



## Alaska Board of Game

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### ALASKA BOARD OF GAME June 3, 2020 – Teleconference Spring Season Bear Hunts

#### *Meeting Summary*

The Board of Game (board) held a special meeting by teleconference on Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. Seven board members were present: Chairman Ted Spraker, Vice-Chairman Stosh Hoffman, Larry Van Daele, Tom Lamal, Jerry Burnett, Al Barrette and Orville Huntington. Meeting materials including the audio recording are available on the Board of Game meeting information webpage at: [www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adf=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=06-03-2020&meeting=tele](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adf=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=06-03-2020&meeting=tele) .

The primary reason for this meeting was to explore ways to recoup hunter opportunity lost due to the restrictions and closures imposed to protect public health and safety during the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. There is no biological emergency and bear populations in the areas considered will not be harmed by taking no action. There was no evidence presented that moose, caribou or deer populations will be adversely impacted by any changes in predation rates if we take no action.

The registration and drawing permits that could not be used in spring 2020 represent some of the most highly coveted bear hunts in the state, and many hunters try for years to obtain those permits and participate in those hunts. By developing alternative solutions to allow them another chance to fulfill their hunting plans and dreams, there will also be the ancillary benefit of providing economic opportunity for guide/outfitters, transporters, air-taxis, and many other small businesses that support hunters and who were also adversely impacted by Covid-19 response actions. By doing that equitably and without adversely impacting the wildlife populations, we will be fulfilling our Constitutional mandate of conservation, utilization, and development of game resources “for the maximum benefit of the people.”

With that in mind, the board action and direction given to the Department of Fish and Game (department), based on public, Advisory Committee, and department comments are as follows:

**PROPOSAL 1 - Open spring 2021 Unit 9 brown bear season for residents and nonresidents.**  
*Carried as amended, 7-0.*

#### ***Annual resident hunt near villages and subsistence registration hunt:***

No change – this proposal does not affect future participation in those hunts

#### ***Resident hunts in other parts of Unit:***

- Add spring 2021 hunt one time only; Go back to regular rotation afterwards
- Same season dates as spring 2020 hunts
- Hunters who participated in Spring 2020 hunt are not eligible for a permit in spring 2021 (registrants for spring 2021 must verify via contact with the department and hunt reports that they did not go into the field to hunt bears in Unit 9 during spring 2020)

***Nonresident hunts in other parts of Unit 9:***

- Add spring 2021 hunt one time only; go back to regular rotation afterward
- Same season dates as spring 2020 hunts

***Emergency closure:***

- ADF&G will closely monitor harvest in the spring 2021 season and will consider closing the hunt by emergency order if reported harvest reaches 75% of 5-year average harvest for spring hunts within a subunit.

**PROPOSAL 2 – Provide the Commissioner the authority to transfer spring black bear drawing permits for Units 1-3 and 14C (JBER), and spring brown bear drawing permits for Units 4, 8, 10, 14C, 22 and 26B to a future hunting season. *Carried as amended 7-0.***

Drawing hunts for black bear and brown bear in Unit 14C and grizzly bear in Unit 26B were amended out of this proposal, resulting in no change during the 2020/2021 or 2021/2022 seasons.

**Region I Southeast bear hunts:**

***Black bear unguided nonresident hunts: DL018 (Unit 1C), DL028 (Unit 2), DL029 and DL030 (Unit 3) and brown bear next-of-kin hunts DB088, and DB089 (Unit 4).***

- Permit holders who participated in spring 2020 bear hunts will not be eligible for transfer of their permit to spring 2022.
- Permit holders who did not participate in a spring 2020 bear hunt may be transferred to spring 2022.
- The department will determine the number of permits utilized during the spring 2020 season plus the number of permits forfeited and add that number to the 2020 fall drawing allowing winners to hunt in the spring of 2022.
- Transferrable permits have to be moved to spring 2022 since resident permits have been drawn for the 2021 spring season.

**Region II Southcentral bear hunts:**

***Resident drawing hunts for Unit 8:***

- Permit holders who participated in spring 2020 bear hunts will not be eligible for transfer of their permit to spring 2022.
- Permit holders who did not participate in a spring 2020 bear hunt may be transferred to spring 2022.
- The department will determine the number of permits utilized during the spring 2020 season plus the number of permits forfeited and add that number to the 2020 fall drawing allowing winners to hunt in the spring of 2022.
- Transferrable permits have to be moved to spring 2022 since resident permits have been drawn for the 2021 spring season.

***Nonresident drawing hunts Unit 8:***

- Permit holders from spring 2020 will be offered to have their permits transferred to spring 2021, or they may forfeit their permits.

- Any spring 2020 forfeited permits in Unit 8 will be offered according to existing ADF&G protocols and regulations for forfeited permits (5 AAC 92.061). There will be no drawing for spring 2021 non-resident hunts in Unit 8.

**Region III Interior & Northeast Arctic:**

- No regulatory changes are necessary in Region III. There is only one nonresident bear drawing hunt (DB987) in Unit 26B. The hunt opens in the fall and remains open through the spring of the following calendar year. All hunters had already reported for the 2019/2020 season.

**Region IV Central & Southwest:**

- Spring 2020 brown bear permits for hunts DB376 (Unit 10) may be transferred to spring 2021. Based on historical harvest data, an increase in harvest is not expected to create a significant biological concern. Brown bear hunts in Unit 10 are logistically challenging and expensive, which limits the overall number of hunters participating in the hunts.

**Region V Western & Northwest Arctic:**

- Spring 2020 grizzly bear permits for hunts DB685 and DB690 may be transferred to the spring 2021 season. In regulatory year 2020/2021, there are currently 24 of 27 DB685 and 20 of 21 DB690 permits remaining as undersubscribed. Drawing permits are only required for nonresident hunters in this Region.

**Additional comments:**

- Changes established due to the adoption of Proposal #1 and #2 will sunset July 1, 2022 and all drawing hunts for bears will return to the normal rotation after spring 2021.
- Any hunters who participated in a hunt (i.e., were in the field hunting with a bear permit described above), whether or not a bear was harvested, are ineligible to move their hunting opportunity to a later time.

**Refunds and other considerations:**

- Fiscal decisions such as refunds of licenses, tags or application fees are beyond the authority of the board and will be decided by the department.
- Permit holders wishing to transfer a permit need to contact the department via email to [dfg.dwc.regs@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.dwc.regs@alaska.gov) no later than August 31, 2020.
- Other individual considerations such as change in residency status in the interim or military service members who are deployed, will be handled in an equitable case-by-case manner at the discretion of the Department.
- Public comment submitted by the Big Game Commercial Services Board (PC009) indicates that their the board will meet July 2020 to act on a proposal to limit guide opportunity for bear hunting in Unit 9 during the spring 2021 season to guides that were registered during the spring 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.