

PROPOSAL 4

5 AAC 92.130. Restrictions to bag limits

Amend the definition of a "taken" mountain goat in Units 1-5 to align with the definition of a "taken" brown bear in Units 1-5 as follows:

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

Proposal: I propose amending the Alaska hunting regulations to align the definition of a "taken" mountain goat with that of a bear in Units 1-5. Specifically, a mountain goat struck by a projectile (e.g., bullet or arrow) should be considered "taken," regardless of whether the animal is retrieved, mirroring the existing regulation for bears in these units. This regulation would mirror the existing bear regulation (5 AAC 92.130) and apply to Unit 1-5 where mountain goats are managed under a weighted point harvest system (male = 1 point, female = 2 points).

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

Rationale:

Consistency Across Species: The current regulation for bears in Units 1-5 (5 AAC 92.130) defines a bear as taken when struck by a projectile, promoting ethical hunting practices and accountability. Extending this definition to mountain goats ensures consistency in harvest reporting and enforcement across big game species in these units.

Frequent Mid-Season Closures Due to Point System: Mountain goat populations in Unit 1-5 are managed using a weighted point system to ensure sustainable harvest. Recent years have seen multiple emergency orders issued by the Unit 1 biologist to close hunting seasons mid-season when harvest points are reached. For example, in 2023, closures were enacted in portions of Unit 1C (e.g., Mt. Kluchman, South Tracy Arm) due to reaching point limits (Emergency Orders R1-8-23, R1-23-24). Defining a goat as taken when struck by a projectile would improve harvest tracking accuracy, potentially reducing the need for abrupt closures.

Ethical Hunting Practices: Mountain goats inhabit rugged, remote terrain, making retrieval of a wounded animal challenging. Defining a goat as taken upon being struck encourages hunters to make responsible shot selections, reducing the likelihood of wounding and loss.

Population Management: Accurate harvest data is critical for sustainable management of mountain goat populations. Counting a goat as taken when struck ensures more precise reporting, aiding the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in monitoring populations and setting quotas.

Public Safety and Fairness: Aligning regulations for mountain goats with those for bears reduces confusion among hunters, enhancing compliance and fairness in enforcement.

Implementation: Amend 5 AAC 92.130 to include mountain goats in the definition of "taken" for Units 1 and 4, as follows:

"In Units 1-5 a *mountain goat* or bear is considered taken when it is struck by a projectile, regardless of whether the animal is retrieved." In Units 1-5, *goats* and bears wounded by a hunter count toward the bag limit for the regulatory year but not the every-four-regulatory-year bag limit. "wounded" means there is a sign of blood or other sign that the animal has been hit by a hunting projectile.

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

Submitted to Juneau -Douglas Advisory Committee via email. Over several years, I have coordinated through discussion, field experience, and networking with outer mountain goat hunters in Southeast Alaska on this much needed change.

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