

Sheep Hunting

PROPOSAL 21 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Modify the restrictions on the use of aircraft for sheep hunting as follows:

Option 1. Delete the following [FROM AUGUST 10 TO SEPTEMBER 20 AIRCRAFT MAY ONLY BE USED TO PLACE HUNTERS AND CAMPS, MAINTAIN EXISTING CAMPS, AND SALVAGE MEAT AND TROPHIES WHILE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DALL SHEEP HUNTING. USING AN AIRCRAFT FOR THE PURPOSE OF SPOTTING SHEEP OR LOCATING DALL SHEEP DURING THE OPEN HUNTING SEASON IS PROHIBITED]

Option 2. Change the wording of proposal 207 to read: **From August 9 to September 20 the use of aircraft to judge Dall sheep for trophy/legal status for the purposes to hunt/harvest is prohibited.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal (or change wording) of the Board of Game generated proposal 207. 1.) Alaska Wildlife Troopers were not in support of 207 and publicly commented that it would be very difficult to enforce. 2.) Proposal 207 was not generated from the public, and when it went out for comments the majority of public written comments were not in support of 207. Advisory Committees that represent the majority of sheep hunters (Anchorage, Mat-Valley and Fairbanks) all opposed proposal 207. Personnel phone calls to board members were used as "public support" 3.) Proposal 207 specifically targets Alaskan residents that use aircraft for the purpose of sheep hunting. Proposal 207 gives hunting guides that use aircraft /nonresidents hunters a big advantage over residents since guides have the time and money to pre-season locate and establish camps before August 10 and are also flying in support of camps during season. (I doubt their eyes are closed when doing it.) If a resident wants to go sheep hunting later in the season to avoid crowds they are at a huge disadvantage. 4.) Proposal 207 does not help at all with the crowding problem. The number one complaint that came from Dr. Brinkman's sheep hunter satisfaction survey was over-crowding; proposal 207 will make that worse during the first part of the season. 5.) Since the ADF&G has not identified any biological reasons to support proposal 207, it appears to be strictly an allocation away from Alaskan residents that use aircraft. 6. **Most importantly**, the way the current regulation reads goes far beyond the board's intent when they passed it. The board intent during discussion was to stop the practice of buzzing sheep to judge them thus affecting other hunters and not being ethical under fair chase. The wording in this regulation prohibits far more than that practice and ties the hands of resident hunters during season when going to unfamiliar areas to change plans based on weather, crowding, and changes in landing areas. This causes a serious safety issue if pilots are worried about getting reported if they want to look for a different spot that would be safer for them to land/hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Daniel Jirak

(EG-C15-024)

PROPOSAL 22 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Modify the restrictions on the use of aircraft for sheep hunting as follows:

Delete: ****From August 10 to September 20 aircraft may only be used to place hunters and camps, maintain existing camps, and salvage meat and trophies while used for the purpose of Dall sheep hunting. Using an aircraft for the purpose of spotting sheep or locating Dall sheep during the open hunting season is prohibited. -****

Replace above language with: - From August 10 to September 20 you must avoid using an aircraft in any manner to spot Dall sheep for the purpose of taking a specific sheep. -

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Rescind 2015 proposal #207. Proposal 207 is excessively broad; therefore we suggest fixing this problem by replacing it with language that mirrors current Big Game Commercial Services regulation prohibiting the use of aircraft to spot a "specific animal." This simply conforms the language for "commercial service providers" and hunting methods and means, while eliminating a redundant regulation.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Professional Hunters Association (EG-C15-112)

PROPOSAL 23 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Repeal the restrictions on the use of aircraft for sheep hunting as follows:

The Board of Game should totally rescind proposal 207 as adopted by the board into regulation. The wording in brackets would be deleted: [FROM AUGUST 10 TO SEPTEMBER 20 AIRCRAFT MAY ONLY BE USED TO PLACE HUNTERS AND CAMPS, MAINTAIN EXISTING CAMPS, AND SALVAGE MEAT AND TROPHIES WHILE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DALL SHEEP HUNTING. USING AN AIRCRAFT FOR THE PURPOSE OF SPOTTING SHEEP OR LOCATING DALL SHEEP DURING THE OPEN SEASON IS PROHIBITED.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal the Board of Game generated proposal 207, option 1, as adopted by the board, for reasons including the following: 1.) The Alaska Wildlife Troopers were not in support of 207 as passed and publicly commented that it would be very difficult to enforce this proposal. 2.) Proposal 207 was not generated from the public, and when it went out for comments the majority of the written comments were not in support of proposal 207. A total of 224 comments were received at the April 24 and May 28 meetings; of these, 184 comments were to rescind proposal 207 and only 27 were in support of keeping proposal 207 as a regulation. The three Advisory Committees that represent the majority of sheep hunters (Anchorage, Mat Valley and Fairbanks) all opposed proposal 207. 3.) Proposal 207 specifically targets hunters that use aircraft for the purpose of sheep hunting. If a resident wants to go sheep hunting later in the season to avoid crowds they will be at a huge disadvantage. 4.) Proposal 207 does not help at all with the crowding problem, which was the number one complaint that came from Dr. Brinkman's sheep hunter satisfaction survey. If anything, this proposal will make crowding worse during the early season period. 5.) Since the Department of Fish and Game has not identified any biological reasons to support proposal 207,

it appears to be strictly an allocation away from hunters that use aircraft. 6.) The Board of Game generated this proposal without following 13-34-JB; Criteria for Development of Board-Generated Proposals. 7.) There are many Dall sheep draw hunts that have openings mid-season. Hunters that have these tags would not be able to do scouting.

PROPOSED BY: Mat Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-C15-122)

PROPOSAL 24 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Repeal the restrictions on the use of aircraft for sheep hunting as follows:

[FROM AUGUST 10 TO SEPTEMBER 20 AIRCRAFT MAY ONLY BE USED TO PLACE HUNTERS AND CAMPS, MAINTAIN EXISTING CAMPS, AND SALVAGE MEAT AND TROPHIES WHILE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DALL SHEEP HUNTING. USING AN AIRCRAFT FOR THE PURPOSE OF SPOTTING SHEEP OR LOCATING DALL SHEEP DURING THE OPEN HUNTING SEASON IS PROHIBITED]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal the Board of Game generated proposal 207. 1.) Alaska Wildlife Troopers were not in support of 207 and publicly commented that it would be very difficult to enforce.2.) Proposal 207 was not generated from the public, and when it went out for comments the majority of public written comments were not in support of 207. Advisory Committees that represent the majority of sheep hunters (Anchorage, Mat Valley and Fairbanks) all opposed proposal 207. 3.) Proposal 207 specifically targets Alaskan residents that use aircraft for the purpose of sheep hunting. Proposal 207 gives hunting guides that use aircraft /nonresident hunters a big advantage over residents since guides have the time and money to pre-season locate and establish camps before August 10. If a resident wants to go sheep hunting later in the season to avoid crowds they are at a huge disadvantage. 4.) Proposal 207 does not help at all with the crowding problem. The number one complaint that came from Dr. Brinkman's sheep hunter satisfaction survey was over-crowding, if anything proposal 207 will make that worse. 5.) Since the Department of Fish and Game has not identified any biological reasons to support proposal 207, it appears to be strictly an allocation away from Alaskan residents that use aircraft.

PROPOSED BY: Kevin Asher and Adam St. Onge (EG-C15-004/026)

PROPOSAL 25 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Repeal the restrictions on the use of aircraft for sheep hunting as follows:

Repeal the regulation created by Board of Game proposal #207

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The recently passed board generated proposal #207 is a bad solution to a problem. The prohibition of spotting sheep during sheep season from an aircraft will lead to increased crowding of sheep hunters during the first week of the season. It will be a safety hazard by causing pilots to push weather to get to a spot before season or by being afraid of making more than one pass to determine the safety of a

landing zone. It will be an opportunity for any hunter or guide to harass another hunter using the same area by falsely reporting that a given plane was being used to spot sheep. It will create anxiety in any hunter using his own aircraft for placing sheep hunters in the field. It will not change the fact that there are still too few sheep to satisfy sheep hunters.

PROPOSED BY: John Frost (EG-C15-116)

PROPOSAL 26 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Repeal the restrictions on the use of aircraft for sheep hunting as follows:

Rescind proposal 207. Address aggressive spotting and/or multiple low level passes and circling during sheep season under the hunter harassment law. Require 12 inch numbers on all planes used to hunt Dall sheep. Have the Department of Fish and Game develop an "airplanes and hunting etiquette" DVD or pamphlet.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Rescind the 2015 proposal #207. Proposal 207 is excessively broad and makes everyone flying in the mountains during sheep season suspect to illegally spotting sheep. Also, the Board of Game has expressed their concern numerous times about resident hunters being disenfranchised and not participating due to overcrowding. This will further discourage resident hunters. Many don't have a lot of time to hunt, and to not even be able to do a quick fly by through nearby valleys looking for legal rams or other camps without risking prosecution and/or loss of their air craft, is likely to discourage many resident hunters from participating at all. Most use their planes to separate themselves from other hunters, not hunt on top of those already there. Though I sincerely feel proposal 207 is unenforceable, it could cost a lot of money to prove one's innocence.

PROPOSED BY: Wayne Kubat (EG-C15-126)

PROPOSAL 27 - 5 AAC 92.990(30). Definitions. Amend the definition of legal Dall sheep ram as follows:

Change the definition of legal Dall sheep ram from: full curl or eight years old or double broomed to: full curl or **nine years old** or double broomed

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to address too many young Dall sheep rams being harvested. It would be a good move to raise the average age at harvest. It is good to have a few eight year old rams left in the population every fall and this will help save some of the young rams that won't take on breeding stress. There are a good number of 7/8 curl rams out there that are eight years old. If they live one more year they end up being nine years old and full curl. In my opinion this is a good thing.

PROPOSED BY: Atlin Daugherty (EG-C15-099)

PROPOSAL 28 - 5 AAC 92.130. Restrictions to bag limit; and 92.990(a)(30). Definitions.

Modify seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep statewide as follows:

Statewide Dall sheep bag limit, unless otherwise provided in 5 AAC 85–92:

One “Full Curl Ram” annually, however,

Only one “Full Curl -” (Full Curl Minus) ram may be taken every four regulatory years by resident hunters; one every ten years by nonresident hunters;

One “Full Curl +” (Full Curl Plus) ram may be taken every regulatory year.

If a second “Full Curl -” ram is taken in a four year period, the hunter may not hunt sheep for the next five years anywhere in the state.

Definitions:

“Full Curl -”: Same as the current definition of full curl (full curl, or broken on both sides, or at least eight years old)

“Full Curl +”: Full curl, broken on both sides, or at least eight years old; **AND** at least 38”; or at least ten years old

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal directly addresses sub legal harvest, the lack of older rams in the population and declining trophy quality concerns.

At least ten % of all rams taken are deemed sub-legal at sealing. In addition, an estimated ten % more are deemed “too close to call, or close enough”, likely sub-legal but too close for the Department of Fish and Game and Alaska Wildlife Troopers to pursue a case.

Justification:

#1 This proposal will allow hunters to hunt every year as long as they are diligent and take large or mature rams. Rather than raising the standard for the bag limit, this allows a hunter to pursue a currently “just legal” ram once every four years, or use the small ram bag limit in case he misjudges a ram they think is larger or older.

#2 This proposal also imposes an administrative penalty for taking two smaller, but yet still legal rams rather than a legal violation. (They may not hunt sheep for the next five years.)

#3 This proposal will force sheep hunters to be very diligent to take old age or large rams at least three out of four years, cutting down sub-legal take drastically.

#4 It is suspected that some very old rams are beneficial to sheep populations.

PROPOSED BY: Steve Untiet and Cary Bloomquist

(HQ-C15-130)

PROPOSAL 29 - 5 AAC 92.990(a)(30). Definitions. Define the term broken as it applies to the definition of full-curl horn of male (ram) Dall sheep as follows:

- (30) “full-curl horn” of a male (ram) Dall sheep means that
- (A) the tip of at least one horn has grown through 360 degrees of a circle described by the outer surface of the horn, as viewed from the side, or
 - (B) both horn tips are broken, or
 - (C) the sheep is at least eight years of age as determined by horn growth annuli;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The efforts by the public and the Department of Fish and Game to scrutinize all aspects of sheep management are still ongoing and as a result the department felt it necessary to submit a proposal to allow the Board of Game to further define broken if an acceptable definition is uncovered as the efforts of the public and the department continue. The department is in the process of creating educational materials for judging full-curl horns of male (ram) Dall sheep and is proactively submitting this proposal in the event the board would like to adopt a definition.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-C15-158)

PROPOSAL 30 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish a nonresident bag limit for sheep of one every four years as follows:

Change Dall sheep bag limit for nonresident hunters to read: One legal ram every (three) four regulatory years. (One ram every three years is a viable alternative to the one every four years.)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We have repeatedly expressed concerns about the numbers of legal rams as well as emphasized our goals to have sustainable, well managed hunting opportunities. Restricting brown bear bag limits for both residents and nonresidents to one every four years has proved very effective over time and eventually resulted in lifting the "one every four" restriction in many units. We are optimistic that this will save some sheep each year, thus this helps to conserve the resource.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Professional Hunters Association (EG-C15-113)

PROPOSAL 31 - 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts. Allow one sheep or goat draw permit per hunter every three years as follows:

Both resident and nonresident hunters cannot put in for a sheep or goat draw permit if they have had a successful draw for that species permit in the past three years. In other words, you may only draw a sheep permit or a goat permit once every three years. By only being able to draw a permit every three years, hunters will think carefully about whether they can utilize a sought after permit before they apply for it.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Both sheep and mountain goat draw permits are awarded to resident and nonresident hunters who then don't use them for various reasons, but then they can put in for the same species draw permit in another area the next year. This takes opportunity away from serious hunters trying to draw a permit, while people without a real commitment to use a hard to draw permit are awarded one.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Montgomery (EG-C15-123)

PROPOSAL 32 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Change all sheep hunts to drawing or registration permit hunts as follows:

Dall sheep hunts should go to draw permits for everyone. No state in the country has sheep hunts without a permit. Going to a draw permit for August 10–September 10 and a registration permit issued for September 11–September 20 if harvest numbers are not met. This proposal will be better for everyone. Residents will have their priority. Dedicated sheep hunters who don't draw will be able to hunt the late season which is generally better for the big rams. Guides on federal lands already have their permit numbers issued by the federal land manager they occupy. Draw areas have been working well. Look at the Tok Management Area, Delta Controlled Use Management Area and the Chugach State Park areas.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Dall sheep numbers have been on the decline for years due weather, wolves and hunting pressure. If nothing is done, the state will be forced to go to permit or emergency order shutdown with big repercussions to sheep numbers.

PROPOSED BY: Demitrios Deoudes (EG-C15-047)

PROPOSAL 33 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Extend the sheep hunting season statewide; provide a timeframe for resident-only and nonresident-only hunting; and establish a statewide registration season as follows:

General Sheep Seasons:

Residents Only **August 2–9** **Registration Permit**
(One permit for all statewide open areas). Hunters may only hunt this season once every three (two?) years.

Nonresidents Only **August 10–17** **Registration Permit**
(One permit for all statewide open areas). Hunters may only hunt this season once every ten year (See justification # 9)

Residents and Nonresidents **August 18–Sept 20** **Registration Permit**
(One permit for all statewide open areas)

“Auction Tag” recipients may hunt all seasons

Early registration periods for residents and nonresidents would alternate years to start first. (Alternative: Residents could start first two out of three years to provide a small advantage).

Drawing areas and seasons would remain unchanged.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Hunters have long complained of crowding during the early portion of season and in easily accessed areas. The only way to alleviate crowding without drastically reducing opportunity (such as a drawing) is to separate hunters over time and space. Resident hunters have asked for a time to hunt without the competition from nonresident hunters and guides. Guides would also benefit from a premier time to hunt without resident competition and crowding.

Justification:

#1 This proposal will reduce crowding by separating both resident and nonresident hunters over time early in the season.

#2 Resident hunting in the early season must be limited to once every two or three years or crowding will only be made worse. Residents account for more than 70% of all sheep hunters and over half of those hunt over the opening week.

#3 Outfitters will likely choose to take a larger percentage of their clients in the nonresident exclusive season, likely slightly reducing conflicts in the remaining season after August 18.

#4 The new aircraft restrictions passed by the board will only increase early crowding due to the desire of some hunters to spot their sheep from the air before hunting. These hunters will all hunt the opener when previously some hunted later in the season. This fact, combined with an already crowded opening week necessitate separation of hunters.

#5 This proposal may encourage those that have quit sheep hunting due to being frustrated by crowding to re-enter sheep hunting.

#6 Ideally, this proposal will be passed in conjunction with a proposal to slightly restrict the bag limit to counteract any increase in harvest resulting from the additional resident hunters that may decide to hunt due to the exclusive season.

#7 By allowing auction tag recipients to hunt all seasons, it will increase the revenue to ADF&G through these already valuable tags. Auction tags for the Brooks Range, Wrangell Mountains, etc. may be viable revenue sources.

#8 Nonresidents probably do not need to be limited to the number of times they can hunt the exclusive season because very few take more than one sheep in Alaska, in a lifetime. This provision was included simply for appearance purposes. If residents are limited to every three years in their exclusive season, they may have angst with nonresidents being able to hunt every year in the exclusive season.

Resident hunters may only hunt each of the “Limited Entry Areas” (drawing or registration) once every five years. This will minimize the people that are really good with registering online from getting the same tag every year. Nonresidents are limited by the drawing.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Hunters have long complained of crowding during the early portion of season and in easily accessed areas. The only way to alleviate crowding without drastically reducing opportunity (such as a drawing) is to separate hunters over time and space. Resident hunters who do not have access to aircraft or are on a budget have asked for a time to hunt without the competition from nonresident hunters and guides. Increased drawing areas have caused a drastic reduction in resident success rates and opportunity over the last decade or so.

Justification:

#1 This proposal will reduce crowding by separating both resident and nonresident hunters over time by allowing them to choose which season is most desirable to each individual. The two early seasons could be ten days long. Seven days was chosen to allow for more “Open” hunting under current methods and means.

#2 Seasons in this proposal get less restrictive as the hunting season progresses; allowing for current regulations only eight days later than currently in place. This will progressively remove hunters from the field causing much less of an “Opening Day Phenomena” on August 17.

#3 This proposal will allow for a limited resident only season in area most easily accessed by those on a budget or for those that are willing to work very hard to hike into remote areas.

#4 The new aircraft restrictions passed by the board will only increase early crowding due to the desire of some hunters to spot their sheep from the air before hunting. These hunters will all hunt the opener when previously some hunted later in the season. This fact, combined with an already crowded opening week, necessitate separation of hunters.

#5 This proposal may encourage those that have quit sheep hunting due to being frustrated by crowding to re-enter sheep hunting.

#6 Allowing a resident-only opportunity with a walk-in only restriction will greatly increase opportunity without greatly increasing harvest. This slight increase in harvest is allowed by slightly decreasing the harvest the second season by limiting method of take.

#7 Ideally this proposal will be passed in conjunction with a proposal to slightly restrict the bag limit to counteract any slight increase in harvest.

#8 By allowing auction tag recipients to hunt all seasons with any weapon, it will increase the revenue to ADF&G through these already valuable tags.

#9 This proposal seeks to address long-term issues with crowding of sheep hunters by making changes to each area of board jurisdiction and examining the below issues:

Board of Game jurisdiction categories and solution categories:

Methods & Means: Restricted weapons hunts, controlled access, etc.

Seasons: Longer but more limited seasons to avoid crowding, multiple shorter seasons, Registration hunts (Mt. goat model), etc.

Bag limits: Full curl, etc.

Documented Issues

- Sub-legal harvest
- Declining populations
- Declining hunter opportunity
- Decreasing hunter participation

Perceived Issues

- Early season crowding
- In-field conflicts
- Full curl management vs. ?
- Residency allocation
- Second degree of kindred allocation
- Guide conflicts
- Air taxi conflicts and crowding
- Declining trophy quality

PROPOSED BY: Steve Untiet and Cary Bloomquist (HQ-C15-129)

PROPOSAL 35 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish statewide sheep hunting seasons for residents and nonresidents based on last names as follows:

Change resident and nonresident sheep season dates to: August 10 to September 20, except that hunters with last names starting with letters A–M (or where ever the half way point of hunters falls in the alphabet) can only harvest a ram from August 10–19 on odd number years, and hunters with last names starting with letters N–Z can only harvest a ram August 10–19 on even number years (all hunters can hunt and/or harvest a ram from August 20–September 20 every year but only one per year total).

This is easy to enforce. All that has to be done is look at the last name on the license and if it starts with the wrong letter and a hunter has harvested a ram prior to August 20, they are in violation. This still gives everyone 32 days to hunt every season and with whoever they want. Also, they can still accompany their buddy, they just can't kill a ram before August 20 on alternate years.

Other options: Divide the alphabet in thirds or fourths and only allow hunters to hunt the first ten days of season every three to four years.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Overcrowding of sheep hunters during the first ten days of season. Half of the sheep are harvested during the first ten days of season and half of those during the first five days.

PROPOSED BY: Wayne Kubat (EG-C15-125)

PROPOSAL 36 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Modify resident and nonresident sheep hunting seasons as follows:

Traditional sheep hunting dates: August 10–September 20

Proposed sheep hunting start dates:

Residents: **August 10–September 20** unless they have a drawing permit that requires a different date to start hunting.

Nonresidents: **August 17–September 20** unless they have a drawing permit that requires a different date to start hunting.

The flying regulations required by the Board of Game’s proposal 207 will start for all parties on August 10.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board of Game to separate certain parts of the sheep season so residents and nonresidents are in the field at different times. In the **nonrandom** survey, 77% of those surveyed wanted nonresidents to start a week later than residents and in the **random** survey 65% of those surveyed wanted the nonresidents to start a week later than residents. This would create less crowding and less air traffic at the same time, which would make a better experience for both the resident and nonresident. It is not an uncommon practice in all states to have hunting dates that benefit residents and this is a highly requested option by Alaskans.

PROPOSED BY: Tom Lamal

(EG-C15-085)

PROPOSAL 37 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Modify resident and nonresident sheep hunting seasons as follows:

Resident hunting season for Dall sheep shall be August 10 to September 20 and nonresident hunting season shall be from August 20 to September 20. Drawing permit areas will start ten days earlier for Alaska residents and if there is a split season, the second half will be shortened by ten days for nonresidents such that residents can start the second half ten days prior to nonresidents.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board of Game to address the issues expressed in the 2014 sheep hunter survey that was contracted out by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the board. Two main issues were expressed in this survey: 1.) fewer legal sheep are available for harvest, and 2.) there are too many nonresident hunters and their associated guides causing overcrowding and shooting too many rams (Fact: Nonresidents which are 20% of all sheep hunters took over 40% of rams harvested between 2009 and 2013).

These are not the opinions of a few disgruntled hunters from Fairbanks which has been portrayed by several people in response to the various proposals submitted to the board over the past few years—77% of the respondents want the board to reduce sheep permit allocation to nonresidents

hunting with professional guides. 77%. This number is from your survey. Please use your survey to guide your decisions on managing OUR game and put Alaska and Alaskans FIRST.

PROPOSED BY: Jake Sprankle (EG-C15-088)

PROPOSAL 38 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Modify resident and nonresident sheep hunting seasons as follows:

Hunting seasons for general season sheep hunts:
Resident general season sheep hunts will open on August 10.
Nonresident general season sheep hunts will open on August 20.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Overcrowding during sheep season. Overcrowding was one of the main problems identified from the Brinkman study. There are also conflicts and tension between resident hunters and nonresident hunters/guides during sheep season. I propose for general season sheep hunts, resident sheep season begin August 10 and nonresident sheep season begin on August 20. This would dramatically decrease overcrowding during the sheep season and any conflicts that may exist between resident sheep hunters and nonresident hunters/guides.

PROPOSED BY: Brad Sparks (HQ-C15-138)

PROPOSAL 39 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Shorten the nonresident sheep hunting season statewide as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 85.055 to shorten the nonresident season in each listed Game Management Unit to be **Sept. 1** [AUG. 10] to Sept. 20.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? According to ADF&G, Dall sheep populations in Alaska statewide have declined over twenty percent since 1990. See ADF&G, DWC, “*Trends in Alaska Sheep Populations, Hunting and Harvests*” (2014), p. 4, stating a 1990 point estimate of 56,740 sheep (and a range estimate of 53,900–62,400 sheep), a 2000 point estimate of 50,850 sheep (and a range estimate of 48,300–55,900 sheep), and a 2010 point estimate of 45,010 sheep (and a range estimate of 42,800–49,500 sheep). Also, according to ADF&G, in the 14 areas for which it issues reports, sheep population trends currently are: (1) **decreasing in four areas**, (2) **stable or decreasing in two areas**, (3) **stable at low levels in two areas**, (4) **unknown in one area**, (5) **stable in four areas**, and (6) **stable or increasing in one area**. *Id.* at 7.

In other words, after 25 years of a declining total population statewide, in only one area out of 14 is the population showing any sign of increasing. Given that the 20% decline is over 25 years, and that the trends for most area populations are that they fall toward decreasing or low levels, rather than toward increasing or high levels, the assertion that normal variability accounts for this

20% decline over 25 years since 1990 (*id.* at 7) seems questionable. A more reasonable explanation may be that too many hunters are chasing too few sheep.

My preferred solutions would be either (a) to amend 5 AAC 92.008 (Statewide Provisions, Harvest Guideline Levels) to establish a statewide **NONRESIDENT HARVEST GUIDELINE LEVEL** that “the annual statewide harvest of sheep by nonresident hunters shall be managed by the department so that in any three year period the annual statewide harvest by nonresidents does not exceed an average of 65 rams per year,” or (b) amend 5 AAC 85.055 (Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep) to provide shortened season dates for **NONRESIDENTS** to be from September 1 to September. 20 in conjunction with the Board of Game directing the Department of Fish and Game to close the nonresident season when it estimates that doing so should result, across a three-year period, in an annual statewide harvest by nonresidents not exceed an average of 65 rams per year. However, the board refuses to accept ever, for a public hearing, any proposal from the public that would establish a statewide nonresident harvest guideline level for sheep. The board’s reason is that, regarding other species, current harvest guidelines codified as “statewide” provisions under 5 AAC 92.008 are in fact guidelines for particular game management units rather than statewide, and the board (through Boards Support staff) has said that guideline harvest levels could only be proposed on a regional or game-management-unit specific basis, rather than on a statewide basis. I think the public has a right to propose a statewide harvest level for nonresidents and to be heard on such a proposal.

This proposal would promote population growth by reducing hunting pressure, **and would also avoid putting residents on a drawing permit system.**

PROPOSED BY: Mike McCrary (HQ-C15-167)

Note: The board does not have authority to restrict nonresident guide services in Alaska.

PROPOSAL 40 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Restrict nonresident sheep hunting to a limited number of drawing opportunities as follows:

According to biologists’ research, a given number of tags will be available to nonresident hunters per area. (Word that however the area research comes out.)

Sheep hunting guide services are reserved to licensed Alaska residents **only**. (This will eliminate some pressure from the should-be breeding rams of the flock).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Declining sheep populations in Alaska. I propose we start towards sheep population increase and maintain the resource of the residences in Alaska by first eliminating all nonresident licensed guiding services for Dall sheep hunting in Alaska. Second, restrict nonresident sheep hunting to limited number draw opportunities per area (biologist to determine). **Too many trophy rams are being taken from the gene pool causing a weak flock to fend off harsh weather and disease.** We all know guiding outfitters hold a high success rate, they have to, and it’s a business, money talks. Why should the power of the almighty dollar get in the way of a sheep recovery program?

The majority of Alaska resident sheep hunters have full time jobs that prevent them from extensive area research, which leave the success rate at an overall lower level compared to the commercialized guiding businesses.

PROPOSED BY: Steven Landa (EG-C15-062)

PROPOSAL 41 - 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts; and 85.055 Seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish a ten percent nonresident sheep permit allocation as follows:

I would like the Board of Game to implement a 90/10 allocation for sheep in Alaska. The board should only allow 10% of sheep permits to be purchased by nonresidents on a statewide basis, but 10% is not guaranteed. The 10% would be calculated on an average of resident and nonresident sheep hunters from the past three years and 10% would be calculated from that total. This 10% allocation would include next of kin and guided hunts.

Example: If there was a total of resident and nonresident hunters that equals 2,000 – (10% of 2,000 = **200 nonresident sheep permits.**) Alaska residents would like to enjoy the same high allocations that other states give their residents. Those states fund their fish and game departments through license fees and don't have guide requirements.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board of Game to address the overcrowding issue for sheep hunters and implement allocation rules that give Alaska residents a minimum of 90% of the resource. The board has been quoted saying the residents need to "share the burden" with the nonresidents if they reduce the numbers of sheep hunters. Other states seem to value their residents and have a 90/10 allocation so their residents are a higher priority. There have been two sheep surveys conducted by Dr. Brinkman. A random survey was given to the board in February and the results of the nonrandom survey were just published. Those who took the nonrandom survey contacted Dr. Brinkman and requested the survey so they could be part of the process in some fashion. Those who took the time to participate in the nonrandom survey showed a high level of interest in the process. In the random survey 77% agreed that nonresidents should be limited and in the nonrandom survey 100% strongly agreed that nonresidents should be limited. When was the last time you saw 100% of people strongly agree on anything?

This 90/10 concept has been presented to the board several times by several people and the board has always opposed giving the residents a higher allocation. The board has now started generating proposals that the public has not requested through the submission of proposals. I hope the Governor and our representatives become aware of current requests and the current results.

PROPOSED BY: Tom Lamal (EG-C15-084)

PROPOSAL 42 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Change nonresident sheep hunts to drawing permit hunts with a 12% allocation cap as follows:

Dall sheep tag/permit (statewide)
Resident: Harvest tag.
Nonresident: Drawing permit, capped at 12%

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? As an Alaska resident hunter I would request the Board of Game to take a hard look at the Dall sheep hunting problem that's been happening for a while now and change the current regulations for nonresident hunters from a harvest ticket to a draw tag with a cap at 12%. The sheep survey that I took part in was a good first step but now it's time to make a change in the regulations to benefit future Alaskan hunters.

PROPOSED BY: Jacques Etcheverry (EG-C15-086)

Note: The board does not have authority to restrict nonresident guide services in Alaska.

PROPOSAL 43 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish a ten percent nonresident sheep permit allocation as follows:

1. Allocation limits: Guides with their nonresident clients should be limited to 10% of overall sheep permits. Most states have a 90/10 allocation which strikes a fair balance from an allocation standpoint. The wildlife is a state resource that should be utilized by residents first. We live here full time, we put up with the winters, the hardships, etc., and we also love the satisfaction that comes from a fair chase, well thought out and planned, successful hunt.
2. Guide qualifications: Hunting guides and assistant guides should be full time residents. If you live here they you can guide here, period. As a starting point, I suggest the same standard to qualify for the Alaska PFD, be used to qualify a person to operate as a hunting guide. Most of us live here full time; we deal with the snow, the breakup, the flooding, along with the beauty of Alaska. Our wildlife is just as valuable as our PFD, please leave its treasure within the state.
3. Scientific data based decisions: The management of our game should be based on scientific data. Bag/harvest limits should be closely tied to trending population data. Obviously over hunting is bad for everyone, and all parties need to participate in supporting limitations should they be necessary. The Board of Game should not place limitations on one particular group based on political views. Recent passage of proposal 207 is a good example of this. Decreasing Dall sheep numbers provided an excuse for the board to target small airplane owners. Airplane owners were an easy target, because they are a small minority in the overall hunting community. In fact, hunting guides use airplanes everyday under the guise of resupply and moving resources between camps. I guarantee they will be spotting sheep for the benefit of their clients. In fact it is impossible to not spot sheep when flying through their habitat. This is an example of a hasty, ill-conceived decision not based on science but on politics.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? As a resident hunter I am concerned with the increasingly limited quality hunting opportunities and over saturation. A recent survey concluded that 40% of Dall sheep harvested was taken by out of state hunters. This is unacceptable, especially with the cyclical reduction in Dall sheep population. Resident hunters are limited in their opportunities for a successful hunt due to over saturation. I suspect the other species will mirror these numbers. Also I see our valuable resource being sold to nonresident big money by the guiding industry. Finally, use science to make management decisions. Please do not let politics overshadow your responsibility to manage this treasure.

PROPOSED BY: Greg Origer (EG-C15-101)

PROPOSAL 44 - 5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts; and 85.055. Seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Allocate ten percent or less of sheep permits to nonresidents as follows:

Nonresidents are limited to no more than 10% of the draw tags available for Dall sheep.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It is time Alaska adheres to the standard practice of limiting nonresidents to no more than 10% allocation of its draw tags for species such as Dall sheep.

With nonresidents having a two to three times greater success rate than residents, for every additional nonresident given a tag above the 10% standard, two to three residents must come out of the field to maintain the same harvest quota.

PROPOSED BY: Brian Bagley (EG-C15-117)

PROPOSAL 45 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish nonresident sheep permit allocation of ten percent as follows:

Replace the majority of nonresident permits with resident only permits, so the permit allocation would be 90/10 percent.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Alaskan residents allotted more sheep hunting than the nonresident hunters. The residents of a state should always have greater access to their state's natural resources. It encourages ownership therefore encouraging those residents to preserve and maintain a healthy sheep population.

Nonresidents are more likely to abuse the hunt with illegal activities. Hunting is expensive for non-residents and I believe Alaska has some of the "cheapest" hunts available.

I would also propose the state require a comparable fee for nonresident hunters to those hunts in the continental U.S. (A deer hunt in Ohio can cost \$8,000. Caribou in Alaska is about \$2,000) but this would require a change in Alaska Statute.

PROPOSED BY: Amy Cooper (EG-C15-098)

PROPOSAL 46 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish a statewide archery season for sheep, August 1–9 as follows:

Establish an archery (conventional bow and arrow NOT crossbow) season for sheep, August 1–9, statewide in any unit that has a general (harvest ticket) sheep hunt. The hunt would be for mature (full curl, double broomed or eight years old or older) rams only. No scope sighted high power rifles or scope sighted high power pistols allowed in the field.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There have been many complaints by sheep hunters of overcrowding reducing the quality of the sheep hunting experience in hunting areas especially at the beginning of the season.

This proposal would spread out the initial group of hunters heading into the mountains to hunt sheep. It is not exclusive as anyone can learn to hunt with archery gear. Sheep hunters seeking a quality uncrowded hunt for undisturbed sheep may be willing to limit themselves to hunting with a device that markedly reduces their ability to actually harvest a sheep. This would give guides an extra hunt to sell. It might move a few rams into more inaccessible terrain before the opening of the general season and thus reduce the harvest of rams during that initial opening week.

PROPOSED BY: The Alaskan Bowhunters Association (EG-C15-102)

PROPOSAL 47 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Establish a statewide youth hunting season for Dall sheep, August 1–5 as follows:

Alaska resident youth hunting season for Dall sheep shall be August 1 through August 5, regardless of whether it is general, registration or a draw permit hunt. Dall sheep taken during the youth season will be counted against the bag limits of both the child and the adult, parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who accompanies the child.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Game needs to address the lack of full curl legal rams available to Alaska residents as well as the future of sheep hunting in Alaska as a whole. The availability of legal rams, much less large trophy rams, has been significantly reduced and is in serious decline. Fewer and fewer youth are hunting and this is largely due to the degradation of game resources and lack of quality hunting opportunities for children 17 years of age and younger.

Sec. 16.05.255 (i) reads: For the purpose of encouraging adults to take children hunting, the board shall establish annual hunting seasons in appropriate areas of the state for big game, other than bison and musk ox that are open before schools start in the fall and before regular hunting seasons begin. Only a resident child accompanied by a resident adult or a child accompanied by the child's resident parent, resident stepparent, or resident legal guardian may take big game in an area where a season established under this subsection is in effect. The adult, parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who accompanies the child may only assist the child in taking big game. A big game animal taken under this subsection must be counted against the bag limits of both the child and the adult, parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who accompanies the child. In this subsection,

- (1) "adult" means an individual who is 21 years of age or older;
- (2) "child" means an individual who is not more than 17 years of age and not younger than eight years of age.

Who will benefit if the proposal is adopted? Alaska resident youth, and future Alaskans. Dall sheep populations may also improve as more youth would be interested in sheep management and game management as a whole. This benefits Alaska, all of Alaska’s game resources, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as well. Resident youth hunters will have an improved, quality hunt experience which would increase their interest in the future of hunting, the future of game management in Alaska, and the future health of Dall sheep populations and its management. This five day season would not conflict with the August 10 opener for Dall sheep by residents and non-residents over the age of 17. In addition, ending it on the 5th of August will provide a buffer to the regular season as few adults would wait until the 10 to start their own hunt. Counting against the bag limits of both the child and the adult, parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who accompanies the child would further reduce suspected "abuses." A five day jump would help reduce conflicts with guides and their clients, and avoid competition from them as well as other resident hunters. Transport services associated with sheep hunting will improve as this will lessen the bottleneck on transporters seen at the beginning of each season. This may also increase the safety of hunters and transporters by spreading out the season and users more.

This proposal is a win-win for Alaska youth, Dall sheep, and the future of hunting in Alaska.

PROPOSED BY: Jake and Tanner Sprankle (EG-C15-069)

During the 2014–2015 Meeting Cycle, the Board of Game deferred this proposal to the Statewide Regulations meeting scheduled for March 2016. It was previously numbered as Proposal 208.

PROPOSAL 48 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep; and 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts. Review and potentially modify sheep hunting opportunities statewide as follows:

Status quo:

- 1. Current hunt types, seasons, and method and means will remain unchanged.

Existing draw hunts:

- 1. All existing drawing and registration hunts will stay in place and remain unchanged.

Options for nonresident hunters:

- 1. Nonresident hunters on private, state, and BLM managed lands will be entered into a limited draw for the entire season, permit allocation by Subunit.
- 2. Nonresident hunters on private, state, and BLM managed lands will be entered into a limited draw from Aug. 10 to 31, (permit allocation by Subunit) followed by a general season harvest ticket hunt.

3. NOTE: Nonresidents hunting on National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service managed lands are already limited due to guide concession programs, so this proposal does not address those hunters and hunt areas.

Options for resident hunters:

1. Resident hunting season will change from a general season harvest ticket to a limited draw for August 10–August 31, and will remain a general season harvest ticket for the remainder of the season. Drawing hunt areas will be defined on a Game Management Subunit level.
2. Resident hunting season will change from a general season harvest ticket to a limited draw for August 10–August 25, and will remain a general season harvest ticket for the remainder of the season. Draw hunt areas will be defined on a Game Management Subunit level.
3. Resident hunting season will change from a general season harvest ticket to a limited draw for August 10–August 19, and will remain a general season harvest ticket for the remainder of the season. Draw hunt areas will be defined on a Game Management Subunit level.
4. Hunters must chose to apply for current drawing hunts or one of the registration hunts by the December Drawing deadline. Hunters may not choose a registration hunt if they apply for any drawing hunt. All hunters may hunt the late open season.
 - a. 1st season registration: August 10–13 (length of season is very short to discourage choosing the “opener”, length of season could be up to 5 days if desired)
 - b. 2nd season registration: August 14–21 (short season but not too short to encourage choosing this option over 1st season)
 - c. 3rd season registration: August 22–31 (longer season for those that want a traditional ten day hunt)
 - d. 4th season general harvest: September 1–20 (Open season for all applicants that didn’t get drawn in drawing hunts, forgot to apply for either drawings or registrations or were not successful in earlier hunts.)
5. Hunters must register according to his/her last name. The season will be divided into three hunt periods. Hunters with a last name starting with letters A through I can only hunt during the first period (August 10–August 23); hunters with a last name starting with letters J through Q can only hunt during the second period (August 24–September 6); hunters with a last name starting with letters R through Z can only hunt during the last period (September 7–20). The following year, hunters from the first period hunt second, hunters from the second period hunt last and the last group hunts during the first period. This rotate allows hunters to hunt the first period once every three years.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? During the last few Board meetings, the Board of Game (board) has received several proposals requesting changes to sheep seasons statewide. Hunters are expressing dissatisfaction with Dall sheep harvest opportunities. Many of the concerns expressed have noted increasing conflict among Alaska resident sheep hunters, hunting guides, transporters, and non-resident sheep hunters. Proposals were deferred

until the February 2015 board meeting in Wasilla. At that time, the board will consider changes to all aspects of sheep hunting seasons across the state.

The Department of Fish and Game has contracted with the University of Alaska to survey the public that may be impacted by these changes, including sheep hunters, guides, transporters and air taxi operators. The survey attempted to learn more about sheep hunter characteristics and behaviors, to quantify the extent of hunter satisfaction or dissatisfaction with current sheep hunting opportunities, and to quantify the extent of hunter approval or disapproval of potential changes to sheep hunting regulations and management. The results are available on the Board of Game website at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.main>. The public is encouraged to review the results of the survey and provide comments to the Board by January 30, 2015 for the February 2015 meeting.

PROPOSED BY: The Alaska Board of Game (WS-2015-02)

PROPOSAL 49 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Restrict the bag limit for Dall sheep in certain areas as follows:

In areas of Alaska where the Department of Fish and Game lacks population trends or shows decreasing trends, the bag limit should be changed to “one ram” for those hunts having bag limits of ewes, $\frac{3}{4}$ curl or less, or three sheep. The following units and bag limits would be affected:

- Unit 19C – 1 sheep with $\frac{3}{4}$ curl horn or less (subsistence hunt only for registration hunt RS380);
- Unit 14C – 1 ewe;
- Unit 24B – 3 sheep, within the John River drainage upstream from the Till Creek, and that portion within the Glacier River drainage.
- Unit 25A – 3 sheep;
- Units 26C – 3 sheep, (RS595); and
- Units 26B – 3 sheep, and on private lands within the Gates of the Arctic National Park.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The estimated population of Dall sheep has declined statewide from between 53,900–62,400 in 1990 to between 42,800–49,500 in 2010 according to the Department of Fish and Game’s best guess. The department’s Survey and Inventory Report for the Alaska Range West herd states that it doesn’t even know what the population trend is; for the Chugach Mountains herd it states that it figures the trend is stable at low levels; for the Central Brooks Range and Western Brooks Range, it states the department figures the Dall sheep population trend is decreasing. Declining sheep populations would imply the population is below the past known carrying capacity of the range.

Dall sheep populations are in decline in the Western Brooks Range. The Alaska Board of Game closed all Dall sheep hunting to all hunters in Unit 23 and 26A west of the Etivluk River drainage during their Spring 2015 meeting. The Gates of the Arctic National Park is considering taking over Dall sheep management and allocation due to declining sheep populations. Accurate sheep harvest is critical in order for the department to manage the sheep herds on the sustained-

yield basis as required by state law AS 16.05.255. Regulations of the Board of Game, management requirements.

Until adequate survey data on the Dall sheep population in these areas can be obtained showing an increase in the sheep population to historic levels, there should be no harvest of ewes, smaller rams, or a three sheep bag limit, for conservation reasons.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Outdoor Council

(EG-C15-074)
