

**Alaska Board of Game
2002-136A-BOG
Unit 1D Brown Bear Drawing Hunt Finding**

The Board of Game (Board) took public and advisory committee testimony on (Unit 1D) brown bears, received biological information from the Department of Fish and Game, and deliberated a proposal (Proposal 7) dealing with a drawing permit hunt for brown bears. As a result, the Board finds the following:

1. Harvest of brown bears in Unit 1D has met or exceeded harvest goals during the 1991-2001 period. This is due to an increase in Defense of Life and Property (DLP) by expanding human populations into brown bear habitat and to increasing nonresident harvest.
2. Specific details of over harvest of brown bears are noted: harvest of brown bears exceeds the harvest goal in Unit 1D during 1991-2001. The harvest goal for brown bears in Unit 1D is 16 bears (4% of the estimated population of 396) with the female portion of the harvest not to exceed 1.5% of the estimated population. Mean annual harvest during 1991-2001 is 17 bears/year.
3. Harvest of female brown bears exceeds the goal of 1.5% including a harvest of 5 sows in one season by the nonresident clients of one big game commercial service provider.
4. A greater number of guides are operating in Unit 1D due to recent restrictions that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) imposed on brown bear guiding on federal lands in Unit 4 and in the remainder of Unit 1. Because of restrictions on federal land, guiding on state land in Unit 1D has become very attractive to guides not permitted to hunt brown bears on federal lands in southeast Alaska. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) does not have an effective means in which to limit or distribute the intensity of big game commercial service provider effort.
5. The Board finds that a lack of a Big Game Commercial Services Board and the inability to limit the scope of operation pertaining to individual big game commercial service providers has detrimentally affected guided hunter allocation. The state has no way to restrict the number of guides who can operate in a particular area since the Owsichek decision in 1988. If additional guides begin targeting Unit 1D this will put additional hunting pressure on the brown bear population.
6. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG) and DNR hope to work together with brown bear guides to address big game commercial guiding in the Haines State Forest (HSF) Plan. A permitting system enacted by DNR would allow them to potentially limit the number of

guides operating on HSF land if ADFG believed this would help solve the resource concern with brown bears or other wildlife species.

7. Regulatory options available to ADFG included managing the hunt through Emergency closures. However, because of the low reproductive potential of brown bears, the Board realized that this strategy would likely result in continued over harvest.
8. In order to address conservation concerns, ADFG proposed the option of establishing a drawing permit hunt for nonresidents for brown bears in Unit 1D (Proposal 7) similar to the hunt established for brown bears in 26B (5AAC 85.025).
9. Alaskan residents and advisory committees were divided on the drawing permit issue. The Juneau Advisory Committee supported the department proposal with the amendment that the Board approve 20 permits for the drawing permit hunt. The Upper Lynn Canal AC opposed the idea of a drawing permit hunt. All respondents agreed that harvest has met or exceeded ADFG harvest goals and that there is an increasing trend in harvest of brown bears in Unit 1D.
10. Given that the human population continues to grow and expand in Unit 1D and given that there is no way to allocate hunting opportunity for brown bears among a continually growing population of guides, it is evident that the brown bear population would continue to be threatened as the annual harvest exceeds harvest goals.
11. Given that harvest of brown bear sows has been increasing during the previous decade and that sows comprised 50% of the harvest in some years, it is evident that the brown bear population would continue to be threatened as the annual harvest exceeds harvest goals.
12. The Board adopted a nonresident drawing permit hunt for brown bears in Unit 1D to be held each year between the dates of Sept. 15 through Dec. 31 and March 15 through May 31. Up to 20 permits are authorized.
13. By this action, the Board's intent is to provide desired sustained hunting opportunities for resident and nonresident hunters and to support a viable guiding industry in Unit 1D.

Vote: _____
November 7, 2002
Juneau, Alaska

Ben Grussendorf, Chair
Alaska Board of Game

