

PROPOSAL 157

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.

Shorten the beaver trapping season in Unit 7 as follows:

Beaver trapping season: Unit 7 – **Nov. 1** [Oct. 15] - April 30

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since 2015, beaver are at least locally depleted in Unit 7. For example, along the Seward and Sterling Highways where beaver were once fairly common now they appear to be virtually absent.

Traditional Unit 7 beaver season was November 10 - March 31, generally necessitating under ice trapping which is less efficient than open water trapping. Beaver populations seemed to be fairly stable. At some point the season was extended to April 30 allowing weeks of open water opportunity. Beginning 2015, the season was again extended, this time to open October 15. Beaver abundance seemed to hold up pretty well after the season was extended to April 30 but soon became obviously depleted after the change to October 15 open.

There is also a federal subsistence hunting season for beaver in Unit 7:

BEAVER • All rural residents, 1 beaver per day, May 1 - October 10.

Beaver pelt quality improves November 1 versus October 15.

Shortening the beaver season in Unit 7 to open November 1 will continue to provide abundant harvest opportunity while giving the population a better chance to recover.

Shortening the beaver season in Unit 15 was considered. However much of Unit 15 is within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge which already has additional beaver trapping restrictions in place. Further we are not familiar enough with Unit 15 beaver populations to ask for a shorter season.

Reducing the bag limit was also considered but presumably few trappers seal 20 beavers from Unit 7 so that probably is not a contributing factor to observed declines.

PROPOSED BY: Cooper Landing Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F22-079)
