

PROPOSAL 21

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

Extend the season for the RB088 brown bear hunt in Unit 4, to align the season for all of Northeast Chichagof Island as follows:

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

Recommended Solution and Draft Regulatory Language:

Regulation RB088 to include Northeast Chichagof by adjusting the boundary description to incorporate the specified coordinates and geographic references. The proposed regulation would read:

Proposed Regulation RB088:

(Outside drainages) Chichagof Island from East Point (57.80' N lat., 134.94' W long.) following the common GUA line of 04-11 to 58.02' N lat., 135.96' W long., to 57.96' N lat., 136.09' W long., following GUA line 04-15, including Yakobi and other adjacent islands; Baranof Island south and west of a line which follows the crest of the island from Nismeni Point (57°34' N lat., 135.25' W long.) to the entrance of Gut Bay (56°44' N lat., 134.38' W long.), including the drainages into Gut Bay, Kruzof Island, and other adjacent islands.

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

Expand the open area under Regulation RB088 to include Northeast Chichagof, till May 31. This area has a high brown bear population, as evidenced by a high Defense of Life and Property (DLP) reports over the past 10 years, indicating significant bear activity. Including Northeast Chichagof in RB088 would align the regulation with the area's bear management needs, support City of Hoonah's refuse waste management efforts to reduce bear human conflicts, and ensure consistency with ADF&G Brown Bear Management and US Forest Service land management practices. While still supporting Bear viewing tourism on Private land and the USFS roads system that is closed to Brown Bear hunting under regulation during these additional 11 days.

The Rationale:

By expanding the bear hunting area for hunt RB088 in Unit 4 to include Northeast Chichagof, defined by precise coordinates and Guide Use Area lines, while keeping existing regulations for Baranof, Kruzof, and adjacent islands intact, the revision extends the hunting period in the area by 11 days, from May 20 to May 31, to enhance bear management.

Key points supporting this change:

Unit 4 brown bear harvest has remained stable at approximately 40 bears under the established harvest guidelines annually for over a decade.

Harvest guidelines, set in the early 2000s and adjusted in 2018 per the Unit 4 Brown Bear Management Strategy (BBMS), target a sustainable 4% harvest rate with no more than 1.5% sow harvest which has proven effective.

Under the BBMS, Outfitter Guides have successfully reduced the number of contracting guides to 20, as mandated. Efforts by guided hunters have effectively decreased the overall nonresident sow

harvest, demonstrating that additional hunting opportunities can be offered without jeopardizing or adversely affecting the core bear population.

The revision aims to balance expanded hunting opportunities with sustainable population management, supported by long-term harvest data and effective science base conservation strategies.

Support for Bear Viewing Tourism:

The proposal ensures that bear viewing on private land and USFS roads already closed to hunting remains unaffected, as RB088 would only apply to designated hunting areas and maintain existing closures. The Unit 4 Brown Bear Management Strategy acknowledges growing tourism demand and recommends identifying and managing specific non hunting bear viewing sites (Port Althorp, Pack Creek). By limiting hunting to areas away from tourism hotspots and enforcing motorized vehicle restrictions, the expansion aligns with ADF&G and USFS efforts to balance hunting and non-consumptive uses like wildlife viewing.

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

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