

Proposal 208 to close ram harvests in GMU 19C etc.

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Speaking for myself from my decades of experience with Dall sheep.

I urge the Board to reject proposals (208 and 214) to reduce Dall sheep hunting opportunities (in GMU 19C and 14C) for the following reasons:

1. While there may be fewer sheep than there used to be, my experience in Dall sheep research and management has shown there are always more sheep than we think there are based on aerial surveys.
2. The harvest of mature rams has consistently been less than half of the recruitment to legal hunting age/size.
3. Hunter numbers typically adjust with the public's perception of legal ram abundance.
4. In my opinion (based on decades of involvement in Dall sheep research and management), restrictions on hunting opportunity (particularly for legal rams) are not biologically necessary at this time, and will have negligible benefits in restoring Dall sheep abundance.
5. If surplus mature rams exist (and I cannot imagine they don't), any restriction on hunting opportunity (as presently offered) is biologically unnecessary, and hence arbitrary.
Arbitrary regulations can not be considered consistent with Alaska Constitution Article VIII Secs. 1-4.
6. Nothing will be irrevocably harmed by leaving things as they are at this time. If hunters do not adjust their numbers with relation to perceived opportunity, or hunter success doesn't remain about as high as it has despite population fluctuations in the past, we can certainly adjust opportunities next year. Acting at this point on the information we have from ADF&G (as presented on October 19) seems premature to me, and is not in the best interests of future Dall ram. Again, an experience-based opinion.

Additionally, I get jumpy when the Board (established "*For the purposes of the conservation and development of the game resources of the state . .*

. “ via AS16/05.2210 rather than the Department (which is the manager) makes proposals to itself and then passes those proposals. That just seems out of character with the historic intended purpose of the Board. That purpose should be expected to comply with the Alaska Constitution Article VIII Secs. 1-4 which call for best-data/science to produce maximum sustained yield principle-driven regulations, not arbitrary or emotionally-based regulations.

Respectfully,

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