

Meeting Date: January 23, 2020

Agenda Item No. 5 B. 3.

Agenda Item: Body-gripping trap rule proposal

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Toby Boudreau, Wildlife Bureau Chief

Background:

The Idaho Trappers Association, with endorsements by the Upper Snake River Trappers of Idaho, Intermountain Fur Harvesters, Idaho Houndsman Association, and the East Idaho Houndsman Association, have petitioned the Commission to adopt additional restrictions on the use of body-gripping traps on dry-land sets. Staff understands the purpose of the proposal is to support continued trapping while reducing negative interactions with those engaged in other outdoor activities.

Body-gripping traps (commonly referred to as “Conibear” traps) are an important tool in regulated trapping to effectively harvest a wide variety of furbearers. Unlike foothold traps, which are designed to restrain an animal alive until the trapper dispatches or release the animal, body-gripping traps are designed for rapid dispatch.

However, use of body-gripping traps in dry-land sets continues to be a safety concern of hunters and other outdoor recreationalists accompanied by dogs where their activities overlap with trapping. For example, a spike in complaints occurred with the widely-reported deaths of two dogs caught in body gripping traps during the winter of 2013.

In response to these concerns, trapping organizations supported the Commission’s earlier adoption of a rule requiring mandatory trapping education for anyone who purchased their first Idaho trapping license on or after July 1, 2011. This rule took effect July 1, 2018.

To further reduce non-target catches, these organizations have proposed restricting the use of body gripping traps with jaws wider than 7.5 inches inside spread in sets on dry land within 30 feet of bait or other attractant, and to establish additional conditions for the use of body-gripping traps greater than 6.5 and less than 7.5 inches inside jaw spread on dry land.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code section 67-5230 allows any person to petition an agency to adopt a rule and requires agencies to either “deny the petition in writing, stating its reasons for the denial” or initiate rulemaking. The Commission must take action on the petition no later its first regularly scheduled meeting after submission of the petition. I.C. § 67-5230(1)(b).

The IDFG has authority to promulgate rules under Idaho Code, Title 36.

Public Involvement Process:

This agenda item is presented in response to a request by the Idaho Trappers Association and their partner organizations for a change to existing rules. If the Commission chooses to proceed with rule making, there will be additional opportunities for public involvement.

Justification:

The Idaho Trappers Association has requested the Commission consider the proposed rule change.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommendation is to conduct negotiated rulemaking on this proposal.