PROPOSAL 136

5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.

Rescind the restriction on use of aircraft for locating Dall sheep for hunting as follows:

This language in 5 AAC 92.085(8) should be rescinded:

[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? The Matanuska Valley AC
believes that the language that was adopted from Proposal 207, in March of 2015, that restricts the
use of aircraft while hunting sheep, should be rescinded. The present language reads:

"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."

After this proposal was adopted by the Board of Game (board), our AC had unprecedented
attendance at its next meeting, and everyone was very upset by the action. Subsequently, on May
28 of 2015, the board held a special meeting at the request of two of its members, to reconsider
and rescind Proposal 207’s language. Proposal 207 was a board generated proposal, that they
produced on their own, not at the request of anyone from the public, and which didn’t address any
biological concerns. Nobody had ever proposed these kind of extreme restrictions before. At the
May 28 special meeting there were 224 public comments on this proposal; 184 were in opposition
to it and wanted to see it rescinded, while only 27 were in support of it. All three of the largest
ACs (Anchorage, Mat Valley and Fairbanks), representing over half of the state’s population,
voted unanimously to rescind Proposal 207. Despite this overwhelming opposition, the board
retained Proposal 207, ignoring the public’s will. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers said from the very
beginning that these restrictions were unenforceable, and to our knowledge no one has ever been
cited for a violation of them. The issues the proposer purported to address with Proposal 207 were
already addressed by other statutes regarding harassing, chasing or herding animals with an
airplane.

Proposals to rescind what started as Proposal 207 have been brought forward in 2016 and 2017
and both times the public has supported rescinding the restrictions by a 2 to 1 margin, but were
ignored by a small board majority. We believe that, in the absence of any biological concern being
addressed, the public should be listened to, and the overwhelming majority want Proposal 207
language rescinded. The board has rejected applying these same restrictions to all other game
species, in Proposal 70 introduced at the statewide meeting in Fairbanks in 2016, and should reject
the restrictions for sheep also.

PROPOSED BY: Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F20-009)

**************************************************************************

Statewide Regulations Proposals