

PROPOSAL 138

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

Reduce the brown bear hunting season in Units 7 and 15 by 15 days as follows:

What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

Units 7 and 15 One bear every regulatory year by RB300 permit.

Resident and Nonresident season: August 10 to **June 15** [June 30]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

Reduce the season length for brown bear hunting by 15 days.

When Board of Game adopted a proposal to extend brown bear hunting season from September 1 through May 31st to August 10th to June 30th in Units 7 and 15, some hunters and biologists believed the longer spring season would result in exceeding the quota and a closure of the fall season. Since this extended season has only been in place since RY24, only one year of complete is available. Fish and Game data reveals 10 females, five years old or older, were reported during spring of 2024. Chronology of harvest indicates five were taken from May 9th to June 15th (50%) and five from June 17th to June 25th (50%).

Allowable harvest of brown bear in Units 7 and 15 is managed on a quota system to assure a sustainable level of annual harvest is not exceeded. Fifty to sixty brown bear can be taken, from all causes of mortality, or 8-12 females five years old or older. Prior to the extended season, that has been in place since 2014, the season has only been closed one time by the state in late October, after fall hunting was essentially over. Following the harvest of 10 adult females during the spring 2024 season plus four non-hunting adult female mortalities, the 2024 fall season was closed in Units 7 and 15 because the 14 adult females taken exceeded the quota of 8-12.

Since few brown bear are taken during the fall, a reduction of 15 days in June will likely reduce adult female harvest and allow for a fall season. After last fall's closure, there was widespread complaining, primarily from moose hunters, that they could not hunt for brown bear. This sentiment added to the conflict between bear hunters using bait sites and those that didn't use the method.

If adopted, this will be a reduction in hunting opportunity by 15 days in the spring. However, it will still allow two months of hunting using bait in the spring and hopefully avoid the closure of the fall season.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

Yes with many local hunters.

PROPOSED BY: Ted Spraker

(OI-F25-031)
