

PROPOSAL 236

5 AAC 92.052. Discretionary permit hunt conditions and procedures.

5 AAC 92.061. Special provisions for brown bear drawing permit hunts.

Remove the sow restriction and penalties for resident hunters in Kodiak brown bear hunt areas 8 thru 16, and institute a sow skull size restriction for resident hunters as follows.

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

Remove the sow restrictions and penalties for resident hunters in hunt areas 8-16.

Institute a skull size component to where the elimination of any permits only happens if a sow is harvested with a skull size less than 15 inches in length or 9 inches in width.

From the 2024/2025 draw hunt supplement: “The bag limit is one bear every four years, and a legal bear is any bear except cubs or females with cubs. A wounded bear counts against your bag limit for the regulatory year.”

Including resident brown bear hunters in the sow harvest restrictions in these hunt areas will lead to many more permits being taken away from resident hunters than nonresident guided hunters.

A resident bear hunter who draws a once-in-a-lifetime Kodiak brown bear permit wants to take a trophy (male) bear but also doesn’t want to come away without harvesting a bear in what will likely be the only chance he or she gets the opportunity for this coveted hunt. Taking a sow in these areas does not affect that hunter, so there is no real incentive to not take a sow. The loss-of-permit penalty falls on future resident hunters.

A guided nonresident hunter is after a trophy brown bear, and most guides will not let a client take a sow. Guides have far more knowledge than most resident bear hunters on judging sows vs boars. Guides in the areas where these sow restrictions are in place have a monetary incentive to avoid taking sows because the penalty (loss of a permit) applies to that guide with that concession area. So, guided nonresident hunters are much more likely to avoid taking a sow.

The previous RY94-RY06 sow harvest restrictions in these hunt areas only applied to nonresident drawing permits and according to the Department, “it was widely believed this prior regulation (RY94-RY06) had a positive effect on the population.”

Going back a few years, the ADF&G chart below shows that in hunt areas 8-16, from RY 21 – 24, nonresidents harvested 10 sows, and residents took 26 sows. Resident hunters took about 73 percent of the sows, with nonresidents taking 27 percent.

1	Area	Sex	Residency	SKTOTAL	Regulatory Year	cert
2	111	F	Nonresident	24.5625	2021	1807985
3	112	F	Nonresident	24.3125	2021	1808011
4	113	F	Nonresident	21.8750	2021	1807995
5	143	F	Nonresident	23.0000	2021	1805763
6	113	F	Nonresident	22.5625	2022	1806351
7	116	F	Nonresident	20.1250	2022	1806333
8	146	F	Nonresident	19.8125	2022	1806233
9	238	F	Nonresident	23.9375	2022	1806286
10	240	F	Nonresident	23.1250	2022	1806212
11	113	F	Nonresident	20.8125	2023	1807341
12	208	F	Resident	20.1875	2021	1808002
13	211	F	Resident	20.9375	2021	1808012
14	211	F	Resident	22.1875	2021	1808028
15	212	F	Resident	21.3750	2021	1807982
16	214	F	Resident	23.1875	2021	1808078
17	215	F	Resident	22.6875	2021	1808021
18	240	F	Resident	22.3750	2021	1805784
19	244	F	Resident	22.8125	2021	1805752
20	210	F	Resident	23.6250	2022	1806336
21	211	F	Resident	23.0625	2022	1806386
22	212	F	Resident	21.1250	2022	1806352
23	213	F	Resident	23.7500	2022	1806368
24	213	F	Resident	25.0000	2022	1806330
25	215	F	Resident	21.6250	2022	1806360
26	238	F	Resident	22.5000	2022	1806298
27	241	F	Resident	22.5625	2022	1806277
28	243	F	Resident	22.3750	2022	1806223
29	212	F	Resident	21.1875	2023	1807316
30	214	F	Resident	20.5000	2023	101188
31	214	F	Resident	22.6250	2023	1807333
32	241	F	Resident	22.6875	2023	1807291
33	243	F	Resident	21.9375	2023	1807210
34	208	F	Resident	19.5625	2024	1813379
35	211	F	Resident	20.6875	2024	1813363
36	213	F	Resident	22.4375	2024	1813389
37	214	F	Resident	21.6875	2024	1813378

If only including nonresidents (who take a quarter of the sow harvests) in the previous sow restrictions had a positive effect on the population to the point those restrictions were rescinded, why are we including residents in these sow restrictions now? Again, without a penalty to the individual resident hunter who takes a sow, there is no real incentive not to take a sow when that hunter won't be affected by future loss of permits. This will continue to result in a significant loss of permits to residents.

We'd like the Department of Fish and Game to only include nonresident drawing permits for these sow harvest restrictions in these hunt areas. Start out just like we did the last time when we had bear conservation concerns in these areas, put the emphasis on guided hunters whereby the guide has a clear incentive not to harvest sows.

Including a skull size component places no burden on Department staff because skulls are already required to be sealed and skulls are measured when sealed. There should be no penalty for any hunter for taking older class sows with a skull size larger than 15 inches in length or 9 inches in width.

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

Kodiak brown bear restrictions on the taking of sows in hunt areas 8-16 and elimination of permits for residents if sows are taken

Department concerns with lower brown bear populations in the southwestern portion of Kodiak Island resulted in the Department instituting regulations in RY23 that result in a loss of permits to both residents and nonresidents if any sows are taken in hunt areas 8–16 (Deadman Bay, Dog Salmon River, South Olga Lakes, Red Lake, Frazer Lake, Karluk Lake, Halibut Bay, Sturgeon River, & North Karluk River).

These new sow harvest restrictions are similar to what was in place in RY94–RY06 in the same hunt areas, although the previous sow harvest restrictions had a skull size component and did not include resident bear hunters.

Since the implementation of these sow harvest restrictions in RY 23 in these hunt areas, residents have harvested nine sows, and nonresidents 1 sow. This results in a significant loss of permits for resident hunters. While we understand the necessity to take fewer sows in these areas, we don't believe resident bear hunters should be included in the sow restrictions and penalties.

Also, we want to note that after the Department implemented these sow restrictions, there was nothing in the Draw Permit Supplement to inform hunters who apply for permits in these areas that these sow harvest restrictions were in place. However, hunters are informed of the sow harvest restrictions after they win a permit for these areas.

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

RHAK always contacts Department biologists when working on proposals. Thanks to Department staff for answering questions and providing harvest information!

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska

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