

## **PROPOSAL 97**

### **5 AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.**

Allow the use of muzzleloaders for goat hunting in Unit 8 as follows:

#### **Solution**

Option A: Muzzleloaders, in addition to bow and arrow, will be allowed to hunt goats in Kodiak Mountain Goat Hunting Areas RG479 (North Road System) and RG478 (South Road System) during the registration goat season in Unit 8.

Option B: Muzzleloaders, in addition to bow and arrow, will be allowed to hunt goats in Kodiak Mountain Goat Hunting Areas RG479 (North Road System) and RG478 (South Road System) beginning November 23 during the registration goat season in Unit 8. (Three weeks archery-only; three weeks archery or muzzleloader.)

Option A is the preferred solution.

Option B would prevent any competition with archery hunters during the first three weeks of the registration season and give them the first chance at the remaining quota. Limiting muzzleloader hunters to the last three weeks, when weather and snow conditions have become more severe, would likely deter many persons from participating.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Area 478 and 479 Mountain Goat Hunting Area quotas are not always being met and goat populations are increasing. To more effectively meet the quota, allow a new hunting opportunity for Alaska resident muzzleloader hunters.

**Management Area Background:** DG478 and DG479 are popular drawing hunts in large part because of the accessibility to goats from the road system in Kodiak on foot without needing to charter ATV, aircraft or boats. The season is long and typically runs August 20 – October 25. These draw hunts are open to residents and nonresidents with no weapon restrictions.

RG478 and RG479 are open to Alaska residents only, currently bow and arrow restricted, and run November 1 – December 15. The registration hunt is more challenging not only because of weapon restrictions, but because weather has become a more serious limiting factor by November.

Per the local Alaska Department of Fish and Game Area Wildlife Biologist, Kodiak Mountain Goat Hunting Areas 478 and 479 were recently surveyed and found to have high populations that may be above sustainable levels. Area 478 had an all-time record of 370 goats in 2017 and Area 479 was close to its record with 203 goats. The number of permits allotted for draw hunts in Area 479 (North Road System) has been increased from 35 to 60 and for Area 478 (South Road System) has been increased from 75 to 100.

**Potential Opposition:** Some bowhunters may not wish to see an increase in hunters or wish not to compete with muzzleloader hunters. Given the number of access points and length of season, I do not think that allowing muzzleloader hunters would greatly encroach on bowhunters.

**Other Options Considered:** Extending registration season and allowing muzzleloaders after December 15: This would take registration season out of alignment with other registration area season lengths. Weather would be severely limiting.

Allowing crossbows and muzzleloaders in addition to bow and arrow: I decided to request for muzzleloaders only after considering that Unit 8 hunting regulations already include a bow and arrow or muzzleloader-only deer season.

**PROPOSED BY:** Benjamin Shryock

(EG-F18-058)

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