



## Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
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The department submitted an Agenda Change Request (ACR 4) to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.050(a)(3) Hunting seasons and bag limit for musk oxen. The proponent is asking the board to open a season in the western portion of Unit 26A for up to 6 muskox.

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 for the population or a threat to meeting objectives for the population that is caused by existing regulations.
- D. The department has identified that muskoxen in the western portion of Unit 26A are present at a higher level than previously thought, which may restrict or reduce a reasonable opportunity for customary and traditional wildlife uses. Without board action now, muskox hunting will not occur for several years as a result of the regular board cycle and these units not being on the call for proposals for a few years.
- E. The department is unaware of any unforeseen, unexpected resource situations that would cause a biologically allowable resource harvest to be precluded by delayed regulatory action, and such delay would be significantly burdensome because the resource may be unavailable in the future.

5 AAC 85.050(a)(3) allows for harvesting muskoxen in the eastern portion of Unit 26A and western 26B, combined. The population there is below the threshold for a hunt. In the western portion of Unit 26A, the population estimate is now 455 (95% CI: 350-631) which would allow for the harvest of 6 muskoxen.

Previous Board meetings addressed muskoxen in Units 26A and 26B and found there are positive customary and traditional (C&T) uses, with an amount reasonably necessary (ANS) of 20 muskoxen (5 AAC 99.025(a)(9)). The Board has also determined there are positive C&T uses of muskoxen in Unit 23 north and west of the Kobuk River drainage, (ANS 18-22) as well as in units 22 and 23 combined south and west of the Kobuk River (ANS 100-150, including 10-25 in Unit 22E). At the time these determinations were made, there were no muskoxen in western Unit 26A. If this ACR is accepted, the board will need to determine if there is a positive or negative C&T finding for these animals in western Unit 26A. If the board determines there is a positive C&T finding, the board will need to determine if an existing positive C&T use finding for Unit 23 should be applied to the herd now found in western Unit 26A, or if the existing positive C&T use finding for Units 26A and B combined should be applied.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting for Unit 26 regulations is during winter/spring of 2022/2023. If the board accepts this ACR, the department recommends the proposal come before the board at its March 2021 meeting in Fairbanks to allow for more public input.

Sincerely,



Eddie Grasser  
Director  
Division of Wildlife Conservation