

## **PROPOSAL 159**

**5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.**

**5 AAC 92.530(31). Management areas.**

Open a resident only archery only hunt for sheep in the Eastern Brooks Range Management Area with aircraft restrictions, and modify the existing youth hunt in the same area as follows:

### **Eastern Brooks Range Management Area:**

Resident One ram with full-curl horn or larger **by bow and arrow only**. August 10-September 20. **No hunter may access or exit the hunt by landing aircraft inside the EMBRMA/AVSMA except for the Arctic Village airstrip itself.**

### **AND:**

**\*\*\* Amend the existing (in regulation only due to federal closure) Youth Hunt to include: No hunter may access or exit the hunt by landing aircraft inside the EMBRAM/AVSMA except for the Arctic Village airstrip itself.**

(This hunt could also be created as a registration hunt if desired by wildlife managers to closer monitor and control the harvest.)

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The purpose of this hunt is to **increase hunter opportunity while having a minimal effect on the sheep population and on local subsistence hunters** by creating a new archery only hunt in the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area/Eastern Brooks Range Management Area.

Per the ADF&G regulations, the Eastern Brooks Range Management Area (EBRMA) currently has a youth sheep hunt from August 1-5 and then a registration hunt that takes place starting in October. However, the EBRMA directly overlays the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area (AVSMA) **which is currently under federal closure** except for the late season/winter registration hunt. **The aim of this proposal is to create a state supported hunt that might prove more acceptable to AVSMA managers** because the increased difficulty of a foot accessed, archery only hunt will make the hunt challenging enough that, despite the added hunter opportunity, will result in which very few sheep will be killed and local subsistence hunting activities and communities will not be affected.

### **On archery hunting:**

Archery hunting is an ideal management tool in areas sensitive to harvest numbers and/or in areas being managed to create the least disturbance possible on local subsistence hunting communities. Archery hunting increases or maintains hunting opportunity for all hunters (any sheep hunter can purchase and learn to shoot a bow) while dramatically decreasing the harvest/impact compared to a hunt in which rifles are allowed. Alaska should begin to implement archery hunting for sheep as a management tool and this hunt, if it were ever to become available, would be an ideal place to utilize this strategy.

(For reference: in the two existing archery draw hunts in Alaska, DS140 and DS141, which are easily accessible by road system near anchorage and have an established ATV trail within a couple of miles of much of the hunting area, there are still abundant sheep and mature rams in the area. Of the 64 resident hunters who receive that tag each year, on average one to three sheep have been killed in total in recent years and this is an any ram hunt. This demonstrates that archery hunts provide great opportunity for

hunt but have little to no affect on animal populations. This hunt would have essentially zero adverse affect on sheep populations while increasing hunter opportunity.)

On access restrictions:

To decrease interruption to local subsistence hunters, an added feature of this hunt could be that it may only be accessed by foot from outside the EBRMA/AVSMA or from Arctic Village itself. To clarify, hunters would have to enter the EBRMMA/AVSMA by foot only unless walking from Arctic Village itself. Air access would only be allowed if planes drop hunters outside of the EBRMA/AVSMA. This would create a unique “controlled access” style hunt that would drastically minimize interruption to the local community and their subsistence hunting activities.

It is the intent of this proposal that the existing youth hunt, if allowed, (which has never been an actual available hunt due to federal regulations described above) would also transition to these air access restrictions, again with the intent of minimizing any interruption to the local community.

**PROPOSED BY:** Paul Forward

(EG-F23-279)

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