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NEWS

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State Changes Subsistence Muskox Hunting Season In Hunt RX106 In Unit 23 Southwest

The Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) announces a change to the subsistence hunting season for muskox by registration permit in Unit 23 Southwest during regulatory year 2011-2012. The open season for Hunt RX106 is January 1 through March 15 unless closed by a subsequent emergency order when the harvest quota is reached. The affected hunt area is Unit 23 Southwest, that portion on the Seward Peninsula west of and including the Buckland River drainage. The available harvest quota for a combined state and federal hunt in Unit 23 Southwest is up to 7 muskox (including up to 3 cows). The season will be closed by emergency order when the quota is filled. Registration permits for hunt RX106 will be available in Kotzebue, Deering, and Buckland beginning on December 12, 2011.

The Board of Game approved a harvest rate of up to 8% for muskox in Unit 23 Southwest. In 2009, harvest rates were reduced to 4% in response to stable population counts and declining trends in bull:cow ratios (mature bulls per 100 cows three-years old and older). For regulatory year 2011-2012, a harvest quota of up to 7 muskox (including up to 3 cows) has been established based on the revised 2010 population estimate, declining bull:cow ratios, and a 4% harvest rate.

To prevent overharvest in the herd, the harvest quota for this portion of Unit 23 is managed jointly by state and federal managers for subsistence hunting opportunity. The reduced quota has required State managers to implement a shorter State hunting season using a single quota rather than managing the hunt with split quotas for separate fall and winter seasons which was possible when available harvest was higher. A winter season has been implemented to allow: 1) the take of up to 3 cows in place of bull-only bag limits typical of fall hunts, and 2) easier access to the hunt area using snowmachines. Hunters desiring information on the federally managed hunt should contact the National Park Service in Kotzebue for federal hunting information.

The Tier II muskox hunt TX107 in Unit 23 is not affected by this emergency order and will open August 1, 2011 as published in the 2011-2012 hunting regulations.

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