

**ACR #1** – Change the statewide definition of “full-curl horn” for Dall sheep hunting.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Western Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council

**CITE THE REGULATION THAT WILL BE CHANGED IF THIS ACR IS HEARD.**

Alaska Administrative Code Number 5 AAC: 92.990 (30) (A),(B), & (C) “full-curl horn” of a male (ram) Dall sheep” 5 Alaska Administrative Code § 92.990

**WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS? STATE IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM.**

Most of current statewide Dall sheep populations are far below historical carrying capacities. Rains on snow with late spring in 2012/13’, as well as multiple subsequent winters have decimated multiple cohorts. Most ram groups do not have full curl, or both horns broken to choose from.

The only option currently legally allowed if there is no true full curl or boomed rams in the groups, is to count annuli rings at a distance.

Most hunters and even professional biologists can mistakenly count 8 rings on 3/4 and 7/8 curl rams on the mountainside. Many hunters cannot age the sheep when in hand. This is documented with the high numbers of young rams being seized by the department at sealing.

The mistaken count of annuli and loss of the very few young recruiting breeding rams is of critical concern to the sustainability of sheep populations’ recovery.

Very few rams will not eventually become legal under the full curl definition by either achieving a full curl, or by breaking off both horn tips if left to mature, so having the aging option is unnecessary and detrimental. At this time few rams are even becoming legal under the full curl definition due to hunting or environmental related mortality prior to maturity being reached.

**WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PREFER?**

The proposed regulatory change would repeal and eliminate criteria (C) statewide “the sheep is at least eight years of age as determined by horn growth annuli;”

If adopted the definition of a full curl of a male (ram) Dall Sheep would be:

"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; broken means the lamb tip is completely absent; horn tips that are chipped or cracked are not broken if any portion of the lamb tip is present; characteristics of the lamb tip include: (i) a length of less than four inches, (ii) the inside surface of the lamb tip is distinctly concave when compared to the remainder of the horn, and (iii) the lamb tip is the section of a horn that is grown during the first six months of a sheep's life and is the section of horn distal of the first annulus, which is the swelling of the horn that forms during the first winter of life.

**STATE IN DETAIL HOW THIS ACR MEETS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**

- A. To correct an error in regulation.**
- B. To correct an effect of a regulation that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted.**
- C. Does the request identify a biological concern for the population or a threat to meeting objectives for the population?**

The mistaken over counting of annuli of rams not meeting full curl or broken horns, causes hunters to take a chance that the sheep is legal. Many times, they are not. The loss of the very few young recruiting breeding rams is of critical concern to the sustainability of Dall sheep population's recovery. This issue needs to be addressed Statewide. This change will have little effect to hunter harvest where mature rams will be taken with true full curl/ broken horned harvest.

- D. Does the request identify an unforeseen, unexpected event or effect that would otherwise restrict or reduce a reasonable opportunity for customary and traditional wildlife uses, as defined in AS 16.05.258(f)?**
- E. Does the request identify an unforeseen, unexpected resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action and such delay would be significantly burdensome because the resource would be unavailable in the future?**

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED PRIOR TO THE REGULAR CYCLE?**

Dall Sheep rams younger than 8 years, that are typically 3/4 curl to just under full curl, will continue to be killed by mistaken hunters guessing at ripples on horns at a distance. Hunters need to have a clear regulation that only allows true full curl harvest.

**STATE WHY YOUR ACR IS NOT PREDOMINANTLY ALLOCATIVE.**

This ACR is strictly biologically driven. There is no allocation disadvantage to any segment of the hunting public.

**IF THIS REQUEST IS ALLOCATIVE, STATE THE NEW INFORMATION THAT COMPELS THE BOARD TO CONSIDER AN ALLOCATIVE PROPOSAL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR CYCLE.**

**STATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ISSUE THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ACR.**

The Western Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council has members that are sheep hunters, as well as many public individuals that hunt sheep within the region. Many residents have deep concerns to help bring the sheep populations back to carrying capacity with true sustained yield harvest of only full curl rams.

**STATE WHETHER THIS ACR HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE, EITHER AS A PROPOSAL OR AS AN ACR, AND IF SO, DURING WHICH BOARD OF GAME MEETING.**

The recent additional Dall sheep populations decline, with data to identify them below carrying capacity, as well as the take of several illegal sub-full curl rams, could not have been proposed last regulatory cycle. It is critical to address this issue statewide through the ACR process.