

**PROPOSAL 12**

**5 AAC 85.020 Hunting season and bag limits for brown bear.**

Lengthen the fall brown bear hunting seasons in Units 9D and 9E for both residents and nonresidents as follows:

Units 9D and 9E: Both residents and nonresidents, October 1-21: 1 bear every four regulatory years by registration permit RB368

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The shortened fall season for brown bear for nonresidents in Units 9D & 9E. Several years ago, due to guide conflict in Unit 9B and 9C, a proposal was passed to limit the harvest of bears in those subunits due to user conflict and perceived abuse of the resource. Units 9D and 9E were not at all affected by this user conflict and issue. However, the proposal was passed to shorten the seasons for all of Unit 9 from October 1-21 to October 7-21. This cut the first six days of the season and shortened it from 21 days to 15 days. The first six days of October are much better weather and more favorable hunting conditions for large mature boars than the end of the season. Additionally, the weather in Units 9D and 9E can be downright terrible later in October and make it difficult to hunt and even more difficult for outfitters to operate safely, and even more difficult to get home at the end of the season.

Then last year, those same "upper" Unit 9 subunits that had the issues that caused the shortening of the season, successfully proposed to extend their seasons. Unit 9A and 9C to October 1-21 and Unit 9B September 20-21, while Units 9D and 9E were left unchanged at our October 7 start date. Consultation with the Unit 9 biologist in King Salmon confirmed the bear population in Units 9D and 9E is healthy and consistent with the other subunits. Also confirmed the harvest statistics are similar in all Unit 9 subunits for ratio of male/female harvest. This indicates that there is no statistical evidence to suggest a limited season for these two subunits when the other subunits have a longer season.

A shift in the season dates would not increase the number of hunters in the field. It will simply increase hunter experience and harvest of mature boars, which is already determined to be a sustainable practice. It will also be adding additional safety factor for operators that is more aligned with other subunits and the current weather patterns.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?** In coordination with other outfitters in Units 9D and 9E as well as consultation and insight from the Unit 9 biologist.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jordan Wallace and Dave Leonard (EG-F24-049)

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