

Additional Information on Sheep Hunting Proposals

Attention Sheep Hunters:

During the last few board meetings, the Board of Game received several proposals requesting changes to sheep seasons statewide. Hunters are expressing dissatisfaction with Dall sheep harvest opportunities. Many of the concerns expressed have noted increasing conflict among Alaska resident sheep hunters, hunting guides, transporters, and nonresident sheep hunters. The board deferred Interior Region proposals until the March 2015 board meeting in Anchorage. However, given the need for lengthy discussions to address the various complexities, the Board of Game has chosen to address these proposals at the February 2015 board meeting in Wasilla. At that time, the board will consider changes to all aspects of sheep hunting seasons and bag limits for the Central/Southwest and Interior Regions. The Southcentral Region sheep proposals will remain scheduled for the March 2015 board meeting in Anchorage.

The Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has contracted with the University of Alaska to survey the public that may be impacted by potential changes, including sheep hunters, guides, transporters and air taxi operators. The survey will attempt to learn more about sheep hunter characteristics, behaviors and preferences, to quantify the extent of hunter satisfaction or dissatisfaction with current sheep hunting opportunities, and to quantify the extent of hunter approval or disapproval of potential changes to sheep hunting regulations and management.

The survey was distributed during the summer of 2014, and results will be available in late October or early November. The results will be available on the Board of Game website at www.boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov. In addition, the results of the hunter survey and summaries of trends in sheep populations, harvest, and allocation will be presented to the public by ADF&G at venues in Fairbanks and Anchorage. The Fairbanks meeting will be held at the Murie Auditorium on the UAF campus on November 19, 2014 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. The Anchorage meeting will be held at the Loussac Library on November 21, 2014 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. These meetings are purely informational and are in no way Board of Game meetings or board sub-committee meetings.

At the February and March 2015 meetings, the board will consider potential changes including, but not limited to:

- Earlier seasons for residents
- Change all general season hunts to registration or draw permits
- Shorter seasons for nonresidents
- Drawing permits required for nonresidents
- Reduce permits for nonresidents
- Limit nonresidents hunting with a next-of-kin relative
- Resident only hunts
- Limit hunters to hunting only one area
- Smaller hunt areas with limited participation
- Require training or orientation for all hunters

- Changes to sealing requirement
- Changes to full-curl bag limit
- Reduce bag limit, (for example one sheep every three years, etc.)
- Changes to same-day-airborne restriction
- Restrict transportation used in some areas
- Youth, restricted weapons, walk-in only hunts

The public is encouraged to review the results of the survey and provide comments to the board by January 30, 2015 for the Central/Southwest meeting and February 27, 2015 for the Southcentral meeting.

