

Proposal 85

5 AAC 92.015(a)(4). Brown bear tag fee exemptions.

Reauthorize the resident brown bear tag fee exemptions for the Interior and Northeast Alaska (Region 3) as follows:

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

5AAC 92.015(a)(4). Brown bear tag fee exemptions.

Reauthorize the resident brown bear tag fee exemptions for the Interior and Northeast Alaska (Region 3) as follows:

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

(4) Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26(B), and 26(C)

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

The Board of Game must annually reauthorize all resident brown bear tag fee exemptions. The Board of Game put resident brown bear tag fees in place statewide during the mid-1970s to discourage incidental harvest, elevate the status of brown bears to trophies, and to provide revenue. Today, populations in the aforementioned units are abundant, and brown bears continue to be highly regarded as trophies. Across the region, season dates and bag limits effectively regulate harvest in areas where interest is high.

Eliminating all resident brown bear tag fees throughout Region 3 simplifies regulations, increases resident hunter opportunity, and is not likely to cause declines in these brown bear populations. This reauthorization would assist with the department objective of managing Region 3 brown bear populations for hunter opportunity and would continue to allow hunters to take brown bears opportunistically. Reauthorizing these tag fee exemptions would allow residents who are unable to purchase the \$25 tag before hunting, due to lack of vendors or economic reasons, to legally harvest brown bears. During regulatory years 2014–2024, approximately 20% of brown bears harvested by resident hunters in Region 3 were taken incidentally to other activities, compared to 8% statewide.

Human-caused mortality of brown bears in most areas of Region 3 is quite low and is assumed to be less than 6% of the population, which is a rate that is sustainable under most ecological circumstances. Where harvests are elevated (i.e., Units 20A, 20B, 20D, and portions of 26B), brown bear populations are managed through changes in seasons and bag limits. The presence or absence of tag fees does not appear to have a significant influence on harvest in these areas.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F26-020)
