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PRESS RELEASE

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Unit 1D Brown Bear Hunters must watch “Take a Closer Look” Video

Due to a high proportion of females harvested in Game Management Unit (GMU) 1D (Haines/Skagway) over the last five years, all brown bear hunters must acknowledge viewing the “Take a Closer Look” video before obtaining a permit (RB050 and RB051). Brown bear permits are available beginning August 18, 2016 at Fish and Game offices in southeast or online at www.hunt.alaska.gov. The video can be found in the “highlights” section at www.hunt.alaska.gov or by typing the following link into your web browser: <http://vimeo.com/30511231>. DVD’s are also available for loan at your local Fish and Game office.

Biologists with the Alaska Department of Fish and game are concerned about the high proportion of female bears in GMU 1D harvest. Female brown bears typically do not breed until they are at least 5 years old and only have cubs every 3-4 years, many of which do not survive to adulthood. Due to this low reproductive rate removing one sow can drastically reduce the size of a population through a decrease in recruitment. A management objective for GMU1D brown bears is to maintain a male to female harvest ratio of 3:2 ($\leq 40\%$ females). The proportion of females in the harvest exceeded 40% (44–62%) during 4 of the past 5 regulatory years. During the same period some hunters harvested small bears as young as 2-3 years old. Continuing to harvest a high proportion of female bears in GMU 1D is unsustainable and could lead to hunt closures.

To ensure harvest is sustainable, hunters are encouraged to target male bears. Becoming proficient at identifying gender, age class and size of brown bears takes knowledge, experience, and patience. This can be especially challenging during the fall when all bears have increased body mass prior to denning. The video provides guidance for distinguishing between male and female bears in the field.

The Department encourages hunters to watch the video in advance to prevent delays in the registration process. Hunters with questions about brown bear hunting in GMU 1D can contact Carl Koch, in the Douglas Area Office at 907-465-4329 or email carl.koch@alaska.gov

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