

PROPOSAL 73 – 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish archery-only registration hunts for Dall sheep in Units 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16 and 17 as follows:

Establish an archery only (conventional bows, not crossbows) registration sheep hunt in all areas of Units 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16 and 17 that are currently general season (harvest ticket) hunts. Season dates to be August 1–9.

An alternative would be the above registration archery sheep hunt from September 21–30. This is not as desirable because of shorter daylight hours and worse weather.

Legal sheep in either case would be full-curl, eight years of age or double-broomed ram only.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Nearly all other states promote bowhunting by allowing longer seasons in more desirable times of the year because bowhunting allows greater public participation in hunting and conservation activities while at the same time limiting by the method of take of the actual harvest of game. Alaska has been struggling with much dissatisfaction among its sheep hunters because of overcrowding and lack of quality animals being available. Allowing an early archery sheep hunt before the regular firearm season would potentially reduce crowding on August 10 and it would not cause any significant increase in sheep harvest. Biologically as long as a legal sheep was still defined as full-curl, eight years old or double-broomed it would not affect the sheep population. There would be benefit to both resident and nonresident hunters and guides because it would give the guides another potential hunt to sell. Bowhunters are not an exclusive group. Anyone can learn to be proficient with bow and arrow. But the harvest would be much less because of the need to get very much closer to the sheep before being able to make a kill. This would be a method by which the Board of Game could provide increased hunting opportunity while not increasing the take of sheep. It would be only in areas where sheep hunting is currently allowed by harvest ticket and not in the special drawing hunt areas. It seems reasonable to initiate this type of season in only one region so that it can be studied to see its effect on the sheep population and on hunters' enjoyment of their opportunities. We propose making it a registration hunt so that participation and reporting can be closely monitored.

PROPOSED BY: The Alaskan Bowhunters Association

(EG-F17-082)
