

PROPOSAL 199

5 AAC 85.030. Hunting seasons and bag limits for deer.

Increase the nonresident bag limit for deer in Unit 8 Remainder as follows:

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

Increase the limit for Sitka blacktail deer on Kodiak Island for nonresidents from 1 buck to 2 deer or 3 deer (bucks only before October 1).

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

The limit for nonresidents was changed from three Sitka blacktail deer to one buck starting in the 2023 season. From what I can tell, this was due to “user-conflict issues” with villages on the ferry system rather than deer population concerns. The Department of Fish & Game opposed the reduction finding no biological reason for it. The population remains high and healthy.

Very few nonresidents ever harvested more than one deer. However, they did book 4-7 day trips wherein they harvested the first decent buck they saw and spent the remaining time in the field trying to beat the size.

The unintended consequence of this reduction is additional pressure put on waterfowl hunting and fishing. When hunters harvest deer at the beginning of their trip, instead of staying in the field looking for a bigger buck, they are now waterfowl hunting and fishing to fill the rest of the days of their trip. I have lived in Larsen Bay my whole life and have never seen so much winter charter fishing and waterfowl hunting.

There are also far fewer nonresidents booking hunts. This is for at least two reasons. First, the reduction in limit gave the impression that the population of deer on Kodiak was low. That is not the case. Second, hunters did not want to devote the time and expense to a hunt that could be over in one day. This harms lodges, transporters, air taxies, outfitters, and other Alaskan businesses.

If this were a population issue or an issue that effected the health of the deer on Kodiak Island, I would be fully supportive. My father was a guide here, my son is guiding too, and we want this area healthy and productive for generations to come. However, the deer population in my area, Larsen Bay/Uyak Bay, is high and healthy. There were 42 deer in my yard last week. Winter conditions effect deer population far more than hunters. We have had mild enough winters, without sheets of ice that block deer food sources, and the population is thriving.

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

No.

PROPOSED BY: Mike Carlson

(OI-F25-182)
