

PROPOSAL 136

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

5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

Allow brown bears to be taken over bait in Unit 20D south of the Tanana River, and require a registration permit as follows:

A spring grizzly bear season similar to brown bear in Kenai that is regulated via registration permits, subject to closer monitoring of harvests, and closure (if necessary) to allow hunters an opportunity to hunt grizzly bear over bait in Unit 20D. I would not want to change the fall season to continue the opportunity to harvest a bear while moose hunting without registering for a tag. I have outlined how I think this change would say if adopted by the Board of Game.

On page 26 of the 2023-2024 Hunting Regulations booklet, the bullet currently reads (the underlined portion is the affected portion):

In Units 7, 11-13, 14A, 14B, 14C Remainder, 15-16, 18, 19A, 19D, 19E, 20A, 20B, 20C, 20D north of the Tanana River, 20E, 20F, 21C, 21D, 23, 24C, 24D, 25C, and 25D brown/grizzly bears may be taken at bear bait stations. Hunters must comply with seasons, bag limits, salvage, and sealing requirements for brown/grizzly bears. (Registration permits and locking-tags may be required in some areas, contact ADF&G for details).

If my proposal is adopted, it would read (the underlined portion is the affected portion):

In Units 7, 11-13, 14A, 14B, 14C remainder, 15-16, 18, 19A, 19D, 19E, 20, 21C, 21D, 23, 24C, 24D, 25C, and 25D brown/grizzly bears may be taken at bear bait stations. Hunters must comply with seasons, bag limits, salvage, and sealing requirements for brown/grizzly bears. (Registration permits and locking-tags may be required in some areas, contact ADF&G for details).

On page 108, the regulations currently state for both resident and nonresident hunters in Unit 20D one bear may be taken every regulatory year, with an open season of August 10- June 30.

If my proposal is adopted, the regulations would read for both resident and nonresident hunters in Unit 20D, one bear may be taken every regulatory year by registration permit available online or in person, with an open season of April 15 - June 30.

With a second entry stating for both residents and nonresidents in Unit 20D, one bear may be taken every regulatory year, with an open season of August 10 - April 14.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unit 20D south of the Tanana River is the only area in Unit 20 that does not authorize the harvest of grizzly bears over bait. I would like to see all of Unit 20 open to the harvest of grizzly bears over bait. While a portion of 20D does have extensive developed access which could lead to a spike in hunter interest and harvest, it also may not, based on what happened in surrounding units when baiting was allowed (20A, 20B, 20C). In these units, interest and harvest spiked when the regulation was changed to allow baiting for two to three years but then that interest decreased. If this pattern does not follow suit my proposal with the registration permit allows ADF&G to quickly close the season if harvest levels go well beyond what the department determines as sustainable. According to ADF&G some bear populations (and other species) are monitored by harvest data via looking at changes in harvest rates, or a change in skull size, or age of certain animals at time of harvest when accurate population estimates are not available. ADF&G has yet to document any significant

changes to the harvest data for Unit 20D grizzly bears, but if they do see a change indicating a population decline they have the registration permit as a tool to make quick changes to the season in order to protect bears. Until ADF&G can document a definite biological concern there seems to be a lost opportunity for being able to bait Unit 20D grizzly bears.

PROPOSED BY: Nicholaus Solomon

(EG-F23-186)
