

Proposal 219

5 AAC 92.170. Sealing of marten, fisher, lynx, beaver, otter, wolf, and wolverine.

Reestablish the Beaver Sealing Requirement in GMU's 20 A, B, C, D as follows:

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

In the interest of beaver conservation, I believe it would be prudent to reestablish the Beaver Sealing Requirement in GMU's 20 A, B, C, D in order to provide harvest data to the ADF&G necessary to answer questions regarding appropriate levels of harvest, numbers taken within specific drainages, methods of harvest, age class ratios, and the chronology of harvest in the central Interior.

Regulatory Language May Read As Follows:

5 AAC 92.170. Sealing of marten, fisher, lynx, beaver, otter, wolf, and wolverine.

(a) A person may not possess, transport, or export from the state the untanned skin of a marten taken in Units 1 - 7 and 14 - 16, the untanned skin of a beaver taken in Units 1 - 11 and 13 - 17, **20A, B, C, D, ...**

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

Potential beaver harvest concerns exist in Interior Alaska; the cessation of beaver harvest data collection in the Interior by ADF&G in the early 2000's (due to beaver sealing requirements being repealed) and the elimination of Fur Acquisition Form and Fur Shipping Tag requirements has resulted in the loss of beaver harvest data from the past 20 or so years. As a result, effective beaver harvest monitoring no longer exists.

There is currently controversy surrounding potential beaver declines in highly accessible, high pressure portions of central GMU 20, centering on the expanded beaver seasons and the allowance of harvest by shooting through the Spring.

In the last decade there has also been a significant increase in demand for beaver carcasses for usage as bear bait, with harvest being facilitated by open water trapping/shooting seasons.

In my extensive personal experience, harvesting beaver by shooting in open water contributes significantly to unrecorded take and wounding loss rates, if done without precise shot placement and the utilization of retrieving dogs or equivalent methodology for rapid retrieval before carcasses sink or are swept away.

Lastly, with open water take, it is virtually impossible to determine if beaver have been harvested from colonies that are being trapped annually by established trappers, who often utilize the accepted practice of limited harvest per lodge to farm beaver colonies.

Beaver as a species are long-lived furbearers, documented to live up to 12 years in the wild. That combined with relatively low reproductive rates leave beaver populations vulnerable to over harvest.

I believe the resumption of harvest data collection is necessary for ADF&G to manage beaver more effectively and that sealing is an efficient method of data collection.

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

No, This was primarily the culmination of numerous discussions with a variety of beaver trappers in the central GMU 20 area.

PROPOSED BY: Robert Hunter

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