

PROPOSAL 4

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

Change the resident bag limit for brown bear in Unit 1 to one bear every two years as follows:

Change the harvest limit for resident brown bear in Unit 1, from one brown bear every four years to one brown bear every two years.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently Southeast Alaska residents can only harvest one brown bear every four regulatory years and this needs to change in order to align with the ADF&G mission to manage wildlife. There is no data or science showing that brown bears in Unit 1 have any population concerns, but rather have high densities and actually show evidence of population increase in areas on the Chilkat Peninsula, Tracy Arm, Endicott Arm, and south to Port Houghton (Scott 2009). As a year-round sportsman, I have seen the increase in older brown bears on trail cams which supports the trend of an increasing population. The Southeast Brown Bear Management Plan has not been changed in over 20 years and the one every four years was initiated in 1968 with no update to this timeframe in over 50 years. To further support this change, it has been shown that when RB063 and RB073 (Berners Bay area) went from one bear every four regulatory years to one bear every regulatory year in 2013, the harvest did not increase in an area that is close to, and easy to access by Juneau residents. Registration permits provide accurate in season management data to help managers monitor harvest closely. In the event that managers felt that too many bears were being harvested, they can always issue an emergency order. In other areas of the state, Unit 13 for example, liberalizing the brown bear harvest actually helped the overall numbers of brown bears (the land only has so much carrying capacity for large apex predators) as well as bolstered ungulate populations. Another need for this change is that British Columbia has not allowed any hunting of brown bears since December 2017.

This change will benefit the wildlife as well as resident hunters.

PROPOSED BY: Jesse Ross

(EG-F22-103)
