and ignited by a flintlock, wheel lock, matchlock,  
19 or percussion mechanism using a percussion or musket cap. The muzzleloading rifle must be a minimum of 45  
20 caliber and may not have more than two barrels."

21 - END -