

Western Arctic/Western Region

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ALASKA BOARD OF GAME
Western Arctic/Western Region Meeting
Mini Convention Center, Nome, Alaska
January 17-20, 2020

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Note: This Tentative Agenda is subject to change throughout the course of the meeting. It is provided to give a general idea of the board's anticipated schedule. The board will attempt to hold to this schedule; however, the board is not constrained by this Tentative Agenda.

Friday, January 17, 8:30 a.m.

OPENING BUSINESS

Call to Order / Purpose of Meeting
Introductions of Board Members and Staff
Board Member Ethics Disclosures

AGENCY AND OTHER REPORTS (See List of Oral Reports)

PUBLIC & ADVISORY COMMITTEE TESTIMONY upon conclusion staff reports

THE DEADLINE TO SIGN UP TO TESTIFY will be announced prior to the meeting.

Public testimony will continue until persons who have signed up before the deadline, and who are present when called by the Chair to testify, are heard.

Saturday, January 18, 8:30 a.m.

PUBLIC AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE ORAL TESTIMONY continued/conclude

BOARD DELIBERATIONS upon conclusion of public testimony

Sunday, January 19, 9:00 a.m.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

Monday, January 20, 8:30 a.m.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS continued/conclude

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS, including petitions, findings and policies, letters, and other business

ADJOURN

Agenda Notes

- A. Meeting materials, including a list of staff reports, a roadmap, and schedule updates, will be available prior to the meeting at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo or by contacting ADF&G Boards Support Section in Juneau at 465-4110.
- B. A live audio stream for the meeting is intended to be available at: www.boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov
- C. The State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special modifications to participate in this hearing and public meeting should contact 465-4110 no later than two weeks prior to start of the meeting to make any necessary arrangements.

Regionwide & Multiple Units

PROPOSAL 1

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Prohibit nonresident hunting of moose or caribou under intensive management in the Western Arctic/Western Region until harvest or population objectives are met as follows:

Nonresident hunting shall not be allowed in Region V (Western Arctic/Western) for any moose or caribou population under a current active Intensive Management Predation Control Program until the minimum Intensive Management population or harvest objective for that population has been reached.

So in areas where, for example, the population objective has been met for a prey population under an active intensive management (IM) predation control plan, but not the harvest objective (or vice versa), this would not apply and nonresident hunting would be allowed.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

Nonresident hunting opportunity in areas within Region V (Western Arctic/Western Region) under active Intensive Management Predation Control Programs.

Intensive Management Predation Control Implementation Programs to restore the abundance of prey species as necessary to achieve human consumptive use goals are intended to benefit resident Alaskans.

Resident Hunters of Alaska supports IM efforts to achieve these goals.

We understand that nonresidents may benefit from IM programs once IM population or harvest objectives are met. That is why we support nonresidents as well as residents paying a fee for the state's intensive management programs. However, nonresidents are not entitled to benefit from IM programs while they are in progress until either the harvest or population objectives for specific moose or caribou populations have been achieved.

We would like to see the Board of Game adopt regulations that match the intent of our Intensive Management law. No nonresident hunting should be allowed in Region V in an area where a moose or caribou population is under a formal active IM Predation Control program to increase populations for the benefit of resident consumptive uses when the minimum IM population **or** harvest objectives for that prey species has not been reached.

Currently there are no active IM programs in place in Region V.

This proposal would thus not have any effect on current nonresident hunting opportunities in Region V, rather is prospective in that regard.

Intensive Management when necessary is first and foremost about putting food on the tables of Alaskans. That's the way Alaskans who support IM efforts understand it. In other areas of the state, like Unit 13, the Board of Game has passed similar regulations for caribou, saying that nonresident hunting of the Nelchina herd will only be allowed if the herd is above the population or harvest objective. There is no valid reason not to have a one-size-fits-all regulation across the state on this particular issue.

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska (EG-F19-130)

PROPOSAL 2

5 AAC 92.115. Control of predation by bears.

Establish intensive management programs for bear across the Western Arctic/Western Region as follows:

Under intensive management, for other prey species harvested by hunters or in other areas, the commissioner of ADF&G may authorize predation control to recover depleted prey populations under Alaska Statute 16.05.020(2), and the Board of Game may adopt regulations for similar purpose under AS 16.05.255 either of these authorities are listed under other programs.

We, Alaskan residents that are concerned for the safety of our children, our food security, our wildlife, our resources, and sustainability for future uses, would like to recommend that the Alaska Board of Game adopt appropriate regulations that begin intensive bear management across the state for both brown and black bears.

I will leave it up to your legal teams, division staff, and board support team to work up the regulation language. I'm sure there will be modifications to add regulatory language appropriate to each unit as this proposal circulates prior to Board of Game meeting.

I recommend that each unit, give recommendations and modifications in assistance with the language to ensure that needs are being appropriately met throughout the state for predator control, "intensive management."

Areas of more intensive concern are the rural areas with higher subsistence economy.

We, would also like to request that you allow local residents to help with this management, because we know the demand for labor outweighs the number of employees. We are here to help at your discretion and volunteers.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The goal is to reduce predation bear rates, allowing humans to take more ungulates while also maintaining sustainable populations of predators. There has been an elevated issue heard throughout the state of bears becoming a problem, in specific the brown bear. This discussion has been brought about during multiple advisory committee meetings, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meetings, and the Federal Subsistence Board.

These programs are designed to reduce predation by wolves or bears and increase moose, caribou, or deer that are a need for source of Alaska. Another species that should be added to this is salmon, if possible.

In all areas where salmon use to be the main source diet for these ungulates are now in search of food, because of the decline of salmon in the spawning grounds. Bears are moving into urban and rural communities, putting human lives at risk and their personal harvests to wanton waste.

There is an ever-growing concern, humans witnessing brown bears harvesting caribou calves at an alarming rate. Not only eyewitnesses, but videos where the brown bears are ripping out newborns as the mothers are mid-point delivery.

Our caribou in the Western Region have flat lined and the population has not increased, which is a growing concern. Due to the decline in salmon, subsistence harvests have shifted on increasing the pressure on caribou to fill the void. If there is not enough caribou to uphold the demand, caribou abundance is at risk to a plummeting decline.

In other regions of Alaska, folks have talked about the moose populations are also declining and they too are concerned about the brown bears hunting moose calves at an alarming rate as well. There is significant concerns about a need for intensive management control on bears.

I had offered to start a proposal through the Board of Game to address these concerns and issues. There are multiple people who are in support of this proposal across the state.

PROPOSED BY: Alissa Nadine Rogers (EG-F19-072)

PROPOSAL 3

5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemptions.

Reauthorize the current resident tag fee exemptions for brown bear in Units 18, 22, 23 and 26A as follows:

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

- ...
- (4) Units... 26;
- ...
- (8) Unit 22;
- (9) Unit 23;
- ...
- (13) Unit 18;
- ...

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

...

- (4) Unit 18;
- ...
- (7) Unit 22;
- (8) Unit 23;
- ...
- (10) Unit 26(A).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Game must reauthorize brown bear tag fee exemptions annually or the fee automatically becomes reinstated. We recommend continuing resident tag fee exemptions for the general season and subsistence brown bear hunts in Region V (Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A).

General Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for: Unit 18, where the tag fee has been exempted for six years; Unit 22, where the tag fee has been exempted for 16 years; Unit 23, where the tag fee has been exempted for 11 years; and Unit 26A, where the tag fee has been exempted for six years. Tag fee exemptions are desired to allow: 1) incremental increase in annual harvest, 2) opportunistic harvest by resident hunters, and 3) harvest by a wide range of users. Increased harvest is allowable because portions of these units have high bear populations.

General season brown bear harvest rates are within sustained yield limits and previous exemptions of the resident tag fee have not caused dramatic or unexpected increases in overall harvest. In Units 18 and 26A, tag exemptions were authorized for RY2012 and harvest has remained within sustained yield and continues to be similar to the preceding ten-year period. In Unit 22, the 16-year tag-free period for residents has had an average annual harvest of 50 brown bears (range 41–63 bears). In Unit 23, general harvests have been increasing slowly since 1961 primarily in response to increases in human population rather than regulatory changes, although harvests are annually quite variable due to effects of weather on hunting conditions. Harvest data for Unit 23 show no trend in the sex ratio, age or size of bears harvested under all types of hunts.

Subsistence Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A where brown bear subsistence hunt requirements include: 1) registration permit, 2) tag fee exemption, 3) salvaging meat for human consumption, 4) no use of aircraft in Units 22, 23 and 26A, 5) no sealing requirement unless hide and skull are removed from subsistence hunt area, and 6) if sealing is required, the skin of the head and front claws must be removed and retained by ADF&G at the time of sealing. Continuing the tag fee exemption helps facilitate participation in the associated brown bear harvest programs maintained by ADF&G for subsistence hunts.

In all units, subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustained yield limits and exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest. In Unit 18, we estimate 1–3 bears are taken annually in subsistence hunts. In Unit 22, subsistence harvest by permit is quite low, averaging less than one bear per year (less than 1% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 23, subsistence permit harvest is less than five bears annually since 1992 (less than 10% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 26A, between one and five bears are taken annually by subsistence hunters.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-155)

Bethel Area Proposals - Unit 18

PROPOSAL 4

5 AAC 85.050. Hunting seasons and bag limits for muskoxen.

Extend the hunting season for muskox in Unit 18, Nelson Island as follows.

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1) | | |
| Unit 18, Nelson Island | | |
| 1 muskox by registration Permit only | Feb. 1- Mar. 31 [MAR. 25] (General hunt only) | Feb.1- Mar. 31 [MAR. 25] |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Extend the season for muskox on Nelson Island in order to increase hunter opportunity and simplify regulations to match proposed changes to Nunivak Island muskox hunts. A longer season would allow area hunters more flexibility to schedule hunts around challenging weather and snow conditions, which are typical of the hunt area. For this registration hunt the Department of Fish and Game (department) limits the number of permits available to ensure that we get the appropriate harvest. In 2018-2019, the department issued 50 permits and harvested approximately 45 muskox.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-179)

PROPOSAL 5

5 AAC 85.050. Hunting seasons and bag limits for muskoxen.

Extend the hunting season for muskox in Unit 18, Nunivak Island as follows.

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (1) | | |
| Unit 18, Nunivak Island | | |
| 1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 110 permits may be issued; | | |

or I muskox by registration
Permit only

Aug 1.[SEPT. 1] – Sept. 30

Aug 1.[SEPT. 1] – Sept. 30

Jan. 15[FEB. 1]-March **31**[15] **Jan. 15**[FEB 1]-March **31** [15]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why??

Extend the season for muskox on Nunivak Island. The population on Nunivak is over the management goal and the Department of Fish and Game needs to issue more permits to reduce the population. Almost all hunters on Nunivak Island use either a guide or transporter to hunt muskox. A longer season will increase the opportunity for hunters to use the limited commercial services on the Island. Transporters on Nunivak Island have reported being unable to meet hunter demand for transportation services with recent increases in permit availability and due to high demand during inconsistent weather windows that allow travel to the island.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-161)

PROPOSAL 6

5 AAC 92.034. Permit to take and use game for cultural purposes.

Add muskox to the list of species that can be taken under a cultural education program permit for Unit 18 as follows:

I am proposing that muskox be added to the list of species under the Cultural Education Program Permit for Nunivak Island for the years where the herd is healthy enough to allow it.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We are working on developing a yearly Cultural Education outing where three or four elders will take the high school and upper junior high students on a three to four day trip where survival skills, traditional practices and values and gaining the confidence to go out on our island to practice subsistence will be the central themes. In order to allow our students to learn to hunt, field dress, butcher and properly store a vital large game animal on our island in the ways of the Cup'ig people. This activity is designed to pass on the Cup'ig values of subsistence living, respect for the environment and the animals who share it with us and the importance of community and acting as a contributing member of one's community. The elders who will be teaching the students have all grown up on Nunivak Island and practice subsistence living. They are qualified and willing to pass these values on to the next generation. A small group of students will be taken along to harvest the animal and. They will actively participate in the field dressing of the animal. All of the secondary students will participate in butchering and preparing the meat for storage. The entire school will participate in eating the meat as prepared by the school cook.

I believe that the harvest of a muskox would be a great part of that outing in years where the herd is large enough to allow for it. I sent in an application for this potential muskox harvest. I noted that muskox is not listed as a species under conditions, terms and restrictions and effectively that will prevent us from participating this year.

PROPOSED BY: Peter Hawkins, Nuniwarmiut School (EG-F19-002)

PROPOSAL 7

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the opening date for the registration moose hunt, RM615 in Unit 18 as follows:

The Lower Kuskokwim Fish & Game Advisory Committee seeks to change the start date of the RM615 moose hunt from September 1 to September 5.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Hunters in the Lower Kuskokwim region are active subsistence users and rely on moose to meet their subsistence needs. The RM615 is a popular Unit 18 hunt for many hunters due to its location and close proximity to lower Kuskokwim communities. Changes in weather conditions in recent years have brought warmer and wetter weather in late August and early September. Zone 1 of the RM615 hunt generally closes by emergency order within the first week of September. Hunters have struggled with preserving their catch until they can return home from their hunt due to the increased wet and warm weather. Moving the start date of the hunt from September 1 to September 5 may allow hunters to hunt during cooler and dryer weather conditions.

PROPOSED BY: Lower Kuskokwim Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-058)

PROPOSAL 8

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Extend resident season for moose hunting in Unit 18 Remainder as follows:

5 AAC 85.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose:

Remainder of Unit 18

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2 moose; of which only 1 may be an antlered bull; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or | Aug. 1 - Sept. 30 |
| 2 antlerless moose; or | Oct. 1 - Nov. 30 |
| 2 moose | Dec. 1 – <u>April 30</u> [MAR. 15] |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? For the Remainder of Unit 18, moose hunting on state land closes March 15 while federal regulations state that federal lands remains open until April 30. Hunters are therefore required between March 16-April 30 to only hunt on federal lands. Extending hunting on state lands until April 30 will align federal and state regulations and provide additional hunting opportunity for hunters in an area that has struggled with more moose than habitat can support.

PROPOSAL 9

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Modify the hunting season and bag limit for moose in Unit 18 as follows:

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

(16)

Unit 18, that portion south of and including the **waters draining into** Goodnews **Bay** [River drainage]

1 moose by registration permit only during the period of [Jan. 1 – Jan. 31 a season of up to 21 days may be announced by emergency order];

Dec 1 – March 31
[Jan. 1 – Jan. 31]

No open season

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Extend the resident open season for the winter moose hunt in the Goodnews River Drainage in Unit 18 in order to increase hunter opportunity in the area. Inconsistent snow and weather conditions have in the past limited hunting during the scheduled 1-month open season in January. Low participation in the hunt has would allow for more hunting opportunity with little risk of overharvest. Only 11 were issued in 2017 with five moose harvested and three in 2018-2019 with no moose harvested. Poor winter travel conditions in 2018-2019 limited hunter access to hunting areas. The hunt quota in the area could more easily be met if the announced opening could be timed to coincide with sufficient snow cover to allow winter transportation. While there is not a recent population estimate, the results from a fall 2016 composition survey are 46 bulls per 100 cows and 41 calves per 100 cows. We believe with the high calf cow ratios and high adult survival that the population has grown to over 300 moose from the last count of 203 in 2013.

PROPOSAL 10

5 AAC 85.045(a)(16). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 18 as follows:

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (16) ... | | |
| Unit 18, that portion south of and including the Goodnews River Drainage | | |
| 1 antlered bull by registration permit only; or | Sept. 1—Sept. 30 | |
| 1 moose by registration Permit only; During the Jan. 1–Jan 31 a season up to 21 days may be announced by emergency order | Jan. 1–Jan. 31 (Season to be announced) | |
| Remainder of Unit 18 | | |
| RESIDENT HUNTERS: | | |
| Up to 2 moose; of which only 1 may be an antlered bull; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or | Aug. 1—Sept. 30 | |
| Up to 2 antlerless moose; or | Oct. 1—Nov. 30. | |
| Up to 2 moose | Dec. 1—Mar. 15 | |

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 antlered bull: or
1 antlerless moose

Sept. 1—Sept. 30
Dec. 1— Mar. 15

...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To be retained, the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 18 must be reauthorized annually. The current antlerless hunts in the Remainder of Unit 18 were adopted at the January 2014 Board of Game meeting in Kotzebue. The current antlerless hunt in the Goodnews Hunt area and nonresident antlerless hunt was adopted at the January 2017 Board of Game meeting in Bethel. The board has previously reauthorized the antlerless moose season for resident hunts in Unit 18 remainder for regulatory year (RY) 2016 through RY2019. This proposal requests reauthorization for RY2020.

Implementation of antlerless hunts began in 2007 and has continued each year due to increased moose abundance, productivity, and population growth along the Yukon River drainage in Unit 18. Based on the steady growth in moose populations and productivity, ADF&G proposes continued antlerless moose hunts in the Remainder of Unit 18.

Within the areas near the Yukon River, the moose population is estimated at a minimum of 14,000 animals. The most recent estimates of calf to adult ratios range from 14:100 in 2018 in the eastern portion of Unit 18 Remainder to 42:100 in 2017 in the western portion of Unit 18 remainder. Twinning rates have also declined from 50% for all areas in previous years to below 20% for the eastern portion of the hunt area. While the overall population still remains high, the recent declines in productivity and evidence of winterkill of calves and adults in the winter of 2018/2019 suggest that segments of this population may benefit from reduced harvest. The suggested possible reduction in the bag limit from 2 moose to “up to 2 moose” is the first step as the department evaluates harvest rates and declines in population and productivity that are likely due to density dependent factors. The “up to” language gives ADF&G the ability to reduce the bag limit portion as more information is gathered and analyzed.

Although the current year harvest data in the Remainder of Unit 18 has not been finalized due to the early proposal deadline, we expect harvest to be similar to the past four years and well within sustained yield for this robust population. Allowing antlerless harvest will benefit hunters through increased opportunity, and any increases in harvest may help slow the growth rate of the population in this portion of Unit 18.

The moose population in the Goodnews River drainage had grown steadily in the past 15 years following a closure in 2004. The hunt reopened in 2008 to a limited registration hunt with a quota of 10 moose. As the population has grown, the quota has gone up and in 2016 was increased to 30. The season has never been closed by Emergency Order, and in recent years the quota was not met. The winter hunt was requested by the communities of Goodnews Bay and Platinum to have additional opportunity to harvest moose when the fall harvest was ten moose lower than the quota.

In the two years that the winter hunt has been held, harvest has been low (only five killed in RY2017 and none in RY2018). The population now is over 300 moose and based on the steady growth in moose populations and productivity, ADF&G proposes continued antlerless moose hunts in the Goodnews River Drainage.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-173)

PROPOSAL 11

5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.

Establish a minimum caliber rifle to be used to harvest moose in Unit 18 as follows:

Restrict the use of centerfire and rimfire rifles .224 caliber and smaller and require a minimum of .243 or 6 mm caliber centerfire rifles for the harvest of moose in Unit 18.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Many moose are killed every year and not harvested as a result of a lack of regulation requiring a minimum caliber rifle to be allowed for harvest of moose in Unit 18. Moose and the number of moose killed need to be accurately communicated, especially in areas that close upon a predetermined quota. Unfortunately, moose are shot with rifles and ammo that are inadequate to kill them.

Moose are one of the largest North American big game species. A common rifle to hunt moose in Unit 18 is the .223 Remington. It is true that centerfire 22 caliber rifles like the .223 and even smaller can effectively kill moose depending on shot placement. Unfortunately, with the high number of variables, perfect shot placement is not a guarantee every time a trigger is pulled, and often can end in a dead and unharvested moose. Because of this, the true number of moose killed is higher than what is reported at harvest, thus negatively impacting the number of moose that can be harvested for subsistence purposes. In addition, this is an ethical problem too. Many times, if a moose is shot with a .223 or smaller rifle, the moose will not fall where it was shot, but rather run off. It is not unusual to harvest moose that have been previously shot with .223 caliber rifles. These moose often cannot be harvested, since large portions are infected and abscessed. Another common situation is moose shot in the jaw by hunters attempting head shots with .223. Moose hit in the jaw by smaller caliber centerfire rifles can appear unharmed leaving the hunter to think they simply missed, when in reality, the moose travels a great distance shot in the jaw, left to starve, unable to chew its food. Finally, one of the most common uses of the .223 and other centerfire 22 caliber rifles and smaller in North America is predator/varmint hunting. As a result, a majority of the ammo loaded commercially for .223 and sold in Unit 18 use hollow point or other fragmenting ballistic tip bullets, none of which are made for the deep bone breaking penetration needed to effectively kill moose. Rather, ballistic tip and hollow point bullets so commonly loaded for the .223 are designed to penetrate and explode inside the body of the coyote, fox or other predator/varmint targeted. Frequently, when these types of bullets are used for big game, especially moose, the targeted animal is maimed by a bullet that comes apart before getting adequate penetration to effectively kill the moose.

PROPOSED BY: Bethel Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-034)

PROPOSAL 12

5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.

Establish a minimum caliber ammunition to be used to harvest moose in Unit 18 as follows:

Establish a minimum caliber ammunition for moose hunts in Unit 18 as .243 or larger.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Moose are a primary food source for many subsistence users in Unit 18. Users rely on the meat for food security. Moose are lost each year because of small caliber and low-quality ammunition that are ineffective in killing big game such as moose. While smaller calibers such as 223 Remington, 17 Remington or 22-250 may be adequate for smaller game, they lead to wounding and loss of moose. Many hunters have observed expired, or wounded moose resulting from several shots using inadequate caliber size and ammunition. Others have observed, in successfully harvested moose, infected flesh wounds that are "pus filled" and, as a result, large portions or the entire moose are unfit for human consumption.

Using a caliber of .243 or larger would minimize this waste and encourage ethical moose hunting and salvage practices.

PROPOSED BY: Mid-Lower Yukon Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-038)

PROPOSAL 13

5 AAC 92.200. Purchase and sale of game.

Prohibit the sale of antlers from moose harvested in Unit 18 as follows:

Mid-Lower Yukon communities have observed an increase in moose antler sales in their region (Unit 18). This has increased harassment of moose as people search for large bulls to harvest in order to sell the antlers. There is concern that the taking of large bulls and the harassment could be detrimental to the overall health of the moose, which local communities rely on for subsistence needs. Purchase of antlers and harvest of moose just for antler sales have increased wanton waste and teaches unethical and untraditional hunting practices to youth.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Mid-Lower Yukon AC is comprised of the Yukon River villages of Mountain Village, Pitka's Point, St. Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall and Russian Mission. The majority of people residing in these communities are subsistence hunters and rely on moose for food security. Mid-Lower Yukon communities have observed an increase in moose antler sales in their region (Unit 18). This has increased harassment of moose as people search for large bulls to harvest in order to sell the antlers. There is concern that the taking of large bulls and the harassment could be detrimental to the overall health of the moose, which local communities rely on for subsistence needs. Purchase of antlers and harvest of moose just for antler sales have increased wanton waste and teaches unethical and untraditional hunting practices to youth.

Current regulations have led to unforeseen social changes in villages along the Yukon River in Unit 18. Hunters have started selecting large bulls instead of the traditional younger animals, there has been an increase in theft of antlers from people's homes, and people have been harassing bulls in early winter including chasing them through trees in an attempt to knock antlers off. People are prioritizing making money off of moose antlers over traditional hunting customs. There has been an increase in unethical and untraditional hunting practices in front of youth.

PROPOSED BY: Mid-Lower Yukon Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-039)

PROPOSAL 14

5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game.

Modify the bag limit for ptarmigan in Unit 18 as follows.

5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game. (a) ...

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Unit 18 | Aug. 10-May 15 | Aug. 10-May 15 |

[50 PER DAY, 100 IN POSSESSION]

15 per day, 30 in possession

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Residents of Unit 18 have reported low rock and willow ptarmigan abundance and poor harvest beginning since 2014. Consecutive wet, cool early summers have likely had a strong negative effect on early chick survival—a phenomenon that has been demonstrated to dramatically affect other Alaskan grouse and ptarmigan populations as well. In addition, consecutive mild and largely snow-free winters have likely increased the effects of predation due to the plumage/landscape color mismatch as well as the inability to effectively thermo-regulate through snow-roosting.

During the 2018 meeting cycle, the Federal Subsistence Board changed the ptarmigan (both rock and willow combined) daily bag limit to 15 ptarmigan per day for Unit 18 (proposal WP18-30) due to local residents concerns about multiple years of low abundance. In addition to the conservation concerns, this proposal also seeks to reduce hunter confusion by aligning the federal and state hunting bag limits for ptarmigan in Unit 18.

Due to the current low abundance, reducing the bag limit would likely have little impact on current hunting opportunity. However, if climatic conditions become more favorable to rock and willow ptarmigan, a lower hunter harvest could protect localized populations for quicker recovery and recolonization.

PROPOSAL 15

5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game.

Address customary and traditional use findings for Alaska hares in Unit 18 and modify the season and bag limit as follows.

5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game. (a) ...

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| (2) | | |
| Snowshoe and Alaska hares | | |
| Units 1-5 | Sept. 1 – Apr. 30 | Sept. 1 – Apr. 30 |
| Units 6 – 26, except 14(A) and 14(C) and Alaska hares in Unit 9 <u>and Unit 18</u> No limit | No closed season | No closed season |
| Unit 9, Alaska hares only 1 per day, 4 total | Nov. 1 – Jan. 30 | Nov. 1 – Jan. 30 |
| <u>Unit 18, Alaska hares only</u> <u>2 per day, 6 total</u> | <u>Aug. 1 – May 31</u> | <u>Aug. 1 – May 31</u> |
| Unit 14(A) 5 per day | No closed season (General hunt only) | No closed season |
| Unit 14(C) 5 per day | Day after Labor Day– Apr. 30 (General hunt only) | Day after Labor Day– Apr. 30 |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The once-abundant Alaska hare population in Unit 18 is now at very low density. There are small seemingly isolated Alaska hare populations throughout Unit 18 however the majority of Unit 18 residents have raised concern about dramatically lower abundance than historically observed as recent as the 1980s and 1990s. Although there are no estimates of abundance, indices, or surveys for Alaska hares in Unit 18,

regulations should be updated to address the customary and traditional uses, low density, possibly declining status, lack of knowledge on abundance and trend, and biological concern for this species. The proposal may result in a slight decrease in hunting opportunity; however, when climatic and habitat conditions are favorable for Alaska hares, a low hunter harvest could protect localized populations for quicker recovery and recolonization. The Board of Game has not yet addressed customary and traditional uses of Alaska hares in Unit 18.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-180)

PROPOSAL 16

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

Extend the hunting season for brown bear in Unit 18 as follows:

We recommend that brown bear seasons close on June 30.

5 AAC 85.020 Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

Unit 18

1 bear every regulatory year by Sept. 1 - May 31 No open season.
registration permit.
(Subsistence hunt only)

1 bear every regulatory year Sept. 1 – **June 30** [MAY 31] Sept. 1 – **June 30** [MAY 31]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In Unit 18, brown bear season closes on May 31, while black bear baiting season closes on June 30. This leaves a month of baiting where it’s legal to hunt black bears, but illegal to hunt brown bears. This proposal would eliminate confusion in the regulations and reduce hunter brown bear conflict at bait stations during the month of June. This would also increase the opportunity that bear baiters have to harvest brown bears.

PROPOSED BY: Bethel Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-032)

PROPOSAL 17

5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

Change the opening date for bear baiting in Unit 18 as follows:

For Unit 18:
Registering bear bait stations start date March 15;
Bait may be placed at the site starting April 1.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to change the start date for bear baiting in Unit 18. Register bait site starting March 15 and deploying bait starting April 1.

Travel conditions in mid-April are too dangerous to deploy bait most years. By the time the river is safe for boating, it is the middle of May and very little time is left before the fur quality on bear start to diminish. Brown bears tend to take long to start hitting the bait and very little real opportunity exist to harvest a brown bear over bait because of travel conditions and time it takes the bears to find the bait. Being able to put bait out earlier would be a lot safer and might increase the chance of a hunter getting a high-quality fur and or a good opportunity at a brown bear. The number of people hunting bears over bait is small and this change would not affect the overall harvest of bear in the unit significantly.

PROPOSED BY: Sam Hancock (EG-F19-042)

PROPOSAL 18

5 AAC 92.210. Game as animal food or bait.

Allow the use of game bird wings and backs to be used for trapping bait in Unit 18 as follows:

I recommend that bird wings of all game birds including swan, geese, and cranes including the humerus, radius and ulna, and the meat of the humerus radius and ulna be allowed other human uses such as trapping bait in Unit 18. The back and the meat of the back should also be used for other human uses like trapping.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to be able to use all bird wings and backbones from swan, cranes, and geese for trapping bait in Unit 18. Bird wings and carcasses, including the backbone, have a long historical use for trapping, and I would like to be able to continue that use. I feel it is more appropriate to use natural baits rather than bring a bunch of trash into the wilderness like compact discs (CDs) and other shiny bobbles.

PROPOSED BY: Sam Hancock (EG-F19-043)

Kotzebue Area Proposals – Unit 23

PROPOSAL 19

5 AAC 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Open a year-round, resident season for caribou bull harvest in Unit 23 as follows:

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS: that portion north of and including the Singoalik River drainage:

5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows:

up to 5 bulls per day; July 1 – **June 30** [OCT. 14 - FEB. 1] however, calves may not be taken;

up to 5 cows per day; Sept. 1 - Mar. 31, however, calves may not be taken

Remainder of Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows:

up to 5 bulls per day; July 1 – **June 30** [OCT. 14 - FEB. 1] however, calves may not be taken;

up to 5 cows per day; Sept. 1 - Mar. 31, however, calves may not be taken

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? During the recent downturn in the Western Arctic caribou herd population, the local advisory committees considered supporting a variety of different regulations for conservation purposes. One of these was to limit the bull season from the former year-round to an abbreviated season that closed from October 14 until February 1. The thought was that mature bulls were rutting during the first half of this period and then were in recovery mode during the second half. Given that local people generally avoided mature bulls during this time it was thought to have little impact on traditional harvesting activities, but still provide some conservation benefit. It was also the case that for decades these mature bulls were targeted and very much accessible for harvest during their annual southern migration in September, so this season would still allow ample opportunity for bull harvest opportunities. However, in the last couple of years, the migration has stalled out during September with the main body of caribou becoming “stranded” in the middle of the Baird Mountains where they remain inaccessible to hunters from the major rivers in Unit 23. By the time the caribou resume their migration the season for bulls has already closed, this has caused harvest pressure to shift to cows. If the bull season remains open year-round, many hunters would take young bulls during the currently closed period, because they do not get rutted and stink like the mature bulls, which would relieve some pressure on the cows. For the conservation of the herd it would be more desirable to take bulls than cows and even in those cases where a hunter may have a difficult time telling a young bull from a cow, both would be open for harvest, so there would be no compliance issue, which currently may happen from time to time. Notably the decline of the herd has stabilized and may in fact be on the road to increasing, this would only be helped by putting in place regulations that encourage the harvest of bulls when either sex is open to take.

What will happen if this problem is not solved? The fall harvest in Unit 23 is likely to be unnecessarily cow heavy in years like the last couple when mature bulls are hard to come by and

when the season closes for bulls when young bulls would be selected for harvest in lieu of cows by many.

What solution do you prefer? Year-round bull season.

Does your proposal address improving the quality of the resource harvested or the products produced? It creates an opportunity and incentive for the harvest of young bulls in lieu of cows, contributing to the long-term growth and conservation the Western Arctic caribou herd.

Who is likely to benefit if your solution is adopted? Those who want a stable and growing Western Arctic Caribou Herd and local people who may inadvertently take a young bull during the current cow only fall season.

Who is likely to suffer if your solution is adopted? None.

List any other solutions you considered and why you rejected them. None.

PROPOSED BY: Kotzebue Sound Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-041)

PROPOSAL 20

5 AAC 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Open a year-round, resident season for caribou bull harvest in Unit 23 as follows:

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS: that portion north of and including the Singoalik River drainage:
5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows:
up to 5 bulls per day; July 1 - **June 30** [OCT. 14 - FEB. 1] however, calves may not be taken;
up to 5 cows per day; July 15 – April 30, however calves may not be taken.

Remainder of Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows:
up to 5 bulls per day; July 1 – **June 30** [OCT.14 - FEB.1] however, calves may not be taken;
up to 5 cows per day; Sept. 1 - Mar. 31, however calves may not be taken.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? At its meeting on December 13, 2018, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group (WACHWG) voted unanimously to support a proposal by the Kotzebue Advisory Committee (AC) to remove the seasonal closure on caribou bull harvest in Unit 23.

The following responses to questions were provided by the Kotzebue AC regarding this proposal:

What is the problem you would like the Board to address? “During the recent downturn in the Western Arctic caribou herd population, the local ACs considered supporting a variety of different regulations for conservation purposes. One of these ways was to limit the bull season from the former year-round to an abbreviated season that closed from October 14 until February 1. The thought was that mature bulls were rutting during the first half of this period and then were in recovery mode during the second half. Given that local people generally avoided mature bulls during this time it was thought to have little impact on traditional harvesting activities, but still provide some conservation benefit. It was also the case that for decades these mature bulls were targeted and very much accessible for harvest during their annual southern migration in September, so this season would still allow ample opportunity for bull harvest opportunities. However, in the last couple of years, the migration has stalled out during September with the main body of caribou becoming “stranded” in the middle of the Baird Mountains where they remain inaccessible to hunters from the major rivers in Unit 23. By the time the caribou resume their migration the season for bulls has already closed, this has caused harvest pressure to shift to cows. If the bull season remains open year-round, many hunters would take young bulls during the currently closed period, because they do not get rutted and stink like the mature bulls, which would relieve some pressure on the cows. For the conservation of the herd it would be more desirable to take bulls than cows and even in those cases where a hunter may have a difficult time telling a young bull from a cow, both would be open for harvest, so there would be no compliance issue, which currently may happen from time to time. Notably the decline of the herd has stabilized and may in fact be on the road to increasing, this would only be helped by putting in place regulations that encourage the harvest of bulls when either sex is open to take.”

What will happen if this problem is not solved? “The fall harvest in Unit 23 is likely to be unnecessarily cow heavy in years like the last couple when mature bulls are hard to come by and when the season closes for bulls, when young bulls would be selected for harvest in lieu of cows by many.”

What solution do you prefer? “Year-round bull season.”

Does your proposal address improving the quality of the resource harvested or the products produced? “It creates an opportunity and incentive for the harvest of young bulls in lieu of cows, contributing to the long-term growth and conservation of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.”

Who is likely to benefit if your solution is adopted? “Those who want a stable and growing Western Arctic Caribou Herd and local people who may inadvertently take a young bull during the current cow only fall season.”

Who is likely to suffer if your solution is adopted? “None.”

List any other solutions you considered and why you rejected them. “None.”

PROPOSED BY: Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group (EG-F19-013)

PROPOSAL 21

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Reduce the bag limit for caribou in Unit 23 as follows:

Proposal: Limit total harvest per hunter to 5 caribou a day, 25 caribou total annually, this to include no more than 5 females annually. (Also include in this change to regulations provisions and necessary forms for proxy hunting to be allowable.)

Potential good results may be the exact same total number of animals harvested in our region, with increased respect and value placed on each animal. Or, it may also lower the total number of animals harvested and/or wounded or wasted—either of which is still an improvement for ADF&G, local hunters, and all hunters of this herd, and most importantly the herd itself.

Potential negative results: I see none.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board of Game (board) to consider reducing the bag limit on caribou in Unit 23 AND to separately reduce the total limit on female caribou each hunter is allowed to harvest annually.

This reduction is in no way a request or attempt to limit any hunters' options for harvesting the number of animals they might need. This request is only to improve things for the herd, and improve things for we hunters of caribou.

Reasons for change: Presently, very liberal bag limits allow hunters in Unit 23 to harvest five caribou per day, 365 days a year, including hundreds of female animals, many of which are pregnant and/or have calves with them and counting on them for survival.

This is a total allowable harvest per hunter of 1,825 caribou per year. While it's likely no one of us here are filling his or her limit, this excessive bag limit is not useful. It's not advantageous to local subsistence hunters who make use of the Western Arctic caribou herd for important traditional source of subsistence caribou and is detrimental to the herd and to the herd's long-term survivability in many ways.

These include: The reality of having a total allowable harvest that exceeds the entire number of animals in the herd hurts the credibility of us all: it makes ADF&G appear to be practicing a hands-off approach to managing, or weak, or just plain confused and inept as resource managers.

This harvest limit--viewed from outside of our region, in places such as Anchorage, Fairbanks, Washington, DC and the world—appears unbelievable, insane, as if it must be a typo of some sort, OR, if believed, makes local subsistence hunters potentially appear wasteful, greedy or demanding to too much. This problem is exacerbated when “Outside” hunters are limited to one animal per year. (Or, as is the case on federal land in Unit 23, all persons living outside the Unit are limited to zero.)

Also, and more importantly, viewed from here, locally, this overly liberal harvest limit sends a strong clear message of “open season” for people to shoot all the caribou they want, whenever they want. This is detrimental to the resource and takes away from our feelings and actions of

responsibility, and in effect makes it appear that our actions don't affect caribou—this actually separates us from being part of the picture, part of the management issue. This sends the message that only outsiders and other forces affect this herd. The end result—however inadvertently—is this excessive bag limit takes we local hunters out of the management picture in this way. This is not a healthy thing.

In addition, being allowed to shoot this many caribou diminishes-or potentially diminishes--the value placed on each animal. This is not a regional response and has nothing to do with race or historical usage—it is simply a patently human response to excess. (Also, separate from just plain excess, as far as regulations, for example: if you or I, as a hunter, were told we legally could shoot 1,825 brown bear per year, what message would that convey? For me, that would say ADF&G feels there are too many bears and shooting any much is a “good” thing.)

Respect is an integral part of protecting this herd, and all herds, and by lowering the bag limit we increase--or potentially increase—respect on all sides. This is simply a good thing to do and need not in actuality limit any hunters' options to harvest the number of animals they individually need to provide for themselves, their family, or their village. This request is only designed to improve things for the herd AND for hunters of caribou.

As far as the hunting of female caribou in Unit 23, the board should look at reducing that number for all of the above reasons, and for the additional reason that the practice of shooting females here often takes place after the rut, in winter, on ice and snow, from motorized vehicles—very often at high speed, with small caliber semi-automatic rifles—and has a higher than normal detrimental effect on the herd, including: more wounded animals per animal harvested; more animals killed if the fetuses in pregnant females are taken into consideration; lower poundage harvested per animal due to more damage to meat on each individual animal (due to herd shooting), and lower poundage also due to females sampling being smaller per kill; and separation of calves from their mothers' also compounding damage to the herd.

PROPOSED BY: Seth Kantner (EG-F19-113)

PROPOSAL 22

5 AAC 85.025 Hunting Seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Extend the season for taking cow caribou in Unit 23 Remainder as follows:

Extend the cow caribou hunting season in Unit 23 Remainder as follows:

September 1 through **April 15** [MAR. 31]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We have been and continue to experience climate change as all fish and wildlife are migrating earlier than normal and staying later than usual. For this reason, we request that the cow season in Unit 23 Remainder be extended to April 15 from March 31.

PROPOSED BY: Northern Seward Peninsula Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-073)

PROPOSAL 23

5 AAC 92.080(4)(B). Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions.

Restrict the use of snowmachines for taking caribou in Unit 23 as follows:

Change regulations to read similar to those in Unit 17:

A snowmobile may be used to assist in the taking of a caribou and caribou may be shot from a stationary snowmobile. “Assist in taking of a caribou” means a snowmobile may be used to approach within 200 yards of a caribou or caribou herd at speeds under 15 mph, in a manner that does not involve repeated approaches or that causes a caribou to flee. A snowmobile may not be used to contact an animal or to pursue fleeing caribou.

Results: This will be a change here, a needed one, and will change hunting practices in a good way. Fewer animals will be wounded, chased, and less meat damaged by herd-shooting and poor hits, and people will have increased self-respect. The end result will not be less caribou harvested, only less caribou wounded and wasted.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the board to address the practice of chasing animals with snowmobiles, and change regulations to make high-speed chasing of animals unlawful.

The practice of chasing caribou with snowmobiles, over the course of the last 50 years in Unit 23, has grown to be common, normal, and a standard hunting practice when snow is on the ground. In that time, the last half century, snowmobiles have “evolved” to be in all practical purposes, personal rocket ships of the tundra and ice; meanwhile other technological hunting aides including clothing, GPS, Cell phones, semi-automatic rifles, etc., have also changed rapidly. Caribou have not had such advantageous changes—basically they are the same animals we hunted 50 years and more ago.

The practice of chasing caribou—with these changes in our equipment, and without laws to protect the animals from these advances in technology—is detrimental to the herd, and, potentially, to our respect for individual animals, and to our own self-respect. Allowing all out high-speed chasing of groups of caribou is simply not a good thing, physically or mentally--for caribou or for us. When I was younger, it was known as unlawful to chase caribou. People did it, but less often than now, and with concern for the legal consequences. In the past 25 years we have moved in the opposite direction--making this practice basically legal with the present regulation allowing “positioning” of animals, but not defining what “positioning” means.

Each year here more and more local people say chasing is not good, especially when it separates calves from their mothers, which we’ve seen a lot of and has been posted on Facebook and made public knowledge in other ways. We here in this region (residents of Unit 23) know it’s not a good thing. Also, many people here worry that subsistence and subsistence hunting potentially will be damaged by this practice, especially as potential future public awareness of this practice increases.

PROPOSED BY: Seth Kantner

(EG-F19-112)

PROPOSAL 24

5 AAC 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Remove the restriction on caribou calf harvest in Unit 23 as follows:

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS, that portion north of and including the Singoalik River drainage: 5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows: up to 5 bulls per day; Oct. 14 – Feb 1, [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN]; up to 5 cows per day; Sept. 1 – Mar. 31, [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN].

Remainder of Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows: up to 5 bulls per day; Oct. 14 - Feb. 1, [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN]; up to 5 cows per day; Sept. 1 - Mar. 31, [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Removing the calf harvest prohibition would allow for calves to be harvested in those circumstances where they have lost their mother and are wandering unattached to the herd or where their mother may have been accidentally harvested. Nobody is targeting calves, but there are rare circumstances where it may make sense to harvest a calf and there is no reason to prohibit this, since making rules based on the exception is not good policy making. Allowing the incidental take of abandoned or orphaned calves would become food for human consumption instead of feeding predators.

What will happen if this problem is not solved? Abandoned/orphaned calves will continue to become food for predators, instead of being able to be used for human consumption.

What solution do you prefer? Removal of calf harvest prohibition.

Does your proposal address improving the quality of the resource harvested or the products produced? It allows for abandoned calves to be utilized for human food instead of feeding predators.

Who is likely to benefit if your solution is adopted? Those who come across abandoned calves and would otherwise have to leave them for the predators.

Who is likely to suffer if your solution is adopted? None.

List any other solutions you considered and why you rejected them. None.

PROPOSAL 25

5 AAC 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Remove the restriction on caribou calf harvest in Unit 23 as follows:

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS: that portion north of and including the Singoalik River drainage:
5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows: up to 5 bulls per day; July 1 – Oct. 14, Feb. 1 – June 30; [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN]; up to 5 cows per day; July 15 – April 30, [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN].

Remainder of Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS: 5 caribou per day, by registration permit only, as follows:
up to 5 bulls per day; July 1 – Oct. 14, Feb. 1 – June 30; [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN]; up to 5 cows per day; Sept. 1 - Mar. 31, [HOWEVER CALVES MAY NOT BE TAKEN].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? At its meeting on December 13, 2018, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group (WACHWG) voted unanimously to support a proposal by the Kotzebue Advisory Committee (AC) to remove the restriction on caribou calf harvest in Unit 23.

The following responses to questions were provided by the Kotzebue AC regarding this proposal:

What is the problem you would like the Board to address? “Removing the calf harvest prohibition would allow for calves to be harvested in those circumstances where they have lost their mothers and are wandering unattached to the herd or where their mother may have been accidentally harvested. Nobody is targeting calves, but there are rare circumstances where it may make sense to harvest a calf and there is no reason to prohibit this, since making rules based on the exception is not good policy making.”

What will happen if this problem is not solved? “Abandoned/orphaned calves will continue to become food for predators, instead of being able to be used for human consumption.”

What solution do you prefer? “Removal of calf harvest prohibition.”

Does your proposal address improving the quality of the resource harvested or the products produced? “It allows for abandoned calves to be utilized for human food instead of feeding predators.”

Who is likely to benefit if your solution is adopted? “Those who come across abandoned calves and would otherwise have to leave them for the predators.”

Who is likely to suffer if your solution is adopted? “None.”

List any other solutions you considered and why you rejected them. “None.”

PROPOSED BY: Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group (EG-F19-014)

Utqiagvik Area Proposals – Unit 26A

PROPOSAL 26

5 AAC 85.045(a)(24). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in the western portion of Unit 26A as follows:

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| (24) ... | July 1—Sept. 14 | No open season. |
| Unit 26(A), that portion west of 156° 00' W. longitude and excluding the Colville River drainage. | | |
| 1 moose; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf ... | | |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To be retained, the antlerless moose season in the portion of Unit 26A west of 156° 00' West longitude and excluding the Colville drainage must be reauthorized annually.

The moose population in the western portion of Unit 26A north of the Colville drainage is somewhat unique compared to the unit-wide population, and the distribution is very sparse because there is very little moose habitat in the coastal plain. However, each year a small number of bulls and cows migrate into the area from the major river drainages in the central and southern parts of the unit. So far, the marginal habitat in this portion of Unit 26A has not allowed moose to establish a population, but these moose provide the only opportunity to harvest a moose in the northwestern portion of Unit 26A.

Unit 26A moose population estimates have historically fluctuated between 294 and 609 moose between 2011 and 2014. More recently, moose counts have observed 145 moose and 218 moose in 2015 and 2018, respectively. The overall trend appears to be slow growth after a decline that started about 2007. The number of moose in the antlerless hunt area is difficult to estimate but is approximately 10 moose per year. Harvest reports indicate four antlerless moose have been harvested since 2005, and the annual harvest rate of antlerless moose is less than 1% of the total population. Due to the low harvest rate the department recommends reauthorization of the antlerless moose season in this area to provide additional hunting opportunity for the small number of hunters to opportunistically harvest antlerless moose in this remote portion of Unit 26A.

Note: This proposal is also scheduled for the Interior and Eastern Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 81.

PROPOSAL 27

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Increase the nonresident bag limit for caribou in Unit 26 as follows:

I propose reinstating the caribou harvest limit for nonresident hunters in the Game Management Unit 26A, B, and C of the North Slope, from the current harvest limit of one bull to two bulls, as it was prior to 2016.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

As one of the predominant Air-Taxi operators conducting in these units consistently for over ten years. Flying an average of 150 flight hours during the month of August. We have not observed a substantial fluctuation in the caribou numbers, Arrowhead Outfitters LLC (AOLLC) has observed a drastic decline in the general hunter participation on the Dalton Highway Corridor. Along with a dramatic drop in hunter inquiries and bookings after the harvest limit was decreased to one bull caribou in 2016.

By using the data from ADF&G area biologist provided in the table below, the harvest numbers are WELL BELOW ALLOWABLE HARVEST and the current Caribou population is stable.

CAH (Central Arctic herd) HARVEST Reported harvest from the general harvest ticket:

| | males | females | Total harvest | Total hunters |
|------------|-------|---------|---------------|---------------|
| 2010 | 978 | 234 | 1238 | 1622 |
| 2011 | 814 | 346 | 1172 | 1401 |
| 2012 | 726 | 275 | 1007 | 1430 |
| 2013 | 729 | 135 | 868 | 1462 |
| 2014 | 720 | 196 | 916 | 1433 |
| 2015 | 530 | 225 | 756 | 1256 |
| 2016 | 316 | 268 | 585 | 1063 |
| 2017 | 223 | 7 | 230 | 619 |
| 2018Prelim | 146 | 3 | 149 | 317 |

| | Resident hunters | Resident harvest | Nonresident hunters | Nonresident harvest |
|------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 2010 | 1201 | 953 | 371 | 280 |
| 2011 | 1045 | 935 | 264 | 228 |
| 2012 | 1126 | 773 | 295 | 235 |

| | | | | |
|------------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 2013 | 1014 | 530 | 441 | 331 |
| 2014 | 987 | 555 | 442 | 358 |
| 2015 | 807 | 414 | 449 | 342 |
| 2016 | 705 | 403 | 358 | 183 |
| 2017 | 348 | 109 | 268 | 118 |
| 2018Prelim | 181 | 71 | 136 | 78 |

Prior to 2016; when nonresident hunters were allowed to purchase the second caribou tag, according to ADF&G only 17 percent used the tag, All the nonresident hunters AOLLC has had contact with, would prefer to at LEAST have the option to PURCHASE a second caribou tag. Using ADF&G estimated 17 percent additional harvest, THE TOTAL ESTIMATED HARVEST WOULD ONLY BE APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL ALLOWABLE HARVEST OF 680 CARIBOU.

In conclusion the total harvest by resident and nonresident hunters was 149 caribou for 317 hunters. With a native local harvest estimated at 100 animals for a total harvest of 249 caribou. This is far below the ADFG allowable harvest of 680 caribou, set by the 2016 population estimate of 22,630 caribou. Please refer to data above, I see no biological data to keep the nonresident hunters in Unit 26 to the one caribou limit, and respectfully request that the ADF&G to reinstate the possibility of nonresident hunters to purchase two bull caribou licenses in the 2020 hunting season.

Thank you for your consideration to this important matter.

PROPOSED BY: Howard Tieden (HQ-F19-145)

Note: This proposal is also scheduled for the Interior and Eastern Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 78.

PROPOSAL 28

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Eliminate the registration caribou permit RC907 and general season caribou harvest ticket requirement for North Slope resident hunters as follows:

We would like the Board of Game to rescind RC907 and harvest ticket requirements for North Slope resident hunters because residents of Unit 23 (Point Hope), Unit 24B (Anaktuvuk Pass), and Unit 26A, B, and C currently already report their caribou harvest to the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management. Most people on the North Slope are very hesitant to report their harvest to agencies that are outside of their region. Because of this, the data that the department receives is poor and of little use for management purposes.

Possible language could include a sentence similar to one in the 2016-2017 Hunting Regulations on page 14. This language would read something like: “If you reside in the North Slope Borough and hunt caribou in Unit 23 north of including Singoalik River drainage or in Unit 24B including Contact Creek south to the confluence of the Ekokpuk drainage with the John River, or in Unit 26 A, B, or C, neither a harvest ticket nor registration permit is required.”

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? RC907 and harvest ticket requirements for residents of portions of Unit 23 (Point Hope) and Unit 24B (Anaktuvuk Pass) and Unit 26 A, B, and C are not resulting in the collection of good caribou harvest data. The North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management (DWM) already successfully collects that information. The DWM traveled to all of the communities on the North Slope and held public meetings during which the residents overwhelmingly supported the DWM to continue to collect harvest data rather than using state harvest tickets or registration permits.

PROPOSED BY: North Slope Fish & Game Advisory Committee (EG-F19-060)

PROPOSAL 29

5 AAC 85.020 Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.
5 AAC 92.132. Bag limit for brown bears.

Increase the resident bag limit for brown bears in Unit 26A as follows:

Resident hunters in Anaktuvuk Pass and Unit 26A feel the brown bear population is continuing to grow. The harvest of brown bears in Unit 26A is far below sustained yield. Resident hunters that do take brown bears are low in number, and should be afforded additional harvest opportunity with a two brown bear limit. (Companion proposal submitted for 24B)

Suggested: Brown/Grizzly Bear Unit 26A Resident, two bears every regulatory year, no closed season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Increase the resident bag limit from one brown bear per regulatory year to two brown bears per regulatory year in Unit 26A.

PROPOSED BY: Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission (EG-F19-089)

Nome Area Proposals - Unit 22

PROPOSAL 30

5 AAC 5 AAC 92.011(k). Taking of game by proxy.

Include muskox on the list of species that can be taken under a proxy permit in Unit 22 as follows:

Add language to 5 AAC 92.011(k) Proxy hunting under this section is only allowed for

- (1) caribou;
- (2) deer;
- (3) moose in Tier I hunts, any-bull hunts, and antlerless moose hunts; [AND]
- (4) emperor geese; **and**
- (5) Muskoxen in Tier II hunts.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal seeks to allow proxy hunting in Tier II muskoxen hunts in Unit 22B through 22E. The trophy value is destroyed in the field subject to permit conditions. These hunts are allowed for the harvest of meat, horn, and fiber by Alaskan residents. These products are distributed throughout the community and because the harvest rate is high there is rarely excess permits about the harvestable surplus. Families/communities have missed opportunities for harvest when the permit holder becomes disabled for whatever reason.

PROPOSED BY: Charlie Lean (EG-F19-010)

Note: This proposal is also scheduled for the Interior and Eastern Arctic Region meeting as Proposal 74.

PROPOSAL 31

5 AAC 85.050. Hunting seasons and bag limits for muskoxen.

Establish a registration permit hunt for muskox in Units 21D, 22A, and 24D as follows:

Establish a limited quota muskoxen season; Units 21D, 22A, 24D; up to 5 bulls; February 1 – April 30.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Muskoxen have occurred in Units 21D, 22A, and 24D for many years, but there is no open season in these units.

Muskoxen are frequently observed in the Nulato Hills during the winter and during spring bear hunting and have been observed near the villages of Galena, Ruby, Nulato, Kaltag, and Huslia. Dispersing muskoxen have had to be killed under defense of life and property (DLP) conditions and near Ruby, Galena, Nulato and the Kateel River during the fall moose season. Muskoxen in the Nulato Hills would provide an additional hunting opportunity that is not being utilized and could provide an additional source of meat for Alaskan hunters.

PROPOSAL 32

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Allow caribou to be taken east of and including the Nuluk River drainage in Unit 22E as follows:

Most hunters are targeting mature caribou bulls during this time and the possibility of domestic stock reindeer being harvested is very slim. We ask that the Alaska Board of Game to change Unit 22E to say “**east of and including the Nuluk River drainage**” [EAST OF AND INCLUDING THE SANGUICH RIVER DRAINAGE] One bull however, calves may not be taken / harvest ticket / August 1-September 30.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently the Alaska Board of Game does not allow hunting caribou west of the Sanaguich River drainage due to domestic reindeer herds “possibly” being in the area. The concern is domestic reindeer may accidentally be harvested in this area. I believe the differences are distinguishable as the breed is shorter in height, heavier in weight, darker and in most cases is equipped with identification tags (red, green, and yellow Ear Tags). These characteristics makes the reindeer easy to identify, from caribou.

This proposal would be a return to historical resource management of the caribou in Unit 22E that ended back in 2016. The caribou are found in higher areas of the continental divide specifically on the northern side. A huge geographic area that holds these caribou has been closed and if nothing is done hunters will be limited to one third of the area that caribou are frequenting during the set hunting season.

PROPOSAL 33

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Modify hunting seasons and require a registration permit for moose hunting in Unit 22D
Remainder as follows:

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. (a) ...

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

(20)

Remainder of Unit 22(D)

RESIDENT HUNTERS: Aug. 10 – Sept. 14

1 bull moose **by registration permit only**; only antlered bull moose may be taken from Dec 1-Jan 31;

Dec. 1[Oct 1] – Jan. 31
(To be announced)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

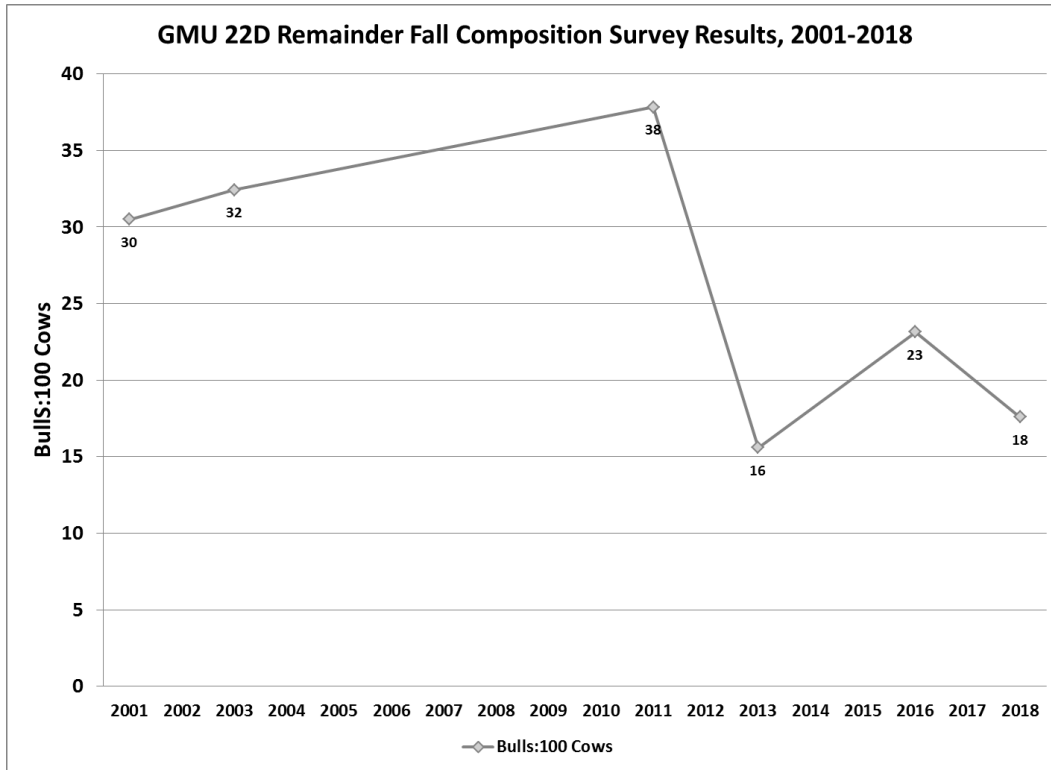
No open season

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Moose abundance in Unit 22D has persisted at low density since dramatic declines in abundance occurred throughout Unit 22 in the late 80's and early 90's. Moose abundance in Unit 22D Remainder was last surveyed in 2014 at which time the population was estimated at 491 moose (95% CI: 410-571) with 18% recruitment. This represents a 14% annual rate of decline 2011 – 2014. The Department of Fish and Game unsuccessfully attempted to complete a moose survey during the spring of 2018, but plans to attempt another abundance survey in the area during the spring of 2020. A spring recruitment survey completed in 2018 observed 977 moose and found 11% recruitment throughout Unit 22D suggesting that the population of moose has not continued to decline 13% annually however recruitment in the area is low.

Fall composition surveys completed in the area 2001 – 2018 indicate that the bull:cow ratio has declined to below our management objective of 30 bull:100 cows. Surveys completed 2013 to present have consistently resulted in bull:cow ratio estimates below 30 bull:100 cows. A survey completed in 2018 found 18 bulls:100 cows (Figure 1). Declines in the bull:cow ratio suggest that the current level of harvest is not sustainable and that management action should be taken to reduce harvest in the area.

The Unit 22D Remainder hunt area is remote and not immediately accessible along the Nome road system. Such challenges have historically limited hunter participation and harvest in the area, as a consequence liberal seasons and bag limits persisted in the area. Elsewhere in Unit 22, registration permit hunts with harvest quotas (RM840) have been implemented in hunt areas immediately accessible along the Nome road system in order to maintain harvest at sustainable levels.

Figure 1. Unit 22D Remainder Fall Composition Survey Results, 2001 – 2018



Hunter participation in Unit 22D Remainder has steadily grown 2000 – 2018. Hunters seeking to take advantage of more liberal moose seasons coupled with advances in the capabilities of off-road vehicles have likely reduced some of the challenges associated with hunting in the area and facilitated the increase in hunter participation.

Reported harvest during RY2017 and preliminary estimates of reported harvest during RY2018 were 34 and 33 bulls respectively. Compared to the long-term average annual reported harvest 2001 – 2016 of 20 bulls per year this information indicates harvest in the area is increasing. Reported harvest should be considered a minimum estimate of harvest as a portion of the moose harvested from Unit 22D Remainder is not reported to the department. Household subsistence surveys completed by the subsistence division in the communities of Teller and Brevig Mission 1988 – 2016 suggest an average harvest of 15 and 5 moose respectively. Conversely, average annual reported harvest from residents of Teller and Brevig Mission for the period 2006 – 2017 is <1 moose and 1 – 2 moose, respectively.

The proposed regulatory changes would improve harvest reporting in the area as well as provide the department the tools necessary to maintain harvest in the area at sustainable levels. Changes to the season dates eliminate the opportunity to hunt moose in Unit 22D Remainder during the month of October and November. Given the status of the population and the observed declines in the bull:cow ratios, providing protections for breeding bulls as well as reducing hunter disturbance during the rut is necessary to ensure future productivity.

A series of small incremental changes have been enacted by the Board of Game in response to declines in abundance and poor productivity. In 2014, antlerless moose hunts in the area were eliminated. In 2017, nonresident hunting was closed. Additional steps are warranted at this time to address biological concerns. The department has considered only making changes to the season dates in the area. Although such changes may reduce the reported harvest in the area, such measures are considered inadequate since they will not improve harvest reporting within the area and do not provide the department with the tools necessary to prevent over harvest.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-148)

PROPOSAL 34

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose

Open a nonresident drawing hunt for moose in Unit 22D Remainder as follow:

We propose that the Alaska Board of Game look into opening a limited nonresident drawing hunt in Unit 22D Remainder for: **one bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, by permit from September 1- September 14.** Allow a harvest quota of five – eight.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There is currently not a nonresident moose season for Unit 22D Remainder. This area has been closed for two years as a previous limited quota registration hunt for a 50-inch or four brow tine bull moose. While resident hunters have a very liberal season of *any bull* that lasts for over five months in Unit 22D Remainder. It would make sense that nonresidents would have an opportunity at a mature bull moose in this same area. More nonresident hunting pressure has been placed on Unit 22E with it being the only nonresident moose hunt in the area, RM855.

In the past, with a registration hunt, an emergency closure has been issued to close the season. This would allow for harvesting over the quota limit. A drawing tag would only allow the biological harvested quota that was limited for the area.

PROPOSED BY: Justin Horton (EG-F19-085)

PROPOSAL 35

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the availability of Unit 22 registration permits for moose hunting with an option to require a registration permit for the Unit 22D Remainder hunt as follows:

Option 1: By permit available in person in Nome or at license vendors in Unit 22 villages July 15 – July 31.

Option 2: Unit 22 moose harvest under a quota hunt and to include Unit 22D remainder.
By permit available in person in Nome or at license vendors in Teller, White Mountain, Golovin. Unit 22B Remainder, 22C, 22D Kuzitrin River Drainages and SW area & Unit 22D Remainder beginning July 15 – July 31. By permit available in person at license vendors in

Unalakleet beginning July 15 – July 31. [BY PERMIT AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [HTTP://HUNT.ALASKA.GOV](http://HUNT.ALASKA.GOV), BEGINNING JULY 24].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The timeframe in which moose harvest tickets are made available in Unit 22. The moose population for most of Unit 22 has been in decline since the late ‘90’s with about half of the subunits under a very strict quota system and strict reporting timeframes. Examples:

Unit 22A Unalakleet River drainage imposed a local moratorium on moose hunting, once hunting resumed very strict quotas and reporting requirements were imposed.

Since the late ‘90’s Unit 22B Remainder had a quota that started in the low teens which is now in the low 20’s.

Unit 22C in the past had a quota as low as nine, fall 2018 was 16 and a reporting period of 24 hours.

Unit 22D Kuzitrin/Pilgrim/Teller had a quota around 54 but is now down in the low 20’s, reporting requirement of 24 hours. Unit 22D is still under a general moose harvest ticket but moose population surveys by ADF&G have shown that moose population has drastically declined also with very low bull to cow ratios.

Hunters are now going into Unit 22E because of the lack of moose in the other units. Local hunters who are the most dependent on harvesting a moose to put in the freezer for winter cannot afford to go someplace else; they are having a hard time competing with outside hunters who come to the region.

PROPOSED BY: Kawerak, Inc., Subsistence Program (HQ-F19-143)

PROPOSAL 36

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the availability of Unit 22 registration permits for moose hunting as follows:

By permit available in person in Nome or at license vendors in Unit 22 villages July 15 – July 31[BY PERMIT AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [HTTP://HUNT.ALASKA.GOV](http://HUNT.ALASKA.GOV), BEGINNING JULY 24].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Timeframe in which moose harvest tickets are made available in Unit 22. The moose population for most of Unit 22 has been in decline since the late ‘90’s with about half of the subunits under a very strict quota system and strict reporting timeframes. Examples:

- Unit 22A Unalakleet River drainage imposed a local moratorium on moose hunting, once hunting resumed very strict quotas and reporting requirements were imposed.
- Since the late ‘90’s Unit 22B Remainder had a quota that started in the low teens which is now in the low 20’s.
- Unit 22C in the past had a quota as low as nine, fall 2018 was 16 and a reporting period of 24 hours.

- Unit 22D Kuzitrin/Pilgrim/Teller had a quota around 54 but is now down in the low 20's, reporting requirement of 24 hours. Unit 22D is still under a general moose harvest ticket but moose population surveys by ADF&G have shown that moose population has drastically declined also with very low bull to cow ratios.

Hunters from Units 22B, C & D are now going into Unit 22E because of the lack of moose in the other units. Local hunters who are the most dependent on harvesting a moose to put in the freezer for winter cannot afford to go someplace else; they are having a hard time competing with outside hunters who come to the region.

PROPOSED BY: John Bahnke III (HQ-F19-144)

PROPOSAL 37

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Close the nonresident moose hunt in Unit 22C as follows:

Residents:

One bull by permit available online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> or in person in Nome or at a license vendors in Teller, White Mountain and Golovin beginning July 24. Harvest quota to be announced. Season will be closed by emergency order when quota is reached. RM840. Sept. 1 – Sept 14.

Nonresidents:

No open season

[ONE BULL WITH 50-INCH ANTLERS WITH 4 OR MORE BROW TINES ON AT LEAST ONE SIDE BY PERMIT AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [HTTP://HUNT.ALASKA.GOV](http://HUNT.ALASKA.GOV) OR IN PERON IN NOME BEGINNING JULY 24. HARVEST QUOTA TO BE ANNOUNCED. SEASON WILL BE CLOSED BY EMERGENCY ORDER WHEN QUOTA IS REACHED. RM 840. SEPT 1 – SEPT 14]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Eliminate the nonresident moose hunt in Unit 22C. Moose populations in Unit 22C have declined since the mid to late '90's and they have had a difficult time bouncing back. The moose harvest in Unit 22C has been and currently still is under a very strict quota hunt with a reporting time of 24 hours. In previous years the quota has been as low as nine. In 2018 the quota was 16. This shared quota is for approximately 3-400 hunters mostly from the Seward Peninsula. This very strict quota has local residents asking why this hunt open to nonresidents when this particular moose population is so low. Hunters who reside in region are the most dependent upon this resource to fill freezers for the long winter. AS 16.05.258 clearly states that subsistence use is first priority above all else including commercial and sport use.

PROPOSED BY: Kawerak, Inc., Subsistence Program (HQ-F19-142)

PROPOSAL 38

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Modify the hunting season and bag limit for moose in Unit 22A as follows.

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. (a) ...

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| (20) | | |
| Unit 22(A), that portion in the Unalakleet River drainage and all drainages flowing into Norton Sound north of the Golsovia River drainage and south of the Tagoomenik and Shaktoolik River drainages | | |
| 1 [ANTLERED] bull by registration permit only; or 1 antlered bull by registration permit only; during the period Dec 1-[Dec 31] <u>Jan 31</u> , a season may be announced by emergency order | Sept. 1 – Sept.[20] <u>30</u> Dec. 1 –[Dec 31] <u>Jan. 31</u> (Season to be announced) | No Open Season |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Changing the season dates for moose in Unit 22A would provide the Department of Fish and Game the flexibility to administer registration permit hunts RM841 and RM844 during the full range of season dates adopted by the Alaska Board of Game without the need to extend the season by emergency order.

The department began administering registration permits RM841 and RM844 during RY2008 following a closure to moose hunting in the area RY2005-RY2007. A season extension was issued annually RY2011-RY2015 to allow permit holders to harvest the remaining harvest quota during the fall season. In 2017, The Board of Game changed the season dates for RM841 from Sept 1-Sept 14 to Sept 1-Sept 20 in order to align the hunting regulations with the season dates historically provided through season extensions. These season dates have historically been sufficient to meet the harvest quota.

In the spring of 2017, the department completed a spring GSPE moose survey within the RM841 hunt area which resulted in a moose abundance estimate of 840 moose (90% CI: 747-933). These results indicated that the population had grown 9% annually over the period 2012-2017. As a result, the harvest quota for RY2017 was increased to 34 antlered bull moose.

At the conclusion of the fall hunt on Sept 20, 2017 the total reported harvest in the RM841 hunt was 27 moose. The department denied requests to extend the season during the fall season and issued an emergency order to open the winter hunt, RM844, with a harvest quota of seven antlered bull moose. The department subsequently issued a season extension January 9, 2018 to extend the winter hunt through January 31, 2018 after 0 moose were harvested during the December season. No moose were harvested during the RY2017 RM844 hunt and the season closed on January 31, 2018.

During RY2018 the harvest quota for RM841 was again set at 34 antlered bull moose. At the conclusion of the fall hunt on September 20, 2018 the reported harvest was 24 antlered bull moose. The department received a request from the Native Village of Unalakleet to extend the season to September 30, 2018. A written petition signed by RM841 permit holders was also received which conveyed a preference for fall hunting opportunity over that provided in the winter hunt, RM844.

On September 21, 2018 the department issued an emergency order to extend the season from September 21-September 30. The season subsequently closed on September 30 with a total reported harvest of 35 antlered bull moose.

The events of RY2017 and RY2018 seem to indicate that the current season dates in regulation do not provide adequate opportunity for permit holders to harvest the available quota. Harvest during either season may be strongly influenced by weather, animal movements, travel conditions, as well as other subsistence and commercial activities in the area. As a result the department would like to extend both seasons to cover the full range of season dates historically provided for through season extensions; provide additional administrative flexibility in hunt management; and eliminate the need to issue season extensions in the future.

If adopted, the department does not anticipate the extended season will create a conservation concern. Both the fall and winter hunts are administered as registration permit hunts and managed with harvest quotas. Successful hunters are required to report their harvest to the department within two days of the kill resulting in timely harvest information, and the department has the authority to issue an emergency order closure.

The department does not have any biological justification for administering RM841 with an antlered bull bag limit. The number of antlered bulls is theoretically equal to the number of bulls within the hunt area during the fall season. As a result, applying an antlered bull bag limit during the fall hunt does not have any management implications. Changing the bag limit in the RM841 hunt to one bull would allow permit holders to harvest moose under proxy hunting regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-159)

PROPOSAL 39

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

5 AAC 92.132. Bag limit for brown bears.

Extend the hunting season for brown bear in Unit 22D and 22E, and increase the resident bag limit as follows:

To address this issue, we respectfully request the Board of Game adopt into regulation the following:

Open to Residents All of Unit 22D/ 22E Two bear [ONE BEAR] every regulatory year August 1- June 15 [MAY 1].

Nonresidents All of 22D/ 22E One bear every regulatory year Aug. 1- June 15 [MAY 1].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The more recent changes in the bear hunting regulations for the neighboring Units 22B and 22C the current bear harvest has shown to be sustainable. Bear reproduction has increased from one bear to three bears per litter. The last couple of years the moose quota has dropped substantially, and local ADF&G staff have attributed some of the moose population decline in Units 22D, 22D Remainder, 22D Southwest, to predators within Unit 22E. What used to be a general harvest ticket with no quota to a quota of 50 moose the quota is now in the low 30's. Cow season has been closed in a few of these areas. If this new bear bag limit regulation is adopted for all of Unit 22D and 22E it will match the bag limits that are already in place for Units 22A and 22B.

PROPOSED BY: Kevin Bahnke (EG-F19-114)

PROPOSAL 40

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

Require a registration permit for brown bear hunting in Unit 22C as follows.

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. (a) ...

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (20) | | |
| Unit 22(C) | | |
| RESIDENT HUNTERS: | Aug. 1 – Oct. 31 | |
| 1 bear every regulatory year by registration permit; or | Apr. 1 – May 31 (subsistence hunt only) | |
| 1 bear every regulatory year | Aug. 1 – Oct. 31 | |

by registration permit

Apr. 1 – May 31

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bear every regulatory year by drawing permit only; up to 27 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 22(B)

Aug. 1 – Oct. 31

Apr. 1 – May 31

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Regulatory changes implemented by the Board of Game in 2017 further liberalized brown bear hunting regulations in Unit 22C. The Department of Fish and Game (department) proposes the Board of Game establish a registration permit for all residents hunting brown bear in Unit 22C in order to evaluate and monitor hunting activity and if necessary, take management action to limit brown bear harvest in Unit 22C.

Unit 22 brown bear regulations were liberalized during the 1997, 1999 and 2001 Western/Arctic Board of Game meetings. A series of changes were made during this time to season dates, tag fee requirements and bag limits. These changes were not universally applied. During the period RY2002-RY2011, brown bear hunting in Unit 22C was managed with a bag limit of one brown bear every four regulatory years and seasons dates of August 1 – October 31 (fall) and May 10-May 31 (spring). The average annual reported harvest of brown bears in Unit 22C was 16 bears per year during this time period.

Brown bear hunting regulations in Unit 22C were liberalized during the 2011 Board of Game meeting when the spring season was extended from May 10-May 31 to May 1-May 31 and again during the 2014 meeting when the bag limit changed from one brown bear every four regulatory years to one brown bear every regulatory year. In years after these regulatory changes went into effect, the average annual reported harvest of brown bears in Unit 22C increased 43% from 16 bears per year RY2002-2011 to 23 bears per year RY2012-RY2016.

In 2017, the Board of Game again liberalized brown bear regulations in Unit 22C by extending the spring season from May 1-May 31 to April 1-May 31. Bear hunters throughout Unit 22 primarily use snowmachines to access bears during the spring season. Extending the Unit 22C brown bear season into April provides bear hunters the opportunity to pursue brown bears during a period of time when travel conditions are generally more reliable and better. These regulatory changes took effect in RY2017. Sealing records indicate that adequate travel conditions persisted in Unit 22C throughout the spring season. The total reported harvest of bears taken in Unit 22C during RY2017 was 38 bears, 76% of which were harvested during the spring season. This is the highest reported harvest of brown bears ever recorded for Unit 22C.

The department considered changes to Unit 22C brown bear season dates and bag limits as a way to limit the effects of recent regulatory changes on Unit 22C brown bear harvest. However, the department lacks the information necessary to recommend small incremental changes to regulations that would provide meaningful data and information without significantly restricting

opportunity. A registration permit would provide the department the means to collect data and information to maintain harvest at the levels previously observed 2012-2017 until the department has a chance to evaluate the status of the Seward Peninsula brown bear population and the effects of increased harvest. The department is planning to participate in a brown bear abundance survey in cooperation with the National Park Service using mark re-sight methods in the spring of 2020.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F19-157)

PROPOSAL 41

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

Extend the season dates for brown bear hunting in Unit 22B and 22C as follows:

Align closing dates of brown bear/grizzly bear season with adjacent portions of Unit 22A. The existing regulation closes the hunt on May 31, but hunts in Unit 22A run through June 15. If adopted, the new regulation would extend closing date of DB685 to June 15 and the resident general season hunt in the same area to June 30.

Unit 22B

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

2 bears every regulatory year by registration (Subsistence hunt only) permit only; or Aug. 1 – **June 30** [MAY 31]

2 bears every regulatory year Aug. 1 – **June 30** [MAY 31]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bear every regulatory year by drawing permit only; up to 27 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 22C Aug. 1 – **June 15** [MAY 31]

Unit 22C

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bear every regulatory year by registration permit; or Aug. 1 - Oct. 31
Apr. 1 – **June 30** [MAY 31]

1 bear every regulatory year Aug. 1 - Oct. 31
Apr. 1 – **June 30** [MAY 31]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bear every regulatory year by drawing permit only; up to 27 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 22B

Aug. 1 - **June 15** [OCT. 31] [APR. 1 – MAY 31]

The new regulation would read August 1 – June 15 for nonresidents and August 1–June 30 for residents.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The DB685 nonresident brown/grizzly bear hunt in Units 22B and 22C currently closes on May 31. The season in adjacent areas in Unit 22A runs through June 15, and the adjacent areas in Unit 21D are open through June 30. Hunts in both adjacent areas are open for both residents and nonresidents under general season regulations. It would benefit hunters with DB685 permits if they could hunt both the drawing and general season areas up to the same closing dates, or at least for an additional 15 days. There does not appear to be a biological concern with the bear population in this area as adjacent units and subunits are open to general season hunting. Season dates for resident general season hunts in the same areas should also be extended to avoid confusion and could be extended beyond the requested nonresident season to June 30 in order to provide additional opportunity.

PROPOSED BY: James Smith (EG-F19-037)

PROPOSAL 42

5 AAC 92.080(4)(B)(i). Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions.

Allow the use of snowmachines to position brown bears for harvest in Unit 22 as follows:

The new regulation would be modified to read “In Unit 22, snow machines may be used to position caribou, wolf, wolverine and grizzly bear for harvest and they may be shot from a stationary snow machine.”

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current regulation does not allow a hunter to use a snow machine to position a grizzly bear for harvest and for a hunter to shoot from a stationary snow machine. However, they can for caribou, wolf, and wolverine. This is a standard and accepted practice in the area when snow conditions allow.

Currently the most practical and safe way to harvest bears in the spring is by snow machine. If this regulation is not changed, bears will not be managed effectively and eventually a predator control program may have to be established. I suggest that the regulation be changed to reflect standard practices that already are conducted for other game in the area. Spotting a grizzly bear from a snow machine and then trying to pursue in closer on foot is very dangerous in soft snow conditions.

PROPOSED BY: Justin Horton (EG-F19-083)

PROPOSAL 43

5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game.

Address customary and traditional use findings for Alaska hares in Unit 22, and modify the season and bag limit.

5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game. (a)(2)

| Units and Bag Limits | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (2) | | |
| Snowshoe and Alaska hares | | |
| Units 1-5 | Sept. 1 – Apr. 30 | Sept. 1 – Apr. 30 |
| Units 6 – 26, except 14(A) and 14(C) and Alaska hares in Unit 9 <u>and Unit 22</u> | No closed season | No closed season |
| No limit | | |
| Unit 9, Alaska hares only 1 per day, 4 total | Nov. 1 – Jan. 30 | Nov. 1 – Jan. 30 |
| <u>Unit 22, Alaska hares only</u> <u>2 per day</u> | <u>Sept. 1 – Apr. 15</u> | <u>Sept. 1 – Apr. 15</u> |
| Unit 14(A) 5 per day | No closed season (General hunt only) | No closed season |
| Unit 14(C) 5 per day | Day after Labor Day– Apr. 30 (General hunt only) | Day after Labor Day– Apr. 30 |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The once-abundant Alaska hare populations in Unit 18 and Unit 9 are now at very low density. Residents of these areas have raised concerns about dramatically lower abundance than historically observed as recent as the 1980s and 1990s.

Alaska hares are also present in Unit 22. Local residents consider them to be common in the area and although they are believed to be below historic levels of abundance local residents suggest hare numbers are not as low as those observed in Units 18 and 9.

The board has not yet considered whether there are subsistence uses of Alaska hares in Unit 22.

Although the Department of Fish and Game does not survey Alaska hare ranges and no population or density estimates are available in Unit 22 regulations should be revised to acknowledge the apparent low density of this species found elsewhere within its range. The proposal may result in a slight decrease in hunting opportunity; however, when climatic and habitat conditions are favorable for Alaska hares, a low hunter harvest could protect localized populations for quicker recovery and recolonization.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F19-156)
