

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
STAFF COMMENTS FOR PROPOSALS 71, 112, 209-211, 220-223, 230 AND 257**

SOUTHCENTRAL REGION REGULATIONS PROPOSALS

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME MEETING

KODIAK, ALASKA

MARCH 20-25, 2026



The following staff comments were prepared by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for use at the Alaska Board of Game meeting, March 20-25, 2026 in Kodiak, Alaska, and are prepared to assist the public and board. The stated staff comments should be considered preliminary and subject to change, if or when new information becomes available. Final department positions will be formulated after review of written and oral testimony presented to the board.

PROPOSAL 71 – 5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations. Establish an average annual historic human harvest value for sheep to consider if sheep populations are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? If adopted, this proposal will set the average annual historic human harvest threshold for sheep.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations. For purposes of implementing AS 16.05.255(e) - (g) the Board of Game will

(1) consider the following criteria when identifying big game prey populations that are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use:

(A) harvest size: the average annual historic human harvest meets or exceeds values as follows:

- (i) caribou: 100;
- (ii) deer: 500;
- (iii) moose: 100;
- (iv) sheep: **XX** [HARVEST SIZE TO BE DETERMINED];

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED?

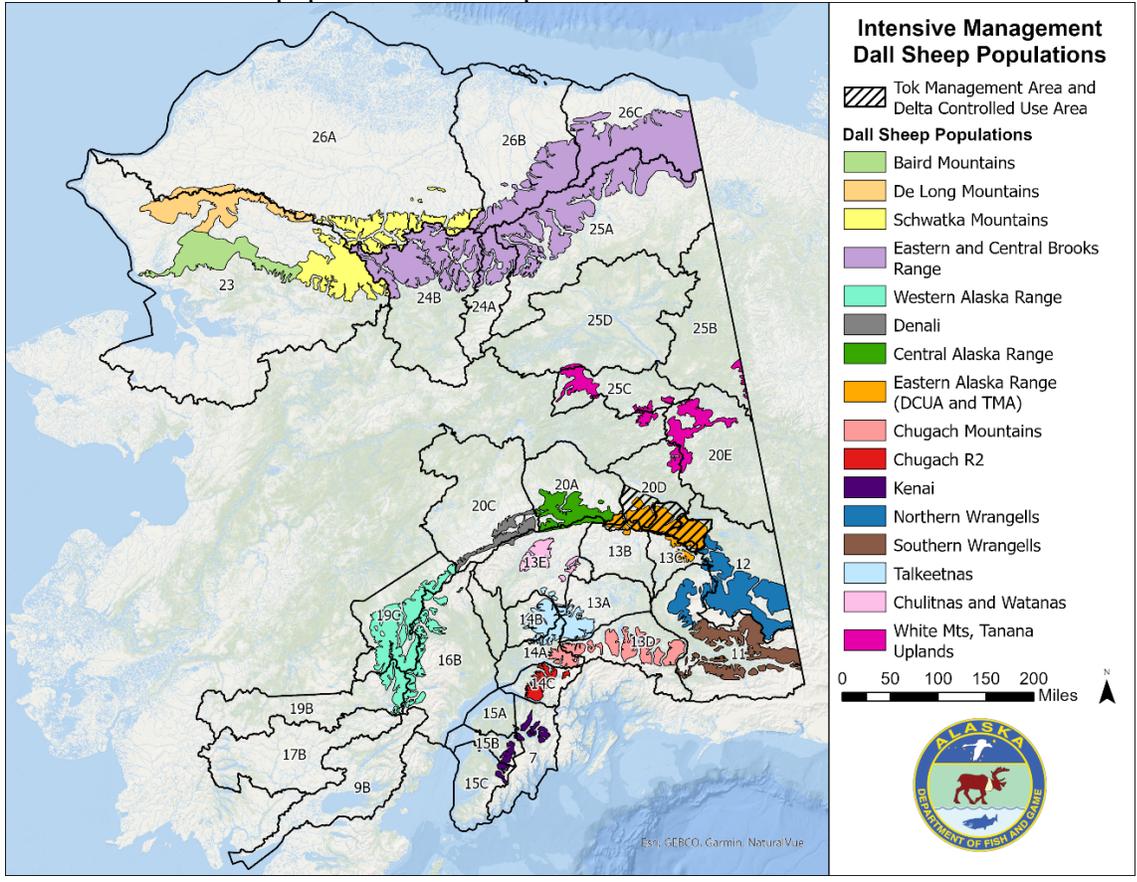
If the Board adopts this proposal, it will set an average annual historic human harvest value for sheep for use in considering if sheep populations are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use. Once established, the board can evaluate each individual population and determine if the population has a positive or negative intensive management finding, and if positive, the board can then set a population and harvest objective for each population.

BACKGROUND: At the Statewide Board of Game meeting in March 2025, the board adopted a proposal that added sheep to the list of species identified as important for providing high levels of human harvest. This provided the framework for the development of intensive management programs for Dall’s sheep.

In 1994 the legislature adopted amendments to Title 16 in the Alaska Statutes. To provide for intensive management of certain big game prey populations. This is commonly known as the “Intensive Management Law”. In 1997 the department and the Board began to apply a process for implementing the IM law. The process consisted of three steps, 1) Identification of ungulate populations that are important for providing high levels of consumptive use. 2) Establishing population objectives and harvest objectives for the identified populations. 3) Applying the population and harvest objectives to decision making. In 1998 the board set historic harvest thresholds for caribou (100), deer (500), and moose (100). These thresholds are part of the first step in the process of implementing the IM law. Now that sheep have been included as an IM

species it is necessary to set the harvest threshold for sheep prior to moving to the second step in the process of implementing IM.

There are 16 distinct populations of sheep in Alaska:



Threshold Level	Population	Historic Harvest
100	Eastern and Central Brooks Range	163
100	Northern Wrangells	124
75	Central Alaska Range	88
75	Western Alaska Range	85
50	Eastern Alaska Range (DCUA&TMA)	73
35	Talkeetnas	37
35	Chugach Mountains	36
30	Southern Wrangells	30
20	Region 2 Chugach Mountains (14C)	21
15	White Mts and Tanana Uplands	17
10	Baird Mountains	10
5	Kenai	9
5	De Long Mountains	9
5	Chulitna & Watana	6
3	Schwatka Mountains	3
0	Denali	0

Table 1. Table 1 shows the average annual harvest between 2005-2025 for each identified sheep population, and what corresponding potential harvest threshold level would be to determine if there is a positive or negative IM finding for that population.

Potential IM action includes habitat improvement and predator control. At this time, it is unknown if sheep habitat improvement is possible or practical, nor is it clear that habitat is a limiting factor for low sheep abundance. Predator removal to benefit sheep populations appears more complex than efforts to benefit moose or caribou populations for several reasons. In most Alaska IM programs, the department focuses on two or three predator species; bears (brown and black) and wolves. Predation of sheep has been documented by wolves, bears, wolverine, coyote, and golden eagles. Contemplation of predator removal to benefit sheep is challenging, because they have not been managed as an IM species and research does not indicate predation is the leading factor contributing to low sheep numbers. Current studies show predator communities and their effects on sheep differ greatly between mountain ranges and sheep populations. Interactions between predator species may also lead to unintended consequences; for example, wolf removal has been theorized to result in increased coyote populations. A robust pre-treatment data set should be collected to ascertain predation levels by each predator species in each sheep population to focus efforts on the appropriate predator if predator removal is directed and to give any IM program the largest chance of success. There are federal regulatory challenges to remove golden eagles. Another hurdle is to determine how to efficiently and safely remove predators if they are identified as contributing to low sheep abundance.

Observations and historic fluctuations in sheep populations indicate low sheep abundance is due to extreme winter weather. As recently as winter 2025 deep snows are accumulating on various sheep ranges, and a number of rain on snow events have occurred. The impacts of habitat status and predation on sheep are unknown. The department also has the authority to remove predators outside of established IM programs if research indicates predation is a leading contributor to declines in sheep populations or is preventing depressed populations from recovering.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal as setting a harvest threshold is necessary for the process of implementing the IM law for sheep. This proposal is the next step in the process toward intensively managing sheep populations for high levels of human harvest. Once the board determines the appropriate harvest threshold it will then need to evaluate sheep populations statewide to determine a positive or negative IM finding for each population.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would result in additional costs for the department in the form of assessing each sheep population to aid the board in determining if the population warranted a positive or negative IM finding.

PROPOSAL 112 – 5 AAC 85.040(3). Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat. Create an archery only registration permit hunt for goats in Units 7 and 15.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Forward

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would create a 7-day, bow and arrow only, registration hunt in all goat hunt areas in Units 7 and 15 that would occur prior to current registration seasons.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? The current regulations as defined in **5 AAC 85.040(3) Hunting Seasons and bag limits for goat:**

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(3) Unit 15(C), that portion beginning at the mouth of Jakalof Creek, then southwesterly along the shore of Kachemak Bay to the mouth of the Port Graham River, then southeasterly up the Port Graham River		

approximately 6 miles, then southerly up the south fork to the divide, then easterly across the divide to the main drainage that flows into Windy Bay, then southeasterly down the creek to Windy Bay, then easterly along the shoreline to the mouth of Rocky River, then northerly up Rocky River and Windy River to the divide separating Windy River from Jakalof Creek, then across that divide to Jakalof Creek, then down Jakalof Creek to the point of origin

1 goat by drawing permit only; however, if a nanny is taken in either season, the hunter is prohibited from taking a goat on the Kenai Peninsula for 5 regulatory years; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited; or

Aug.10—Oct. 15
(General hunt Only)

No open season.

1 goat by registration permit only; however, if a nanny is taken in either season, the hunter is prohibited from taking a goat on the Kenai Peninsula for 5 regulatory years; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited; or

Aug.10—Oct. 15

No open season.

1 goat by registration permit only; however, if a nanny is taken in either season, the hunter is prohibited from taking a goat on the Kenai Peninsula for 5 regulatory years; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited

Nov.1—Nov. 30

No open season.

Unit 15(C), that portion beginning; at the mouth of the Port Graham River, then southeasterly up the Port Graham River approximately 6 miles, then

southerly up the south fork to the divide, then easterly across the divide to the main drainage that flows into Windy Bay, then southeasterly down the Creek to Windy Bay, then along the southern shore of Windy Bay, then westerly along the shore of the Gulf of Alaska and around the tip of the Kenai Peninsula and easterly to the point of origin

1 goat by registration permit only; however, if a nanny is either season, the hunter is prohibited from taking a goat on the Kenai Peninsula for 5 regulatory years; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited

Aug. 10–Oct. 15
Nov. 1–Nov. 30

Aug. 10–Oct. 15
No open season

Unit 7 and Remainder of Unit 15

Aug. 10–Oct. 15
(General hunt only)
Nov. 1–Nov. 30
(General hunt only)

Aug. 10–Oct. 15
Nov. 1–Nov. 30

1 goat by drawing permit only in the Aug. 10–Oct. 15 season (up to 500 permits will be issued), or 1 goat by registration permit only in the Nov. 1–Nov. 30 season; however, if a nanny is taken in either season, the hunter is prohibited from taking a goat on the Kenai Peninsula for 5 regulatory years; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited

...

Unit 7 is located entirely within the Anchorage-Matsu-Kenai Nonsubsistence Area, therefore there are no subsistence uses for goat in this area.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for goat in Unit 15C, outside the Anchorage-Matsu-Kenai Nonsubsistence Area. The board has determined an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 7–10 goat.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would establish an archery-only registration season for goats, when opportunity exists after the current drawing permit season and prior to current registration season. Adequate time to gather harvest reports is needed between the end of the drawing season and the beginning of any registration hunts to calculate remaining allowable harvest quotas, if available, and determine which areas may be opened.

If adopted, current reporting periods for drawing hunts would need to be shortened, and registration permit distribution dates and season dates adjusted later to allow for full accounting of drawing season harvest. Moving the dates for the current registration hunt later in the year would put increased overlap between the registration hunt and the rut period, which could increase harvest rates. Permit quantities would be adjusted by managers as necessary.

BACKGROUND: In 2001, the board established the current hunt structure for mountain goats on the Kenai Peninsula with an early drawing permit season of Aug.10–Oct. 15 and a late season registration hunt of Nov. 1–Nov. 30. Registration hunts only open if harvest opportunity still exists after the closure of the early drawing season. A maximum of 500 permits may be issued. This system was established due to conservation concerns.

Under the current management system, goat numbers have recovered in most management units. From 2015 to 2024, seven mountain goats (0.7%) of the harvest were taken by archery. However, the 10-year average proportion of nannies taken by archery (29%) is higher than the 10-year average proportion of nannies taken by other means (19%).

The hunting opportunity for mountain goats in the portion of Unit 15C outside of the NSA is slightly different, and at the 2019 Board of Game meeting the board restructured the Seldovia (RG364) and English Bay (RG365) mountain goat hunts, establishing a new hunt (DG364) for the Seldovia area, and separating the late seasons of RG364 and RG365 into RG374 and RG375 to aid the department in the distribution of permits, the tracking of hunts in these management areas, and to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative. If the board adopts the proposal the department recommends permits also be available in the Soldotna and Homer ADF&G offices, in addition to those currently listed in the proposal. To meet the board’s statutory responsibility to the subsistence law, it should consider whether subsistence regulations continue to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses if the proposal is adopted.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 209 – 5AAC 85.035. Hunting seasons and bag limits for elk. Require all nonresidents hunting brown bear, elk, or mountain goats in Unit 8 to be accompanied by a guide.

PROPOSED BY: Stig Yngve

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal seeks to require nonresident hunters to be accompanied in the field by a licensed Alaska big game guide when hunting elk, brown bear, or mountain goat in Unit 8.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

AS 16.05.407. Nonresident hunting big game animals must be accompanied.

(a) It is unlawful for a nonresident to hunt, pursue, or take brown bear, grizzly bear, mountain goat, or sheep in this state, unless personally accompanied by

(1) a person who is licensed as

(A) a registered guide-outfitter or a master guide-outfitter under AS 08.54 and who is providing big game hunting services to the nonresident under a contract with the nonresident; or

(B) a class-A assistant guide or an assistant guide under AS 08.54 and who is employed by a registered guide-outfitter or a master guide-outfitter who has a contract to provide big game hunting services to the nonresident; or

(2) a resident over 19 years of age who is

(A) the spouse of the nonresident; or

(B) related to the nonresident, within and including the second degree of kindred, by marriage or blood.

5 AAC 92.061. Special provisions for brown bear drawing permit hunts.

(a) In the Unit 8 general brown bear drawing permit hunt, the department shall issue permits, and a hunter may apply for a permit, as follows:

(1) the department shall issue a maximum of 40 percent of the drawing permits to nonresidents and a minimum of 60 percent to residents; each guide may submit the same number of nonresident applications for a hunt as the number of permits available for that hunt;

(2) the department shall enter, in a resident drawing, each application from a resident and each application from a nonresident accompanied by a resident relative who is within the second degree of kindred; for each season, the department shall issue a maximum of four permits to nonresident hunters accompanied by a resident relative who is within the second degree of kindred; however, the department may not issue, within one calendar year, more than one of these permits per individual hunt, as described in the permit hunt guide published each year by the department;

(3) the department shall enter, in a guided nonresident drawing, each complete application from a nonresident who will be accompanied by a guide; the department may enter an application and issue a drawing permit for the general hunt only to a successful nonresident applicant who presents proof at the time of application that the applicant will be accompanied by a guide, as required under AS 16.05.407 or 16.05.408;

...

The Alaska Board of Game (board) has made negative customary and traditional use findings for elk, brown bear, and mountain goat in Unit 8.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? If adopted, nonresident hunters would no longer be allowed to hunt brown bear or mountain goat with a resident relative meeting the requirements outlined in AS 16.05.407 (a)(2) and would be required to utilize the services of a guide when hunting these species in Unit 8. Nonresident hunters would also be required to be accompanied by a licensed Alaska big game guide while hunting elk in Unit 8.

BACKGROUND: Current regulations allow for the take of brown bear and mountain goat in Unit 8 by nonresident hunters accompanied in the field by a resident relative within the second degree of kindred (2DK). Nonresidents are not required to be accompanied in the field by either a licensed Alaska big game guide or a 2DK resident relative while hunting elk in Unit 8, or anywhere else in Alaska.

For Unit 8 brown bear, 5AAC 92.061 stipulates that guided nonresident hunters are only eligible for brown bear drawing permits DB101-128, DB131-DB158, DB161-DB163 and DB191-DB193. Nonresident hunters who intend to hunt with a 2DK resident relative are only eligible for brown bear drawing permits DB201-228, DB231-DB258, DB261-DB263 and DB291-DB293. Regulations further stipulate that of these drawing permits the department may only award 1 permit per drawing hunt area per calendar year and a total of 4 drawing permits per season to nonresident hunters accompanied by a 2DK resident relative. In most years the maximum number of drawing permits allowed by regulations (8) are awarded to nonresidents accompanied by a 2DK resident relative.

Unlike the drawing permit hunt areas, registration permit hunts RB230 and RB260, do not have a specific allocation for guided nonresident hunters or nonresident hunters accompanied by a 2DK resident relative. On average RY15-RY24, 22 nonresident hunters per regulatory year (range: 10-41) registered for these permits collectively. Of these nonresident registration permit holders, 93% hunted, 82% of which utilized the services of a licensed Alaska big game guide for their hunt. The remaining 18% of nonresident hunters are assumed to have been accompanied in the field by a 2DK resident relative.

Through a combination of drawing and registration permit hunts administered for brown bears in Unit 8 between RY15-RY24, an average of 9 nonresident hunters accompanied by a 2DK resident relative hunted brown bear annually (range: 5-14 nonresident hunters) with an average annual harvest of 3 bears per year, 71% of which were male bears.

Nonresident hunters may only hunt mountain goats in Unit 8 in the following hunts: DG471-DG474, DG476, DG478-DG479 or RG480. Late season registration goat hunts administered in the draw permit hunt areas after November 1 (RG471-RG474, RG476, RG478-RG479 and RG488-RG489) are only open to resident hunters. There is no specific allocation for guided

nonresident hunters or nonresident hunters accompanied by 2DK resident relatives in any of the drawing or registration permit hunts for mountain goat open to nonresident hunters in Unit 8. On average RY15-RY24, 177 (range: 150-235) nonresidents were issued permits to hunt mountain goats in Unit 8. Nonresident hunters account for 18% of all the hunters in the field and 29% of the harvest in drawing and registration permit hunt areas with an open season for nonresidents. On average, 73% of nonresident hunters indicated that they utilized the services of an Alaska licensed guide.

Nonresidents are not required to be accompanied in the field by either a licensed Alaska big game guide or a 2DK resident relative while hunting elk in Unit 8.

Nonresident hunters may only hunt elk in Unit 8 with a drawing permit or registration permit RE755. There is no specific allocation for guided nonresident hunters or nonresident hunters accompanied by 2DK resident relatives in any of the drawing or registration permit hunts for elk open to nonresident hunters in Unit 8. On average RY15-RY24, 34 (range: 19-46) nonresidents were issued permits to hunt elk in Unit 8. Nonresident hunters account for 6% of all the hunters in the field and 9% of the harvest in drawing and registration permit hunt areas with an open season for nonresidents. On average, 18% of nonresident elk hunters indicated that they utilized the services of an Alaska licensed guide.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative. Modification of AS 16.05.407 to include elk as a guide required species would require legislative action and is therefore outside of Board of Game authority. The board can and does allocate hunting opportunity between guided and non-guided nonresidents for many species. This approach would not require legislation.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 210 – 5 AAC 85.035. Hunting seasons and bag limits for elk; 5 AAC 85.035. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures. Reallocate Afognak Island elk permits and limit RE706 permits to one per household.

PROPOSED BY: Brooks Horan

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? Adoption of this proposal would eliminate the 16 registration permits available annually for registration permit hunts RE752 and RE756. Hunting opportunities previously provided through these registration permits would once again be provided through drawing permits DE715, DE717, DE721 and DE723. Adoption of this proposal would also direct the department to make 8 permits for resident registration permit hunt RE706

available for in-person pickup only as follows: 4 permits in Port Lions and 4 permits in Ouzinkie with a limit of 1 permit per household.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5 AAC 99.025 Customary and traditional uses of game populations, Elk in Unit 8 have a negative customary and traditional use determination.

5AAC 85.035. Hunting seasons and bag limits for elk.

Units and Bag Limits	Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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(2)

Unit 8, Raspberry Island

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull elk by drawing permit only; up to 100 permits will be issued in combination with the nonresident hunt	Oct. 1—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	
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1 antlerless elk by registration permit only;	Oct. 23—Nov. 30 (General hunt only)	
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NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull elk by drawing permit only; up to 100 permits will be issued in combination with the resident hunt		Oct. 1—Oct. 22
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1 antlerless elk by drawing permit only; up to 200 permits will be issued		Oct. 23—Nov. 30
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Unit 8, Eastern Afognak, that portion of Afognak Island east

of the main north-south logging road (1100 road) from the Danger Bay logging camp at 58° 08.20' N. lat., 152° 32.98' W. long., north to its terminus at Discoverer Bay at 58° 19.60' N. lat., 152° 21.80' W. long., and adjacent islands west of Marmot Strait.

1 elk by drawing permit only; up to 500 permits may be issued; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	Sept. 25—Oct. 22
1 elk by registration permit only ; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	No Open Season
1 elk by registration permit only	Oct. 23—Nov. 30 (General Hunt Only)	Oct. 23—Nov. 30
Remainder of Unit 8 1 elk by drawing permit only; up to 500 permits may be issued; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	Sept. 25—Oct. 22
1 elk by registration permit only ; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	No Open Season
1 elk by registration permit only	Oct. 23—Nov. 30 (General Hunt Only)	Oct. 23—Nov. 30

5AAC 85.035. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures.

...

(L) In accordance with (M) of this paragraph, the department may issue up to four resident registration permits, with no more than registration permit per person, for the early season elk hunts in each of the following areas:

- (i) Unit 8, Eastern Afognak, that portion of Afognak Island east of the main north-south logging road (1100 road) from the Danger Bay logging camp at 58° 08.20' N. lat., 152° 32.98' W. long., north to its terminus at Discoverer Bay at 58° 19.60' N. lat., 152° 21.80' W. long., and adjacent islands west of Marmot Strait;
- (ii) in the remainder of Unit 8 in Ouzinkie;
- (iii) Unit 8, Eastern Afognak, that portion of Afognak Island east of the main north-south logging road (1100 road) from the Danger Bay logging camp at 58° 08.20' N. lat., 152°

32.98' W. long., north to its terminus at Discoverer Bay at 58° 19.60' N. lat., 152° 21.80' W. long., and adjacent islands west of Marmot Strait; and
(iv) in the remainder of Unit 8 in Port Lions.

(M) for each resident registration permit issued by the department under (L) of this paragraph, the department will reduce the number of drawing permits available in the same area for the same early season elk hunt by one;

...

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? By eliminating registration permit hunts RE752 and RE756 hunting opportunities previously provided through these registration permits would once again be provided through drawing permits DE715, DE717, DE721 and DE723. These permits would be issued through the drawing application process and made available to both resident and nonresident hunters. Administering these hunts in this way would eliminate the need for resident hunters to travel to the communities of Port Lions and Ouzinkie to register for a permit.

Adoption of this proposal would also allocate eight (8) RE706 permits for in-person registration on a first-come first-served basis for Alaska residents in the communities of Port Lions and Ouzinkie, with a limit of one per household.

BACKGROUND: Afognak Island elk are managed using established harvest guidelines for individual herds and a 10-percent harvest objective for the overall elk population. A harvest objective is established annually for each herd based on available biological information to provide a sustainable level of harvest and maintain a stable to slightly increasing population.

Elk hunting opportunity in the Unit 8 Remainder hunt area is provided through an early season drawing permit hunt for elk of either sex (DE715) with an open season Sep. 25–Oct. 9 and a late season draw permit hunt for elk of either sex (DE717) Oct. 8–Oct. 22. Elk hunting opportunity in the Eastern Afognak hunt area is provided through an early season drawing permit hunt for elk of either sex (DE721) with an open season Sep. 25–Oct. 9 and a late season draw permit hunt for elk of either sex (DE723) Oct. 8–Oct. 22.

If the harvest objective for the area is not met during the drawing and registration permit hunts administered in these areas between Sep. 25–Oct. 22, additional hunting opportunity may be provided through a registration permit hunt for elk of either sex (RE755) Oct. 23–Nov. 30. Permits for this hunt are only available for in person registration at ADF&G offices in Anchorage, Kodiak, Palmer, Soldotna, Fairbanks and Homer. The registration permit hunt is subject to emergency order closures when the combined harvest from drawing and registration permit hunts reaches established harvest objectives. Opportunities to harvest elk during the RE755 registration permit hunt were available in the Unit 8 Remainder and Eastern Afognak hunt areas 7 of the last 10 years and 9 of the last 10 years (RY15-RY24), respectively.

Population estimates for individual elk herds on Afognak Island are based on minimum count aerial surveys completed annually in early fall (August-September). Elk population estimates in the Unit 8 Remainder hunt area averaged 420 elk (RY15-RY24). Harvest from the area averaged 37 elk annually during this same period. Annual draw permit issuance for DE715 and DE717 was 45 permits and 50 permits, respectively. Elk population estimates in the Eastern Afognak hunt area averaged 205 elk (RY15-RY24). Harvest from the area averaged 19 elk annually during this same period. Annual draw permit issuance for DE721 and DE723 was 37 permits per hunt. The hunting opportunity provided by the current hunt administration allows for the harvest of elk from these areas to reach the established harvest objective annually.

Proposal 209 was adopted at the 2023 Southcentral Board of Game meeting. This proposal directed the department to allocate a portion of the hunting opportunity previously provided through drawing permit hunts in the Unit 8 Remainder and Eastern Afognak hunt areas to resident-only registration permit hunts RE752 and RE756 with a corresponding reduction in the number of drawing permits available in these areas (DE715, DE717, DE721 and DE723). These hunts have an open season Oct. 8–Oct. 22, and a bag limit of one elk of either sex. Permits are available for in-person registration in the communities of Port Lions and Ouzinkie 3 business days prior to the start of the season with 4 permits for RE752 and 4 permits for RE756 available in each community. A department representative from the Kodiak ADF&G office travels to each community to issue the permits on the day of permit issuance. If travel to these communities is delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, such as weather, the date permits are available is rescheduled to the next available business day. Hunters may possess RE752 or RE756, but not both, and only one permit may be issued per hunter.

During RY24 and RY25 (the first two years the hunts were administered), permit holders for RE752 and RE756 were predominately residents of Unit 8 communities (97%). Kodiak residents held the majority of the permits (50%) followed by residents of Port Lions (28%) and Ouzinkie (19%). In RY24 100% of the permit holders participated in the hunt with a 43% success rate. Preliminary results for RY25 are not available at this time.

Elk hunting opportunities in the Raspberry Island hunt area are provided through an early season drawing permit hunt for bull elk (DE702) with an open season Oct. 1–Oct. 12 and a late season draw permit hunt for bull elk (DE704) with an open season Oct. 11–Oct. 22. Following the conclusion of the drawing hunts for bull elk, a late season hunt for cow elk is administered for both resident and nonresident hunters. Nonresident drawing permit hunt (DE706) has a bag limit of 1 cow elk with an open season Oct. 23–Nov. 30. Permits for this hunt are issued through the drawing application process. Resident registration permit hunt RE706 has a bag limit of 1 cow elk with an open season Oct. 23–Nov. 30. Permits for this hunt are available online and at the Kodiak ADF&G office.

The population objective for Raspberry Island is 150-200 elk with a bull:cow ratio of 20-25 bulls:100 cows. Historically, when the total population of elk on Raspberry Island approaches

230-250 animals the population suffers an abrupt decline. This abrupt reduction in the population has been documented multiple times since the 1960's (1965, 1987, 1996, 2018). The estimated number of bulls on Raspberry Island has stayed relatively consistent over time with drastic fluctuations primarily observed within the cow population. Multiple attempts have been made to decrease the cow population through hunter harvest by substantially increasing the number of DE706 permits from a low of 40 permits in RY14 to high of 150 permits RY20-RY23. Even with substantial increases in the number of permits available, the annual harvest averaged 9 cows per year in RY14–RY23. This was primarily attributed to an overall lack of participation (57% effort) during this same period. Proposal 70 at the 2023 Southcentral Board of Game meeting changed the resident hunting opportunity for cow elk on Raspberry Island from a drawing permit hunt to a registration permit hunt. Providing the opportunity to harvest antlerless elk through a registration hunt was intended to aid the department in achieving and maintaining the management objective of 150-200 elk with a 20-25:100 bull:cow ratio.

During RY23 and RY24 a record high number of cow elk were harvested during the DE706 hunt, reducing the overall size of the Raspberry Island elk herd to within our management objective of 150-200 elk. Consequently, the department limited the overall number of permits available for RE706 to 25 permits in RY24 and RY25. This was necessary to address concerns about overharvest, which may impede productivity and future growth, while also eliminating the need to limit harvest through emergency order closures. Due to the limited number of permits available, permits were made available online only on a first-come, first-served basis. All the available permits were issued within minutes of them becoming available. During the first year of the hunt, 52% of permit holders participated in the hunt and 3 cow elk were harvested. In the future, the department anticipates administering the hunt with an unlimited number of permits and the use of emergency order closures when necessary to reduce the population to within management objective.

Most of the land within the hunt area is privately owned by the Afognak Native Corporation. Public access to portions of the hunt area is unrestricted, other areas require elk hunters to obtain a land use permit and an elk hunting endorsement. Camping in the area around Afognak Lake is only authorized for Afognak Native Corporation Shareholders.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal because it is allocative. Existing hunting opportunities for elk in Unit 8 allow for the harvest of elk to reach the established harvest objective for individual herds and population as a whole.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 211 – 5AAC 85.035. Hunting seasons and bag limits for elk. Lengthen the elk registration hunt RE755 by one month, to close December 31.

PROPOSED BY: Alexis Kwachka

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? Adoption of this proposal would extend the season for RE755 by 31 days, changing the closure from November 30 to December 31.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5 AAC 99.025 Customary and traditional uses of game populations. Elk in Unit 8 have a negative customary and traditional use determination.

5AAC 85.035. Hunting seasons and bag limits for elk.

Units and Bag Limits	Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
...		
(2)		
...		
Unit 8, Southwest Afognak, that portion of Afognak Island and adjacent islands south and west of a line from the head of Back Bay (58° 05.38' N. lat., 152° 45.7' W. long.) to Hatch- ery Peak (58° 07.2' N. lat., 152° 47.5' W. long.) to the head of Malina Bay (58° 09.3' N. lat., 152° 51.0' W. long.)		
1 elk by drawing permit only; up to 500 permits may be issued	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	Sept. 25—Oct. 22
1 elk by registration permit only	Oct. 23—Nov. 30 (General Hunt Only)	Oct. 23—Nov. 30
Unit 8, Eastern Afognak, that portion of Afognak Island east of the main north-south logging road (1100 road) from the		

Danger Bay logging camp at 58° 08.20' N. lat., 152° 32.98' W. long., north to its terminus at Discoverer Bay at 58° 19.60' N. lat., 152° 21.80' W. long., and adjacent islands west of Marmot Strait.

1 elk by drawing permit only; up to 500 permits may be issued; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	Sept. 25—Oct. 22
1 elk by registration permit only ; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	No Open Season
1 elk by registration permit only	Oct. 23—Nov. 30 (General Hunt Only)	Oct. 23—Nov. 30
Remainder of Unit 8 1 elk by drawing permit only; up to 500 permits may be issued; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	Sept. 25—Oct. 22
1 elk by registration permit only ; or	Sept. 25—Oct. 22 (General hunt only)	No Open Season
1 elk by registration permit only	Oct. 23—Nov. 30 (General Hunt Only)	Oct. 23—Nov. 30
...		

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Adoption of this proposal lengthen the hunting season for registration elk hunt RE755 on Afognak and Kodiak islands to include the month of December. This would allow elk that move from Raspberry or Afognak islands to be harvested on Kodiak Island, and provide additional elk hunting opportunity..

Allowing the harvest of elk on Kodiak Island reduces the likelihood that a breeding population of wild Roosevelt elk is established outside of the current range of the population. Allowing Roosevelt elk to become established on Kodiak Island may result in hybridization with the privately-owned, domestic herd of Rocky Mountain elk that currently exist and compromise the genetic integrity of the pure strain wild Roosevelt elk herd. In addition, there are some concerns regarding the potential for disease transmission between the domestic Rocky Mountain elk and the wild Roosevelt elk.

BACKGROUND: In 1928, under a goat-elk exchange program with the State of Washington, 8 Roosevelt elk calves (3 males and 5 females) were captured from Ho Valley on the Olympic Peninsula and shipped to Kodiak Island, Alaska. Because of grazing concerns from local ranchers, elk were removed from the Kodiak Island and released near Litnik Bay on Afognak Island in the spring of 1929. The population thrived in the 1930's and 1940's, and by the early 1950's the Afognak population was estimated at 300 animals with 2 elk observed for the first time on nearby Raspberry Island after swimming across the Raspberry Straits.

Similar to most cervids, elk are powerful swimmers. Hollow hair and ample fat provide buoyancy while swimming and insulate them from hypothermia in cold water environments. Elk have been documented swimming across lakes, rivers, and deep-sea ocean straits.

After becoming established on Afognak and Raspberry Islands, Roosevelt elk were and are occasionally observed on Kodiak Island. Around 2017, a local pilot reported and photographed a Roosevelt elk swimming in Karluk Lake and, around that same time, another resident reported observing "a few" elk near the Kupreanof Peninsula on the Kodiak mainland. However, reports of Roosevelt elk on Kodiak Island are not common and the frequency is undetermined.

In addition to Roosevelt elk occasionally occupying Kodiak Island, there is also a domestic herd of Rocky Mountain elk that reside on a grazing lease near Narrow Cape on the Kodiak Road System. The unmarked, privately-owned Rocky Mountain elk herd historically and consistently are not contained within the boundaries of the state grazing lease and are often observed roaming unrestrained across the landscape. On multiple occasions over the past 10 years, ADF&G has observed and documented Rocky Mountain elk roaming off the grazing lease. This lack of containment has led to concerns regarding disease transmission and hybridization between the domestic Rocky Mountain herd and Kodiak's wild Roosevelt elk population.

The establishment of Roosevelt elk on Kodiak increases the potential for hybridization to occur between the two genetically distinct populations thereby jeopardizing the genetic integrity of the Roosevelt elk population. Because most of the historical Roosevelt elk populations in North America have been hybridized with other elk species, the Kodiak Archipelago remains one of the last strongholds for this genetically unique population. Allowing the hybridization of Rocky Mountain and Roosevelt elk would not only jeopardize the genetic integrity of the Roosevelt elk herd but may also reduce the appeal to many hunters who travel to Kodiak Island to specifically hunt this unique species of elk, the largest elk species in the world.

Afognak Island elk are managed using established harvest objectives for individual herds and a 10 percent harvest objective for the overall elk population. A harvest objective is established annually for each herd based on available biological information to provide a sustainable level of harvest and maintain a stable to slightly increasing population. Hunting opportunity is provided through a combination of drawing and registration permit hunts that occur throughout the range of the population Sep. 25–Oct. 22. The number of permits available for these hunts is set

annually based on established harvest objectives. Additional hunting opportunity may be provided during the RE755 registration permit hunt if established harvest objectives have not been met for individual herds and the population as a whole. There is no limit on the number of permits available for the hunt, harvest is managed through targeted emergency order closures.

The current estimated population of elk in Unit 8 is 1,000-1,200 elk. Total combined average annual harvest (RY15-RY24) was 101 elk (range 80-123) with 63% bulls. A portion of the RE755 hunt area has been open annually since it was established in 2003 with an average annual harvest of 25 elk (RY15-RY24). During this same period, 63% of the harvest occurred Oct. 23–Oct. 31, 30% from Nov. 1–Nov. 10, 6% from Nov. 11–Nov. 20 and <1% Nov. 21–Nov. 30. A total of 10 elk have been harvested on the mainland of Kodiak RY15-RY24, 1 in 2016 and 9 in 2019.

Most of the land on Afognak Island is privately owned by the Afognak Native Corporation. Public access to portions of the hunt area is unrestricted, other areas require elk hunters to obtain a land use permit and an elk hunting endorsement. Camping in the area around Afognak Lake is only authorized for Afognak Native Corporation Shareholders.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department **SUPPORTS** this proposal to allow for additional opportunity when it exists. Existing hunting opportunities for elk in Unit 8 allow for the harvest of elk to reach the established harvest objective for individual herds and population. If adopted, the department does have the ability to close the season by emergency order if there are concerns of unsustainable harvest.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 220 – 5AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat. Lengthen registration goat permits RG471-474 and RG476 by two months, to close March 31.

PROPOSED BY: Stig Yngve

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? Adoption of this proposal would extend the season for registration goat hunts RG471-474 and RG476 by 59 days in a common year and 60 days in a leap year, moving the closure from Jan. 31 to Mar. 31.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.

Units and Bag Limits	Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
...		
(4)		
...		
Remainder of Unit 8		
1 goat by drawing permit only; up to 500 permits may be issued; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited; or	Aug 20 — Oct. 25 (General hunt only)	Aug 20 — Oct. 25
1 goat by registration permit only; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited	Nov. 1 — Jan. 31 (General hunt only)	No Open Season
...		

There is a negative customary and traditional use finding for goats in Unit 8.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? Adoption of this proposal would allow the department to provide additional hunting opportunities for goats by extending the existing season to March 31 for registration permit goat hunts RG471-RG474 and RG476. Seasons could still be closed by emergency order if warranted to prevent overharvest.

BACKGROUND: Kodiak goats have had remarkable population growth since being introduced to Kodiak Island in the early 1950s, with recent population estimates exceeding 3,500. As goats continue to thrive, management objectives have shifted from promoting expansion and growth to slowing or stabilizing population growth. In the remainder of Unit 8, there are 5 goat hunting areas (DG/RG471, DG/RG472, DG/RG473, DG/RG474 and DG/RG476) managed using a drawing and registration permit hunt structure. Each area has a drawing hunt followed by a registration hunt. If harvest objectives are not met during the drawing hunt, the corresponding registration hunt is held to provide additional opportunity in an effort to meet established harvest objectives. Registration goat hunts in these areas are only open to Alaska residents with restrictions on the availability of permits and the mode of access hunters can utilize. Permits for RG471-RG474 are only available for in-person registration in the

community of Port Lions and permits for RG476 are only available for in-person pickup in the community of Old Harbor. Use of aircraft for these hunts is restricted, and permit holders who choose to access the hunt area by aircraft may only do so from state-maintained runways or a float-equipped aircraft landing in saltwater.

Goat harvest objectives are established annually for each hunt area based on goat distribution and abundance estimates. Harvest quotas for hunt areas DG/RG471, DG/RG472, DG/RG473, DG/RG474 and DG/RG476 typically range from 5–15% of the most recent minimum count for each area. Harvest objectives as well as annual harvest for drawing and registration permit hunts in these areas is outlined in Table 220-1. Permit issuance for registration permit hunts RG471-RG474 collectively averages 6 permits per year. Permit issuance for RG476 averages 12 permits per year.

Table 220-1. Annual harvest objectives and harvest by permit type for hunt areas DG/RG471, DG/RG472, DG/RG473, DG/RG474 and DG/RG476 RY20-RY25.

	RY20	RY21	RY22	RY23	RY24
DG/RG471 Harvest Objective	18	18	18	20	20
DG471 Harvest	10	14	16	13	14
RG471 Harvest	2	3	1	0	1
DG/RG472 Harvest Objective	4	4	4	4	4
DG472 Harvest	5	4	2	5	6
RG472 Harvest	0*	0	0	0*	0*
DG/RG473 Harvest Objective	4	4	4	11	11
DG473 Harvest	4	3	3	5	7
RG473 Harvest	0*	0	0	0	0
DG/RG474 Harvest Objective	40	40	40	41	41
DG474 Harvest	33	21	25	26	24
RG474 Harvest	0	0	0	0	0
DG/RG476 Harvest Objective	16	16	16	23	23
DG476 Harvest	17	15	18	17	18
RG476 Harvest	0*	0	1	5	1

*Emergency order closure issued prior to the start of the hunt

The harvest of goats by drawing and registration permit hunts administered in these hunt areas resulted in 79% of the harvest objective in DG/RG471, 110% in DG/RG472, 72% in DG/RG473, 64% in DG/RG474, and 99% in DG/RG476 for RY20-RY24.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal. Existing hunting opportunities for goat in Unit 8 allow for the harvest of goats to reach the established harvest objectives in each hunt area annually. If season dates were extended, the department would continue to utilize its discretionary permit authority to limit the number of drawing permits available in conjunction with emergency order closures for registration permit hunts

when needed to maintain harvest at sustainable levels, and cannot guarantee any hunts will remain open until December 31.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 221 – 5 AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat. Lengthen registration goat hunt RG480 in Unit 8 by opening the season August 1.

PROPOSED BY: Daniel Olson

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would lengthen the season for the RG480 goat hunt in Unit 8 by changing the opening date from August 20 to August 1.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
...		
(4)		
Unit 8, that portion of Kodiak Island south and west of a line extending along the Spiridon River, following the North Fork of the Spiridon to its headwaters, then going southwest following the spine of the island over Koniag peak to the headwaters of the South Fork of Midway Creek, then downstream on Midway Creek to Midway Bay	Aug. 20–Mar. 31 (General hunt only)	Aug. 20–Mar. 31
2 goats by registration permit only, only 1 of which may be a billy; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited		

...

There is a negative customary and traditional use finding for goats in Unit 8.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? If adopted, this proposal would open the registration goat hunt RG480 earlier, beginning on August 1. This proposal may increase the harvest of goats in RG480 as hunters will have an additional 19 days to harvest goats compared to the current season start date of August 20. The earlier start to the goat hunting season would conflict with the current and historical goat survey schedule which commonly takes place during the first 2 weeks of August when snow accumulation is at a minimum and when pilot availability is more certain. The department strives to avoid aerial surveys during open seasons to minimize negative impacts to hunters in the field.

BACKGROUND: Registration goat hunt RG480 encompasses the southwestern half of Kodiak Island and includes an estimated 1,500-1,600 mountain goats. The goat population increased rapidly following their introduction, expanding throughout much of the island with the population peaking in 2017 with an estimated 3,500 goats island-wide, 2,000 of which were counted in RG480 surveys. In response to this rapid growth, hunting regulations were liberalized in RG480 to encourage hunter participation and slow population growth. Recent surveys suggest these efforts have been successful as population growth has slowed and appears to be stabilizing (Figure 221-1). Hunting in RG480 is currently open from Aug. 20–Mar. 31. Beginning in 2013, RG480 had a bag limit of 2 goats and, beginning in 2020, one of the 2 harvested goats is required to be a nanny. Permits are available on-line and at selected department offices. Resident and nonresident hunters may participate, but nonresidents must be accompanied by an Alaska-licensed guide or a resident relative within second degree of kindred. Over the last 5 years (RY20-RY24), an average of 1,138 permits were issued annually for RG480 with an average harvest of 184 goats. The 5 years prior (RY15-RY19), an average of 1,496 permits were issued annually for RG480 with an average harvest of 230 goats. Liberalized harvests and season modifications have resulted in a relatively stable goat population in the RG480 hunt area.

RG480 currently has more than a 7-month season (Aug. 20–Mar. 31). The majority of goat harvest during RY20-RY24 occurred in the months of October (37%), September (18.7%) and November (14%).

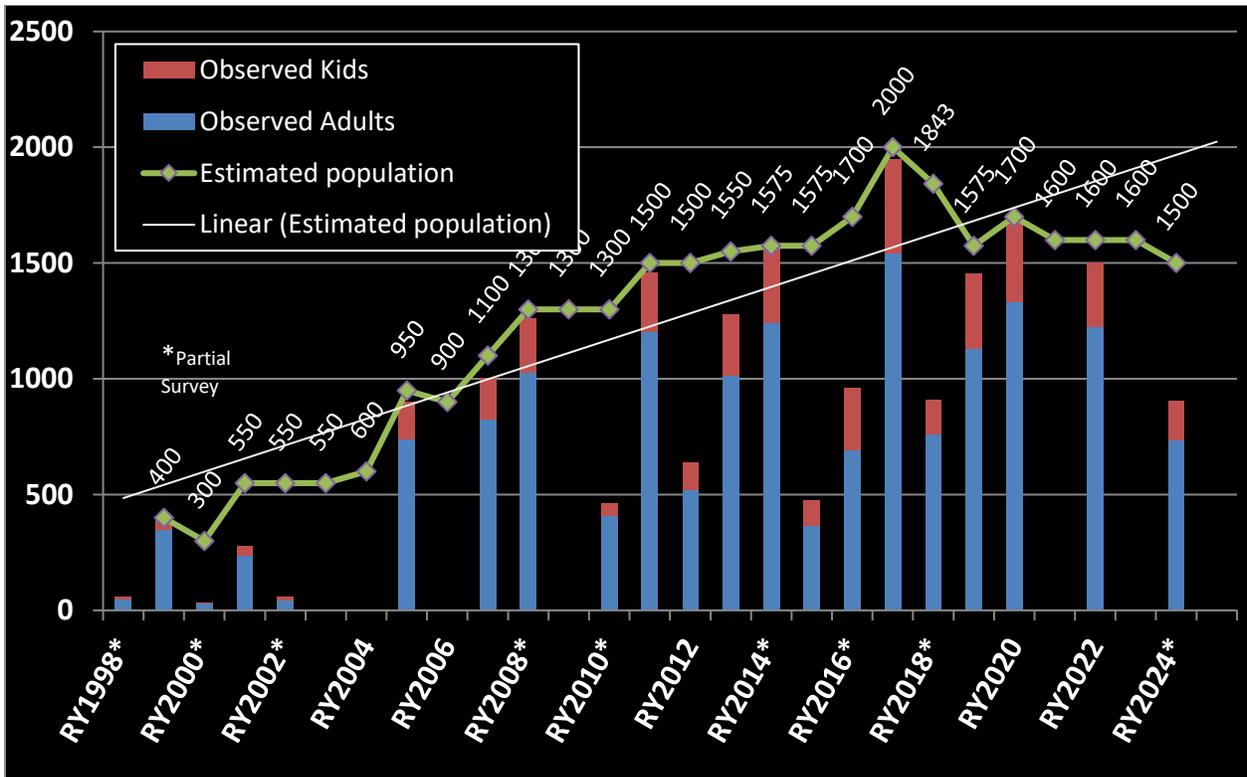


Figure 221-1. Unit 8 aerial mountain goat composition counts and estimated population size from RY98-RY24 in the RG480 goat hunt area.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to lengthen the season for the RG480 goat hunt in Unit 8 to open August 1. The department supports additional opportunity where available, though the proposal may jeopardize the department’s ability to conduct annual goat surveys.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 222 – 5AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat. Restrict the bag limit for registration goat hunt RG480 to one billy only, and require horns to be sealed.

5AAC 92.171. Sealing of horns and antlers.

PROPOSED BY: Caleb Martin

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? Adoption of this proposal would reduce the bag limit for goat hunt RG480t in Unit 8 from two goats, only one of which may be a billy, to one billy, and require horns be “sealed”.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat.

Units and Bag Limits	Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
...		
(4)		
...		
Unit 8, that portion of Kodiak Island south and west of a line extending along the Spiridon River, following the North Fork of the Spiridon to its headwaters, then going southwest following the spine of the island over Koniag peak to the headwaters of the South Fork of Midway Creek, then downstream on Midway Creek to Midway Bay	Aug. 20 — Mar. 31 (General hunt only)	Aug. 20 — Mar. 31
2 goats by registration permit only; only 1 of which may be a billy; the taking of nannies with kids is prohibited		
...		

5AAC 92.171. Sealing of horns and antlers.

(A) A person may not alter, possess, transport, or export from the state, the horns of a Dall sheep ram taken in any hunt where there is a horn configuration bag limit, the horns of a Dall sheep taken in Units 6 – 11 and Units 13 – 17, or the horns of a Dall sheep taken under a registration permit in Unit 19(C), unless the horns have been permanently sealed by a department representative within 30 days after the taking, or a lesser time if designated by the department; except the horns of a ¾-curl or less sheep taken in registration hunt in Units 25(A) or 26(C) do not need to be sealed.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? This proposal would reduce the bag limit for mountain goat in the RG480 hunt area from 2 goats (only one of which may be a billy, the take of nannies with kids is prohibited) to 1 goat and restrict the bag limit to billies only throughout all of Unit 8. This proposal would also require all hunters to have the horns of harvested goats “sealed”.

The adoption of this proposal may reduce the overall harvest of goats from Unit 8. This presumed reduction in harvest would conflict with the department’s management objective to slow or limit population growth, particularly on the southwestern end of the island within the RG480 hunt area.

Requiring goat hunters to have the horns of all harvested goats sealed may be burdensome to some hunters but would allow the department to collect valuable information on the demographics of harvested animals that would inform goat management island-wide.

BACKGROUND: The goat population on Kodiak Island has undergone remarkable population growth and range expansion since being introduced to the island in the early 1950’s. Goats can now be found throughout the majority of the available habitat on the island. The population peaked in 2017 at an estimated 3,500 goats, 2,000 of which were observed in the RG480 hunt area. As goats continued to thrive throughout the early 2000’s, management objectives shifted from promoting range expansion and population growth to slowing or stabilizing population growth.

There are 7 goat hunting areas in the northern half of Unit 8 (DG/RG471, DG/RG472, DG/RG473, DG/RG474, DG/RG476, DG/RG478 and DG/RG479) managed using a drawing and registration permit hunt structure. Seasons for drawing permit hunts run from Aug. 20-Oct. 25. Registration permit hunts may be administered in these areas if a harvestable surplus exists after the conclusion of the draw permit hunt. Registration permit hunts are open to Alaska residents only with a season of Nov. 1-Jan. 31, unless closed by emergency order. At the boards direction, the department utilizes its discretionary permit authority to place various restrictions on these permit hunts including; the availability of permits, the mode of access hunters can utilize, and the type of weapon hunters may use to harvest animals.

The RG480 hunt area encompasses the southwestern half of Kodiak Island and currently includes an estimated 1,500-1,600 mountain goats. In response to rapid population growth, hunting regulations were liberalized to encourage hunter participation and slow population growth. Recent surveys suggest these efforts have been successful as population growth has slowed and appears to be stabilizing (Figure 222-1). The RG480 hunt has an open season from Aug. 20–Mar. 31. In 2013, the RG480 bag limit increased to 2 goats, in 2020 the bag limit was modified to stipulate that if 2 goats are harvested from within the RG480 hunt area only one of the 2 harvested goats may be a billy. Permits are available on-line and at selected area offices. Over the last 5 years (RY20-RY24), on average 1,138 permits were issued annually for RG480

with an average harvest of 184 goats. The 5 years prior (RY15-RY19), on average 1,496 permits were issued annually for RG480 with an average harvest of 230 goats. Liberalized harvests and season modifications have resulted in a relatively stable goat population in the RG480 hunt area.

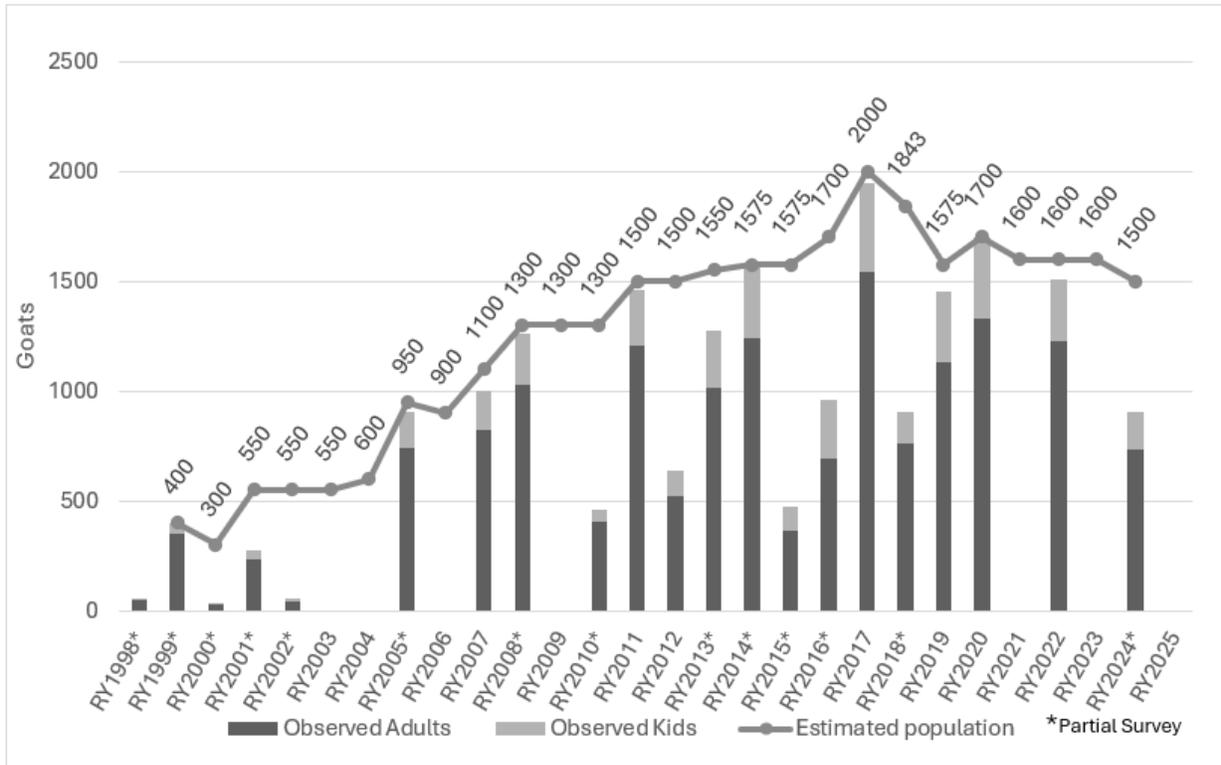


Figure 222-1. Unit 8 aerial mountain goat composition counts and estimated population size from RY98-RY24 in the RG480 goat hunt area.

Goat harvest objectives are established annually for each hunt area based on goat distribution and abundance estimates. Harvest objectives for hunt areas typically range from 5–15% of the most recent minimum count for each area. The average annual harvest of goats RY15-RY24 from throughout Unit 8 was 331 goats (Figure 222-2), during this same period the average proportion of males in the harvest was 60% (range 53-68%). The average annual harvest of goats RY15-RY24 from the RG480 hunt area was 205 goats, and the average proportion of males in the harvest was 57% (range 49-67%).

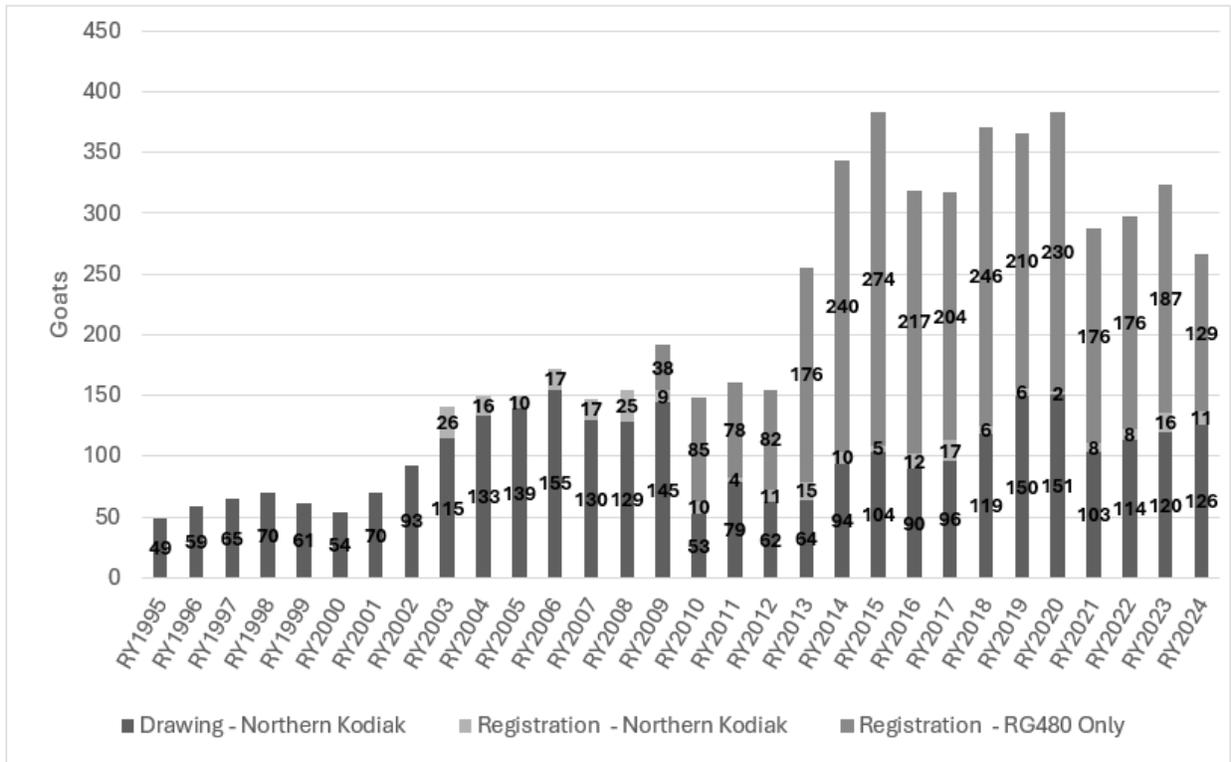


Figure 222-2. Unit 8 mountain goat harvest RY95-RY24.

When horn sealing is required for Dall sheep a hole is drilled into the horns and an aluminum “seal” is permanently inserted into the horn. No such process or “seal” currently exists for mountain goats; however the department regularly uses its discretionary permit authority to require hunters to present the horns of their harvested goat to the department for inspection as part of the reporting or specimen requirements for the hunt (commonly within 5-10 days of the kill). At a minimum a department representative will use horn characteristics to determine the sex of the animal, estimate the animals age, and measure the length and base circumference of the longest horn; this process typically takes 5-10 mins. This information is most reliable when collected by an ADF&G representative with the necessary training and experience to collect the information accurately. Accurately aging mountain goats requires an understanding of horn development and growth and an understanding of the characteristics used to distinguish between true and false annuli.

Kodiak is one of the areas in Alaska where horn inspections are not currently required for goats; however, from 1998–2005 Kodiak goat hunters were required to submit horns for measurement following the hunt. These measurements contributed to a broader study investigating horn growth and habitat quality on Kodiak Island. Horn growth may be a useful index of habitat quality.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **OPPOSED** to reducing the bag limit of goats in the RG480 hunt area and restricting the bag limit to billies-only throughout Unit 8. There is currently no conservation concern for goats on Kodiak Island; adoption of a bag limit that limits the harvest of goats to males-only is inconsistent with the management approach used within the range of mountain goats elsewhere in Alaska. The department’s discretionary permit authority provides sufficient tools to address a conservation concern should one arise. The existing hunt structure in Unit 8 allows for the harvest of goats to be used as a tool to meet management objectives. The department is **NEUTRAL** on the requirement that hunters present the horns of all goats harvested in Unit 8 to be measured by ADF&G, and can use discretionary permit authority to require sealing when it is necessary.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 230 – 5 AAC 85.040. Hunting seasons and bag limits for goat. Lengthen registration goat hunt RG480 in Unit 8 by opening the season August 1.

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would lengthen the season for the RG480 goat hunt in Unit 8 to start August 1.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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(4)

Unit 8, that portion of Kodiak Island south and west of a line extending along the Spiridon River, following the North Fork of the Spiridon to its headwaters, then going southwest following the spine of the island over Koniag peak to the headwaters of the South Fork of Midway Creek, then down-

stream on Midway Creek to
Midway Bay

2 goats by registration permit
only, only 1 of which
may be a billy; the taking of
nannies with kids is prohibited

Aug. 20–Mar. 31
(General hunt only)

Aug. 20–Mar. 31

...

There is a negative customary and traditional use finding for goats in Unit 8.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? If adopted, this proposal would open the registration goat hunt RG480 earlier, beginning on August 1. This proposal may increase the harvest of goats in RG480 as hunters will have an additional 19 days to harvest goats compared to the current season start date of August 20. The earlier start to the goat hunting season would conflict with the current and historical goat survey schedule which commonly takes place during the first 2 weeks of August when snow accumulation is at a minimum and when pilot availability is more certain. The department strives to avoid aerial surveys during open seasons to minimize negative impacts of low elevation flights during surveys on hunters.

BACKGROUND: Registration goat hunt RG480 encompasses the southwestern half of Kodiak Island and includes an estimated 1,500-1,600 mountain goats. The goat population increased rapidly following their introduction, expanding throughout much of the island with the population peaking in 2017 with an estimated 3,500 goats island-wide, 2,000 of which were counted in RG480 surveys. In response to this rapid growth, hunting regulations were liberalized in RG480 to encourage hunter participation and slow population growth. Recent surveys suggest these efforts have been successful as population growth has slowed and appears to be stabilizing (Figure 230-1). Hunting in RG480 is currently open from Aug. 20–Mar. 31. Beginning in 2013, RG480 had a bag limit of 2 goats and, beginning in 2020, one of the 2 harvested goats is required to be a nanny. Permits are available on-line and at selected department offices. Resident and nonresident hunters may participate, but nonresidents must be accompanied by an Alaska-licensed guide or a resident relative within second degree of kindred. Over the last 5 years (RY20-RY24), an average of 1,138 permits were issued annually for RG480 with an average harvest of 184 goats. The 5 years prior (RY15-RY19), an average of 1,496 permits were issued annually for RG480 with an average harvest of 230 goats. Liberalized harvests and season modifications have resulted in a relatively stable goat population in the RG480 hunt area.

RG480 currently has more than a 7-month season (Aug. 20–Mar. 31). The majority of goat harvest during RY20-RY24 occurred in the months of October (37%), September (18.7%) and November (14%).

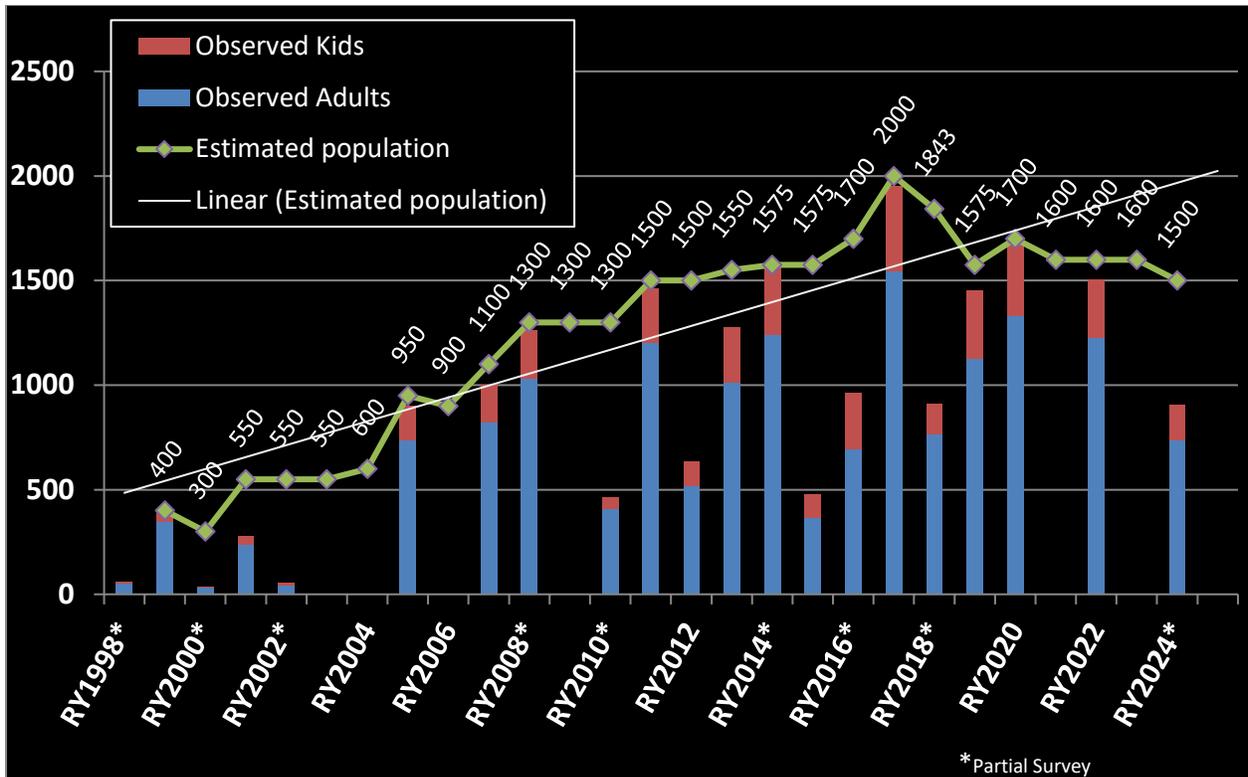


Figure 230-1. Unit 8 aerial mountain goat composition counts and estimated population size from RY98-RY24 in the RG480 goat hunt area.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to lengthen the season for the RG480 goat hunt in Unit 8 to start August 1. The department supports additional opportunity where available, though the proposal may jeopardize the department’s ability to conduct annual goat surveys.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.

PROPOSAL 257 – 5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.
 Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20B.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? Reauthorize antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20B.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? Antlerless moose hunts are authorized in Unit 20B by drawing, registration, or targeted permit hunts, as follows:

Creamer's Field Refuge

Residents and nonresidents:

- One antlerless moose by bow and arrow by drawing permit. Up to 150 permits may be issued, and recipients are prohibited from taking an antlered bull in the Fairbanks Management Area (FMA). Season dates of September 1–November 27.

Residents only:

- One antlerless moose by muzzleloader by drawing permit. Up to 10 permits may be issued, and recipients are prohibited from taking an antlered bull in the FMA. Season dates of Dec 1–January 31.

Fairbanks Management Area, outside of Creamer's Field

Resident and nonresidents:

- One antlerless moose by bow and arrow by drawing permit. Up to 150 permits may be issued, and recipients are prohibited from taking an antlered bull in the FMA. Season dates of September 1–November 27.

Residents only:

- One moose by shotgun, crossbow, or bow and arrow by targeted permit. Up to 100 permits may be issued with season dates announced by emergency order.

Minto Flats Management Area

Residents only:

- One antlerless moose by registration permit, October 15–last day of February.

Middle Fork of the Chena River drainage

Residents only:

- One antlerless moose by drawing permit. Up to 300 permits may be issued, and taking a cow accompanied by a calf is prohibited. Season dates of August 15–November 15.
- One antlerless moose by registration permit, and taking a cow accompanied by a calf is prohibited. Season dates of October 1– last day of February.

Southeast of the Moose Creek dike within ½ mile each side of the Richardson Highway

Residents only:

- One moose by bow and arrow, crossbow, or muzzleloader by drawing permit. Up to 100 permits may be issued with season dates of September 16– last day of February.
- One moose by shotgun, crossbow, or bow and arrow by targeted permit. Up to 100 permits may be issued with season dates announced by emergency order.

Remainder of Unit 20B

Residents only:

- One antlerless moose by drawing permit, by youth hunt only. Up to 200 permits may be issued with season dates of August 5–14.

- One antlerless moose by drawing permit. Up to 1,500 permits may be issued, and taking a cow accompanied by a calf is prohibited. Season dates of August 15–November 15.
- One antlerless moose by registration permit, and taking a cow accompanied by a calf is prohibited. Season dates of October 1– last day of February.
- One moose by shotgun, crossbow, or bow and arrow by targeted permit. Up to 100 permits may be issued with season dates announced by emergency order.

Hunts for bull moose are also available in Unit 20B. Refer to the *2025–2026 Alaska Hunting Regulations* for specific details about moose hunting seasons in Unit 20B.

The Unit 20B intensive management (IM) population objective is 12,000–15,000 moose and the IM harvest objective is 600–1,500. There is a positive customary and traditional use (C&T) finding for moose in Unit 20B within the Minto Flats Management Area, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) of 20–40 moose. There is also a positive C&T finding for moose in Unit 20B, outside the boundaries of the Minto Flats Management Area and outside the boundaries of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area, with an ANS of 75–100 moose.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) will continue to have the ability to use antlerless hunts as a tool to help regulate the moose population, provide for the additional harvest opportunity, and reduce nuisance moose issues and moose-vehicle collisions.

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

Few antlerless hunts are currently being held in Unit 20B because the population is under the IM population objective of 12,000–15,000 moose. The most recent unitwide survey was in November 2023, when the department estimated the unitwide population at 7,848 moose (90% confidence interval (CI) = 6,613–9,083). The antlerless hunts that the department currently administers are as follows:

Fairbanks Management Area (FMA) – The purposes of the FMA antlerless drawing hunts are to regulate moose abundance in the FMA and reduce moose–vehicle collisions and moose–human conflicts.

Richardson Highway Hunt -The Richardson highway moose drawing permit allows hunters to hunt any moose ½ mile on either side of the Richardson highway with bow and arrow, muzzleloader, or crossbow. The hunt is intended to reduce moose-vehicle collisions along this section of the Richardson Highway.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and **SUPPORTS** this proposal. Although few antlerless hunts are currently being held in Unit 20B because the population is under the IM population objective, retaining the ability to implement antlerless hunts within the unit is an important management tool to regulate future population growth, provide for harvest opportunity to help meet IM harvest objectives, and attempt to reduce moose-vehicle collisions and nuisance moose in urban areas and along highways. It will also help meet community needs such as those for potlatch ceremonies; without the reauthorization it is unlikely that any moose will be available for the full complement of community needs.

COST ANALYSIS: Approval of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.
