

The Board of Game approved an agenda change request to consider this proposal at the March 2012, Interior Region meeting.

Proposal 260 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Open brown bear season yearly and lengthen spring season in Unit 9B.

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open season
(8)		
...		
Unit 9B		
1 bear every regulatory year by registration permit	Sept. 1-May 31 (Subsistence hunt only)	No open season.
1 bear every 4 regulatory years by registration permit only	Sept. 20-Oct. 21 [(ODD YEARS ONLY)] May 10- 31 [25] [(EVEN YEARS ONLY)]	Sept. 20-Oct. 21 [(EVEN YEARS ONLY)] May 10- 31 [25] [(EVEN YEARS ONLY)]
1 bear every regulatory year by registration permit only within 5 miles of the communities of Port Alsworth, Nondalton, Iliamna, Newhalen, Pike Bay, Pedro Bay, Pope Vanoy Landing, Kakhonak, Igiugig, and Levelock	July 1-June 30 (General hunt only)	No open season.
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ISSUE: This proposal was submitted as a companion proposal for the board to consider while reviewing intensive management options to increase moose harvests in Unit 9B. The proposal liberalizes the brown bear season in Unit 9B by allowing resident and nonresident hunters to take brown bear every year (the current season only occurs every other year) and by extending the spring season by 6 days.

Brown bears in Unit 9 are a highly sought after species that are managed to maintain high density and a high quality population. However these management goals are at odds with

other mandates to provide harvest opportunity for moose because of the effect brown bear predation has on moose calf survival. Brown bears in Unit 9B occur at a lower density (50 brown bears per 1000 sq. km) than other portions of Unit 9 and do not achieve the same skull size as bear populations that are more coastal. In this regard, the Unit 9B brown bear population is more similar to the brown bear population observed in Unit 17.

Moose occur at low densities in Unit 9B, and the reported moose harvest has declined to 26 moose in 2010. Unreported harvests are difficult to assess, but appear to be variable and may be significant in some years. The reported harvest is below the intensive management harvest objective of 100-250 moose.

The moose population in Unit 9B is limited in part by the availability of moose habitat, predation, poor calf recruitment, and unreported harvests; however the relative importance of each of these factors is unknown at this time. Much of Unit 9B is poor moose habitat, however, where moose occur, they appear to be in excellent nutritional status based on winter calf weights and pregnancy rates obtained from a study near Lake Clark. While there are many factors that likely limit the moose population in Unit 9B, predation by brown and black bears is thought to be the most important source of mortality affecting moose calf survival and recruitment based on the low calf:cow ratios in autumn and comparison with similar areas (Unit 16).

Liberalizing the brown bear season in Unit 9B would provide hunters with additional opportunity to harvest brown bears and could benefit moose calf survival, particularly if bears are taken during the spring calving season.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Moose harvest objectives for Unit 9B will not be achieved.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? This proposal may reduce the potential to harvest large brown bears from Unit 9B over time, but it is not expected to reduce the overall brown bear population significantly as observed in other areas. However if moose calf survival can be increased, more moose will be available for harvest in Unit 9B.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Those who want to harvest more brown bears in Unit 9B.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? Those who want brown bears to be managed as a trophy species in Unit 9B.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? None

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

LOG NUMBER: ADFGBOG260
