

*Note: Proposal 149 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Southeast Region meeting in January 2019 and the Southcentral Region meeting in March 2019*

**PROPOSAL 149**

**5 AAC 85.0XX. Hunting seasons and bag limits for mule deer.**

Establish seasons and bag limits for mule deer statewide, excluding Sitka black-tailed deer, as follows:

The department is asking the board to address new species coming from places in Canada that have winter ticks and perhaps other parasites and pathogens. Winter ticks are a threat to cervid health in Alaska, especially for moose.

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS AND WHY?**

The department would like the board to address how to best manage non-native wildlife that moves into Alaska, and how to best handle the pathogens and parasites they carry.

Currently mule deer have been documented in interior Alaska—specifically in the Interior/Northeast Arctic region—however, pathogens and parasites are not region-specific, nor are they specific to mule deer, and the department prefers this be addressed on a statewide basis or other appropriate scale.

The Board of Game received an emergency petition from the Kenai Fish and Game Advisory Committee to open a hunt for mule deer with no closed season and no bag limit as a result of the sightings. The Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game used the authority delegated him by the board to evaluate and act on the petition. The petition was denied; however, due to biological concerns, the department submitted an Agenda Change Request to discuss the issue with the board. In discussing this proposal, the board may wish to refer to the petition, as well as any samples the department may have collected from any resulting mule deer harvest in order to monitor future health risks to Alaskan wildlife.

Winter ticks have not been documented in Alaska yet; however, the department would like to provide the board with information specific to additional pathogens and parasites that might be introduced to Alaska by mule deer, not just winter ticks. Winter ticks are prevalent in other places in North America and heavy infestations of winter ticks on moose can result in severe anemia, skin irritation, hair loss, and ultimately, death. This, combined with perhaps increased sightings of mule deer in Alaska, have led to the department requesting this be discussed out of cycle.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F18-ACR2)

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