

2011 Montana Wolf Hunting Season Summary & Next Steps

March 8, 2012



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

2011 Wolf Season Proposal

- Proposed Quota
 - 220 (40% harvest rate in each of the recovery areas, predicted to reduce minimum count to 425)
- 14 wolf management units in 3 recovery areas
 - Subquota = 3 in HD 316 in WMU 390
 - Subquota = 4 in HD 280 in WMU 290
 - NEW → WMU 250 (W Fk Bitterroot) = 18
- Season Dates
 - Archery Only – Sept 3 – Oct 16 (NTE 20%)
 - Back Country – Sept 15 – Dec 31 (NTE 20%)
 - General Rifle – Oct 22– Dec 31 (Extended to Feb. 15)

2011-12 Wolf Season Results

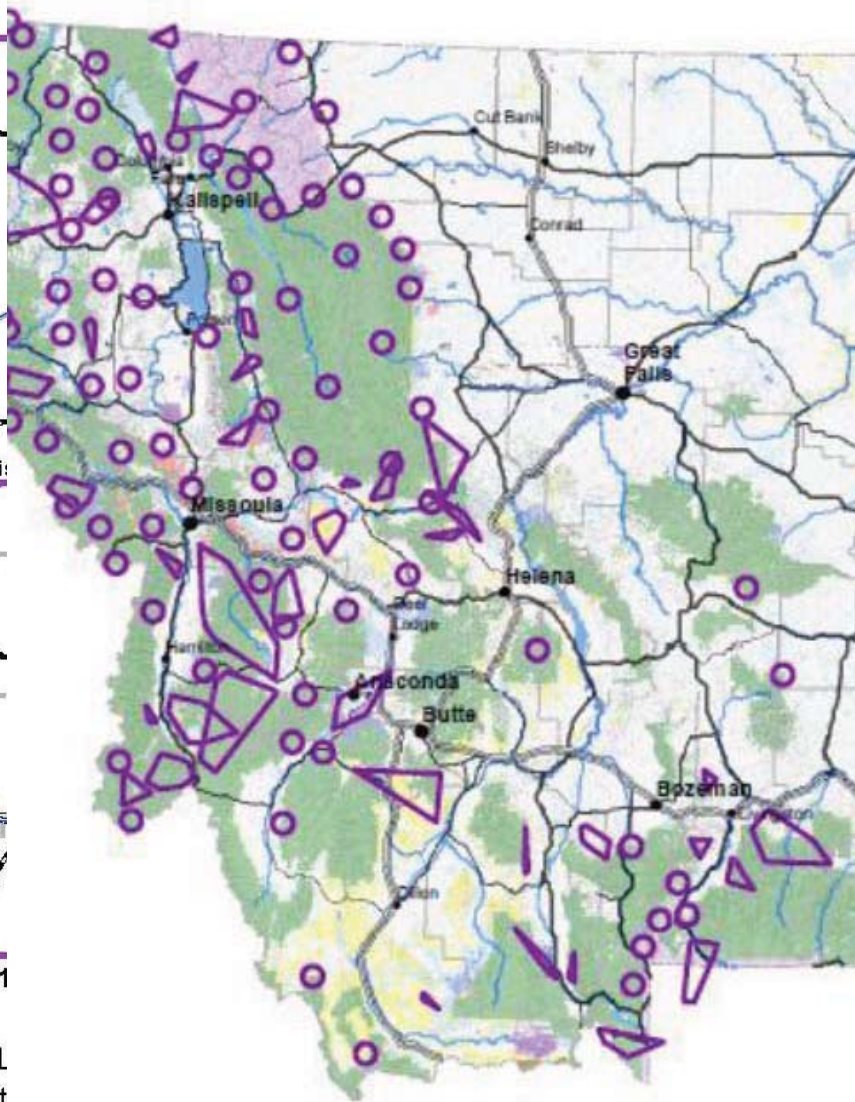
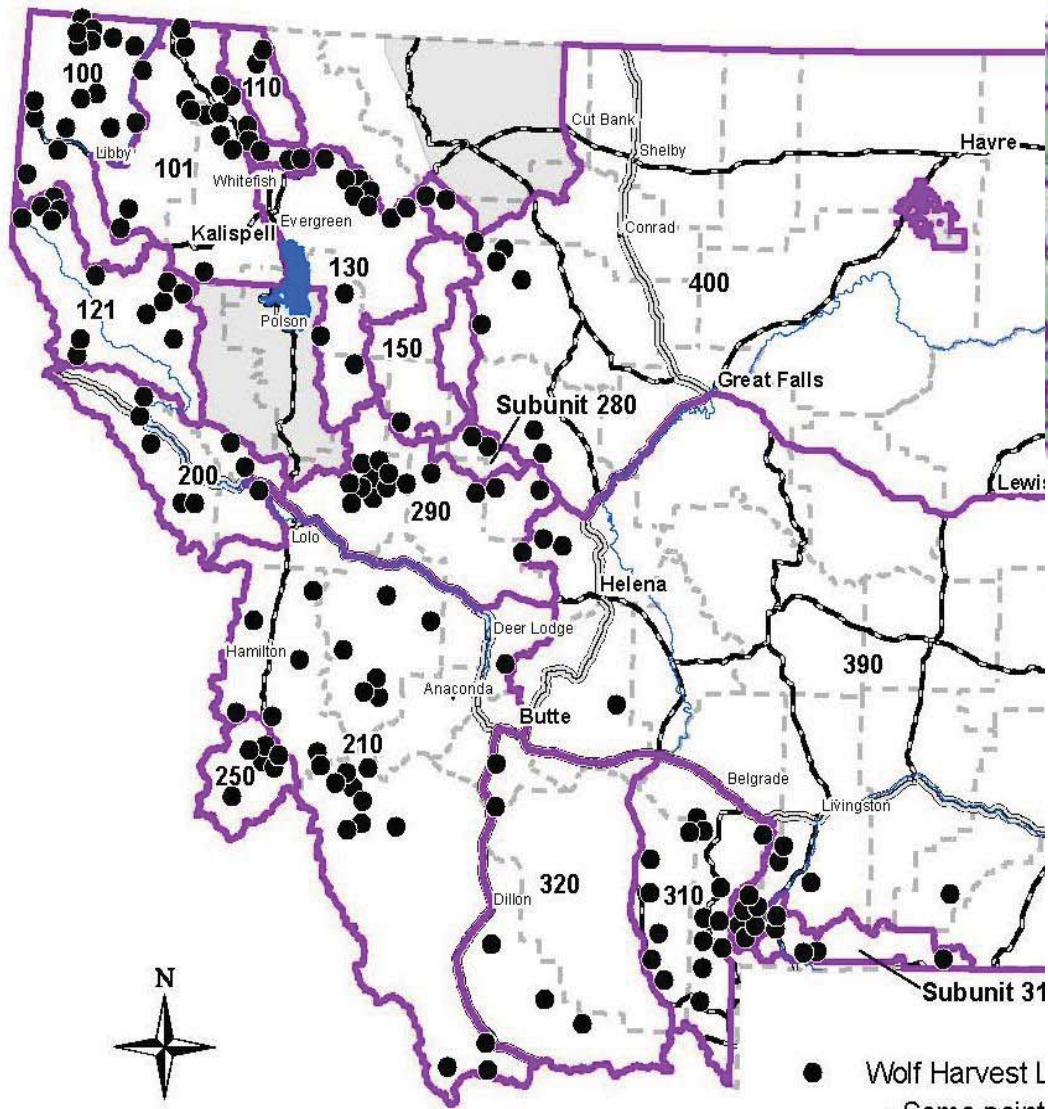
- 18,689 licenses sold
- 166 wolves taken from 60 different packs
 - 11 by Archers
 - 155 by Hunters (1.3 wolves/day)

97 adults / 35 yearlings / 25 yoy / 7 unknown

86 male : 80 female

115 gray / 37 black / 7 white / 7 unknown

52% on public land / 48% on private land



- Wolf Harvest L
- Some point
actual harvest location for display purposes
- Gray Wolf Management Units (WMU)

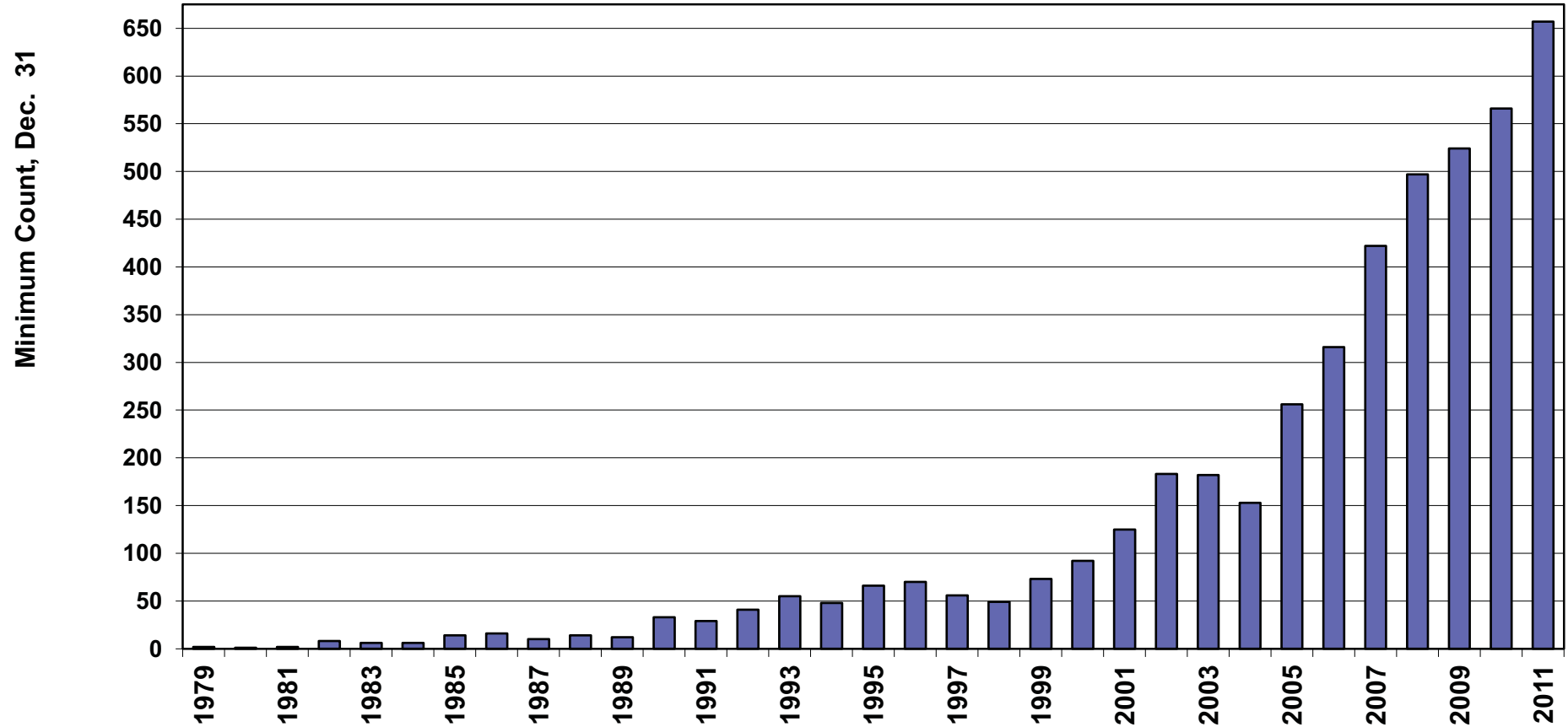


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2011 Annual Report Summary

- Minimum 653 wolves (up from 566)
- 130 Packs (up from 108)
- 39 Breeding Pairs (up from 35)
 - NW Montana - at least 372 wolves in 85 packs, 23 of which were breeding pairs.
 - W Montana (CID), at least 147 wolves in 23 packs, 7 of which were breeding pairs.
 - SW Montana (GYA) - at least 134 wolves in 22 packs, 9 of which were breeding pairs.

Minimum Count of Wolves in Montana

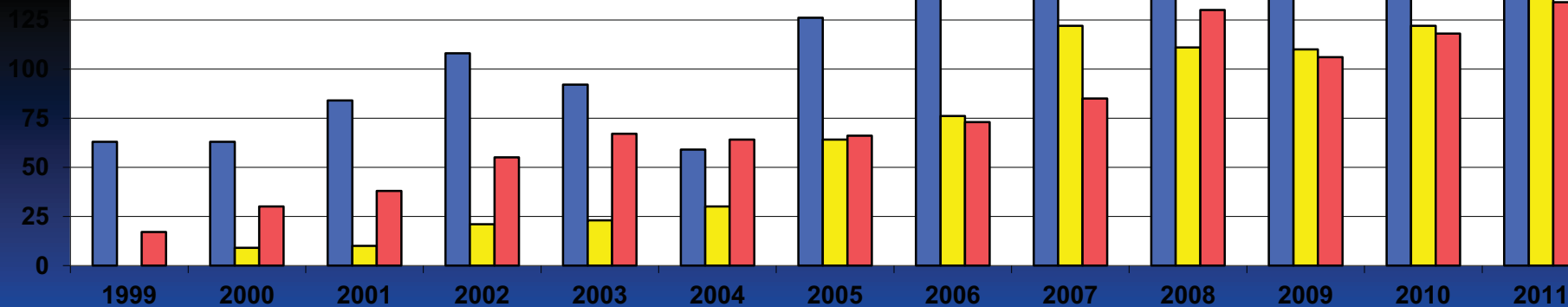


Minimum Number of Wolves

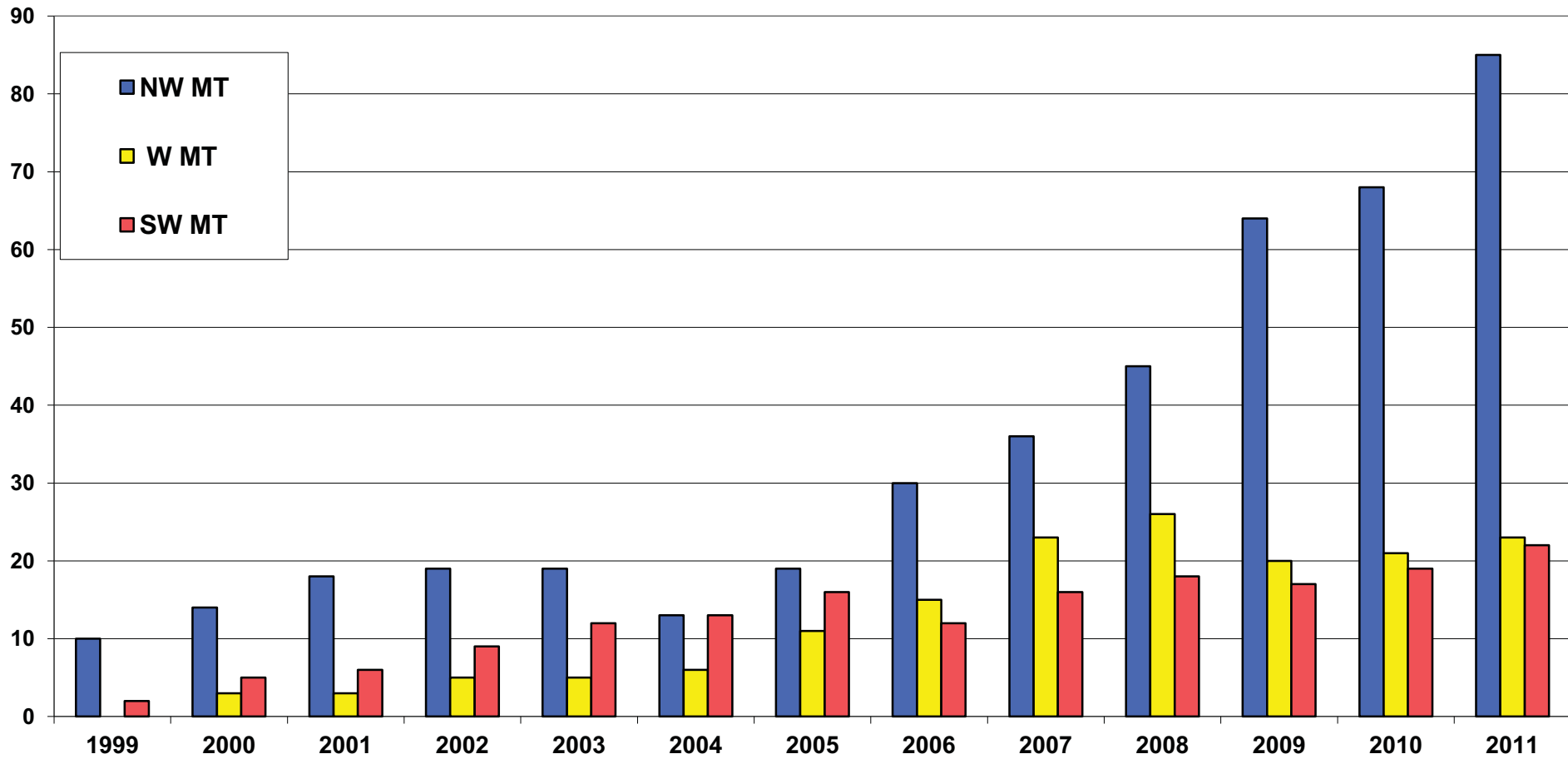
NW MT

W MT

SW MT



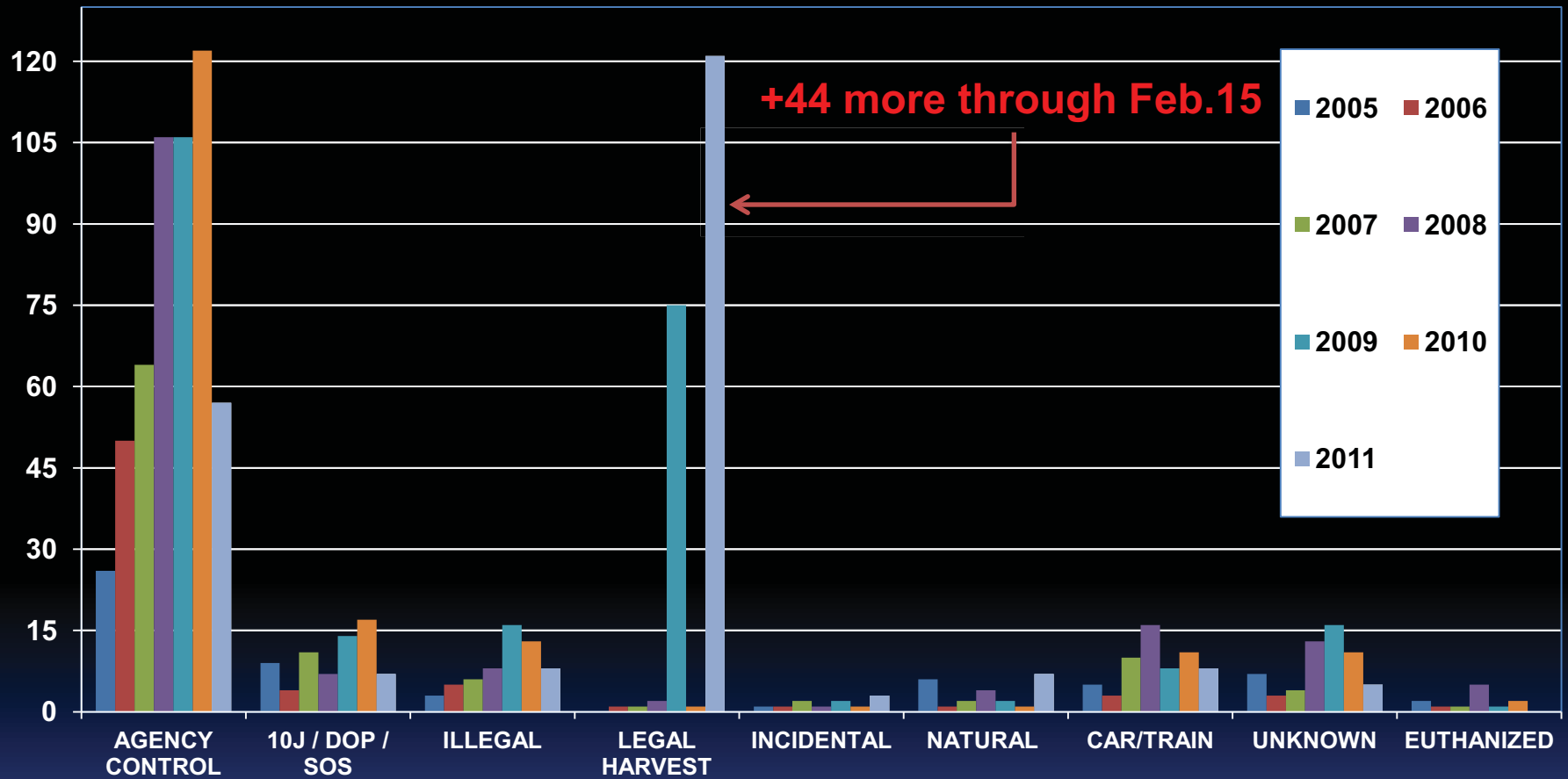
Minimum Number of Packs



Livestock Losses from Wolf

- Livestock complaints:
 - 233 in 2009
 - 191 in 2010
 - 152 in 2011 (approx. 50% verified as wolf-caused)
- Livestock losses
 - 87 cattle, 64 sheep, 5 horses, 3 llamas in 2010
 - 74 cattle, 11 sheep, 1 horse in 2011
- 2011: 17% of packs confirmed to have killed livestock.
- 2010: 31% of packs confirmed to have killed livestock.

Wolves removed in Montana, 2005-2011



2011 Wolf Mortality = 216 + 44

(vs. 179 in 2010 and 255 in 2009)

- 122 by Hunting (in calendar year 2011)
- 64 in response to Livestock Depredation
 - (vs. 141 in 2010 and 145 in 2009)
- 8 illegally killed
- 7 vehicle collisions
- 1 train collision
- 1 electrocution (downed power line)
- 1 legal take
- 7 wolves died of natural causes
- 5 wolves died of unknown causes

Where do we go from here?



What about other large carnivores?

Large Carnivore Management

- FWP is committed to carnivore/ungulate balance that provides for long-term hunting opportunities.
- FWP is adapting management to reduce carnivore populations in response to impacts to ungulates and to minimize further reductions in hunter opportunity
- In some instances, other variables such as weather, habitat, disease, etc. have also impacted ungulate populations, and need to be included in management decisions.

Large Carnivore Management

Montana FWP will manage large carnivores – wolves, bears, and mountain lions – through a science-based strategy that:

- Maintains viable populations of ungulates
- Maintains viable populations of large carnivores
- Achieves a balance between predator and prey populations at levels that support our hunting heritage
- Proactively addresses livestock and human safety concerns

Must recognize that in some areas it won't ever be how it was

Large Carnivore Management

- Fair Chase Hunting is how we will manage large carnivores
- Adaptive Management



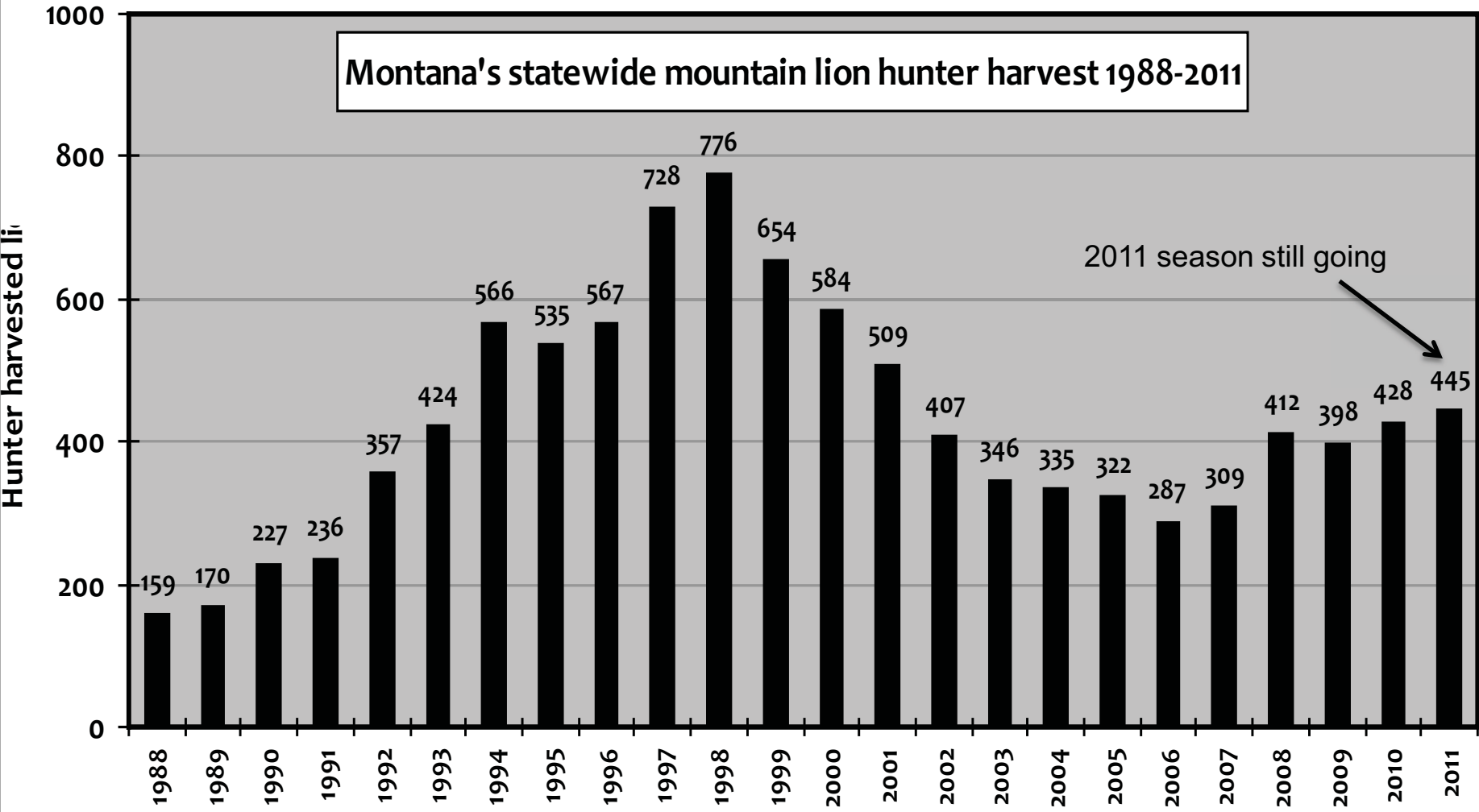
Large Carnivore Management – what have we done

- Applying results of 10-year study of mountain lions in the Garnett Mountains that improved our understanding of population dynamics, lion densities, source-sink dynamics, and impacts of hunting
- Applying results of 8-year study of black bears to determine harvest rates and acceptable harvest levels
- Ongoing recovery efforts for grizzly bears to regain state management authority (GYE delisted once)
- Wolf recovery, monitoring, modeling, and research and evolving management
- Madison and Bitterroot Wolf-Elk Research
- Development of monitoring methods using hunter observations

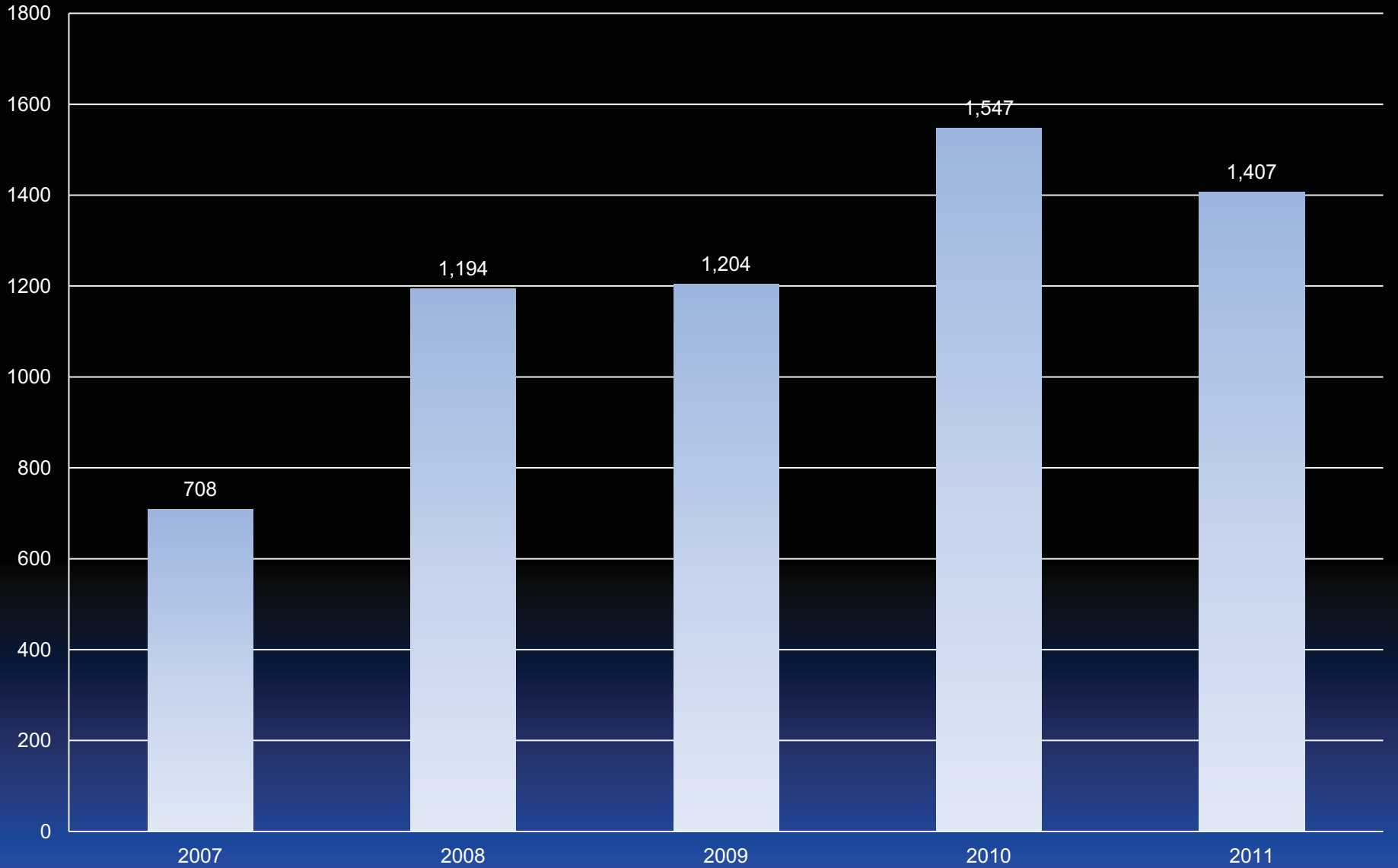
Large Carnivore Management – what have we done (management)

- Delisted Wolves (3 Times!)
- Extended black bear spring and fall seasons
- Added archery opportunities for lions, wolves, and bears (increased bear harvest by approx. 100)
- Hybrid season for lions in R2 and increasing quota for mountain lions
- Increased wolf quota from 2009, extended wolf seasons and lifting of hunter orange requirements
- Liberalized wolf depredation response protocol; Increased wolf collaring

Montana's statewide mountain lion hunter harvest 1988-2011



Black Bear Harvest - 2007-2011



2012 Wolf Season



2012 Wolf Season Considerations

- General Season – No WMUs, No Quotas
- Longer Season (through Feb. 15)
- Trapping??
- Electronic Call (requires statute change)
- > 1 per hunter (requires statute change)
- Reduce nonresident price from \$350→\$50 (requires statute change)

2012 Wolf Season – next steps

- May Commission meeting – proposals
- June – public comment period
- July Commission meeting – final regs
- 2013 Legislature – propose wolf package

