

Fairbanks Area - Units 20A, 20B, 20C, 20F, & 25C

Proposal 187

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Increase youth hunting opportunities by allocating a portion (5%) of the any bull draw hunts and antlerless draw hunts in 20A as follows:

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

New hunt codes would be as follows

YM770, YM771, YM774, YM641, YM655, YM768, YM769, YM772, YM773, YM628, YM639, YM668, YM679. With season dates of 1 Sep- 30 Sep.

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

Increase youth hunting opportunities by allocating a portion (5%) of the any bull draw hunts and antlerless draw hunts in 20A.

Hunter recruitment is at an all-time low. We need to provide more youth only opportunities across the state. The proposed season dates are also more advantageous to youth hunters, possibly allowing them to have a better hunt experience.

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-F26-154)

Proposal 188

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Nonresident permit allocation for draw permit hunt DM766 limited to “up to ten percent” as follows:

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

Nonresident permit allocation for draw permit hunt DM766 limited to “up to ten percent”

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

DM766 permit hunt is becoming more sought after. With this increased interest and a recent reduction in available permits we would ask that the Board limit nonresident permit allocation to allow resident hunters a better chance of receiving permits

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

Written by Middle Nenana River AC

PROPOSED BY: Middle Nenana River AC

(OI-F26-081)

Proposal 189

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM766, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits as follows:

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

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM766, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits. If at least 10 permits are not available a Non-Resident permit will not be available.

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

Limit the number of tags that may be drawn by Non-Residents for Moose drawing hunt DM766.

There is currently no allocation cap on how many tags may be drawn by Non-Residents.

Non-Residents are drawing a consistently high proportion of the tags for high demand drawing hunts. Moose hunting in Alaska is the only state in the Union that has opportunity to hunt Alaska-Yukon Moose unguided as a US Citizen, making it a highly desirable opportunity. Both Residents and Non-Residents compete for the tags equally in the Big Game Drawing which means Alaska Residents receive no preference in the drawing.

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

No

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale

(OI-F26-151)

Proposal 190

5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20A as follows:

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

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(18)		
Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with the Remainder of Unit 20(A); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 15–Nov. 15 (General hunt only)	
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 1–Last day of Feb.	
...		
1 moose by targeted permit only; by shotgun,	Season to be announced by emergency order	

crossbow, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

(General hunt only)

...

Remainder of Unit 20(A)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 15–Nov. 15
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 25–last day of Feb.

...

1 moose by targeted permit only; by shotgun, crossbow, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order
(General hunt only)

...

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

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually by the Board of Game. The primary goals of the Unit 20A antlerless hunts are to regulate moose population growth and herd size within the intensive management (IM) population objective, at levels that the habitat can support, to provide harvest opportunity to help meet IM harvest objectives, and to provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios below objectives.

Unit 20A antlerless harvest is determined by a decision matrix that incorporates population status in relation to the IM population objective, nutritional status, and the population trend. The Unit 20A moose population is currently within the IM population objective and nutritional indices suggest the population is at moderate to high nutritional levels, but the population trend is uncertain. In November 2024, the Unit 20A population estimate was 11,696 moose (90% confidence interval 10,155–13,237 moose; 2.0–2.6 moose per square mile), which fell within the IM population objective of 10,000–15,000 moose and was similar to the previous estimated Unit 20A population size from fall 2022. Nutritional status is assessed primarily via twinning rates and short-yearling weights. The 3-year average twinning rate in western Unit 20A was 21%, 16% in central Unit 20A, and 32% in eastern Unit 20A. These twinning rates suggest moderate (10-20% twinning rates) to high (>20% twinning rates) nutritional status. Female short-yearling weights collected during 2023–2024 averaged 398 lbs, which is greater than the 385 lb threshold indicative of high nutrition in the decision matrix. The population trend since the November 2024 population survey is uncertain due primarily to the winter of 2025–2026, which appeared to negatively affect calf survival because of deep snow and persistent extreme cold. Due to this uncertainty in population trend data, no antlerless hunts in Unit 20A will be held in regulatory year 2026. Antlerless hunt plans for regulatory year 2027 will be reassessed following collection of additional data, including a planned population survey in the fall of 2026.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F26-014)

Proposal 191

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the registration period and permit issuance in antlerless moose registration hunt RM768 to October 1-15, and change the season dates to October 15 – last day of February as follows:

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

In years that the antlerless moose registration hunt RM768 is opened, change the registration period and permit issuance to October 1-15, and change the season dates to October 15 – last day of February.

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

In years that the winter antlerless moose registration hunt RM768 is opened in Unit 20A Remainder, the registration period closes in August before the regular bull season begins. Because of this, local residents that may wish to participate in this hunt during times of food scarcity and/or when they are unable to harvest a bull moose during the regular season are unable to participate because they have missed the registration period. By shifting the registration period and issuance of permits for RM768 to October, it would provide better opportunity for local residents to participate in the winter antlerless

moose hunt RM768.

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

Yes, this proposal was developed by the Minto Nenana Fish & Game Advisory Committee with assistance from ADFG staff.

PROPOSED BY: Minto/Nenana Fish & Game Advisory Committee (OI-F26-190)

Proposal 192

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Maintain current antlerless hunt closures (2026) in 20A remainder as follows:

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

Maintain current antlerless hunt closures (2026) in 20A remainder. Maintain no open season for antlerless moose

by drawing permit hunt and by registration permit only as shown in 2025-2026 regulations. Reject any incoming proposals for 2027 that establish dates of Aug 15 - Nov 15 for antlerless moose by drawing permit hunt and dates of Aug 25-last day of Feb for registration permit only.

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

The Minto-Nenana AC has held a long standing position against antlerless hunts, and only supports taking of cows for ceremony. Some young moose harvested in the area have fully grown live tapeworms, which may indicate declining health. Local residents report fewer moose harvested for communities. The lower end of the confidence interval for the population estimate 10,155 is not very much above the lower end of the IM population objective of 10,000. With the hard winters and

continued climate uncertainty, precautionary management that eliminates antlerless hunts would better sustain population.

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

Yes, local ACs are concerned about low moose populations and moose health. Additionally, the winters of 2021 and 2025-2026 were extremely hard on moose, especially calves.

PROPOSED BY: Tlaa Deneldel Community Group (OI-F26-174)

**This Proposal was submitted with a map that can be found online at:*

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook>

Proposal 193

5 AAC 92.540. Controlled Use Areas.

Shorten the season dates for motorized restrictions in the Wood River CUA as follows:

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

We proposed to shorten the season dates for motorized restrictions in the Wood River CUA Wood River Controlled Use Area: Unit 20A bounded on the north by the south side of the Rex Trail beginning at its intersection with the east bank of the Totatlanika River, then easterly along the Rex Trail to Gold King airstrip, then from Gold King airstrip along the trail's extension along the north side of Japan Hills to the Wood River; bounded on the east by the east bank of the Wood River, including the Wood River drainage upstream from and including the Snow Mountain Gulch Creek drainage; bounded on the south by the divide separating the Yanert River drainage from the drainages of the Healy Creek, Moody Creek, Montana Creek, and the Wood River; and bounded on the west by the east bank of the Nenana River from the divide separating the drainage of the Yanert River and Montana Creek north to Healy Creek, then easterly along the south bank of Healy Creek to the north fork of Healy Creek, then along the north fork of Healy Creek to its headwaters, then along a straight line to the headwaters of Dexter Creek, then along the east bank of Dexter Creek to the Totatlanika River, and then down the east bank of the Totatlanika River to the Rex Trail. The area is closed to the use of any motorized vehicle, except aircraft for big game hunting including the transportation of any big game hunters, their hunting gear, and/or parts of big game, **Aug 5 - Aug 25**; *however, this does not prohibit motorized access via, or transportation of game on, the Parks Highway or the transportation into the area of game meat that has been processed for human consumption.*

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

The issue is the overly restrictive motorized vehicle closure in the Wood River Controlled Use Area (WRCUA) in GMU 20A, which severely limits affordable resident access despite abundant game populations.

History of the WRCUA: This area was established decades ago as a tool to control ground-based access and prevent potential conflicts with guides during the fall season. The current rule (5 AAC

92.540) prohibits all motorized vehicles except aircraft from August 1–September 30 (with exceptions for the Parks Highway and processed meat). While the original intent was sustainable management, the aircraft-only exception has created de facto exclusivity for commercial air transporters and guides.

Current conditions and supporting data: The moose population in all of Unit 20A is extremely healthy and at one of the highest densities in North America. Recent geospatial population estimates (GSPE) and ADF&G surveys show stable numbers (e.g., eastern 20A estimates in the 2,700–4,000+ range in recent years), bull:cow ratios of 28:100 (2022), and calf:cow ratios of 33:100. Populations remained robust even after the tough 2021–2022 winter, with normal adult mortality. Caribou are also thriving and managed conservatively via the DC827 drawing hunt, which has high success rates among participants. Predator populations (wolves and bears) remain healthy and balanced.

Despite this abundance, participation is low due to access barriers. The DC827 caribou hunt has historically low entry rates because hunters cannot reach the area affordably without aircraft. This year alone, 34 cow moose hunts went undersubscribed largely because of access fears. General-season moose success rates hover at 22–26% (hundreds of hunters), while drawing hunts reach 41%—but many more Alaskans could hunt if ground access were allowed outside peak season. Antlerless permit uptake remains low (e.g., 2021: only 112 of 260 permits hunted, 41 cows harvested).

All safety nets remain firmly in place: strict antler restrictions (50-inch, 4 brow tines, or spike-fork), drawing permits that cap additional harvest, limited cow tags, and ongoing intensive-management monitoring. These ensure any increased access will stay well within sustainable levels.

Economic reality and lack of opportunity: The aircraft-only rule forces residents to rely on expensive air transporters. Typical costs run \$3,795 base per hunter for a moose drop camp plus \$1,200–\$1,500 for meat haul (total often \$4,000–\$6,000+ per person). This is prohibitive for most resident families, especially for cow hunts or caribou. Affordable ground access via the Rex Trail, Parks Highway, or existing trails (using personal ATVs, boats, or vehicles) would open real opportunity without commercial dependency.

The restrictions effectively prioritize guide exclusivity over resident needs. This is unfair to Alaskans, violates the principle of maximum sustained yield, and contradicts the Alaska Constitution’s mandate for sustained yield benefiting residents.

What happens if nothing changes? Resident participation stays artificially low, harvestable surplus goes unused (undersubscribed permits), and the area continues to function as a private playground for well-funded air-based hunters. Other solutions (e.g., past boundary adjustments proposed in 2023–2024 Board cycles) were

considered but rejected because they do not directly address the temporal restriction that creates the affordability barrier.

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-F26-169)

Proposal 194

5 AAC 92.530. Management areas.

Allow the take of waterfowl with the use of shotgun within the Healy Lignite Management Area as follows:

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

Healy Lignite Management Area- Open to hunting by bow and arrow only, small game **and waterfowl** may also be taken by falconry and shotgun.

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

We would like the Board to allow the take of waterfowl with the use of shotgun within the Healy Lignite Management Area. The Board recently changed regulation and allowed the take of small game by shotgun but failed to address the take of waterfowl.

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

Written by the Middle Nenana River AC

PROPOSED BY: Middle Nenana River AC (OI-F26-079)

Proposal 195

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Increase youth hunting opportunities by allocating a portion (10%) of the antlerless draw hunts in 20B FMA as follows:

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

New hunt codes would be as follows YMXXX season dates Sept 1-Nov 27

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

Increase youth hunting opportunities by allocating a portion (10%) of the antlerless draw hunts in 20B FMA.

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-F26-156)

Proposal 196

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM786, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits as follows:

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

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM786, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits. If at least 10 permits are not available a Non-Resident permit will not be available.

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

Limit the number of tags that may be drawn by Non-Residents for Moose drawing hunt DM786.

There is currently no allocation cap on how many tags may be drawn by Non-Residents.

Non-Residents are drawing a consistently high proportion of the tags for high demand drawing hunts. Moose hunting in Alaska is the only state in the Union that has opportunity to hunt Alaska-Yukon Moose unguided as a US Citizen, making it a highly desirable opportunity. Both Residents and Non-Residents compete for the tags equally in the Big Game Drawing which means Alaska Residents receive no preference in the drawing. Additionally this is an Antlerless Moose hunt.

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

No

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale (OI-F26-158)

Proposal 197

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM788, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits as follows:

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

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM788, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits. If at least 10 permits are not available a Non-Resident permit will not be available.

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

Limit the number of tags that may be drawn by Non-Residents for Moose drawing hunt DM788. There is currently no allocation cap on how many tags may be drawn by Non-Residents.

Non-Residents are drawing a consistently high proportion of the tags for high demand drawing hunts. Moose hunting in Alaska is the only state in the Union that has opportunity to hunt Alaska-Yukon Moose unguided as a US Citizen, making it a highly desirable opportunity. Both Residents and Non-Residents compete for the tags equally in the Big Game Drawing which means Alaska Residents receive no preference in the drawing. Additionally this is an Antlerless Moose hunt.

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

No

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale

(OI-F26-160)

Proposal 198

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the dates of the non-resident hunt within the Minto Flats Management area to September 8-25 in 20B and September 5-15 in 20B remainder as follows:

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

Change the dates of the non-resident hunt: in 20 B within the Minto Flats Management Area as follows:

no open season [SEPT 8 - SEPT 25]; and in 20B remainder as follows: **no open season** [SEPT 5 - 15].

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

The most recent surveys show continued low moose numbers after 2021, the rough winter that contributed to a 35% decline in Unit 20B bringing it below the IM population objective.

Additionally, some young moose harvested in the area have fully grown live tapeworms. Local residents report fewer moose harvested for communities which data shows too.

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

Yes, locals are meeting and concerned about low moose populations and moose health. Additionally, the winter of 2025-2026 was extremely hard on moose, especially calves.

PROPOSED BY: Tlaa Deneldel Community Group (OI-F26-176)

Proposal 199

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Close a portion of western Unit 20B to nonresident moose hunters as follows:

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

Close the portion of Unit 20(B) outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area and outside the Minto Flats Management Area to nonresident moose hunters. In regulation, this area could be described as that portion of Unit 20(B) west of a line beginning at the Unit 20(A) / Unit 20(B) boundary at 64° 38.423 N. lat., 148° 38.921 W. long., north to 65° 12.586 N. lat., 148° 38.921 W. long., and that portion north of the line from 65° 12.586 N. lat., 148° 38.921 W. long., to the Unit 20(B) / Unit 25(C) boundary at 65° 12.586 N. lat., 148° 1.544 W. long.

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

The portion of Unit 20B outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (FNSA) is split into 2 areas in 5 AAC 99.025 for moose, each with a positive customary and traditional use finding. The first area is that portion within the Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA), which has an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses (ANS) of 20–40 moose. The second area is that portion outside of the MFMA; this area has an ANS of 75–100 moose. The moose population within this second portion of Unit 20B decreased by approximately 48% between fall 2020 when the department estimated it at 2,386 moose (90% confidence interval 1,841–2,391) and 2023 when the department estimated it at 1,239 moose (90% confidence interval 827–1,651). This decrease was likely mostly due to the hard winter during 2021–2022. Following this decline, harvestable surplus (4% of the midpoint population estimate) was estimated at 50 bulls, which is below the ANS of 75–100 moose.

5 AAC 99.025 (c)(1) states that ANS includes the total amount of animals from a population that must be available for subsistence hunting in order to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence users hunting under State and Federal subsistence regulations. Furthermore, Alaska Statute 16.05.258(b)(4) states that if the harvestable portion of a population is not sufficient to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses, the appropriate board shall adopt regulations eliminating consumptive uses, other than subsistence uses. Therefore, since the estimated harvestable surplus is below the ANS in this portion of Unit 20B, and thus reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses is not being provided, eliminating nonresident moose hunting opportunity must be considered by the Board of Game since nonresident moose hunters are not subsistence users.

Moose management, as it relates to the ANS determinations, is complicated in western Unit 20B because the portion of Unit 20B outside the FNSA and outside the MFMA surrounds the MFMA and is discontinuous in area. This regulatory structure (separate ANS determinations for each area) does not reflect the biological reality that moose from the same population move in and out of the MFMA and therefore between the areas with separate ANSs. In addition, because the area outside the MFMA does not follow drainages and includes disconnected polygons, hunting regulations created specific to this area are likely to be challenging to implement and for hunters to interpret.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F26-037)

Proposal 200

5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20B as follows:

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

	Resident Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts	Nonresident Open Season
Units and Bag Limits (18)		

...

Unit 20(B), that portion within
Creamer's refuge

...

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts	Nonresident Open Season
1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or	Sept. 1–Nov. 27 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1–Nov. 27
1 antlerless moose by muzzleloader by drawing permit only; up to 10 permits may be issued; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area	Dec. 1–Jan. 31 (General hunt only)	No open season.
Unit 20(B), remainder of the Fairbanks Management Area		
...		
1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or	Sept. 1–Nov. 27 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1–Nov. 27
1 moose by targeted permit only; up to 100 permits may be issued	Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only)	No open season.
Unit 20(B), that portion within the Minto Flats Management Area		

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts	Nonresident Open Season
...		
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only	Oct. 15–Feb. 28 (Subsistence hunt only)	
...		
Unit 20(B), the drainage of the Middle Fork of the Chena River		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 300 permits may be issued; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 15–Nov. 15 (General hunt only)	
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 1–Last day of Feb. (General hunt only)	No open season.
...		
Unit 20(B), that portion southeast of the Moose Creek dike within one-half mile of each side of the Richardson highway		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 moose by drawing permit only; by crossbow, bow and arrow, or muzzleloader only; up to 100 permits may be issued; or	Sept. 16–Last day of Feb. (General hunt only)	

Units and Bag Limits	Resident	Nonresident
	Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts	Open Season
1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued	Season to be announced by emergency order	

Remainder of Unit 20(B)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; by youth hunt only; up to 200 permits may be issued; or	Aug. 5–Aug. 14 (General hunt only)
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...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 1,500 permits may be issued in the remainder of Unit 20(B); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 15–Nov. 15 (General hunt only)
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1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 1– Last day of Feb.
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1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued	Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only)	No open season.
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...

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

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually by the Board of Game. The primary goals of the Unit 20B antlerless hunts are to regulate moose population growth and size within the intensive management (IM) population objective, at levels that the habitat can support, to provide harvest opportunity to help meet IM harvest objectives, to provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios below objectives, and to reduce moose-vehicle collisions and nuisance moose issues.

The most recent unit-wide Unit 20B moose population estimate was below the IM population objective and thus there are currently few antlerless hunts offered within the unit. In November 2023, the Unit 20B moose population estimate was 7,848 moose (90% confidence interval 6,613–9,083 moose; 0.7–1.0 moose per square mile), which fell below the IM population objective of 12,000–15,000. This estimate was a decrease from the previous unit-wide survey in fall 2020, when the population estimate was 12,480 moose. The department surveyed the eastern and central portion of Unit 20B in fall 2025, and the results of this survey suggest the moose population was stable within this portion of the unit between 2023 and 2025. The primary cause for the decline between 2020 and 2023 was likely the difficult winter of 2021–2022, which was a prolonged winter with deep snow and icing events that negatively impacted moose populations throughout the interior. Following the winter of 2021–2022, no antlerless hunts have been offered in Unit 20B except for within the Fairbanks Management Area (FMA) and within the Richardson Highway corridor. The primary purposes of the FMA and Richardson Highway corridor hunts are to reduce vehicle-moose collisions, and for the FMA, to reduce nuisance moose issues.

The only antlerless hunts planned for Unit 20B for regulatory year 2026 are within the FMA and Richardson Highway corridor. Furthermore, the targeted hunt for any moose may be used to address public safety or nuisance moose issues. The department will base antlerless hunt plans for regulatory year 2027 and beyond on the results of the planned western Unit 20B moose population survey in fall 2026 as well as ongoing monitoring of nutritional indices. No additional antlerless hunts beyond the FMA, Richardson Highway corridor, and targeted hunts will be held in the near future unless the unit-wide population increases to within the IM population objective, nutritional condition declines, or there is an identified harvest surplus within a portion of the unit due to an increased population.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F26-015)

Proposal 201

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Create a new muzzleloader hunt in a portion of unit 20C as follows:

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

We would like to see the hunt structure modeled after the existing DM766 hunt. Season dates from Nov1-Dec15. Bag limit 1 bull for resident hunters and 1 bull with antlers 50" or greater or 4 or more brow tines on one side for non-resident hunters. We would ask up to 50 permits be made available. We would also like the Board to consider restricting non-resident hunters' permit

allocation of no more than ten percent of permits issued, using the language of “up to 10% non-resident allocation”.

The proposed hunt area would be as follows. That portion of unit 20C bounded on the East by the East bank of the Kantishna river to its confluence with the Toklat river, following the east bank of the Toklat river which is North of DNP&P. Bounded on the North by the North bank of the Tanana river. Bounded on the West by the 20C boundary to the point of the boundary directly west of the North West corner of Denali Preserve then following a straight line to the Preserve boundary. Bounded on the South by the northern boundary of DNP&P.

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

We would like the Board to consider creating a new muzzleloader hunt in a portion of unit 20C. A growing number of hunters are participating in the current DM766 muzzleloader permit hunt. Creating this would open up additional opportunity for a late season hunt in an area that receives very little hunting pressure during general season due to limited access.

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

Written by the Middle Nenana River AC

PROPOSED BY: Middle Nenana River AC

(OI-F26-080)

Proposal 202

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Improve youth hunting opportunities by changing the youth hunt in 20C RM781, 25 Aug- 31 Aug, to a draw hunt with new dates as follows:

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

New draw hunt YMXXX (up to 10 permits, resident only) season dates 26 Sep- 30 Sep. Harvest has been on average one bull during the previous 5 youth seasons. Speaking to the area biologist there is enough surplus to allow a later season hunt that would allow more success for youth hunters. The dates a draw selection were chosen to avoid conflict with local hunters.

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

Improve youth hunting opportunities by changing the youth hunt in 20C RM781, 25 Aug- 31 Aug, to a draw hunt with new dates.

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-F26-157)

Proposal 203

5 AAC 92.220. Salvage of game meat, furs, and hides.

Require Bone-In Transport of Moose Meat in the Lake Minchumina Area of Unit 20C as follows:

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

PROPOSED REGULATION

The Lake Minchumina area of GMU 20C, as defined by all Lake Minchumina watersheds draining into the Muddy River and Birch Creek as far as the Kantishna, the meat of a harvested moose must remain naturally attached to the bone on the front and rear quarters as well as the ribs until removed from the field or transported to the location where it will be processed.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE

Field deboning may continue to contribute to wanton waste and complicate enforcement.

BENEFITS

Ensures full salvage of edible meat. Aligns with regulations used in other Alaska units. Simplifies enforcement of wanton waste laws.

COSTS

Slightly heavier pack loads for hunters

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

Require Bone-In Transport of Moose Meat in the Lake Minchumina Area of Unit 20C PROBLEM

Deboning moose meat in the field increases the risk of wanton waste and makes enforcement difficult. With the rising number of hunters entering Unit 20C—the risk of improper salvage increases.

In remote areas such as the Lake Minchumina region, difficult terrain and transportation logistics can lead to meat being left behind when animals are deboned in the field.

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

Yes, this proposal was developed by the Lake Minchumina Fish & Game Advisory Committee

PROPOSED BY: Lake Minchumina Fish & Game Advisory Committee (OI-F26-181)

Proposal 204

5 AAC 85.045; 92.050. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose; Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.

Create a limited draw Moose hunt for nonresidents in the Lake Minchumina area of GMU 20C as follows:

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

The Lake Minchumina area of GMU 20C, as defined by all Lake Minchumina watersheds draining into the Muddy River and Birch Creek as far as the Kantishna, shall have a limited permit drawing for Moose hunting once per year for non-Alaskan residents. The initial drawing will take place in the Lake Minchumina Community Building during the first week of June and consist initially of three permits awarded. Permits shall be awarded only to those participants physically present during the drawing.

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

Increased hunting pressure in the Lake Minchumina Area of GMU 20C has led to a lack of sufficient local moose numbers.

Although GMU 20C encompasses a vast area of the Alaskan Interior, Lake Minchumina lies along the extreme western rim of GMU20C. As such we have a limited watershed upon which to effectively hunt. Our principally accessible hunting area is the Lake Minchumina out flow Muddy River sometimes down to its confluence with Birch Creek and the Mckinley Fork of the Kantishna. Our accessible hunting portion of GMU 20C has rarely received any moose number attention other than hunter tag data. Yet, we are a community wholly dependent upon this valuable resource. To put matters in perspective: of the 13 moose harvested locally last fall only three remained for community consumption, the rest of them left with the hunters.

What would happen if nothing is changed?

A high volume hunting /transporting /guide operation simply does not bode well for our vulnerable, moose dependent, community of Lake Minchumina. We seek to mitigate, at least to a degree the impact of high volume operations upon this community.

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

Yes, this proposal was developed by the Lake Minchumina Fish & Game Advisory Committee

PROPOSED BY: Lake Minchumina Fish & Game Advisory Committee (OI-F26-182)

Proposal 205

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the dates of the non-resident moose hunt in 20C to September 1 - 25 as follows:

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

Change the dates of the non-resident hunt in 20C as follows: **Sept 5** [SEPT 1] to **Sept 15** [SEPT 25].

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

20 C is a low density moose area and a full survey has not been completed since 2011. With the new road, agriculture developments, and private land sales, fewer local residents are reporting successful hunts. Additionally, some young moose harvested in the area have fully grown live tapeworms.

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

Yes, locals are meeting and concerned about low moose populations and moose health. Additionally, the winter of 2025-2026 was extremely hard on moose, especially calves.

PROPOSED BY: Tlaa Deneldel Community Group (OI-F26-179)

Proposal 206

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change bag limit and special instructions for RM 781 to one bull with spike fork antlers, 50 inch antlers, or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side. as follows:

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

Change the bag limit and special instructions for permit hunt RM781 to read: One bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or 4 or more brow tines on at least one side by permit available online at hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Tok, Minto, Tanana, Nenana or Central beginning July 1

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

In Unit 20C the bag limit and special instructions for hunt permit RM781 for resident hunters is stated as One bull by permit available online at hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Tok, Minto, Tanana, Nenana, and Central beginning Jul1. This is putting strain on Moose Population in Unit 20C.

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

Developed in coordination with local hunters in the Healy Unit 20C area after observing a noticeable drop in bull moose population in Unit 20C over the last several years.

PROPOSED BY: Howard Walters

(OI-F26-042)

Proposal 207

5 AAC 92.540. Controlled Use Areas.

The Lake Minchumina area of GMU 20C shall have hunting access limited to surface use watercraft transport as follows:

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

The Lake Minchumina area of GMU 20C, as defined by all Lake Minchumina watersheds draining into the Muddy River and Birch Creek as far as the Kantishna, shall have hunting access limited to surface use watercraft transport. Float plane access is limited during the moose hunting season to and from only Lake Minchumina and Wien Lake. All other lakes of the Lake Minchumina/Muddy River/Birch Creek watershed shall be limited to surface access means during the scheduled moose season in GMU 20C.

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

Increased hunting pressure in the Lake Minchumina Area of GMU 20C has led to a lack of sufficient moose numbers harvestable by local community residents, a trend increasing with a recent development.

Lake Minchumina is easily accessed by Wright Air Service with two to three times per week mail, passenger and freight service. Although GMU 20C is a vast area of the Alaskan Interior, Lake Minchumina lies on the western rim of GMU20C. We have a limited watershed area upon which to hunt. Of 13 moose harvested locally last fall only three remained for community use.

Alaska Mental Health Trust's (AMHT) award of a multi-year permit for Willow Air Guide & Transporter exclusive access and use of AMHT's lands on the surrounding area of Lake Minchumina is impactful. Willow Air's reputation is a "high volume" hunter transporter guide and warrants concern of commercial moose hunting pressure in the Lake Minchumina area. We have seen increased float plane camps on lakes in the Minchumina area.

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

The Lake Minchumina Fish and Game Advisory Committee, on the recent meeting of April 25, 2026 was not able to discuss and debate the merits of this proposal. Nonetheless, some

Minchumina Community members thought it did merit consideration by the Alaska Board of Game and as such is now submitted to the Board of Game by the May 1, 2026 deadline.

PROPOSED BY: Walter Maakestad

(OI-F26-078)

**A map was included with this proposal submission and can be found online at*

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook>

Proposal 208

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Remove the winter moose hunting season from regulations in GMU 20F as follows:

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

Remove the winter moose hunting season from regulations in GMU 20F as follows:

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose

Unit 20(F), that portion drained by the Yukon River downstream from, but not including, the Hess Creek and Tanana River drainages

1 bull by registration permit only Sept. 5 - Sept. 25

[DEC. 1 - DEC. 15]

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

Moose numbers in Unit 20F have declined to a point where having a winter hunt can no longer be justified. The winter season is for bulls only, but there have been observations of illegal cow harvest during the winter season. The area is accessible by winter road and snowmachine from the Elliot Highway and gets too much pressure. Cows are hauled out in the dark during winter. This area used to have a nice little herd of cows that hung out in the wintertime, but they are gone.

Moose population surveys have never been conducted in this area. Residents of Rampart have reported seeing less moose in recent years and it is taking more time and effort to harvest moose. The Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council (EIRAC) has requested surveys of the 20F moose population for years through letters and their Annual Reports, but neither State nor Federal managers have been able to prioritize them to date.

Based on these reasons, management needs to be more conservative and reduce harvest opportunity by closing the winter season.

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

This proposal was discussed and developed in a public meeting. The EIRAC Chair serves on the Tanana-Rampart-Manley Advisory Committee as the Vice Chair.

PROPOSED BY: Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (EIRAC) (OI-F26-116)

Proposal 209

5 AAC 99.025. Customary and traditional uses of game populations.

Re-evaluate the ANS for 20F and 20C and create a separate ANS for each subunit to be able to more accurately evaluate whether ANS is being met in 20F as follows:

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

Re-evaluate the ANS for these units and create a separate ANS for each subunit to be able to more accurately evaluate whether ANS is being met in 20F.

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

Residents of Tanana and Rampart report not meeting their subsistence needs for moose in recent years. They have observed a decline in numbers of moose and are increasingly putting in more effort to try to harvest them.

Currently the ANS for moose is combined for Units 20F and 20C and is 100-130 moose. These two areas are vast and the subsistence use patterns and access are highly varied between these two units.

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

Yes, this proposal was developed by the Tanana-Rampart-Manley Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED BY: Tanana/Rampart/Manley Fish & Game Advisory Committee (OI-F26-191)

Proposal 210

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the winter moose hunting season in GMU 20F to a Tier II hunt as follows:

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

Change the winter moose hunting season in GMU 20F to a Tier II hunt For Change the Dec 1 - Dec 15 hunt to a tier II hunt.

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

By default, all 20F moose hunts are essentially Tier I hunts already, as there are no non-resident opportunities.

Tanana and Rampart community members have had a difficult time harvesting moose in the fall season and have seen the population decline drastically for some time now. While the 2025 unit-wide harvest of only 12 bulls (local and non-local success combined) may appear to be an anomaly, it is a realistic reflection of the dwindling success local hunters from these communities have faced in recent years.

Given the ongoing decline in salmon populations, the residents of Tanana and Rampart can no longer afford to wait for official Department trend data to catch up with their direct, on-the-ground observations of depressed moose numbers.

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

Yes, this proposal was developed in conversation with the Tanana-Rampart-Manley Advisory Committee and Department staff.

PROPOSED BY: Janessa Newman

(OI-F26-205)

Proposal 211

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change hunting season for moose in 25C to start one week later than it currently does, for the same number of days that are allowed now as follows:

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

My husband and I would like to suggest the hunting season for moose in 25C be changed to start one week later than it currently does, for the same number of days that are allowed now. It seems over the last 25 plus years we've been hunting the area, the seasons have changed and the moose are not active until later in September. This change wouldn't necessarily need to be applied to non-residence hunters, but it would be nice for us resident hunters. Thank you for your considerations

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

Our issue is the lack of moose, which we and many others believe to be tied into the milder climate. The leaves are dropping later and later in the fall and the moose just are not as active as they used to be during the current hunting dates for Unit 25C.

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

This is a suggestion based on our personal experience and the many, many comments of other hunters who believe the climate is affecting the hunting season for moose.

PROPOSED BY: Renee Dick

(OI-F26-070)

Proposal 212

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Change the bag limit in RM 781 and RM 749 registration moose hunts to: One bull with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side as follows:

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

Change the bag limit on all the above nonresident registration moose hunts to:

One bull with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

Unit 20B RM 781 **Nonresident** within Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge Sept 1 – Sept 30 and Nov 21 – Nov 27

One bull by bow & arrow only with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

Unit 20B RM 781 **Nonresident** Remainder of Fairbanks Management Area Sept 1 – Sept 30 and Nov 21 – Nov 27

One bull by bow & arrow only with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

Unit 20B RM 781 **Nonresident** drainage of the middle (East) fork of the Chena River Sept 26 – Sept 30

One bull by bow & arrow only with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

Unit 20B RM 781 **Nonresident** Salcha River drainage upstream from and including Goose Creek Sept 26 – Sept 30

One bull by bow & arrow only with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

Unit 20D RM 749 **Nonresident** within the Healy River drainage Sept 1 – Sept 20

One bull with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

Unit 20D RM 749 **Nonresident** north of the north bank of the Tanana River including the Volkmar River drainage, east to include the Billy Creek drainage, including the Healy River drainage Sept 1 – Sept 20

One bull with 50" antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

Unit 20D Remainder RM 749 **Nonresident** Sept 1 – Sept 15

One bull with 50” antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on at least one side

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

Nonresident Registration Any-Bull or Antlered-Bull Moose Hunts

The opportunity to take a bull moose without antler restrictions should be reserved for residents only as it is a meat hunt that provides special opportunity for resident moose hunters to fill their freezer.

Resident hunters continually ask for more any-bull moose hunts as it is so much more likely to be able to harvest a moose without antler restrictions. But they are told by the Department that only so many any-bull hunts can be offered. With such limited any-bull over-the-counter moose hunts available, it makes no sense to allow nonresidents to have that same bag limit. An archery only hunt or weapons restriction hunt is not a reason to allow an any-bull bag limit.

We don't want to eliminate nonresident over-the-counter moose hunting opportunity in Unit 20, however we do want there to be antler restrictions for all nonresident moose hunts.

There are several nonresident registration moose hunts in Unit 20 that have a bag limit of any-bull or antlered bull, listed below.

Unit 20 Nonresident Registration Moose Hunts with Any-Bull or Antlered Bull Bag Limit

Unit 20B RM 781 within Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge

Sept 1 – Sept 30 and Nov 21 – Nov 27 **One bull with spike fork antlers or greater by bow & arrow only**

Unit 20B Remainder of Fairbanks Management Area

Sept 1 – Sept 30 and Nov 21 – Nov 27 **One bull with spike fork antlers or greater by bow & arrow only**

Unit 20B RM 781 drainage of the middle (East) fork of the Chena River Sept 26 – Sept 30 **One bull by bow & arrow only**

Unit 20B RM 781 Salcha River drainage upstream from and including Goose Creek Sept 26 – Sept 30 **One bull by bow & arrow only**

Unit 20D RM 749 within the Healy River drainage Sept 1 – Sept 20 **One bull**

Unit 20D RM 749 north of the north bank of the Tanana River including the Volkmar River drainage, east to include the Billy Creek drainage, including the Healy River drainage Sept 1 – Sept 20

One bull

Unit 20D Remainder RM 749 Sept 1 – Sept 15 **One bull**

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

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska

(OI-F26-095)

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.

20A Sheep (GS000) Resident Stats RY21-25						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Avg
Hunted	135	96	111	136	124	120
Harvested	18	12	20	21	19	18
% Success	13%	13%	18%	15%	15%	15%

*Preliminary data

20A Sheep (GS000) Nonresident Stats RY21-25						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Avg
Hunted	47	47	40	49	51	47
Harvested	26	24	20	24	35	26
% Success	55%	51%	50%	49%	69%	55%

*Preliminary data

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee

(OI-F26-163)

Proposal 214

5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.

Limit nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in Unit 20A as follows:

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

Limit nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in Unit 20A.

Unit 20A Sheep

Nonresident Aug 10 – Sept 20

One ram with full-curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by draw permit DSXXX Up-to 20 permits may be issued

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

Sheep Declines in Unit 20A, Unlimited Nonresident Opportunity, Crowding & Conflicts

Continued unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in Unit 20A during a significant sheep decline is unwarranted, even if it poses no sheep conservation concerns under full-curl management.

Unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in Unit 20A combined with no limits on the guides nonresident sheep hunters are required to hire isn't good for anyone and with fewer legal rams on the landscape it exacerbates the conflicts.

Nonresident sheep hunters in Unit 20A harvested 57 percent of the sheep on average over the last five years: (ADFG charts)

20A Sheep (GS000) Harvest by Residency RY21-25						
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Avg
Resident	18	12	20	21	19	18
Nonres	26	24	20	24	35	26
% Nonres	59%	67%	50%	53%	58%	57%

*1*Preliminary data. Note for RY25, the resident and nonresident harvest does not add up to the total harvest for the area. This is due to several harvest tickets with no residency information included.*

Nonresident guided sheep hunters make up 28% of all the sheep hunters on average over the last five years and have nearly four times the success rates as resident hunters:

The sheep population in Unit 20A has significantly declined, however there was a bright spot in the 2025 minimum count survey with a marked increase in the number of lambs, along with an overall increase in the population. Still, we are looking at a decades long period for sheep recovery if it does happen and sheep will remain at low numbers for the near future.

The board is on record stating that there are problems with unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity combined with no limits on guides when sheep populations are this low. This is why the option the board chose to solve similar problems in Unit 19C was to implement a guide concession program to limit the number of guides and their clients. There may very well be proposals to implement such a program in Unit 20A before the board during this cycle.

But until there is a guide concession program in Unit 20A, with the current status of our sheep population we believe nonresident sheep hunters should be limited. And the only way we see to do that is via draw permits with a limited allocation. We recognize why a draw permit system is not preferred by the guides, but we do it in plenty of other units. Any new draw permit system would not take effect until the fall 2028 season.

With all due respect to the board, it's past time to act and limit nonresident sheep hunters in Unit 20A. We don't need it to be a draw for both residents and nonresidents; there is no reason we

can't just have a draw hunt for nonresidents while allowing over-the-counter resident sheep hunting opportunity at the same time.

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

Thanks to Department staff for the data and charts!

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska

(OI-F26-094)

Proposal 215

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.

State owned lands in the Stampede Road corridor should be closed to hunting and trapping of wolves, coyotes, wolverine, and lynx as follows:

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

State owned lands in the Stampede Road corridor should be closed to hunting and trapping of wolves, coyotes, wolverine, and lynx. These lands are referred to hereinafter as the "Stampede Road Townships." These lands are specifically described as follows:

(a) Unit 20(C), that portion west of a line beginning at 63° 48.146' N. lat., 148° 59.934' W. long., north to 63°49.445' N. lat., 148° 59.935' W. long., then west to 63° 49.445' N. lat., 149° 12.699' W. long., then north to 63° 54.642' N. lat., 149° 12.699' W. long., and bounded on the south, west, and north by Denali National Park.

A map depicting these lands is provided. The legal description and the map are taken from an emergency closure order issued by Commissioner Sam Cotton on April 2, 2018.

A regulation to implement this proposal should provide as follows:

5 AAC 84.180 Areas Closed to Hunting and Trapping. Hunting and trapping of wolves, coyotes, and wolverine, and lynx is closed in the area known as the Stampede Road Townships, which are described in subpart (a) of this regulation, as follows:

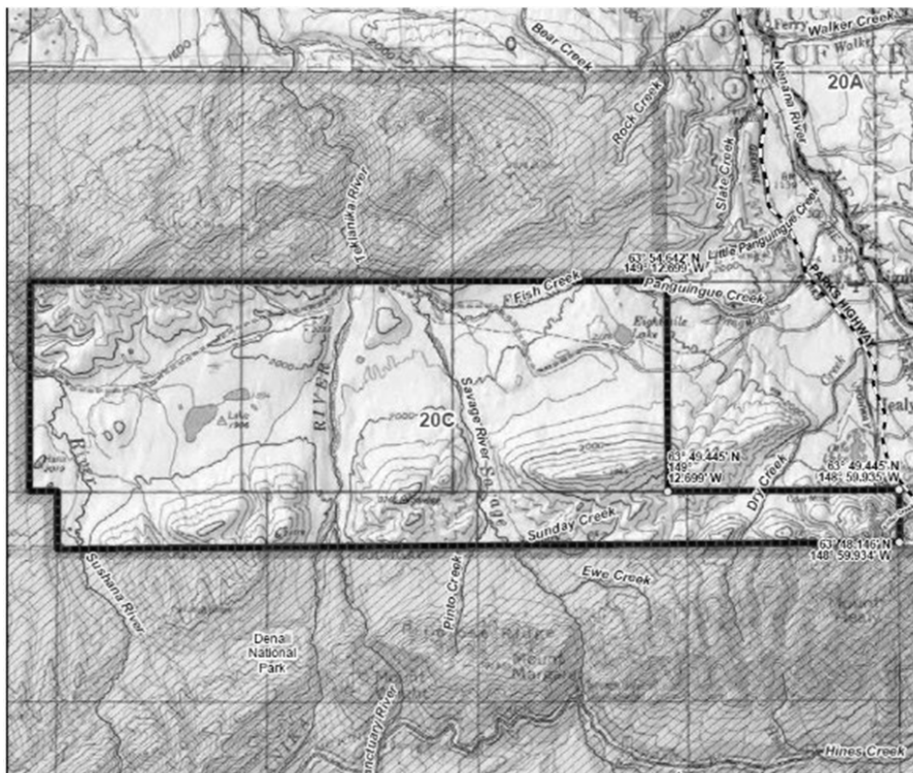
(a) Unit 20(C), that portion west of a line beginning at 63° 48.146' N. lat., 148° 59.934' W. long., north to 63°49.445' N. lat., 148° 59.935' W. long., then west to 63° 49.445' N. lat., 149° 12.699' W. long., then north to 63° 54.642' N. lat., 149° 12.699' W. long., and bounded on the south, west, and north by Denali National Park.

(b) Exceptions:

(1) Use of a firearm to kill one of the listed species in self defense, or in defense of private property, for instance companion animals, poultry or livestock, is not prohibited by this section.

(2) Lands owned by or administered by the National Park Service are excluded from areas to be closed by this section.

A map depicting the lands proposed to be closed is provided. Areas proposed to be closed are within the area outlined in red. Lands administered by the National Park Service are shown in blue.



Areas proposed to be closed are within the area outlined in red. Lands administered by the National Park Service are shown in blue. A color version of this map is available at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook>

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

As recently as 2010 part of the lands located in the Stampede Road Townships were closed to the hunting and trapping of wolves by regulation at 5 AAC 84.180. But the Board of Game subsequently repealed those closures, and at the current time there are no regulations providing for year round closures of these lands to the hunting and trapping of wolves, coyotes, wolverine, and lynx. Hunting and trapping of wolves, coyotes, wolverine, and lynx in the Stampede Road Townships negatively impacts the viewing of these species by Alaskans on wildlife viewing tours inside the Denali National Park. Wildlife viewing is a use of wildlife protected by Article VIII, Section 3 of the Alaska Constitution, This section is commonly referred to as “the Common Use Clause”. The fact that wildlife viewing is protected by the Common Use Clause was expressly found to be the law in *Michelle Stone Bittner v. State of Alaska, et al*, Case No. 3AN-23-07487 CI, where the Superior Court in a decision dated March 12, 2026, held at page 12 as follows:

"Article VIII provides that '[w]herever occurring in their natural state, fish, wildlife, and waters are reserved to the people for common use.' The clause does not limit use to consumption or to consumptive users. As the United States Supreme Court has recognized, aesthetic and environmental well being - like economic well being - are essential components of the quality of life. Non-consumptive use advances those interests just as consumptive use advances economic ones. The term 'common use' is broad enough to encompass both. In sum, wildlife is reserved 'to the people,' not merely to those who consume it."

The Superior Court continued in its decision to explain that a Court reviewing a challenge to a regulation should not second guess the Board's decision, but should "ensure that the Board has taken a hard look at all factors relevant to the public interest before making that decision"; and that in regard to wildlife viewing, the Board did not take a hard look at the public's interest in viewing wolves when in 2022 it modified 5 AAA 92.111(c), and for that reason and others, declared the regulation arbitrary and invalid: stating at page 18 of the decision as follows:

"As discussed above, non-consumptive use is a form of common use reserved to the people of Alaska under Article VIII. Because it is constitutionally protected, it is a factor relevant and material to the public interest. The hearing transcripts show that the Board did not consider the impact expanded predator control would have on non-consumptive users of wolves. By failing to consider the impacts of wolf control on non-consumptive users, the Board failed to take a hard look."

For that reason and others, the Court on April 12, 2026 declared the regulation invalid, and entered final judgment in favor of Ms. Bittner and authorized her to file a motion for attorneys fees.

The decision by the Superior Court in the Bittner case, and the authorities upon which the Court relied, establishes that the loss of viewing by Alaskans is an important, constitutionally protected use. With that clear statement of this constitutional law, we know now that the repeal after 2010 of closures of wolf hunting and trapping in the Stampede road townships was arbitrary and voidable.

This instant proposal if adopted by the Board would provide a remedy for the previous arbitrary and voidable decisions of the Board of Game, where the Board opened all state owned land in the Stampede Road Townships to hunting and trapping of wolves..

The number of people who ride the buses on wildlife tours along the Park Road substantially exceed 100,000 every year, while only a handful of hunters and trappers consume these watchable wildlife species in the Stampede Road Townships. Closing state lands in these limited areas to hunting and trapping of the listed species is highly likely to increase the aesthetic enjoyment of non-consuming Alaskan visitors to the Park.

The Board needs to take a hard look at the numbers of consumptive users vs. non-consumptive users, the frequency of sightings before and after the repeal of the previous closures, the economic impact of allowing hunting and trapping in this limited area, and abide by the constitutional mandate that wildlife is reserved for both non-consumptive and consumptive users.

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

Yes. I consulted with individuals familiar with the history of efforts to close the townships and the Superior Court's decision.

PROPOSED BY: Kneeland Taylor (OI-F26-076)

Proposal 216

5 AAC 84.270; 92.095. Furbearer trapping; Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.

Change the boundaries of the closed area to allow beaver trapping with submerged sets above the River Road bridge on the Chena River as follows:

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

Unit 20B – that portion of the Chena River downstream from the River Road bridge and Creamers Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge

No Open Season

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

Beaver trapping in the closed area of Unit 20B

Change the boundaries of the closed area to allow beaver trapping with submerged sets above the River Road bridge on the Chena River

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-F26-165)

Proposal 217

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.

Allow the use of a firearm and bow and arrow to take beaver during an open trapping season in Unit 20B Remainder as follows:

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

Allow the use of a firearm and bow and arrow to take beaver during an open trapping season in Unit 20B Remainder

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

In 2022 the regulations were changed to allow the use of a firearm and bow and arrow to take beavers under a trapping license statewide. This method of beaver harvest was allowed from 2022 until 2026, when the board was made aware of a conflicting regulation. The board clarified the conflicting regulation by returning the regulations to pre-2022 language. There are no current conservation concerns for beaver. I would like the board to restore the use of a firearm and bow and arrow as a legal method and means to take beaver under a trapping license in Unit 20B Remainder. This would not affect that portion of the Chena River downstream from its confluence with the Little Chena River and Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

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-F26-155)

Proposal 218

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.

Change season and bag limits for Furbearer Trapping in 20A and B as follows:

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

Proposal to reduce harvest of beaver and improve management of beaver populations:

Change to Alaska Administrative Code:

Article 7 -Seasons and Bag Limits, 5 AAC 84.270 Furbearer Trapping: Unit 20 (A) change from "no closed season, no limit" to "November 1 - April 30, no limit." Remainder of Unit 20 (B) change from "September 25 - May 31 no limit" to "November 1-April 30, no limit."

Suggestions for improved management of beaver populations:

1. The harvest period needs to be shortened to eliminate the open water seasons which extend from when the rivers start moving until May 31 and from September 25 through October 31. Beavers mate during the months of February and March. The gestation period is 105-107 days and kits are born after breakup. (Ref. #1). Harvesting during the spring open water season reduces the number of dominant females and corresponding new born kits. It is the most vulnerable time for beaver groups and colonies, since beavers only produce one litter per year. Harvesting beaver should not be allowed during this period of time. The fall open water season should be eliminated, as long as necessary to allow the beaver populations to increase back to normal levels
2. Each major drainage in 20B should be treated differently for management purposes, since each have different habitats and access points for the public. River drainages with large amounts

of aspen, birch and willow are better habit for beavers than areas dominated by climax forests, and harvest pressure is a function of accessibility.

3. Regulations should promote the taking of beaver while their hides are prime, ie when both the under fur and guard hairs are at their maximum length and density. Nonprime furs have under-developed underfur and guard hairs and the leather is reddish to black, due to root hair production of melanin. Grade IV and V pelts are almost useless (Ref. 2). Beaver molt their furs annually and trappers report the shedding of fur within 10 days of break-up. Fur management regulations normally are designed to permit trapping when the fur is prime, across species.

4. Beaver surveys should be conducted regularly in late fall to count the active beaver houses for each of the major drainages in 20B: the Saleha, Chena and Chatanika rivers. Beaver populations could then be estimated and harvest quotas determined, for use in establishing open seasons and methods of harvest.

5. Use of fire arms to harvest beaver should not be permitted as a means for harvest, except to kill nuisance beaver. To the extent open water seasons exist, trapping should be allowed only with underwater traps and snares, as written in the current regulations in 20 B (Ref 3)

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

An over harvest of beaver has occurred in unit 20 B due to the open water (non -ice) harvesting by various users, including non-fur takers who use the carcasses for bait. The current non-ice season for 20B is from April 15 through May 31, and September 25 through October 31. Trapping beaver on non-ice waters allows use of more efficient methods for accessing and harvesting beaver than fur-takers using under ice methods. This has resulted in reduction in beaver populations with fewer live houses (those with fall-time caches) and live houses with smaller caches.

User groups have been recently promoting non-prime fur harvesting of beaver. Trappers have been using above water conibears and leg hold sets and firearms. 5AAC 92-095(a)(10) prohibits use of firearms in 20B and requires below water-line traps and snares during the open water (non-ice) season.

Also, use of beaver carcasses for bear baiting and dog food has increased the non-fur demand, adding to the open water season harvest. Since 2022 firearms have been used, as the Board is aware, due to an error printed in the trapping regulations booklets distributed to the public. According to several experienced hunters that have used firearms to dispatch beaver, retrieval success is often 50 percent, resulting in waste of game.

I have been trapping beaver on the Chatanika River for the last 25 years and have kept records for a ten mile stretch of the river. In 2001-2002, there were 12 beaver houses with live caches in the lower stretch of the line. The upper portion of the line had 6. Over 270 beavers were harvested from that stretch of river since 2001. Our harvest for the 2026 season was 1 beaver, and there were six trappable houses.

Most of this decrease has occurred since 2022, which coincides with firearms beginning to be used, and an increase in user group promotion of open water harvesting. I became aware of

firearm use on beaver in early September of 2024. We encountered a hunter setting up an ambush on a beaver house and the hunter asked us if we were aware that it was legal to shoot beaver for bear bait. The date was September 3, three weeks before the open water season. This was also the first year we noticed a significant decrease in the number of live houses. We went to see Fish and Game to report our observations and they said they encountered a boater in possession of 12 beaver the last of May near the Olmes campground. These beaver were taken for the carcasses.

My records of fall beaver caches and beaver harvest for the Chatanika River may be the only records for this area, since there is no beaver biologist employed at ADFG - Fairbanks.

Individuals that have trapped 20A for the last 25 years have indicated that the last time they were able to get to their line, no caches were visible on any of the beaver lodges in the area.

I have a cabin on the Saleha river, and in 2010 there were 10 beaver houses visible within a 2 mile distance from our cabin. Today there are 2. Whereas in the past, beavers were seen swimming all up and down the river. There were "lumber yards near caches", and "bones" littered the gravel bars. Today all of the above are noticeably missing.

Ref #1: "Wild Furbearer Management and Conservation in North America", (WFMC), Ch. 25., pg 285.

Ref #2: WFMC, Ch. 53., pg. 720 & 726.

Ref #3: Alaska Administrative Code 5AAC 92.095 "The following methods and means of taking furbearers under a trapping license are prohibited: (10): taking beaver in Units 11, 13 and 16 from September 25 through November 9; in the remainder of 20 (B) and in Unit 20(0) from September 25 through October 31 and from April 16 through May 31; and in Units 7 and 15 from October 15 through November 9 and from April 1 through April 30, except with underwater traps or snares."

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

PROPOSED BY: Garry Hutchison

(OI-F26-136)

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

(OI-F26-214)
