

Proposal 213

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

Open a resident-only spring brown bear season extension in Unit 20A and 20B Remainder as follows:

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

We propose a resident-only spring brown bear season extension in Unit 20A and 20B Remainder Residents: One bear every regulatory year Sept 1-June 30

The nonresident season and bag limit would remain the same and close on June 15.

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

EXTEND BROWN BEAR SEASON TO JUNE 30 FOR RESIDENTS ONLY

The current grizzly bear hunting season in Units 20A and 20B (remainder) closes on June 15, while legal black bear baiting stations remain active and permitted through June 30. This 15-day gap unnecessarily limits resident hunting opportunity during the late-spring period when bears are active at baits.

Grizzly bear populations in these units are healthy and stable. ADF&G has recently liberalized seasons in this area (most recently extending the close from May 31 to June 15) with no conservation concerns. Harvest levels remain low and well within sustainable limits: for example, recent data show only ~31 brown bears harvested annually across the large, combined area of Units 20A, 20B, 20C, 20F, and 25C (55% males), and historical harvests in 20A/20B alone have averaged 10–18 bears per year. Interior Alaska brown bear densities are low to moderate (10–25 bears per 1,000 mi² in similar habitat), and sustainable harvest rates are 5–6% of the population—current take is far below that threshold.

If nothing changes, resident hunters lose the final two weeks of baiting opportunity each year, reducing both recreational and subsistence harvest potential with zero biological benefit. Other solutions considered (e.g., no change or a full year-round season) were rejected because this targeted 15-day extension perfectly aligns hunting with existing baiting rules while maintaining the conservative one-bear bag limit and fall/spring structure.

We did not want to include nonresidents in this season extension due to potential conflicts with guided nonresidents and increased baiting activity by guides who are allowed up to 10 bait stations in each guide use area.

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

Yes, the Fairbanks AC developed this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee

(OI-F26-163)
