

Note: Proposed amendments to 5 AAC 85.055, including changing hunts to drawing permit hunts and changing seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep, are outside the scope of the Statewide Regulations meeting.

PROPOSAL 100

5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.

Limit nonresident sheep hunting opportunity statewide so that nonresidents do not harvest more than 35 percent of total sheep harvest from any game management subunit as follows:

Regulatory Changes this Proposal Requests

The solution we seek with this proposal is to limit nonresident sheep hunting opportunity statewide in a manner **whereby nonresidents do not harvest more than 35 percent of the total sheep harvest from any game management subunit.** Such a harvest allocation is more than fair to nonresidents. If nonresident sheep harvest exceeds 35 percent of the total harvest in any one area, that area's allocation of permits shall be reduced. We did not suggest specific allocations for several units listed below, leaving that to the board to best determine based on Department of Fish and Game nonresident sheep harvest data.

If the allocation remains an up-to number, the department will need direction and guidance from the board as to a starting point and when a higher number of permits should be awarded.

Please note, for multiple subunits listed together, the suggested up-to number of permits is for each individual subunit.

Unit 7 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 2 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 11

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 12 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 13A, 13B Remainder, 13C Remainder, 13D Remainder, 13E

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 14A Remainder, 14B

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 15 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 2 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 16

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 19A, 19B, 19D, 19E

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 19C

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 15 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[NO OPEN SEASON]

Unit 20 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 20 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 24A within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

**Aug 10 – Sept 20
[AUG 10 – OCT 5]**

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 24A Remainder, 24B Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 25A east of the middle fork of the Chandalar River, excluding the Eastern Brooks Range Management Area

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 25A within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

**Aug 10 – Sept 20
[AUG 10 – OCT 5]**

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 25B, 25C.25D

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger

Aug 10 – Sept 20

**every four regulatory years by permit;
up to X number of permits may be issued**

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 26A east of and including the Etivluk River drainage, excluding Gates of the Arctic National Park, and Unit 26C

Nonresident

**One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit;
up to 10 permits may be issued**

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 26B within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area

Nonresident

**One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit;
up to 10 permits may be issued**

**Aug 10 – Sept 20
[AUG 10 – OCT 5]**

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in many units, conservation concerns, conflicts & crowding.

Problem Statement

The Board of Game (board) *has known for a long time* that unlimited nonresident sheep hunting in certain areas causes crowding and conflicts and leads to nonresident guided sheep hunters taking the majority of the sheep harvest each year.

But the board, while acknowledging these problems, has continually refused to limit nonresident sheep hunters in the known problem areas to draw-only permits – as Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) has proposed each cycle – using the rationale that nonresident draw permits with limited allocations “don’t provide stability to guide businesses.”

In 2023, after nonresident guided sheep hunters took 90 percent of the sheep harvest in Unit 19C the previous year from a severely declining sheep population, the board completely closed all nonresident sheep hunting in the subunit for five years due to sheep conservation concerns. For

some reason the board preferred a complete closure to nonresident sheep hunters – which shuts down all guided sheep hunting businesses in the area – over limiting nonresident sheep hunters.

The board believes the best, and thus, *only* solution to unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity *that the board itself allows* is to limit the number of guides on state lands. The real problem, according to the board, is not too many nonresident sheep hunters who are required to be guided; it's too many guides, and the solution is a convoluted and expensive Guide Concession Program (GCP) on state lands that would ostensibly limit guides and in turn limit the number of their nonresident clients and harvests.

The board has pursued and supported a GCP as the only solution to the known problems for over a decade, but such a program requires legislative action and approval. During the 28th legislative session in 2014, a bill was introduced (SB 160) to create a GCP on state lands where most all these problems occur, but it had a million-dollar fiscal note and other issues and never even made it out of committee. After that failure the board continued to do nothing to limit nonresident sheep hunters and kept pushing for another bite at the apple. A similar bill was introduced in 2024 during the current (at time of this writing) 33rd legislative session in both chambers (SB 253/HB 396), with a smaller half-million-dollar fiscal note, that would put the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a land management agency, in control of a Guide Concession Program on state lands to regulate the number of guides and determine which guides win exclusive concessions. At the time this proposal is being drafted, with two weeks left in the legislative session, those bills are not expected to go anywhere.

For nearly 20 years now, the board has been aware of the known problems they have created by allowing unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in certain areas but has kicked the can down the road on using their authority to limit nonresident sheep hunters.

This proposal asks the board to do the right thing now and put all nonresident sheep hunters in areas where they are not currently limited on draw permits with a limited allocation. The board could put a sunset clause on any new limits on nonresident sheep hunters, whereby should a GCP pass the legislature and be incorporated in these areas, those regulations are voided. But it's highly likely that any limits placed on nonresident sheep hunters in specific areas via a draw permit system would be the same or similar to the limits on guided hunters imposed by a GCP. The board could also stipulate that the number of permits awarded can be reviewed in cycle for that region if sheep populations rebound.

RHAK's Overall Objective with this Proposal

Our main objective is to ensure our Dall sheep populations are managed sustainably with an emphasis on protecting future resident general sheep hunting opportunities. This should also be the primary objective of the board. Our secondary objective is to reduce the crowding and conflicts and ensure nonresident sheep hunters retain *some* sheep hunting opportunities, rather than having their opportunity completely shut down in individual units.

Unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity should never be allowed anywhere in the state, regardless of if it leads to sheep conservation concerns, simply because we know the problems that creates in the field that also lead to excessive nonresident harvests.

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

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK)

(HQ-F24-041)
