

## **Utqiagvik Area – Unit 26A**

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### **PROPOSAL 30**

#### **5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.**

Extend the trapping season to year-round for muskrat in Unit 26A as follows:

<b>Species and Units</b>	<b>Open Season</b>	<b>Bag Limit</b>
<b>(8) Muskrat</b> ...		
Units 19, 20 (except 20(E)), 21, 22, [AND] 24 – 26(B), and 26(C)	Nov. 1 – June 10	No limit.
Units 18, 23, and 26A	No closed season.	No limit.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Muskrat have become more abundant and continue to increase on the North Slope. Residents are interested in being able to harvest muskrat year-round and have no bag limit, similar to the Unit 18 and 23 trapping regulations. A season ending June 10 represents a missed opportunity for residents to harvest muskrat.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F23-067)  
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### **PROPOSAL 31**

#### **5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Liberalize the moose bag limit in a portion of Unit 26A and expand the hunt area as follows:

Unit 26A, that portion west of the eastern shore of Admiralty Bay where the Alaktak River enters, following the Alaktak River to 155°00' W longitude excluding the Colville River drainage—one moose; however, you may not take a calf, or a cow accompanied by a calf July 1-Sept. 14.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Unit 26A portion west of 156 W. longitude excluding the Colville River, one moose bag limit to be reinstated and the boundary moved eastward. This regulation was on the books for many years to provide some opportunity for migratory moose that wandered west of their normal range in Unit 26A. The only reason this proposal was not reauthorized was because of timing of advisory committee meetings. The federal boundary for this hunt has also been amended to extend eastward as follows: Unit 26A, that portion west of the eastern shore of Admiralty Bay where the Alaktak River enters, following the Alaktak River to 155°00' W longitude excluding the Colville River drainage—one moose; however, you may not take a calf, or a cow accompanied by a calf July 1-September 14. It would create less confusion and provide slightly more opportunity for residents to harvest moose if the boundaries were aligned.

**PROPOSED BY:** North Slope Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F23-192)  
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*Note: The Board of Game does not have authority to delegate the Department of Fish and Game's management of the resources.*

## **PROPOSAL 32**

### **5 AAC 92.540. Controlled use areas.**

Change the boundaries and effective dates of the Anaktuvuk Pass Controlled Use Area as follows:

#### **Area Description:**

Anaktuvuk Pass Controlled Use Area: the area consists of that portion of Unit 26A including drainages of the Colville River between and including the drainages of the Anaktuvuk River and the Etivluk River (BOUNDED BY A LINE BEGINNING AT 153° 30' W. LONG. ON THE GAME MANAGEMENT BOUNDARY BETWEEN UNITS 24 AND 26(A), NORTH ALONG 153° 30' W. LONG. to 69° N. LAT., EAST ALONG 69° N. LAT. TO 152° 10' W. LONG., SOUTH ALONG 152° 10' W. LONG. TO 68° 30' N. LAT., EAST ALONG 68° 30' N. LAT. TO 150° 40' W. LONG.,) to the game management boundary between Units 24 and 26(A), [AND WESTERLY ALONG THE GAME MANAGEMENT UNIT BOUNDARY TO THE POINT OF ORIGIN AT 153° 30' W. LONG] from July 15 until the caribou migration has moved through Anaktuvuk Pass as determined by the trilateral leadership comprised of the City of Anaktuvuk Pass, the Nunamiut Corporation, and the Naqsrarmiut tribe. The area is closed to the use of aircraft for the harvest of furbearers, sheep, and bear including transportation of hunters, their hunting gear, and or parts of game. (FROM AUG. 15-OCT. 15, IS CLOSED TO THE USE OF AIRCRAFT FOR CARIBOU HUNTING, INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION OF HUNTERS, THEIR HUNTING GEAR, AND/OR PARTS OF CARIBOU.)

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Anaktuvuk Pass Controlled Use Area (CUA) was created to allow for an undisturbed fall migration of caribou to facilitate the subsistence harvest of caribou by the community of Anaktuvuk Pass. Under current regulations, the start date, spatial extent, and allowances for other species to be hunted limit the effectiveness of the CUA. Community members have expressed concern that hunters can still use aircraft to harvest furbearers, sheep, and bear within the CUA. They are also concerned that these activities occur in important migratory areas outside the CUA area which disrupts the caribou migration. Residents observe resident and nonresident hunters at the Anaktuvuk Pass airport in possession of caribou antlers, only, during the CUA closed period. Caribou taken outside the area and aircraft use within the area can deflect leaders in the caribou migration, and as a result, the entire migration beyond the reach of Anaktuvuk Pass resident hunters.

**PROPOSED BY:** North Slope Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(EG-F23-190)

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## **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.

**PROPOSED BY:** Spencer Pape, Seth Kroenke, Jeff Rost, and Jon Burrows (EG-F23-254)

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## **PROPOSAL 34**

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

Open an archery-only registration permit hunt in portions of Unit 26A for residents only when it is determined sheep hunting can be allowed in those area as follows:

Unit 26A west of the Etivluk River (could also include Unit 26A east of Etivluk River for consistency and to decrease harvest in that area).

Residents only: RS\*\*\* One ram, full curl or larger by bow and arrow only. Season: August 10-September 20

Hunters must register for this hunt (in person at license vendors) and report successful harvest within 48 hours.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** If and only if, it is determined the sheep population in Units 23 and 26A can again support hunting, the area should be open to hunting by bow and arrow only. Bow and arrow hunting is an important conservation management tool that provides hunting opportunity while minimizing harvest.

In August of 2014, an emergency order was placed on Unit 23 and 26A (west of the Etivluk River) to close all sheep hunting because of a marked decrease in the sheep population. Sheep population data for this area is not currently publicly available but if the biologists determine that this area can support a limited amount of hunting at any point in the future it would make the most sense to open it as an archery only hunt. Creating an archery hunt would reintroduce hunting opportunity of all hunters.

Archery only hunting does not adversely affect opportunity in any way. It simply requires that hunters use a shorter range weapon. This will make the hunt a little more difficult but will maintain the experience of the hunt. Skilled and/or lucky hunters will still harvest rams but the overall impact on the population will be much lower than that of a rifle hunt.

Going forward, with sheep numbers across the state in general decline and agreement at recent state and national wild sheep conservation meetings that this problem is unlikely to improve in the future (climate change related weather events) we, as hunters, must accept that alternative management options such as temporary hunt closures or draw hunts may become increasingly necessary. Archery hunts provide an appealing alternative because they do not limit opportunity but do limit the harvest. Archery hunts have been used as management tools around the world for this reason and it's time that we consider this option more broadly in Alaska. If or when the sheep population in Units 23 and 26A has recovered enough to support some minimal amount of hunting it should be a registration archery only hunt.

This should be a registration hunt so that ADF&G can monitor the harvest and shut down the hunt if harvest reaches a biological threshold determined by ADF&G.

Of note, in the past there has been some resistance to transitioning existing rifle hunts into archery hunts because of the perception of some that this somehow decreases opportunity. It is, however, well established throughout the United States and in Alaska that all hunters are capable of taking advantage of archery hunts by the simple means of purchasing and learning to shoot a bow. Currently it's possible to

buy an effective hunting bow for less than the cost of most rifles and to learn to shoot accurately in a matter of weeks.

**PROPOSED BY:** Paul Forward

(EG-F23-298)

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*Note: This proposal is also scheduled for the March 15 – 22, 2024 Interior and Eastern Arctic Region meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska as Proposal 157. Unit 26A will be considered at the Western Arctic / Western Region meeting. The board may defer final action on both Subunits to the Interior and Eastern Arctic Region meeting.*

### **PROPOSAL 35**

#### **5 AAC 85.050. Hunting seasons and bag limits for muskoxen.**

Change the Unit 26A and Unit 26B muskox hunt area boundaries to match federal hunt boundaries, and expand the state hunt areas as follows:

Unit 26A, that portion west of the eastern shore of Admiralty Bay where the Alaktak River drains, following the Alaktak River to 155°00' W longitude south to the Units 26A border- one musk ox by Tier II permit Aug. 1-Mar. 15. Unit 26A east and Unit 26B west, that portion from west of the Dalton Highway to the eastern shore of Admiralty Bay where the Alaktak River enters, following the Alaktak River to 155°00' W longitude south to the Unit 26A border—1 muskox by Tier II permit Aug.1-Mar. 15.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Modify the boundary of the western Unit 26A and eastern Unit 26A-26B muskox hunts so the boundaries match the federal hunt boundaries and so the state hunt boundaries abut.

**PROPOSED BY:** North Slope Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(EG-F23-193)

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