

Note: Alaska Statute 16.05.255 specifies the bag limit taken under a youth hunt must be counted against the bag limits for both the child and adult.

PROPOSAL 114

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

Open a youth drawing hunt for Dall sheep in Unit 14C as follows:

Issue resident youth sheep permits – bag limit – any-ram in all draw areas within Unit 14C. The number of permits issued will be equal to the number of nonresident permits issued for each draw code. Season dates – August 1–5 or concurrent with draw season dates.

Shared bag limit by the guardian/parent is not a requirement of the draw permits in Unit 14C.

Rescind the shared bag limit for youth sheep hunts in all general harvest areas.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Youth hunting opportunities for sheep is currently limited to a five-day season in general harvest areas. Most of the areas are quite difficult or expensive to access resulting in poor participation. In addition, further discouragement of participation results from the bag limit shared with the guardian/parent.

The current youth sheep hunt has been in place for the last two years, resulting in a 12+/- rams killed by youth each fall. The onerous limits (shared bag limit) placed on this hunt is discouraging to the guardian and hence the youth are not getting opportunity to utilize the resource. Considering the total harvest by both residents and nonresidents in general areas of over 700 rams a year, and the Department of Fish and Game has no concern for overharvesting rams (under full curl regs), youth shared bag limit should be dropped. The current youth harvest is not having a measurable impact now, nor would they be in the future, after dropping the shared bag limit, assuming current full curl management, short five-day season, and difficulty/cost of access.

Secondly, a recent study indicates that at least 50% of the legal rams each year are left on the mountain under full-curl regulations, indicating populations are sustainable under current management, regardless of hunting "pressure."

Sheep are readily accessible from trail systems in much of Unit 14, making both success and participation more probable compared the current youth hunts available.

Sheep populations in the Chugach State Park are robust, with many rams dying of old age each year. Additional limited opportunity for youth could be provided with little to no impact to the current resource given the surplus of rams in Unit 14C.

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