

## **Regionwide & Multiple Units**

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### **PROPOSAL 1**

**5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.**

**5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Prohibit nonresident hunting of moose or caribou under intensive management in the Western Arctic/Western Region until harvest or population objectives are met as follows:

**Nonresident hunting shall not be allowed in Region V (Western Arctic/Western) for any moose or caribou population under a current active Intensive Management Predation Control Program until the minimum Intensive Management population or harvest objective for that population has been reached.**

So in areas where, for example, the population objective has been met for a prey population under an active intensive management (IM) predation control plan, but not the harvest objective (or vice versa), this would not apply and nonresident hunting would be allowed.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?**

**Nonresident hunting opportunity in areas within Region V (Western Arctic/Western Region) under active Intensive Management Predation Control Programs.**

Intensive Management Predation Control Implementation Programs to restore the abundance of prey species as necessary to achieve human consumptive use goals are intended to benefit resident Alaskans.

Resident Hunters of Alaska supports IM efforts to achieve these goals.

We understand that nonresidents may benefit from IM programs once IM population or harvest objectives are met. That is why we support nonresidents as well as residents paying a fee for the state's intensive management programs. However, nonresidents are not entitled to benefit from IM programs while they are in progress until either the harvest or population objectives for specific moose or caribou populations have been achieved.

We would like to see the Board of Game adopt regulations that match the intent of our Intensive Management law. No nonresident hunting should be allowed in Region V in an area where a moose or caribou population is under a formal active IM Predation Control program to increase populations for the benefit of resident consumptive uses when the minimum IM population **or** harvest objectives for that prey species has not been reached.

Currently there are no active IM programs in place in Region V.

This proposal would thus not have any effect on current nonresident hunting opportunities in Region V, rather is prospective in that regard.

Intensive Management when necessary is first and foremost about putting food on the tables of Alaskans. That's the way Alaskans who support IM efforts understand it. In other areas of the state, like Unit 13, the Board of Game has passed similar regulations for caribou, saying that nonresident hunting of the Nelchina herd will only be allowed if the herd is above the population or harvest objective. There is no valid reason not to have a one-size-fits-all regulation across the state on this particular issue.

**PROPOSED BY:** Resident Hunters of Alaska

(EG-F19-130)

## **PROPOSAL 2**

### **5 AAC 92.115. Control of predation by bears.**

Establish intensive management programs for bear across the Western Arctic/Western Region as follows:

Under intensive management, for other prey species harvested by hunters or in other areas, the commissioner of ADF&G may authorize predation control to recover depleted prey populations under Alaska Statute 16.05.020(2), and the Board of Game may adopt regulations for similar purpose under AS 16.05.255 either of these authorities are listed under other programs.

We, Alaskan residents that are concerned for the safety of our children, our food security, our wildlife, our resources, and sustainability for future uses, would like to recommend that the Alaska Board of Game adopt appropriate regulations that begin intensive bear management across the state for both brown and black bears.

I will leave it up to your legal teams, division staff, and board support team to work up the regulation language. I'm sure there will be modifications to add regulatory language appropriate to each unit as this proposal circulates prior to Board of Game meeting.

I recommend that each unit, give recommendations and modifications in assistance with the language to ensure that needs are being appropriately met throughout the state for predator control, "intensive management."

Areas of more intensive concern are the rural areas with higher subsistence economy.

We, would also like to request that you allow local residents to help with this management, because we know the demand for labor outweighs the number of employees. We are here to help at your discretion and volunteers.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The goal is to reduce predation bear rates, allowing humans to take more ungulates while also maintaining sustainable populations of predators. There has been an elevated issue heard throughout the state of bears becoming a problem, in specific the brown bear. This discussion has been brought about during multiple advisory committee meetings, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meetings, and the Federal Subsistence Board.

These programs are designed to reduce predation by wolves or bears and increase moose, caribou, or deer that are a need for source of Alaska. Another species that should be added to this is salmon, if possible.

In all areas where salmon use to be the main source diet for these ungulates are now in search of food, because of the decline of salmon in the spawning grounds. Bears are moving into urban and rural communities, putting human lives at risk and their personal harvests to wanton waste.

There is an ever-growing concern, humans witnessing brown bears harvesting caribou calves at an alarming rate. Not only eyewitnesses, but videos where the brown bears are ripping out newborns as the mothers are mid-point delivery.

Our caribou in the Western Region have flat lined and the population has not increased, which is a growing concern. Due to the decline in salmon, subsistence harvests have shifted on increasing the pressure on caribou to fill the void. If there is not enough caribou to uphold the demand, caribou abundance is at risk to a plummeting decline.

In other regions of Alaska, folks have talked about the moose populations are also declining and they too are concerned about the brown bears hunting moose calves at an alarming rate as well. There is significant concerns about a need for intensive management control on bears.

I had offered to start a proposal through the Board of Game to address these concerns and issues. There are multiple people who are in support of this proposal across the state.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alissa Nadine Rogers

(EG-F19-072)

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### **PROPOSAL 3**

#### **5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemptions.**

Reauthorize the current resident tag fee exemptions for brown bear in Units 18, 22, 23 and 26A as follows:

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

- ...
- (4) Units... 26;
- ...
- (8) Unit 22;
- (9) Unit 23;
- ...
- (13) Unit 18;
- ...

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

...

- (4) Unit 18;
- ...
- (7) Unit 22;
- (8) Unit 23;
- ...
- (10) Unit 26(A).

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Board of Game must reauthorize brown bear tag fee exemptions annually or the fee automatically becomes reinstated. We recommend continuing resident tag fee exemptions for the general season and subsistence brown bear hunts in Region V (Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A).

General Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for: Unit 18, where the tag fee has been exempted for six years; Unit 22, where the tag fee has been exempted for 16 years; Unit 23, where the tag fee has been exempted for 11 years; and Unit 26A, where the tag fee has been exempted for six years. Tag fee exemptions are desired to allow: 1) incremental increase in annual harvest, 2) opportunistic harvest by resident hunters, and 3) harvest by a wide range of users. Increased harvest is allowable because portions of these units have high bear populations.

General season brown bear harvest rates are within sustained yield limits and previous exemptions of the resident tag fee have not caused dramatic or unexpected increases in overall harvest. In Units 18 and 26A, tag exemptions were authorized for RY2012 and harvest has remained within sustained yield and continues to be similar to the preceding ten-year period. In Unit 22, the 16-year tag-free period for residents has had an average annual harvest of 50 brown bears (range 41–63 bears). In Unit 23, general harvests have been increasing slowly since 1961 primarily in response to increases in human population rather than regulatory changes, although harvests are annually quite variable due to effects of weather on hunting conditions. Harvest data for Unit 23 show no trend in the sex ratio, age or size of bears harvested under all types of hunts.

Subsistence Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A where brown bear subsistence hunt requirements include: 1) registration permit, 2) tag fee exemption, 3) salvaging meat for human consumption, 4) no use of aircraft in Units 22, 23 and 26A, 5) no sealing requirement unless hide and skull are removed from subsistence hunt area, and 6) if sealing is required, the skin of the head and front claws must be removed and retained by ADF&G at the time of sealing. Continuing the tag fee exemption helps facilitate participation in the associated brown bear harvest programs maintained by ADF&G for subsistence hunts.

In all units, subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustained yield limits and exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest. In Unit 18, we estimate 1–3 bears are taken annually in subsistence hunts. In Unit 22, subsistence harvest by permit is quite low, averaging less than one bear per year (less than 1% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 23, subsistence permit harvest is less than five bears annually since 1992 (less than 10% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 26A, between one and five bears are taken annually by subsistence hunters.

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

(HQ-F19-155)

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