

Proposal 108

5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.

Return GMU 19C Dall Sheep season to historic season dates as follows:

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

GMU 19C Dall's Sheep Season. Aug 10 – Sept. 20, 2027. Residents and Non-Residents. One Full Curl Ram.

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

GMU 19C Dall's Sheep Season. Return it to historic season dates. All the time, expense, effort, and restrictions implemented since 2023 have not, and will not, put more sheep on the mountain.

Out of Cycle BOG Proposal 204 passed in March of 2023 after the same proposal had failed by a wide margin at the previous regularly scheduled Interior Cycle BOG meeting. There was a significant level of emotion which trumped proven science, leading to the passage of Proposal 204 at the out of cycle meeting held on the Kenai Peninsula. The Alaska Board of Game process represents the most democratic process of wildlife conservation in the world and Alaskans need to be able to believe in and trust the Board process to make scientific and constitutional based decisions.

The ensuing developments since have put proven science aside and pitted user groups against user groups in the drawn-out fight for who will and will not hunt Dall's sheep in GMU 19C.

As a conservationist, hunter, and professional guide, having spent nearly 3,000 days of the past 45 years of my life living with and documenting Dall's sheep populations in GMU 19C, I have seen nearly identical population swings over the years, due to hard winters and predator abundances. These cycles are normal and will continue to occur.

Full curl management of wild sheep naturally protects recruitment. Recruitment and genetics are both provided for by the sub-legal ram population.

Hunting within a full-curl management strategy does not affect recruitment.

As well, harvest and sealing records for 19C prior to 2023 clearly indicate that rams exceeding eight years of life were not being harvested annually.

Professional guides and resident hunters can easily determine harvest potential by paying attention to annual harvest reports, weather reports, sheep hunting media, and plan their outings accordingly.

Board of Game actions to manage predation at lower levels will do more than any other factor to help maintain sustained yield, abundance, and maximum benefit objectives. Then, when hard winters do occur, the populations are not already in low density equilibriums which require longer periods of time to naturally rebuild.

Most Alaskans love our wolves, but we do not love them in numbers that hold our precious prey species in low densities which does not allow for our given habitats to be utilized.

If the BOG follows the new pattern of wild sheep management it has started within GMU 19C, the burgeoning of the process will compound around the state and the negative fight for who does and who does not hunt will continue to degenerate hunting for future generations.

You can fix this now.

Recommendations:

1. Accelerate activation of already passed predator management initiatives within GMU 19C.
2. Reauthorize over the counter Dall's sheep hunting for residents and non-residents equally.
3. Develop and encourage maximum penalty for anyone harvesting sub-legal sheep.

What would happen if nothing is changed?

People's time, state expenses will continue to be lost. The negative fight for who will or will not hunt will continue. Mature rams will continue die of old age while professional guides try to explain to their clients in the field why. Resident and non-resident hunters will continue to lose hunting opportunity.

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

This proposal and reasoning for it has been supported by numerous previously provided written and oral BOG testimonies from many people and entities including but not limited to, well known and respected Alaska wild

sheep biologists, wildlife biologists/managers, ADF&G, wild sheep support groups and related individuals, professional guides and their support groups, outdoor associations, and hunters in general.

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