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NEWS RELEASE

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Kenai Peninsula Registration Brown Bear Hunt Closes October 21

(Soldotna) – Registration brown bear hunt RB300 in Kenai Peninsula Game Management Units 7 and 15 will close by emergency order at 11:59 p.m., October 21, 2014. The 2014 Peninsula-wide management objective is not to exceed 70 human-caused brown bear mortalities, including no more than 17 adult sows. Currently, the total reported number of human-caused mortalities for 2014 is 67 bears, including seven adult sows.

Human-caused brown bear mortalities unrelated to hunting – including road kills, bears killed in defense of life or property, and animals taken illegally by poachers – historically occur on the Peninsula through October and, to a lesser extent, into November. The hunting season is being closed to avoid exceeding the management cap.

“Closing this hunt at 67 bears will ensure that we have a safe buffer,” said Division of Wildlife Conservation Director Doug Vincent-Lang.

The Alaska Board of Game raised Kenai Peninsula brown bear mortality caps in 2013, largely in response to testimony from many locals that brown bear nuisance issues and public safety were a concern. also in 2014, regulations allowed hunters with RB300 permits to harvest Peninsula brown bears during the spring hunting season at established black bear bait stations. Hunters were encouraged to take mature boars only.

Early reports suggest management strategies are working to reduce nuisance brown bear complaints and non-hunting mortalities while maintaining hunting opportunity. Human-caused mortalities of adult brown bear sows remain well below the cap of 17, while non-hunting human-caused brown bear mortalities have been low – four bears total – well below recent averages.

“Having fewer bears near town has led to fewer complaints,” said Kenai Area Wildlife Biologist Jeff Selinger. “That, combined with more people taking measures to manage attractants has led to fewer bear-human conflicts in residential areas.”

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