

PROPOSAL 246

5 AAC 92.171. Sealing of horns and antlers.

Change the sealing method for Dall sheep horns to avoid damage as follows:

I would like to see the board adopt language that removes [PERMANENT] from the sealing requirement and allows for the use of a locking tag attached to the skull or through a hole drilled in the skull plate, or another method that does not require damage to the sheep’s horns. Perhaps even a provision could be made to let a hunter choose the permanent plug if they wish, but the statute would be brought into line with the temporary nature of sealing of other Alaskan trophy animals and furbearers such as brown bears, some black bears, wolves, lynx, otters, and wolverines with a locking tag that can be removed during the taxidermy process.

5 AAC 92.171.

A person may not alter, possess, transport, or export from the state, the horns of a Dall sheep ram taken in any hunt where there is a horn configuration bag limit, the horns of a Dall sheep ram taken in Units 6-11 and Units 13-17, or the horns of a Dall sheep taken under a registration permit in Unit 19(C), unless the horns have been [PERMANENTLY] sealed by a department representative within 30 days after the taking, or a lesser time if designated by the department. **The seal must remain on the skull or skull plate until the taxidermy cleaning process has commenced;** except the horns of a ¾-curl or less sheep taken in the registration hunt in Units 25(A) and 26(C) do not need to be sealed.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current sealing methods for Dall Sheep horns (using a numbered aluminum “plug”) cause unnecessary and often unwanted damage to a hunter’s trophy. Upon sealing, a hole is drilled into one of the sheep’s horns, and a permanent plug is inserted. Although common for sealing sheep horns in other states, this method of permanent sealing provides no inherent useful data, research materials, testing samples, resource protection, or other tangible benefit to the State of Alaska that could not otherwise be provided by sealing with a locking tag on the skull or skull plate, but it does require permanent damage be done to the trophy itself.

It is also notable that only one of the sheep’s horns is sealed (suggesting that both horns are staying naturally attached to the skull or skull plate and considered “sealed), and sealing is not required for some horns such as winter-killed pick-ups, or horns taken before sealing was required (If taken care of, it’s effectively impossible to distinguish between horns taken two years ago, and 25).

This sealing method is also not consistent with most other big game animals and species that require sealing in Alaska, including CITES animals like brown bears, which are sealed with a locking tag that can legally be removed and damage repaired during the taxidermy process. They are sealed in a manner that is not permanently damaging to the trophy. The sealing process and requirement for Dall sheep is valuable and beneficial to the resource and its management, but the specific method of permanent sealing currently used causes unnecessary and often unwanted damage to the trophy. Many of the state’s sheep hunters would prefer a less destructive sealing method, such as the locking tag that was used in 2004 and 2005 in the first years that sealing of sheep horns was required.

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