

Hunting & Other Permits

PROPOSAL 134

5 AAC 92.069. Special provisions for moose and caribou drawing permit hunts.

Allocate 90% of all moose drawing permits to residents as follows:

Issue 90% of moose drawing permits to Alaska residents.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The issue I'd like to address, on a statewide basis, is the allocation of primary meat animals in drawing hunts as spelled out in 5 AAC 92.069.

Moose drawing permit allocations should reflect food security needs for Alaskan residents. As a primary meat animal, there is no reason to allocate half of the moose in any given draw hunt to outside hunters, many if not most of whom do not want the meat. This is currently in practice, most egregiously in Unit 21B as spelled out in AAC 92.069(b)(3). I'd like the Board of Game to consider, during drawing permit distributions, a more reasonable share of these important subsistence animals: 90% guaranteed to residents of the State of Alaska. Other allocation solutions considered are numbers of 80 or 75 percent, as for caribou in 92.069(c), although I feel these are too low.

I understand the normal rationale for draw hunts; that there are not enough animals to satisfy the demand of a general season hunt. I also understand another rationale for draw hunts; the economic security of commercial users, and also that when hunts go to draw for "trophy" purposes, or to effectively add a new animal to the "must be guided" class as exists in statute, that there are often other opportunities available. One primary problem with this second rationale is that those additional opportunities, on federal land, are weighted to local residents, not equal access to all Alaskans as per state mandate. Another is that all harvesters should be able to use all parts of the animal to meet their needs, be it meat for the freezer, hide for clothing or sewing, or bones and antlers for hardware, handicrafts, decoration, and medicinal use. This is limited in some of those additional opportunities, along with adding onerous reporting and specimen requirements.

In summary, state regulation in 5 AAC 92.069 should be amended to reflect the prevailing guidance of the Alaska Supreme Court (McDowell 1989) and the Constitutional provisions of Alaskans' common use, maximum use, and maximum benefit clauses by the Board of Game using its authority to protect the harvest needs of all Alaskans, prioritized over those of nonresidents of the state, by issuing 90% of moose draw permits to resident Alaskans.

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

PROPOSED BY: Douglas Malone

(EG-F24-065)

PROPOSAL 135

5 AAC 92.050 (a)(4). Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.

Allocate 10% of the big game permits to nonresidents as follows:

Nonresidents shall be guaranteed 10% of the available permits for each hunt as long as a hunt has at least 10 permits. If a hunt has less than 10 permits no nonresident tag will be issued. If the number of nonresident permits is not a round number, it shall be rounded down to the next round number.

This is consistent with most other Western states in the United States. This language shall not apply to hunts already allocated specifically to nonresidents either guided or unguided. In the case of drawing hunts with less than 10 permits the Department of Fish and Game shall have the authority to issue up to one permit specifically for nonresidents granted it does not take a resident permit away to meet the original permit quota. This language, because it would set aside permits for nonresidents would be less restrictive than many western states that allow UP TO 10% of the permits to be allocated to nonresidents.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Nonresident drawing permit allocation is uncapped in many drawing hunts. Currently there are many drawing hunts that have no nonresident allocation limits. Alaska residents are finding it increasingly difficult to draw permits. Nonresident allocations in the lower 48 have been drastically reduced in the last five years resulting in more interest by nonresidents to hunt and apply in Alaska. The current regulations are unit or hunt specific as it relates to nonresident allocation thus making it difficult and cumbersome to address in the usual regional proposal process.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory Committee? No.

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale (EG-F24-084)

Note: Alaska Statute 16.05.340 establishes fees for hunting permits.

PROPOSAL 136

5 AAC 92.050. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.

Limit bison and musk ox drawing permit hunts to once in a lifetime, and only allow applicants to apply once per hunt as follows:

First, make it a lifetime hunt, one and done. Second, get rid of the multiple chance drawings and just increase the price to \$50.00 for a chance. It would still create plenty of revenue and there would be folks still trying to get this fabulous draw.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since the musk ox and the bison tags are so hard to get; why doesn't the state do two things for the hunters to give them a realistic chance to hunt these animals.

I have been putting in for this draw for 18 years and not successful and yet others have had multiple draws to hunt them. There is also another option to make it a one per household also. I just read today where my co-worker and husband both drew for bison. It is just my opinion but I would like a real chance to get one. Thanks for letting me vent.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? We often talk about it at work and with others that I am friends with that share my concerns.

PROPOSED BY: Russel Hawkins (EG-F24-003)

PROPOSAL 137

5 AAC 92.050. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.

Change the drawing hunt permit process as follows:

Options and alternative strategies to consider either singly or in combination:

1. Increase waiting period(s) by species if successful in harvest and/or draw.
2. Reduce application number by species (e.g., 6 to 4)
3. Restrict applications for one applicant (or party) to maximum of three species per draw application year.
4. Restrict applications to apply for bison OR muskox, caribou OR elk, and/or sheep OR goat per draw application year.
5. Reduce resident bag limit for bison to once-in-a-lifetime if successful in harvest of a bison on a resident draw permit.
6. Increase opportunity for additional registration hunts with quotas where possible as an alternative to draw hunts.

Other options considered:

1. Bonus Point System - previously considered by Board (several different meetings).
2. Create and establish separate draw hunts for longtime applicants - requires tracking applicant history and possibly establishing a "hunter identification number".

Options rejected:

1. Preference Point System - previously considered by Board (same as above).
2. Once-in-a-lifetime drawing with unsuccessful harvest.
3. Long waiting periods for successful moose draw applicants.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The probability of successfully drawing a hunt permit (for most of the current hunts offered) has become exceedingly difficult over the last several years. In 2018, there were 321,126 applications for 8,302 draw permits. Just five years later (2023), there were 373,511 applications for 5,216 draw permits - an overall average

reduction of almost half from 2.6% to 1.4%. The majority of the most desirable draw hunts have seen significant reductions in drawing opportunity. For example, DM410 (antlerless moose) has shown an increase from 2013 to 2023 of 2,628 applications for 75 permits to 8,674 for 100. Similarly, DC590 (caribou) has went from 906 applications for 100 permits (2013) to 9,248 for 100 (2023). Others include DE702 (elk) - 627 applications/8 permits (2013) to 3394 applications/6 permits, DI403 (bison) - 11,320 applications/50 permits to 33,306 applications/60 permits, and DS123 (sheep) - 560 applications/1 permit to 3,127 applications/1 permit.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? This proposal was developed in consultation with local hunters interested in improving the opportunity to be successful in the hunt permit drawing. The alternatives were created to stimulate discussion at the Board of Game meeting to encourage action to address the significant reduction in drawing opportunity for the average resident hunter. The local fish and game advisory committee has not consulted at this time nor is aware of this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: Gary Feaster (EG-F24-011)

PROPOSAL 138

5 AAC 92.016. Musk oxen tag fees.

Remove the requirement for a locking tag in subsistence hunts for musk ox as follows:

5 AAC 92.016. Musk oxen tag fees. The resident tag fee for hunting musk oxen by registration permit on Nelson Island and on Nunivak Island is \$25. The Board of Game waives the resident tag [FEE] for subsistence musk oxen hunting.

or

5 AAC 92.016. Musk oxen tag fees. The resident tag fee for hunting musk oxen by registration permit on Nelson Island and on Nunivak Island is \$25. **A resident tag is not required for taking musk oxen in subsistence hunts.** [THE BOARD OF GAME WAIVES THE RESIDENT TAG FEE FOR SUBSISTENCE MUSK OXEN HUNTING.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current regulation waives the resident tag fee for hunting musk oxen in subsistence hunts yet still requires the hunter to have the locking tag in their possession and to lock it onto the portion of the animal required to be salvaged if successful. AS 16.05.340(a)(16)(B) allows the board to reduce or eliminate the resident big game tag and fee for musk oxen for all or a portion of a game management unit. The board waived the tag fee for subsistence hunts but did not waive the tag requirement. The Department of Fish and Game implemented the regulation by telling permit holders the tag is not required, which is technically incorrect. This proposal is an attempt to align the regulation with how the

department is administering the regulation, and in the manner that is the least cumbersome for the hunters.

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

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F24-084)

Note: Proposal 188 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Statewide Regulations meeting scheduled for March 2025.

PROPOSAL 188

5 AAC 92.050. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.

Award DI403 and DI404 permit recipients whose tags were cancelled on July 24, 2024 the same hunting permits for an upcoming season, and develop a plan with ADF&G to ensure late season changes do not impact hunters.

The preference would be awarding these cancelled tags during an upcoming hunting season. I would also encourage the Board of Game to work with ADF&G to develop a plan to ensure late season changes do not leave hunters who were expecting and planning to hunt a particular unit or species hanging. Successful hunting in Alaska requires extensive planning, especially for those who do not have access to motorized means of transportation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Game should consider addressing the cancelled DI403 and DI404 permits that were cancelled on July 24, 2024. This cancellation happened after impacted hunters were contacted by ADF&G to congratulate hunters and encourage hunters to begin their planning process. Some hunters were given the opportunity to hunt this season while approximately half of hunters were not given this opportunity. The Board of Game should consider addressing the cancelled DI403 and DI404 permits that were cancelled on July 24, 2024. This cancellation happened after impacted hunters were contacted by ADF&G to congratulate hunters and encourage hunters to begin their planning process. Some hunters were given the opportunity to hunt this season while approximately half of hunters were not given this opportunity.

PROPOSED BY: Lang Van Dommelen (HQ-F24-ACR2)

Note: Proposal 189 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Statewide Regulations meeting scheduled for March 2025.

PROPOSAL 189

5 AAC 92.050. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.

The department manages the Delta Bison Herd within a narrow range of abundance in an attempt to avoid conflicts with agriculture and maintain a viable and sustainable population. The department adjusts permits and bag limits annually in an attempt to keep the population at approximately 360 adults, post hunt. The department assumes that natural mortality is going to be very low in this population, and when natural

mortality events occur, as in the historic winter of 2021/2022, permit numbers or hunt conditions must be significantly changed. The department is often unaware of the degree of mortality until after permits have been awarded. A mortality event in the spring of 2024 also led to a situation where too many permits were awarded, running a risk of unsustainable harvest.

After conducting post-calving surveys in the summer of 2024, the department recognized the need to reduce the overall number of permits, and to change the bag limit to bulls only. Chances of winning a Delta bison permit are extremely low, existing regulations allow residents to be eligible for a permit only once every ten years, and existing regulations allow nonresidents to be eligible for a permit once per lifetime. Given these restrictions, the department would like the board to consider transferring any DI403 and DI404 permits awarded for the 2024 regulatory year that were subsequently taken away, to be transferred to regulatory year 2026. This would allow those who had been announced as winners for regulatory year 2024 to hunt in regulatory year 2026.

Absent the transfer of permits across regulatory years, the department would like the board to consider lifting the lifetime and 10-year loss of eligibility for those hunters that were awarded permits that were subsequently revoked, allowing those hunters to begin applying again.

5 AAC 92.050(a)(6) would therefore read:

(E) a permittee who had their Unit 20(D) bison permit revoked for regulatory year 2024 may, upon request, have the permit transferred to regulatory year 2026.

Also offered for consideration, adding a new sub-subparagraph to 5 AAC 92.050(a)(4)(H):

5 AAC 92.050(a)(4)

(H) a resident who is a successful applicant for a bison drawing permit hunt is ineligible to apply for another bison drawing permit for 10 years; a nonresident who is a successful applicant for a bison drawing permit hunt is ineligible to apply for another bison drawing permit;

(i) however, a resident who had their Unit 20(D) bison permit revoked for regulatory year 2024 is eligible to apply for another bison drawing permit for regulatory year 2026; and a nonresident who had their Unit 20(D) bison permit revoked for regulatory year 2024 is eligible to apply for another bison drawing permit.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This regulation covers the vast majority of permit issuance scenarios, however due to the timing of bison surveys, the department's attempts to manage within a narrow window of abundance for this population, and the early notification of permit winners, there are occasionally scenarios where the department must retract permits or eliminate a hunt entirely. Applicants are warned that hunts could be eliminated, and that application fees may not be refunded. The Delta bison hunt is unique in that it is highly sought after, and bison hunts in general have a lifetime or 10-year moratorium (depending upon residency) on re-applying after winning, further emphasizing how unique it is to win such a permit, and how unusual it is to win and then lose such a permit.

Permit winners that have had their permits retracted will be unable to hunt, and may not have the chance again, even if they are allowed to reapply. Previous attempts to adjust hunt conditions to allow all winners to hunt have resulted in low success rates, and short hunt windows. Many hunters expressed a preference to simply hunt in a different year, rather than have the hunt conditions

drastically altered. Although it does not address the loss of opportunity in 2024, the department is considering advertising a more conservative number of permits in the drawing supplement, which may mitigate this issue moving forward.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F24-ACR3)
