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Advisory Announcement

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Dall Sheep Hunting Requires Extra Care

(Fairbanks) – As hunting season fast approaches, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is asking sheep hunters to use diligence when evaluating and harvesting rams.

Last season, many ADF&G offices reported an increase in the number of sublegal sheep that were presented to be sealed. ADF&G refers these cases to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers for citation.

Record snowfall and late spring storms in 2012, 2013, and 2014 resulted in poor lamb production and declining sheep populations in many Alaska mountain ranges. Higher than normal winter mortality in the winters of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 further reduced sheep numbers in many game management units. Rams born between 2012-2014 will be 8, 9, and 10 years old this season— age classes that typically make up most of the harvest available to hunters. There are legal rams out there, but hunters may see fewer of them. As a result, hunters may be more tempted to harvest younger and smaller rams. Harvesting younger, sublegal rams further reduces the number of rams available for legal harvest in future years.

An ADF&G booklet on hunting and judging sheep for legality can be obtained online at https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/hunting/dallsheephunting/pdfs/dall_sheep_hunting_full_curl_identification_guide.pdf, or picked up at your local ADF&G office.

Hunters are encouraged to carefully assess horns to ensure that a ram meets the legal definition of full-curl before harvesting. Hunters should also approach animals as closely as possible to ensure a clean, ethical shot, and choose harvest locations where sheep can be recovered after harvest.

We encourage hunters to pass on marginal sheep, spend extra time watching the animals to learn more about behavior, and enjoy the experience of spending time in the sheep mountains.

More information on Dall Sheep hunting in Alaska is available on the ADF&G website:
<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=sheephunting.main>

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