

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS
BOARD OF GAME
OCTOBER 25 - 29, 1999
Barrow, Alaska

DESIGNATED REPORTER: Susan Bucknell

This summary of actions is for information purposes only and not intended to detail, reflect or fully interpret reasons for Board actions.

PROPOSAL NO. 1

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 84.270(1). FURBEARER TRAPPING; 5 AAC 85.060. HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR FUR ANIMALS; and 5 AAC 92.170(a)(3). SEALING OF MARTEN, LYNX, BEAVER, OTTER, WOLF AND WOLVERINE. Reclassify beaver as game animal, establish no closed season, and eliminate sealing requirement in Unit 23

AMENDMENT: Make seasons and bag limits the same and lift the sealing requirements for beaver in Units 18, 22, 23 and 26A.

DISCUSSION: The department reported that beaver are abundant and are expanding their range in Unit 23. The board agreed there was no biological reason not to liberalize seasons and bag limits for beaver in Unit 23. The board also lifted the sealing requirement to simplify the regulation and to provide additional opportunity to harvest beaver in Unit 23.

PROPOSAL NO. 2

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 84.270(1). FUR BEARER TRAPPING and 5 AAC 92.095(3). UNLAWFUL METHODS OF TAKING FURBEARERS; EXCEPTIONS. Lengthen season, allow use of firearms, and eliminate sealing requirement for beaver in Unit 18.

DISCUSSION: No action due to action on Proposal 1.

PROPOSAL NO. 3

ACTION: Amended, and deferred

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(16). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Lengthen brown bear season in Unit 18.

AMENDMENT: Opening date, May 1.

DISCUSSION: Deferred to the March 2000 Board of Game meeting.

PROPOSAL NO. 4

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR and 5 AAC 92.132. BAG LIMIT FOR BROWN BEARS. Increase brown bear bag limit for residents in Unit 22.

DISCUSSION: The department reported that allowing the harvest of one bear per year would lead to excessive harvest. The board decided that revising DLP requirements to liberalize bear regulations would better address bear problems in Unit 22.

PROPOSAL NO. 5

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Increase brown bear bag limit for bow hunters in Unit 22.

DISCUSSION: The department reported that there is no bag limit of one brown bear every two regulatory years anywhere in the state. The board did not want to change the regulation for bow hunters only at this time.

PROPOSAL NO. 6

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Change accompaniment requirement for nonresident brown bear hunters in Units 22B, 22C, 22D, and 22E, and disallow permittees from hunting moose in the same year.

DISCUSSION: The board does not have statutory authority to make this change.

PROPOSAL NO. 7

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5AAC 85.020(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Increase the number of nonresident drawing permits for brown bear issued for Units 22B, and 22C.

DISCUSSION: The department reported that there is an increase in the number of bears in Unit 22. The department supplied information that bear harvest by nonresidents is highest in Unit 22A where drawing permits are not required. The department recommended increasing the number of drawing permits issued to nonresident hunters by 10 permits. Increase the number by seven in Units 22B and 22C and increase by three in Units 22D, and 22E. The board agreed that In Unit 22 it is reasonable to give nonresidents additional hunting opportunity.

PROPOSAL NO. 8

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5AAC 85.020(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Lengthen the spring brown bear hunting season by ten days in Unit 22C.

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to action on Proposal 43.

PROPOSAL NO. 9

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(21). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR and 5 AAC 92.530(16)(B)(ii). MANAGEMENT AREAS. Increase brown bear bag limit, change drawing permit to registration permit for nonresidents hunting in spring and lengthen season; and allow use of aircraft for brown bear hunting under authority of a registration permit in Unit 23.

AMENDMENT: Increase number of drawing permits for nonresident hunters to 24 in the spring and 24 in the fall. Allow residents to take one bear a year, but keep the limit at one bear in four years for nonresidents.

DISCUSSION: The board heard testimony from locals who want to increase bear harvest. The board considered increasing the number of drawing permits versus going to registration permits, and discussed the difficulties of closing a registration hunt when a quota is reached. They agreed that a brown bear taken in Unit 23 does count toward the limit in other areas that allow only one brown bear every four years.

PROPOSAL NO. 10

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(21). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Eliminate nonresident brown bear drawing permits and establish registration permits during fall in Unit 23.

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to action on Proposal 9.

PROPOSAL NO. 11

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(24). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Increase brown bear bag limit in Unit 26A.

DISCUSSION: The board heard department testimony that there is no biological reason to restrict opportunity, and that bear harvest will not likely increase. The board agreed there is no need to restrict the harvest to one bear every four years to one bear every year. The board also reported that the moose population is recovering from a substantial decline and would likely recover more rapidly if there was less bear predation. The board agreed that a bear taken in Unit 26A would count in areas where only one bear every four years is allowed.

PROPOSAL NO. 12

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.025(13). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR CARIBOU. Establish caribou season and bag limit in a portion of Unit 18.

DISCUSSION: The board heard testimony from the department that an earlier hunting season would target the smaller Kilbuck caribou herd rather than the Mulchatna herd. They discussed range conditions, changing caribou migration patterns, and how to know when the Mulchatna herd arrives into the area.

PROPOSAL NO. 13

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.025(13). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS OF CARIBOU. Establish a nonresident caribou season and bag limit in a portion of Unit 18.

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to the action on Proposal 12.

PROPOSAL NO. 14

ACTION: Carried as amended on reconsideration

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.025(17). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR CARIBOU.

Establish a caribou season in Unit 22D

AMENDMENT: For Unit 22(D), that portion of the Kuzitrin drainage upstream of the Kuzatrín River bridge and east of the Taylor Highway (Nome-Kougarok Road): Resident hunters may take 5 caribou per day, July 1-June 30; however cow caribou may not be taken May 16-June 30. Nonresident hunters may take 5 caribou, July 1- June 30; however, cow caribou may not be taken May 16-June 30.

DISCUSSION: While board members were concerned that the burden of this action would fall primarily on one reindeer herder, the Department of Law reported the board's mandate is to manage wildlife, not domestic animals. There is no biological reason to restrict take of the Western Arctic Herd. Since caribou have been present in the subunit in most recent years the department policy is to open a season instead of opening by emergency order year after year. The department will work to educate hunters to avoid accidental take of reindeer.

PROPOSAL NO. 15

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.025(17) and (18). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR CARIBOU.

Establish a caribou season in Unit 22E identical to the season in Units 22A, 22B, and 23.

DISCUSSION: The Board weighed the differences between what Shishmaref hunters want which is to shoot caribou without travelling into Unit 23, against reindeer herders contention that caribou in Unit 22E are occasional and few, and that their reindeer would be shot if there is an opening. A meeting is planned in Shishmaref to try to reach consensus on the issue. Department staff reported there is no biological reason to oppose opening a season only user conflicts.

PROPOSAL NO. 16

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045.(16). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Clarify description of moose hunt area in Unit 18.

DISCUSSION: This housekeeping proposal identifies a portion of a moose hunt area boundary in Unit 18 that is missing from the description of the hunt area.

PROPOSAL NO. 17

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Shorten resident moose season in Unit 22B.

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to action on Proposal 19.

PROPOSAL NO. 18

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(20). HUNTING SEASON AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Eliminate nonresident moose season in Unit 22D.

AMENDMENT: Amended to make the nonresident season in Unit 22D the same as Unit 22B.

DISCUSSION: The board heard testimony that the intent of the proposal is to keep harvest in Unit 22D from increasing in response to restrictions in Unit 22B. Department staff said that while the success rate is not changing, already hunters report having to travel farther and look harder to get a moose in Unit 22D.

PROPOSAL NO. 19

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Shorten moose seasons and eliminate antlerless season in Unit 22B.

AMENDMENT: Unit 22(B), that portion east of the Darby Mountains, including the drainages of the Koyuk and Inglutalik Rivers: Resident hunters: 1 bull, Aug.1-Sep. 30 and Nov. 1-Dec.31. Non-resident hunters: 1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, Nov. 1-Dec. 31. Remainder of Unit 22(B): Resident hunters: 1 bull, Aug. 1-Sep. 30, Dec. 1-Jan. 31. Nonresident hunters: 1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, Sep. 1-Sep. 30.

DISCUSSION: Board members discussed ways to protect subsistence moose hunting in Unit 22B without severely impacting commercial operators in areas not used by subsistence hunters. The board discussed composition of moose population, the possible effects of various season dates, and considered the testimony of guides working in the area.

PROPOSAL NO. 20

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Establish an antlerless moose season in December for residents in Unit 22C.

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to action on Proposal 22.

PROPOSAL NO. 21

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE.

Lengthen the resident moose season in Unit 22C.

DISCUSSION: The board heard department concerns that the bull:cow ratio in Unit 22C is very poor; any changes that could increase the harvest of bull moose would not be biologically sound.

PROPOSAL NO. 22

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Establish a registration hunt for antlerless moose in Unit 22C.

DISCUSSION: The board heard that the moose population might be reaching carrying capacity in Unit 22C. They decided that there is limited hunting opportunity. The board discussed whether to restrict the number of permits available, or to put a quota on the number of animals to be harvested. The board also considered drawing or registration permits in relation to subsistence opportunity. They discussed other possible dates to open an antlerless season.

PROPOSAL NO. 23

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Establish a resident drawing permit hunt for antlerless moose in Unit 22(C).

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to action on Proposal 22.

PROPOSAL NO. 24

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.045(21). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Establish a drawing hunt for moose on the Upper Noatak River drainage and above including the Kelly River drainage, and the Squirrel River drainage.

DISCUSSION: The department presented available census data on these moose populations. Board members agreed with department assessment that the moose situation in the Noatak drainage was of more concern than the Squirrel River moose population. The board discussed conflicts between a drawing hunt and the subsistence hunt and considered the possibility of registration hunts, and of closing the antlerless season. The board also discussed subsistence needs. If the results of an upcoming Noatak moose census in November indicate action, the department will ask the board to take up Noatak moose at it's March 2000 meeting.

PROPOSAL NO. 25

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.050(2). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MUSK OXEN. Establish Tier II muskox hunt in Unit 22C; increase hunt area and harvest limit in Unit 22D.

DISCUSSION: The board agreed with the department that because this is a new hunt the department would like to get two years data under the existing provisions before making any changes. The board also wanted the Seward Peninsula Muskox Cooperators group involved in any changes to the current muskox hunt in Unit 22.

PROPOSAL NO. 26

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.050(2). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MUSK OXEN.

Expand muskox hunt area and shorten season in Unit 22D.

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to action on Proposal 25.

PROPOSAL NO. 27

ACTION: No Action

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.050(2). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MUSK OXEN.

Expand muskox hunt area and shorten season in Unit 22D.

DISCUSSION: No action taken due to action on Proposal 25.

PROPOSAL NO. 28

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.050(2). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MUSK OXEN.

Establish a Tier II hunt for muskox north and west of the Noatak River in Unit 23.

DISCUSSION: The department reported that local subsistence hunters have expressed interest in harvesting muskox from this population since 1995. Subsistence need for this muskox population has been set at 18-20, well above the harvestable surplus. The board agreed this is a Tier II situation.

PROPOSAL NO. 29

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.050(3). SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MUSK OXEN. Lengthen the Tier II muskox season in Unit 26B by starting the season Aug. 1 instead of Sep. 15.

DISCUSSION: Board members supported this proposal. The earlier opening is consistent with other Tier II muskox hunts. The board agreed that this would allow people to hunt by boat. The board heard from the department that there is no biological reason to oppose this change. The North Slope Muskox Cooperators Group supported the proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 30

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.060(1). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR FUR ANIMALS.

No closed season, no bag limit for coyote in Unit 23.

DISCUSSION: The board concluded that there is a coyote season on the books. The department reported that coyote sightings are rare and there is no need to change the regulation at present.

PROPOSAL NO. 31

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.065(3). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR SMALL GAME.

Increase season and bag limit for ptarmigan in Unit 23.

AMENDMENT: Season changed to Aug. 10-June 15.

DISCUSSION: The board discussed that ptarmigan are abundant and few are harvested. This regulatory change would not affect the abundance of ptarmigan in Unit 23; it would allow additional opportunity and would simplify hunting regulations.

PROPOSAL NO. 32

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.065(3). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR SMALL GAME.

Lengthen the ptarmigan season in Unit 26A

AMENDMENT: Make the bag limit the same as in Unit 23 i.e., 50 a day/100 in possession.

DISCUSSION: The board heard evidence of customary and traditional use of ptarmigan and found a positive C&T finding for ptarmigan in Unit 26. The department reported that ptarmigan are abundant and that this change would not affect the population.

PROPOSAL NO. 33

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.015(b). BROWN BEAR TAG FEE EXEMPTIONS. Eliminate the brown bear resident tag fee requirement in Unit 22.

DISCUSSION: The board heard testimony that there are too many bears in Unit 22. The department reported that bear predation on moose calves is probably responsible for low moose recruitment. The board discussed changes in DLP regulations as another way to address concerns about the growing bear population.

PROPOSAL NO. 34

ACTION: Carried

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.067. UNITS 22, 23, AND 26(A). BROWN BEAR PERMITS. Remove the reference to general brown bear drawing permits in Unit 26.

DISCUSSION: This is a housekeeping proposal. Drawing permits were eliminated in Unit 26A in 1995 but the regulation was not changed at the time.

PROPOSAL NO. 35

ACTION: Amended and tabled to spring 2000 BOG meeting

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.080(4). UNLAWFUL METHODS OF TAKING GAME; EXCEPTIONS. Allow the taking of caribou by snowmachine in Unit 22.

AMENDMENT: The following methods of taking game are prohibited:

(4) unless otherwise provided in this chapter, from a motorized vehicle, a motor-driven boat, or a snowmachine unless the motor has been completely shut off and the progress from the motor's power has ceased, except that a motor-driven boat may be used to take caribou in Units 23 and 26, a snowmachine may be used to take caribou in Unit 23, a snowmachine may be used to take caribou in Unit 22 provided that the snowmachine has been stopped when caribou are shot, and a motorized vehicle may be used to take game as described in (10) of this section;

(5) with the use of an aircraft, snowmachine, motor-driven boat, or other motorized vehicle for the purpose of driving, herding, or molesting game, except that a snowmachine may be used to move caribou in Units 22 and 23;

DISCUSSION: Before extending the Unit 23 provision to Unit 22, the board amended the language of the existing regulation to clarify how snowmachines may be used in hunting caribou. The board will allow residents in Unit 23 an opportunity to comment before applying the new wording to that unit.

PROPOSAL NO. 36

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.085(8)(D). UNLAWFUL METHODS OF TAKING BIG GAME; EXCEPTIONS. Allow same-day-airborne hunting of caribou in Units 22, 23 and 26A, within range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

DISCUSSION: The board noted that there was no support from the public or from advisory committees for this proposal.

PROPOSAL NO. 37

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.132(1). BAG LIMIT FOR BROWN BEARS. Increase brown bear bag limit in Unit 26A.

AMENDMENTS: Include Units 23 and 26A to the list of units with bag limits of one bear every four regulatory years

DISCUSSION: The board decided a bear taken in Unit 26A will count against the one bear every four regulatory years bag limit, because there is no intensive management finding for moose in Unit 26A. The board discussed the need to distinguish areas where they try to drive the bear population down in accordance with the intensive management regulation by harvesting above sustainable harvest levels, from areas where that is not Board of Game intention. They board asked area department staff to suggest practical alternatives to in-unit sealing for Unit 26A.

PROPOSAL NO. 38

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.165(3) and (4). SEALING OF BEAR SKINS AND SKULLS. Add sealing locations and clarify who may seal subsistence-taken brown bears.

AMENDMENT: Amended to simplify the language of the proposal, and to add Aniak along with Iliamna and King Salmon to the Western Alaska Brown Bear Management Area.

DISCUSSION: This proposal clarifies that department representatives, designated sealers, and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Protection representatives may seal bears within the management area or at designated locations Board members discussed how to make the sealing requirements flexible and effective.

PROPOSAL NO. 39

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.220(3). SALVAGE OF GAME MEAT, FURS AND HIDES. Require salvage of black bear meat in Western and Arctic regions.

DISCUSSION: Board members discussed edible meat of black bear. Board members expressed concerns about wanton waste but do not support extending the meat salvage requirements.

PROPOSAL NO. 40

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.540(6). CONTROLLED USE AREAS. Establish a controlled use area on a portion of the Kwethluk River.

DISCUSSION: Department of Law reported that this proposal is not within the board's authority.

PROPOSAL NO. 41

ACTION: Carried as amended

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.540 (6)(A)(i). CONTROLLED USE AREAS. Clarify description of Kalskag Controlled Use Area in Unit 18.

AMENDMENT: Revised language: ...

(i) the area consists of that portion of Unit 18 bounded by a line from Lower Kalskag on the Kuskokwim River northwesterly to Russian Mission on the Yukon then east along the north bank of the Yukon River to Tucker's Slough then along the north bank of Tucker's Slough to its confluence with the Yukon River, then along the North bank of the Yukon River to the old site of Paimiut, then back to Lower Kalskag.

DISCUSSION: This is a housekeeping measure to include Tucker's Slough in the Kalskag Controlled Use Area.

PROPOSAL NO. 42

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.540(9)(A). CONTROLLED USE AREAS. Repeal 5 AAC.540(9)(A), the Noatak Controlled Use Area.

DISCUSSION: The board heard testimony that the Noatak Controlled Use Area has substantially reduced conflicts with non-local hunters and has reduced the effects of small aircraft on subsistence hunters. The board supported maintaining the controlled use area.

PROPOSAL NO. 43

ACTION: Failed

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 85.020(20). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR BROWN BEAR. Lengthen brown bear season in Unit 22C.

DISCUSSION: The Brown Bear Working Group will address concerns about bears in Unit 22.

PROPOSAL NO. 44

ACTION: Carried as amended, to incorporate all Intensive Management findings from this meeting

DESCRIPTION: 5 AAC 92.108. IDENTIFIED BIG GAME PREY POPULATIONS. This proposal would establish regulations to identify those ungulate populations that are important for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use, and establish population and harvest objectives.

BOARD OF GAME FINDINGS FOR INTENSIVE MANAGEMENT (OCTOBER 1999).

Caribou Population	Finding of importance for high levels of human consumptive use		Population objective	Harvest objective	Board discussion
Unit 18, Kilbuck herd	positive				High hunter demand; important food source
Units 22, 23, and 26 Western Arctic Herd	positive				High harvest level; high hunter demand; important food source
Unit 26 Teshekpuk Herd	positive				Important source for human consumptive use

Moose population	Finding for high levels of human consumptive use		Population objective	Harvest objective	Board discussion
Unit 18		positive			Important source for human consumptive use
Unit 22		positive			High level of human harvest, success rate constant, 30 years.
Unit 23		positive			Good access, high hunter demand, important for meat
Unit 26		negative			Important for meat, but not high level of harvest

Miscellaneous Business

Established BOG future meeting schedule.

BOG 99-129 (RC46) Board Findings on Snowmachine Use in the Taking of Caribou in Game Management Units 22 and 23.

The board drafted a letter to the Division in support of a letter received from Mat-Su AC about lice in wolves and foxes.

BOG Resolution 98-127, on reestablishing the Guide Board will be re-released in response to question from legislator. Mike Fleagle will draft letter to accompany.