

Nebraska's inaugural mountain lion hunting season will take place in 2014.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners approved regulations for the season at their meeting July 26 in Lincoln.

Up to four mountain lions may be harvested next year in the Pine Ridge, the only area of the state known to have a reproducing population of the big cats. Areas open to mountain lion hunting in the remainder of the state will have an unlimited harvest quota.

Four units have been created to manage mountain lions, although only two will be open to hunting in 2014.

Up to four mountain lions may be harvested in the Pine Ridge Unit next year. The Keya Paha and Upper Platte units will be closed until a huntable population exists and an unlimited number of mountain lions may be harvested in the Prairie Unit, which makes up the remainder of the state not included in the other three units.

The Pine Ridge, Keya Paha and Upper Platte units have the same boundaries as the deer management units that go by the same names.

The objective for the Pine Ridge Unit is to provide a harvest opportunity while allowing a slight to moderate reduction in mountain lion population. The Pine Ridge Unit will have two seasons, with harvest quotas of two mountain lions for each.

The first season is Jan. 1-Feb. 14. One permit will be issued by auction to a resident or nonresident and one will be issued by lottery to a resident. Both may hunt with dogs. The first season will close immediately once the quota of two mountain lions or sub-quota of one female is met.

The second season in the Pine Ridge is Feb. 15-March 31. There will be 100 lottery permits issued to residents, but hunting with dogs is not allowed. The season will close immediately once the quota of two mountain lions or sub-quota of one female is met.

The objective of the Prairie Unit is to provide unlimited hunting opportunity in the part of the state that is unlikely to establish a breeding population of mountain lions. The season is open year-round and an unlimited number of permits are available. Permits will cost \$15. Hunting with dogs is allowed only Jan. 1-March 31.

The use of traps or bait is prohibited while hunting mountain lions.

The application period for the Pine Ridge Unit is Sept. 3-30. Applications for the Prairie Unit will be accepted Dec. 16, 2013-Dec. 31, 2014. The nonrefundable application fee is \$15.

Gov. Dave Heineman made an appearance at the meeting and drew the winning entry in the Nebraska Super Tag Lottery.

Jameson Wood, a 14-year-old from Hemingford, won the four-species (deer, elk, antelope and turkey) hunting permit out of 2,047 entries. The permit is valid for 2013 and 2014.