

Delta Junction Area – Unit 20D

PROPOSAL 125

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change all general season harvest ticket moose hunts in Unit 20D to a registration permit as follows:

For all harvest ticket moose hunts in Unit 20D, change the [HT] under column heading “PERMIT/HUNT #*” to “RM _ _ _”, with ADF&G assigning one hunt number to replace all ten harvest ticket hunts.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Given recent severe winter kill of moose in Unit 20D, which has extensive road-network access to hunting areas, high hunter effort and high harvest, better data is needed to aid in moose management. During 2018-2022, an annual average of 1014 hunters harvested 251 moose from this unit. Current harvest ticket hunts for moose in Unit 20D do not provide ADF&G biologists adequate hunter effort and harvest data to proactively manage the moose population. There are currently ten harvest ticket hunts in Unit 20D. Changing all harvest ticket hunts in Unit 20D to a single registration hunt, with a requirement to report the harvest to ADF&G within 14 days from the end of the season, will provide the department more accurate, reliable, and timely data upon which to base moose management decisions. It will also simplify the regulation booklet by reducing the number of different hunts to help maximize moose hunting opportunity and harvest, as well as make it easier for hunters to have the proper paperwork to hunt an area. Hunters would be able to obtain these permits at any ADF&G office or online.

PROPOSED BY: Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F23-242)

PROPOSAL 126

5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20D as follows:

Units and Bag Limits (18)	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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...

Unit 20(D), that portion lying west of the west bank of the Johnson River and south of the north bank of the Tanana River, except the Delta Junction Management Area and the Bison Range **Controlled Use Area** [YOUTH HUNT MANAGEMENT AREA]

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 1,000 permits may be issued in combination with that portion in the Delta Junction Management Area; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Oct. 10–Nov. 25
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf

Oct. 10–Nov. 25
(General hunt only)

...

Unit 20(D), that portion within the Bison Range Controlled Use Area

...

1 bull with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side; or 1 antlerless moose, per lifetime of a hunter, by youth hunt drawing permit only; up to 10 permits may be issued; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf;

Sept. 1–Sept. 30
(General hunt only)

Sept. 1–Sept. 30

Unit 20(D), that portion within the Delta Junction Management Area

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 moose every four regulatory years by drawing permit only, a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Sept. 1–Sept. 15
(General hunt only)

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 1,000 permits may be issued in combination with that portion lying west of the west bank of the Johnson River and south of the north bank of the Tanana River; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 10–Nov. 25 (General hunt only)
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1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf	Oct. 10–Nov. 25 (General hunt only)
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NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 moose every four regulatory years by drawing permit only, a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Sept. 1–Sept. 15
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...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually. The objectives of the Unit 20D antlerless moose hunts are to 1) stabilize population growth of this high-density moose population; 2) address concerns about range degradation, reduced nutritional condition of moose, and reduced reproductive success of moose; 3) make progress toward meeting the Unit 20D intensive management (IM) harvest objective of 500–700 moose; and 4) provide youth and disabled veteran hunting opportunity. These objectives are being met.

If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the moose population could quickly increase to levels beyond the ability of the habitat to support the moose population. Opportunity to hunt a harvestable surplus of cow moose would be lost, and the ability to meet IM harvest objectives could be compromised. Additionally, the population may need to be reduced dramatically when new data are available and analyzed.

Antlerless moose hunts are offered in southwest Unit 20D, which has the highest moose density in the unit. This area has great potential for population growth due to an abundance of high-quality moose habitat created from extensive land clearing for agricultural use and multiple wildfires over the past 30 years. Total moose harvest in all of Unit 20D averaged 225 moose (an average of 201 bulls and 24 antlerless moose) during regulatory years 2020 and 2021. No antlerless moose were harvested in RY22 and no harvest is planned for RY23.

Antlerless hunting opportunity and harvest is limited at present to help maintain this moose population at current densities and within the ability of the habitat to support the population. The largest antlerless harvest (n=113) that occurred in Unit 20D was in 2009, when antlerless hunts were first authorized for the

purpose to reduce population size and address moose nutritional concerns. Since 2011, the southwest Unit 20D population estimates (range = 2,500–4,500 moose), and bull harvest in southwestern Unit 20D (201–282) have been stable. The 2022 population estimate for southwest Unit 20D was 2,459 moose (corrected for sightability) with a density of 1.94 moose per square mile, 28 calves:100 cows and 23 bulls:100 cows. The 2022 population estimate is 40% lower than the 2020 estimate, likely due to increased mortality as a result of severe winter conditions during 2021–2022, which included deep snow and winter rain events. The department does expect nutritional indices to improve because of the current reduced population size. However, to maintain this moose population from experiencing nutritional stress in the future, a limited antlerless harvest may still be warranted in future years.

Continued antlerless harvest will likely be needed to maintain this population at the optimal density relative to habitat constraints and will contribute additional harvest towards meeting the IM harvest objective of 500–700 moose without reducing bull-to-cow ratios below management objectives. The current population trend suggest that low, consistent antlerless harvest provided by drawing permit hunts in Unit 20D, in conjunction with other mortality factors (including ceremonial harvest, vehicle collision, accidents, and predation), is appropriate to maintain population stability.

The Department of Fish and Game will continue to evaluate antlerless moose hunts and their effect on moose density and population growth. Future antlerless moose hunts will be implemented as needed based on the evaluation of three indices of density-dependent moose nutritional conditions in relation to changes in moose density: biomass removal of current annual growth on winter browse, proportion of females with twin calves, and late-winter calf weights.

Additional drawing or registration permits will be issued only if more harvest is needed in specific areas to maintain optimal moose densities.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F23-044)

PROPOSAL 127

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Expand the hunt area and change the bag limit for the Unit 20D youth moose hunt YM792, and eliminate the drawing hunt DM791 as follows:

Unit 20D, expand the YM792 hunt boundaries to the entirety of southwest Unit 20D including the Delta Junction Management Area (DJMA) and eliminate DM791 from regulation. Hunt Dates: Sept 16th-25th

Resident youth who will be 10-17 years old by the starting date of the hunt are eligible to apply, and can only hunt (with) a youth permit while they are 10-17 years old. Each permittee must be accompanied in the field by a licensed Alaska resident adult at least 21 years old.

One (1) Moose: antlerless moose permits (up to 100), by youth hunt (YM792) drawing permit only; up to ten Any Moose permits may be issued; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; If the moose surveys determines there are a surplus of bulls, one any moose could be the bag limit for a portion of (example 1st-10th) successful applicants drawn. The remaining successful applicants' bag limit would be one antlerless moose.

Luck of the draw for bull tags. The bag limit (any moose or antlerless) and the number of permits will be a permit condition decided upon annually by the Delta area biologist based on most recent population and habitat surveys.

Example: The department determined it should harvest approximately 30 antlerless moose and has determined up to ten any bulls (Any Moose) could be harvested. Therefore, the department would issue 40 permits and the first ten applicants drawn would have the option to harvest. Any Moose, and the remaining 30 successful applicants could only harvest an antlerless moose.

Suggested language for the handy dandy:

Resident

20D

South of the north bank of the Tanana River and west of the west bank of the Johnson River, including the Delta Junction Management Area and the Bison Range Controlled Use Area

One moose by qualified youth hunters. Taking calves or cows accompanied by calves is prohibited.

YM792

Sept 16th–25th

Suggested language in the draw supplement:

Game Management Unit, Area20D, Southwest, Qualified Youth Residents Only

Hunt No.

YM792

Number of Permits

Up to 100

Season Dates

September 16th–25th

Legal Moose

Any Moose for the first 10 successful applicants drawn, except calves or cows accompanied by calves may not be taken.

Or

Antlerless for the remaining successful applicants. Taking calves or cows accompanied by calves is prohibited.

Specimens Required

Specimens may be required

Reporting Requirements if Successful

In person to ADF&G in Delta Junction within two days of kill

Additional Requirements and Information

Hunt Area: That portion of Unit 20D south of the north bank of the Tanana River and west of the west bank of the Johnson River.

See hunting regulations for motorized restrictions within the Bison Range Controlled Use Area. Bag limit will be determined by order drawn with up to 10 Any Moose permits being awarded.

(Table submitted with proposal)

Suggested language for the handy dandy:

R	20D	South of the north bank of the Tanana River and west of the west bank of the Johnson River, including the Delta Junction Management Area and the Bison Range Controlled Use Area	ONE MOOSE by Qualified Youth Hunters . Taking calves or cows accompanied by calves is prohibited.	YM792	Sept 16 th – 25th
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Suggested language in the draw supplement:

Game Management Unit, Area	Hunt No.	Number of Permits	Season Dates	Legal Moose	Specimens Required	Reporting Requirements if Successful	Additional Requirements and Information
20D, Southwest, Qualified Youth Residents Only	YM792	Up to 100	September 16th-25th	Any Moose for the first 100 successful applicants drawn, except calves or cows accompanied by calves may not be take. Or Antlerless for the remaining successful applicants. Taking calves or cows accompanied by calves is prohibited.	Specimens may be required	In person to ADF&G in Delta Junction within 2 days of kill	Hunt Area: That portion of Unit 20D South of the north bank of Tanana River and west of the west bank of the Johnson River. See hunting regulations for motorized restrictions with the Bison Range Controlled Use Area Bag limit will be determined by order drawn with up to 10 Any Moose permits being awarded.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Simplify antlerless moose hunts in southwest Unit 20D.

In existing regulations, DM791 is an antlerless hunt in southwest Unit 20D. There is also a youth hunt (YM792) on the books that allows for bull and antlerless moose harvest, but in a very small area. With the recent severe decline in moose population, we are projected to issue fewer permits for the near future. Eliminating DM791, and expanding YM792 will provide a high quality youth hunt, and antlerless moose harvest while simplifying the regulations.

In January 2023, the department (ADF&G) presented a moose management workshop at which it confirmed that moose in Unit 20 suffered a significant population loss from the winter of 2021-2022.

The Delta Advisory Committee was asked how to move forward and make decisions for the future harvest of antlerless moose. (There are no antlerless hunts planned for this area in 2023, but future harvest may be needed)

The goal of the Delta AC is to create and maintain a productive and healthy moose population in southwest Unit 20D. This will be assessed through moose abundance and condition, habitat condition, and twinning rates as measured by the following surveys conducted by ADF&G:

- 1) Biennial geospatial population estimation (GSPE) moose population surveys
- 2) Annual calf twinning surveys
- 3) Short yearling calf weights
- 4) Browse removal surveys

Equipped with this information, the department will determine the number of antlerless permits to issue for southwest Unit 20D. These draw permits will be available through the expanded youth hunt (YM792).

The Delta AC recommends the harvest of bull moose also be included in this youth hunt. Adding the desired number of "Any Moose" (up to ten) permits to this hunt will provide opportunity for the youth to harvest a bull. Any moose permits will also allow the department to maintain the desired bull/cow ratio for the unit.

ADF&G staff has stated in moose management meetings that a bull/cow ratio of approximately 15/100 is sufficient for reproduction. However, many moose populations (including Unit 20D) are managed at 25 to 30 bulls per 100 cows to increase hunter satisfaction through seeing more bulls while hunting in antler-restricted areas. Keeping a close watch on bull/cow ratios will determine the number of bull of tags allocated for this hunt (up to ten). The allocation of ten or less tags to this (any moose) hunt should be sustainable most years. ADF&G reported the southwest Unit 20D bull/cow ratio to be at 25/100 based on their most recent survey in 2022.

These tags would be put into this proposed expanded youth hunt (YM792) that will be a high quality youth hunt to help manage our moose population into the future.

PROPOSED BY: Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F23-246)

PROPOSAL 128

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the bag limit for the youth moose hunt YM792 to one bull as follows:

Amended: "One bull by permit"

Removed: [with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with four or more brow tines on at least one]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Would like consideration for YM792 youth hunt to consider expanding the bag limit to "any bull" in the event that the "antlerless" portion of the hunt is removed. This year's hunt (2023) removed antlerless due to the harsh winter the season before.

The bag limit for this season is now, “One bull per lifetime, with spike-fork or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on at least one side.” This extremely limits the youth hunters on chances of success. After speaking with Delta Junction fish and game, it was confirmed that the large majority of all moose taken on that hunt are antlerless. With only a four day window of hunting per permit, it is very limiting on success since the area is not very large and closed to motorized vehicles. Parents or guardians taking their youth on the hunt will not have the ability to cover as much terrain as needed to find a legal bull on this hunt. My understanding of the youth program is to get the next generation taught, excited and interested in the great resources we have in this state. My fear is that this year will result in a low success rate for all the YM792 hunters and/or the tags not even being hunted. Also, the rest of Unit 20D has the same bag requirements. So in a year where antlerless is removed from the youth hunt, the youth have no advantage other than the small areas bounded off to them. If the regulation for this youth hunt isn’t addressed, it could result in a significant drop in applicants and an even bigger drop in successful moose taken.

Suggest allowing motorized vehicles when the antlerless portion is removed to assist the maximizing the land area the youth can cover in the area.

PROPOSED BY: Lucas Wacker

(EG-F23-179)

PROPOSAL 129

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the bag limit for the youth moose hunt YM792 as follows:

The YM792 Bison Range Youth Hunt Controlled Use Area hunt legal animal should be changed to one moose of either sex, excluding calves. At a minimum it should be changed to any bull.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The YM792 Bison Range Youth Hunt Controlled Use Area legal animal should be changed to one moose of either sex, excluding calves. At a minimum it should be changed to any bull. According to the local fish and game officials in the area, there is a large population of moose in this area. This hunt is limited to ten tags only. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce children into the sport of hunting and I think that limiting the tag to a spike-fork or 50” or more bull is unnecessarily handicapping this hunt. While it is the responsibility of the adult hunter accompanying the child on the hunt, these restrictions also have a potential of placing a youth hunter at a larger risk of taking an illegal animal. This could have a devastating effect on their view of hunting moving forward. Overall, this is a once in a lifetime tag and opportunity for these children and I believe that they should not be limited so much on what they can harvest, especially in an area that can support the low number of harvests that would occur on this hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Kenneth Bowman

(EG-F23-187)

PROPOSAL 130

5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.

Award up to 10% of permits for DS203 and DS204 to nonresidents, and remove the allocation between guided and nonguided nonresidents as follows:

Up to 10% of permits for each hunt (DS203 and DS204) shall be awarded to nonresidents by random draw from among all applicants, with no forced separation of nonresident permits between guided and 2DK. If the total number of nonresidents drawn is less than 10%, that is the number awarded to non-residents, with all remaining permits awarded to resident applicants. The total non-residents drawn will be from none to the 10% maximum. The suggested new language in the regulation would be:

5 AAC 92.057

(6) The department shall issue a maximum of 20 percent of the drawing permits allocated to nonresidents in (2), (3), **and** (4)[, AND (5)] of this subsection to nonresidents accompanied by a resident over 19 years of age who is the spouse or other relative of the applicant within the second degree of kindred, as described in AS 16.05.407(a).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Resolve unintended consequences to ADF&G implementation of 5 AAC 92.057 provisions put in place due to 2022 Proposal 149. As a result of the adoption of Proposal 149, the AAC now states: “(6)the department shall issue a maximum of 20 percent of the drawing permits allocated to nonresidents in (2), (3), (4), and (5) of this subsection to nonresidents accompanied by a resident over 19 years of age who is the spouse or other relative of the applicant within the second degree of kindred, as described in AS 16.05.407(a).”

The Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA) is included as number (5), which states “the department shall issue a maximum of 10 percent of the drawing permits to nonresidents and a minimum of 90 percent of the drawing permits to resident, ...”

The draw hunt supplement in previous years stated “up to 10% to nonresidents.” In the 13 years immediately preceding 2023, the average percentage of total permits awarded to all nonresidents ranged from 1.4% to a high of 8.1% with an average of 5.1%. The 2023 implementation of this regulation was technically correct but did not meet the intent of the proposal, and is definitely opposed by the Delta AC. It did not provide “up to” 10% of each hunt, but instead split the guided nonresident and second degree of kindred (2DK) nonresidents between the two hunts, with the walk-in early hunt having 1.4% of the permits set aside for 2DK nonresident hunters and the motorized late hunt having 17% of the permits set aside for guided nonresidents. This implementation guarantees a total of 10% of all permits in the DCUA to nonresidents, but significantly disadvantages residents, guided nonresidents, and 2DK nonresidents on one hunt or the other. It also means any nonresident tags not awarded during the draw, become undersubscribed and are then available for nonresidents on a first-come first-served basis.

In 2023 there were 73 applicants for the single 2DK nonresident permit, and only one qualified guided nonresident application for seven available .

The author of Proposal 149, is not familiar with the hunters or guides operating in the DCUA but included it in his proposal because it was a place with nonresident allocation limits in its sheep hunts. The rationale of Proposal 149 is based on numbers of 2DK and guided nonresidents applying for permits in areas where the author hunts and do not extend to the DCUA. His statement that “*Less than 15% of nonresident sheep hunters are second degree of kindred (2DK) hunters statewide, (hunting with a relative)...*” obviously

misses the mark for the DCUA hunts where the latest draw application cycle saw 98.7% of nonresident applications from 2DK hunters (73 of 74 total qualified applications). Further, in the 13 years from 2009-2022, the percentage of 2DK applicants from all nonresidents ranged from 29.3% to a high of 97.1% and averaged 72.8% annually.

These numbers reflect that in the same period, there were only two guides registered to operate in Units 20D/20A and one of those does not offer sheep hunts. Predictably, following the results of this year's draw and six nonresident tags being available on the first-come first-served basis, two more guides have registered in 20D/20A within weeks of the draw permit results being published. There is a small portion of the DCUA in Unit 13. Based on outfitter websites, only one of the six registered guides in Unit 13 could be guiding sheep hunters in DCUA, and it is unknown if he does.

The Delta AC is ambivalent about the split of nonresident permits between 2DK and guided hunters.

The Delta AC unanimously supports returning the application and drawing process for DCUA sheep hunts, including allocation of non-resident permits, to the way it was done prior to implementation of Proposal 149.

PROPOSED BY: Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F23-244)

PROPOSAL 131

5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.

Allocate 10% of the Delta Controlled Use Area sheep drawing permits to nonresidents as follows:

10% of the total number of sheep permits issued in the Delta Controlled Use Area will be guaranteed to nonresidents and these nonresident permits will be divided evenly as possible between the two hunts in this area that occur August 10th to August 25th and August 26th to September 20th. The second degree of kindred permit can be issued in either hunt at the departments discretion if there is one issued.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to have 10% of the sheep draw permits in the Delta Controlled Use Area guaranteed to nonresidents in the draw. It is currently up to 10% but in the 2023 draw permit supplement the department gave nonresidents 10% of the total permits and I would like to see them get that permanently.

10% of the permits have been issued in the past under the current regulations and this would give guides some certainty when applying their hunters for these permits.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Montgomery (EG-F23-323)

PROPOSAL 132

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

5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.

Allocate 20% of the resident only late season Delta Controlled Use Area sheep drawing hunt DS204 to archery only as follows:

Allocate 20% of the total DS204 tag allotment each year to a separate tag that is archery only for the same area. If managers see fit, this archery hunt could take place during the same time as the general DS204 hunt or could take place during a separate time period.

20% of the total number of DS204 tags that would currently be allotted will be re-allocated to a new drawing hunt. **1 Full Curl Ram by bow and arrow only 8/26-9/20**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal is one of several written this year with the intention of **maintaining hunting opportunity for all hunters while decreasing harvest on sheep populations.**

The current tag allotment for DS204 is adjusted each year to accommodate the estimated harvestable surplus of sheep in this area. This proposal is intended to maintain that number of tags but to allocate 20% of them each year to archery only. Because of the increased difficulty of archery hunting this will shield an overall decrease in harvest which, over time, may result in more sheep being available for harvest in future year. Similarly, in the event that sheep population does decline, wildlife managers may be able to maintain the number of tags because of the overall decrease harvest rate of tag holders (due to 20% of them being archery hunters who will have lower success rates.) Over time this could demonstrate the effectiveness of using archery as an effective management tool for sheep hunting in Alaska.

Overall, this will maintain opportunity while decreasing harvest and thereby enhancing the overall resource for future generations of hunters.

***Of note, in the past there has been some resistance to transitioning existing rifle hunts into archery hunts because of the perception of some that this somehow decreases opportunity. It is, however, well established throughout the United States and in Alaska that all hunters are capable of taking advantage of archery hunts by the simple means of purchasing and layering to shoot a bow. Currently it's possible to buy an effective hunting bow for less than the cost of most rifles and to learn to shoot accurately in a matter of weeks.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Forward

(EG-F23-290)

PROPOSAL 133

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

5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.

Allocate 20% of the resident only early season Delta Controlled Use Area sheep drawing hunt DS203 to archery only or create a new early season archery only hunt as follows:

Allocate 20% of the total DS203 tag allotment each year to a separate tag that is archery only for the same area. If managers see fit, this archery hunt could take place during the same time as the general DS102 hunt or could take place during a separate time period.

Option 1:

20% of the total number of DS203 tags that would currently be allotted will be re-allocated to a new drawing hunt. **1 full-curl ram by bow and arrow only 8/10-8/25**

Option 2:

20% of the total number of DS203 tags that would currently be allotted will be re-allocated to a new drawing hunt. **1 full-curl ram by bow and arrow only 8/1-8/10.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal is one of several written this year with the intention of **maintaining hunting opportunity for all hunters while decreasing harvest on sheep populations.**

The current tag allotment for DS203 is adjusted each year to accommodate the estimated harvestable surplus of sheep in this area. This proposal is intended to maintain that number of tags but to allocate 20% of them each year to archery only. Because of the increased difficulty of archery hunting this will shield an overall decrease in harvest which, over time, may result in more sheep being available for harvest in future year. Similarly, in the event that sheep population does decline, wildlife managers may be able to maintain the number of tags because of the overall decrease harvest rate of tag holders (due to 20% of them being archery hunters who will have lower success rates.) Over time this could demonstrate the effectiveness of using archery as an effective management tool for sheep hunting in Alaska.

Overall, this will maintain opportunity while decreasing harvest and thereby enhancing the overall resource for future generations of hunters.

***Of note, in the past there has been some resistance to transitioning existing rifle hunts into archery hunts because of the perception of some that this somehow decreases opportunity. It is, however, well established throughout the United States and in Alaska that all hunters are capable of taking advantage of archery hunts by the simple means of purchasing and layering to shoot a bow. Currently it's possible to buy an effective hunting bow for less than the cost of most rifles and to learn to shoot accurately in a matter of weeks.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Forward

(EG-F23-291)

PROPOSAL 134

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

Change the time frame for which a person can be awarded Mt. Harper sheep drawing permit DS206 in Units 20E and 20D, to one permit every four regulatory years or once per lifetime as follows:

I would ask that the same one per every four years rule or a one per lifetime rule be applied to DS206 as an obvious means to increasing opportunity for those who have never drawn the hunt. I would ask this to be the minimum time allowance for any one individual to win this permit with a consideration for an even longer time period such as perhaps “one per lifetime.”

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? For sheep drawing permit 206 (Mt Harper) the current regulations allow for resident individuals to apply (and potentially win) a permit every year. As we continue to see a changing environment adversely affect our sheep populations with a corresponding reduction in permit numbers, the federal government closing areas to sheep hunting, and no points system for Alaskas drawing permits it becomes increasingly difficult for Dall sheep hunters to have an opportunity to harvest a large representation of the species. The one per every four regulatory years rules already applies to areas that have historically held far larger populations of sheep such as the Tok Management Area than occur in the Mount Harper area.

PROPOSED BY: Donald Lee III

(EG-F23-229)

PROPOSAL 135

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

Close Mount Harper sheep drawing hunt DS206 in Units 20D and 20E, to nonresidents as follows:

I would as the board to consider permanently closing this hunt to nonresidents.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? For sheep drawing permit 206 (Mount Harper) the current regulations allow nonresident individuals to apply (and potentially win) a permit every four years. As we continue to see a changing environment adversely affect our sheep populations with a corresponding reduction in permit numbers, the federal government closing areas to sheep hunting, and no points system for Alaskas drawing permits it becomes increasingly difficult for resident Dall sheep hunters to have an opportunity to harvest a large representation of the species.

PROPOSED BY: Donald Lee III

(EG-F23-230)

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)

PROPOSAL 137

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 all of Unit 20 as follows:

Allow the hunting of brown/grizzly bears over bait in all of Unit 20: Brown/grizzly bears MAY NOT be taken over bait or scent lures EXCEPT under conditions of a bear baiting permit in Units 7, 11-13, 14A, 14B, 14C remainder, 15-16, 18, 19A, 19D, 19E, 20, 21C, 21D, 23, 24C, 24D, 25C, and 25D.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There is a large and healthy population of brown/grizzly bears in Unit 20 and we need to have the ability to use this resource and help our moose and caribou populations through more lenient limitations on baiting within all of Unit 20.

PROPOSED BY: Tyrel Palmer

(EG-F23-205)

PROPOSAL 138

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 as follows:

Amend the current regulation to allow grizzly/brown bears to be harvested at a bait station in the entirety of Unit 20D by striking the phrases “that portion of” and “north of the Tanana River”, from Section (b)(1) and (b)(13). After amendment the regulation would read “...20(A), 20(B), 20(C), 20(D), 20(E)...”, for both of the aforementioned sections.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the Delta Junction area, the winter of 2021-2022 had the largest snow accumulation in recorded history, per USDA-NRCS snow accumulation data. Making the event even more destructive, a mid-winter rain event put a two-inch ice layer in the middle of the snowpack. All wildlife in Unit 20D south suffered from the extremely hard winter, but especially the ungulates. According to ADF&G surveys completed and reported to the Delta Advisory Committee by local area biologists, the Delta bison and the Macomb Plateau caribou herd populations were reduced by almost 50% and the moose population by 40%.

According to ADF&G biologist out of Palmer, Alaska, in his “determining kill rates of ungulate calves” research, a mature female grizzly/brown bear consumed 44 calves in 25 days and a mature male consumed 42 calves in 26 days. This amount of predation could be extremely devastating to the remaining population of the ungulates in the unit. The biologist also produced and compiled data that states: “the cautious approach applied to grizzly/brown bear management may not be necessary” and that the population

estimates should not be based on harvest but along with other facts that support a higher harvest of grizzly/brown bears as long as the breeding females and their young are protected. This information is in the research article “Effects on Harvest of Brown Bear Population in Alaska” which also supports research completed by the Delta ADF&G office that demonstrates that these bears travel a large area and will repopulate areas with lower bear densities and even produce more cubs to do so. Unit 20D south has basically become a sanctuary for these bears as you can bait in every unit surrounding this portion of land, yet all of the surrounding areas are still supporting a healthy population of grizzly/brown bears after years of baiting. At this point, there is no biological data that shows any type of a conservation concern for the grizzly/brown bear population. There is, however, growing concern based on last years surveys, for the ungulate population after our heavy losses of sheep, caribou, bison and moose last year, which demonstrates that this area should be opened to harvesting grizzly bears over bait stations. This would also simplify the regulation to create continuity throughout the unit. It may also be prudent to be proactive in this matter and eliminate this lost opportunity for harvest, rather than having to depend on the department to conduct predator control later on which is a costly endeavor.

PROPOSED BY: Delta Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(EG-F23-243)
