

Kotzebue Area Proposals

PROPOSAL 36 - 5 AAC 85.045(21). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 23 as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(21)		
Unit 23, that portion north of and including the Singoalik River drainage		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
1 moose by registration permit only; however, antlerless moose may be taken only from Nov. 1–Dec. 31; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or	July 1—Dec. 31	
1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side	Sept. 1—Sept. 20	
NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:		
1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side by drawing permit only; up to 125 permits may be issued in all of Unit 23		Sept. 1—Sept. 20
Remainder of Unit 23		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
1 moose by registration permit only; however, antlerless moose may be taken only from Nov. 1 - Dec. 31; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 1—Dec. 31	

1 bull with 50-inch antlers
or antlers with 4 or more
brow tines on one side

Sept. 1—Sept. 20

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or
antlers with 4 or more brow
tines on one side by drawing
permit only; up to 125 permits
may be issued in all of Unit 23

Sept. 1—Sept. 20

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To be retained, antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. Moose densities have been low (0.03–0.44 moose/mi²) in surveyed portions of Unit 23 since 2010. To address this issue, the board restricted moose hunting for resident and nonresident hunters during the November 2003 board meeting. These restrictions substantially shortened the resident antlerless moose season and limited hunting opportunity through a registration permit hunt structure (RM880) during the months of November and December. There have not been any additional changes to moose hunting seasons in Unit 23, and the antlerless seasons have been reauthorized annually by the Board of Game.

The reported harvest of antlerless moose averages 13 moose per year and is less than 1% of the total population, which is sustainable. As a result, the Department of Fish & Game recommends reauthorizing the antlerless moose hunt to provide additional hunting opportunity for the small number of hunters who opportunistically harvest antlerless moose in this area.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-130)

PROPOSAL 37 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Lengthen the nonresident fall hunting season for brown bear in Unit 23 as follows:

Unit 23 nonresident brown bear permit hunts DB761 through DB767 and RB761 through RB767, open season **August 1** [SEPTEMBER 1] through October 31.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Lengthen the nonresident brown bear season for drawing and registration permit hunts (DB761-767 and RB 761-767). Change opening date from September 1st to August 1st. This will align non-resident season with the resident season. This will allow for additional opportunity to harvest bears in hunts that are already under-subscribed and harvest goals are not being met (per the area biologist).

Harvest is already regulated by permit numbers so over-harvest is not a concern. In addition, Western Arctic caribou numbers are at an all-time low and moose calf survival rates in this area are extremely low.

PROPOSED BY: Stan Parkerson (EG-F16-004)

PROPOSAL 38 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Lengthen the nonresident fall hunting season for brown bear in Unit 23 as follows:

New Season Dates:

Unit 23, nonresident brown/grizzly bear draw hunts DB761 –DB767 and registration hunts, RB761-RB767: **August 20** [SEPTEMBER 1] through October 31.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Modify the brown/grizzly bear season in Unit 23 for the fall season nonresident draw, and registration hunts. Change the season opening date for nonresident hunters by 12 days. Current season date is September 1 to October 31. New season would be August 20 through October 31. This would allow for more opportunity to harvest the growing grizzly population. Would help with some of the hunting congestion with caribou hunters by starting the bear season earlier, and spreading out some of the hunting pressure over the longer season. Would help with calf recruitment for both the caribou and moose populations. Would not impact or conflict with the current resident season which starts August 1.

PROPOSED BY: Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-017)

PROPOSAL 39 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Lengthen the nonresident fall hunting season for brown bear in Unit 23 as follows:

This would be a very easy fix. On page 117 of the 2015-2016 Hunting Regulations, replace September 1 with August 25.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In Unit 23 the current season for grizzly bear is: September 1 through October 31 for nonresident grizzly bear hunters. I would like to propose opening the nonresident grizzly bear season a week earlier on August 25. The resident season begins August 1, so there no conflict or negative impact to resident hunters. However I would say that most people hunting grizzly bear are out of the area before the end of September. I am out of there by choice by the September 15, and another guide in Guide Use Area 23-02 is out of there around September 23 or 24.

Winter can come to stay by the end of September. The only access to the Upper Noatak, for instance, is by small plane, like a Super Cub or Cessna 180/206. When you get snow and ice on the ground, it can be unsafe to operate on wheels. The 600-foot gravel bar that was very workable when you could see the rocks, becomes a totally different situation when it is white with snow and ice. So from a safety standpoint it is a much shorter season than it looks like as hardly anybody hunts in October for grizzlies. The big bears are mostly heading for their dens by the first part of October anyway. I have been hunting there over 30 years and have always been out of there by the middle of September for safety reasons. Another aspect of this change would be that it would allow a few more bears to be taken and increase the harvest.

Another factor is that the bears don't really care, their coats are already in their prime and they are ready for harvest. In my humble opinion, a few more bears taken would help a few more moose to make it to maturity. We would all like to see a few more moose. Last year for the two weeks that I was there, we saw zero moose in our area. I was very surprised at that. The Noatak National Park Service is also on board with this proposal. Even though this proposal is really a small change to

the current regulations, it would make a significant and positive difference. Thank you for considering this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: E. Mont Mahoney (EG-F16-015)

PROPOSAL 40 - 5 AAC 85.020(21). Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Increase the resident bag limit for brown bear in Unit 23 as follows:

Unit 23, two bear limit per regulatory year.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to change the limit on brown/grizzly bears to two per year rather than the one per year in an attempt to help sustain the moose and caribou populations which are in decline due to the predator population.

PROPOSED BY: James Bourquin and the Kotzebue Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-056)

Note: At the 2016 Statewide Regulations Meeting, the Board of Game adopted requirements for all nonresidents and nonresident aliens hunting with a registered or master guide which will be implemented for the winter 2017 drawing hunt application period. Please review the ADF&G comments for this proposal for additional information.

PROPOSAL 41 - 5 AAC 92.050. Required permit hunt conditions and procedures. Require a guide-client agreement to apply for a nonresident brown bear drawing permit in Unit 23 as follows:

In the next Alaska Drawing Permit Hunt Supplement, under brown/grizzly bear, page 3 under Unit 23 nonresidents only, implement the requirement and "Show the Handshake Symbol."

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unit 23 nonresident drawing hunts for grizzly bear are all guided hunts except for next of kin applicants. Right now there is no requirement for any one putting in for these drawing hunts to even contact a guide before putting in for the drawing. It is conceivable for a number of people to apply for the drawing hunt, and draw the permit and then trash-can the permit without even intending to use it, thus negating the purpose of the drawing process. The other problem is that there is really no commitment on the part of the drawing applicant to go on the hunt since he does not even have to know or contact a guide before putting in for the drawing permit. If a handshake agreement with a guide was required it would be much better and pretty much eliminate both problems.

1. A handshake agreement with a guide would narrow the drawing applicants to those with real intent on coming on the hunt. It would weed out most of those who would abuse the system.
2. A handshake agreement with a guide would most likely entail a deposit along with the written agreement thus resulting on more actual hunts taking place as people who have put down deposits are more prone to fulfill their part of the contract to actually come on the hunt as they have put something into it and don't want to lose their deposit.

3. It is a matter of good, better and best. It may be good to have a draw. It is better and best to have the requirements that a handshake agreement entail to eliminate abuse of the system, and have more hunts take place. It brings integrity to the drawing process and would most likely increase the number of bears taken, which is what the Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologist in Kotzebue hopes for. Thank you for considering this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: E. Mont Mahoney (EG-F16-026)

PROPOSAL 42 - 5 AAC 92.044. Permit for hunting bear with the use of bait or scent lures.

Allow the use of bait for black and brown bear hunting in Unit 23 as follows:

Allow baiting in Unit 23, April 15—October 15 for black and grizzly bears, otherwise same regulation as in other units.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Bear baiting is not allowed in Unit 23. Unit 23 is on the radar for intensive management. I would think this could help with predator numbers.

PROPOSED BY: Jared Cummings (EG-F16-018)

PROPOSAL 43 - 5 AAC 92.080(4-5). Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions. Allow the use of snowmachines to position and harvest brown bears and furbearers in Unit 23 as follows:

A snowmachine may be used to position a caribou, wolf, wolverine, **grizzly bear or furbearers** for harvest, and a caribou, wolf, wolverine, **grizzly bear or furbearers** may be shot from a stationary snowmachine in Unit 23.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Include grizzly bears and furbearers to the language allowing an exception to the use of snowmachines to position caribou, wolves, and wolverines for harvest in Unit 23. These animals are hunted and harvested in the same way as caribou, wolves, and wolverines in Unit 23, but the focus for the original proposal was on the caribou, wolves, and wolverines, which are the most commonly harvested and most sought-after species in the region by the greatest number of people (although many proposal supporters, including Tribes in Unit 23, requested a broader application of the use of snowmachine hunting at the time of the original proposal). However, it would be beneficial for all the same reasons expressed during the consideration of the original snowmachine use proposal to include grizzly bears and furbearers and have consistency for hunters in Unit 23 while pursuing all these species. No increase in harvest, or abuse of the use of snowmachines for hunting, has been noted since the implementation of the allowance of snowmachine use for hunting caribou, wolves, and wolverines, as was the main concern expressed by the opposition at the time of the original proposal.

PROPOSED BY: Kotzebue Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F16-112)

PROPOSAL 44 - 5 AAC 92.540(9)(A). Controlled use areas. Modify the area of the Noatak Controlled Use Area in Unit 23 as follows:

Noatak Controlled Use Area

(i) The area consists of that portion of Unit 23 in a corridor extending five miles on either side of, and including, the Noatak River, including the river, beginning at the mouth of the Noatak River and extending upstream to the mouth of the **Cutler River** [SAPUN CREEK].

(ii) The area is closed from August 15 through September 30 to the use of aircraft in any manner for big game hunting, including the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game; however, this provision does not apply to the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game to and between publicly owned airports.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are increased conflicts between local and non-local hunters at the head boundary of the Noatak Controlled Use Area, that are reducing caribou hunter success in the fall time.

PROPOSED BY: Noatak/Kivalina & Kotzebue Fish and Game Advisory Committees
(EG-F16-065)

PROPOSAL 45 - 5 AAC 92.540(9)(A). Controlled use areas. Require big game hunting camps to be three miles apart within and near the Noatak Controlled Use Area as follows:

(iii). Big game hunting camps are required to be spaced at least three miles apart on the Controlled Use Area and along the Agasisuak, Eli, and Squirrel Rivers. This would allow the caribou to migrate with less disruption.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The disruption of big game hunting in the fall time on the Squirrel, Agasisauk, and Eli Rivers due to the increased density of hunters creating a barrier to the migration.

PROPOSED BY: Noatak/Kivalina & Kotzebue Fish and Game Advisory Committees
(EG-F16-082)
