

PROPOSAL 33

5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.

Reduce the Unit 26A sheep bag limit for residents to one ram with full-curl horn or larger every four regulatory years as follows:

Implement one ram with full-curl horn or larger every four regulatory years for residents. This regulation already exists for nonresidents and as minor as it is, has made a positive impact towards the resource. As different as it is, the one brown bear, every four regulatory years for both residents and nonresidents on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula has boosted the brown bear population and created the best brown bear hunting opportunity in North America. Very rarely does a brown bear hunter go home empty handed. This same regulation geared towards Dall sheep would have a major impact on the resource in a positive manner.

5 AAC 85.055. Unit 26A Sheep.

Resident hunters: One ram with full-curl horn or larger **every four regulatory years**; Harvest ticket. August 10-September 20.

If nothing is done, the pressure will continue to increase on the Dall sheep resource, which will eventually lead the Board of Game and/or the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to implement restrictions, such as shortening of the season, creation of weapons restriction hunts, limitations or closures placed on different user groups, creation of a statewide draw, and maybe even an emergency closure. Ultimately, it will lead to the loss of another Dall sheep hunting opportunity.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It is known and documented by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and anyone that has hunted Dall sheep in the past couple of years, that the Dall sheep population is down across the entire state. This downturn has created more pressure on the remaining harvestable population of Dall sheep rams. The 2022 season saw an alarming uptick in sub-legal harvest. User group controversy and overall negative sheep hunting experiences have been expressed profusely by the public. Where there are Dall sheep, there is a noticeable presence of hunters. Which ultimately creates higher than normal hunting pressure, increased competition amongst hunters, and even in some cases hunter on hunter conflicts. In order to create an overall enjoyable hunting experience and keep Dall sheep from going to a draw statewide and most importantly keep sheep on the mountain, a mechanism needs to be put in place to decrease the pressure on the resource, even if it's a minor one.

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