



November 13, 2018

An Agenda Change Request (ACR 3) has been submitted by Dennis Zadra to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.040(a)(2) Hunting seasons and bag limits for mountain goat in Unit 6. The proponent is asking the board to change the bag limit for guided goat hunters in Unit 6 and implement a fine for guides responsible for nonresident hunters taking nannies.

With respect to the board's Agenda Change Request (ACR) acceptance criteria (5 AAC 92.005):

- A) The department is unaware of any error in regulation.
- B) The department is unaware of any effects of regulations that were unforeseen when the regulation was adopted.
- C) The department does not believe that there is a biological concern or a threat to meeting objectives for this population.
- D) The department is unaware of any unforeseen or unexpected events that would otherwise restrict or reduce a reasonable opportunity for customary and traditional wildlife uses as defined in AS 16.05.258(f). There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for goats in Units 6C and 6D, and an amount reasonably necessary of 15–26 goats.
- E) The department is unaware of any unexpected resource situations that would cause a biologically allowable resource harvest to be precluded by delayed regulatory action. The department currently manages goats in Unit 6 in compliance with the sustained yield principle.

Mountain goat populations in Unit 6 are considered manageable by hunt areas that cannot all be surveyed annually. The population is estimated to be 4,000-5,000 goats which is likely at or above average. Record high counts have been observed in many areas throughout Unit 6 and are probably demonstrative of mild winters that have positively influenced productivity. The population has a minimum objective of 2,400 goats in Unit 6. Maximum Allowable Harvest is usually 3-5% of the most recent minimum count survey. Factors such as length of time from last survey, number of kids observed, and amount of nanny harvest contribute to the determination of appropriate harvest level.

Mountain goat hunting opportunity is provided in 17 unique hunt areas (RG202-RG206, RG212, RG220, RG226, RG230-RG232, RG242-RG245, RG248, RG249, RG252, and RG266). In 2015, the board adopted a proposal from the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee that sought to restrict hunters from hunting goats in Unit 6 for 5 years following the harvest of a nanny. The purpose of this regulation was to address repeated harvest of nannies by individuals

particularly in areas with small quotas. This proposal was modeled from a regulation adopted in Units 7 and 15 for the same purpose. The regulation was first implemented in RY15.

Goat hunts are administered using “Goat Points” where billies count as 1, nannies count as 2, and unrecoverable goats count as 1.5 points towards the Maximum Allowable Harvest. This point system exists to attempt to account for the biological importance of nannies in a population. However, the true biological cost of the loss of a reproductive nanny to the population is greater than twice that of a billy. The regulation sought to create further incentive for the careful selection of a billy for harvest.

Since the inception of this regulation 33 nanny goats have been harvested. In the 5 years before the regulation, the average annual harvest of nannies was 18% of the total. Since the regulation was adopted, an annual average of 12% of the total harvest has been nannies. Before the regulation, five hunters took nannies more than once in ten years. Of those, 25 hunters harvested at least one billy in the same ten-year period. One nonresident harvested a billy the regulatory year after shooting a nanny the previous year. Nine hunters that killed a nanny would still be able to hunt goats within the federal system as federally qualified users.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting for Unit 6 is in March of 2019, and the proposal deadline for that meeting was May 1, 2018. The next regularly scheduled board meeting for Unit 6 is winter/spring of 2021/2022. If the board accepts this ACR, the Department recommends the proposal come before the board at its March 2019 meeting in Anchorage.

Sincerely,



Bruce Dale
Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation