

Proposal 40

5 AAC 85.050. Hunting seasons and bag limits for musk oxen.

Change hunting dates for Musk Ox hunt in GMU 22 to Aug1-Mar 31 as follows:

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

Preferred solution is TX090 season date Aug1-Mar 31 [Mar 15].

Alternate solution is TX090 season with end date later than Mar 15 such as March 24.

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

The TX090 hunt is a relatively new hunt, having been open for five years. We are still learning how to carry out this hunt. During the first two years, the majority of the harvest occurred in August and September. However, in the third and fourth years, the timing of harvest shifted to the winter months, with only one animal being harvested in August or September in each of those years. This year, all hunters chose to wait until winter to harvest, when both meat and qiviut are at their best. Only two out of 10 hunters were successful.

There has been a noticeable shift in the distribution of animals away from the area near Unalakleet. Over the first five years of the hunt, all but one animal was harvested in this area. Recently, however, hunters have needed to access more remote locations due to muskox migration and displacement where travel by four-wheelers or boats is very limited. These areas are typically only accessible after sufficient snowfall, but not during the years with excessive snow accumulation, such as 2026.

Currently, March 15 is the standard closure date for Muskox hunts in GMU 22. However, several hunts in GMU 18 and 26 remain open till March 31. Given increasing reliance on winter access and the variability of snow conditions, aligning the TX090 season with these later closing dates may improve hunter opportunity and success.

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

SNSAC has discussed this proposal with several current and previous TX090 permit holders.

PROPOSED BY: Wes Jones (OI-F26-062)
