

Proposal 24

5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemptions.

Reauthorize the current resident tag fee exemptions for brown bear in Units 18, 22, 23 and 26A as follows:

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

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

...

(4) Units... 26;

...

(8) Unit 22;

(9) Unit 23;

...

(13) Unit 18;

...

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

...

(4) Unit 18;

...

(7) Unit 22;

(8) Unit 23;

...

(10) Unit 26(A).

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

The Board of Game must reauthorize brown bear tag fee exemptions annually or the fee automatically reinstates. The department recommends continuing resident tag fee exemptions for the general season and subsistence season hunts in Region 5 (Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A).

General Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for: Unit 18, where the tag fee has been exempted for 10 years; Unit 22, where the tag fee has been exempted for 20 years; Unit 23, where the tag fee has been exempted for 15 years; and Unit 26A, where the tag fee has been exempted for 10 years. Tag fee exemptions are desired to allow: 1) incremental increase in annual harvest; 2) opportunistic harvest by resident hunters; and 3) harvest by a wide range of users.

General season brown bear harvest rates are within sustained yield limits and previous exemptions of the resident tag fee have not caused dramatic or unexpected increases in overall harvest. In Units 18 and 26A, tag exemptions were authorized for regulatory year (RY) 2012 and average harvests have remained within sustained yield limits and continue to be similar to the preceding 10-year period. In Unit 22, the 18-year tag-free period for residents has had an average annual harvest of 50 brown bears (range 41–63 bears). In Unit 23, general harvests have been increasing slowly since 1961 primarily in response to increases in human population rather than regulatory changes, although annual harvests vary due to weather and hunting conditions. Harvest data for Unit 23 show no trend in the sex ratio, age, or size of bears harvested under all types of hunts.

Subsistence Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A where brown bear subsistence hunt requirements currently include the exemption. Continuing the tag fee exemption helps facilitate participation in the associated brown bear harvest programs maintained by ADF&G for subsistence hunts.

In all units, subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustained yield limits and exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest. In Unit 18, an estimated 0–3 bears are taken annually in subsistence hunts. In Unit 22, subsistence harvest by permit is quite low, averaging less than 1 bear per year (less than 1% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 23, subsistence permit harvest is less than 5 bears annually since 1992 (less than 10% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 26A, between 0 and 5 bears are taken annually by subsistence hunters. Only 6 subsistence permits were issued in Region 5 and 0 bears were taken RY2023.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F26-022)
