

Northeast Arctic Area Proposals

PROPOSAL 101 - 5 AAC 92.XXX. Create a regulation allowing the harvest of moose under a permit for “celebration of life” events as follows:

The Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich’in Tribal Government (GZGTG) is allowed to harvest moose under a permit issued by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game for a “Celebration of Life” event.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Funerary and mortuary moose are provided for in 5 AAC 92.019. Moose is customarily used in celebratory events as well, where many community members gather for potlaches and feasts, not associated with a person’s passing.

Current regulations that allow harvest of moose for funerary and mortuary purposes do not fulfill the requirement of all Gwich’in ceremonies and gatherings. Gwich’in people are historically generous people and Fort Yukon has been a gathering point for fishing and trading since time immemorial.

While the Tribe does have memorial potlaches to honor those that have passed away we would also like to use moose for positive traditional celebrations.

This regulation will enable the Tribe to continue to honor tradition without having the sadness of death be the center of the celebration we also celebrate the changing of seasons, the bountiful harvest and changes that it will bring.

Events may include, but are not limited to, GZGTG Annual Meeting (enrolled Tribal Members vote for first and second Chief and Council Members, one full day), GZGTG Holiday Potlatch (Christmas Eve – New Year’s Day, 5–9 days, everyone welcome, made possible through donations and volunteers), Spring Carnival Potlatch, (region-wide, everyone welcome, 5–8 days long, daily meals), Community Fall Harvest/Agricultural Fair Potlatch, and Community Spring clean-up potlatch.

PROPOSED BY: Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-039)

Note: This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as proposal 1 and the Interior/Northeast Arctic Region meeting as proposal 102.

PROPOSAL 102 - 5 AAC 99.025. Customary and traditional uses of game. Evaluate a separate amount reasonably necessary for subsistence for the Teshekpuk caribou herd as follows:

The recommendation is to evaluate a separate amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) figures for the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds. Updated caribou population data is warranted in the consideration due to the recent dramatic declines of both herds. More recent harvest data for the North Slope communities may also be included in the evaluation at this time. Proposed regulations change as follows:

5 AAC 99.025 Customary and traditional uses of game populations (a) - Species and Unit: Caribou, Units 21, 22, 23, 24, and 26 (Western Arctic caribou herd, [TESHEKPUK LAKE HERD])

Finding: positive

Amount Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses: 8,000 – 12,000

Species and Unit: Caribou, Units 26A and 24B (Teshekpuk Herd)

Finding: positive

Amount Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses: To be determined

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) held public meetings on November 3–4 and December 14, 2015 and reviewed, discussed at length, and made recommendations on conservation management strategies for the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds which have been in decline for several years. At these meetings the Council also discussed its concern for the management of the smaller Teshekpuk herd and formally approved submission of a request to the Alaska Board of Game (board) to reconsider the evaluation of a separate ANS for the Teshekpuk caribou herd.

The Council requests the board re-evaluate and establish a separate ANS for the Teshekpuk caribou herd. Currently both the Western Arctic caribou herd and the Teshekpuk caribou herd are combined together with a single ANS that was originally established by the board in 1992 for just the Western Arctic herd. In 2014 the board deliberated on the findings of customary and traditional uses that led to a positive determination for the Teshekpuk herd and that there was a harvestable surplus of that caribou population. The board was then presented with options for establishing an ANS and voted to forego establishment of a separate ANS for the Teshekpuk herd.

The Council is very concerned that the combined ANS has created a range that is too high for the Teshekpuk herd to sustain and has resulted in hunting regulations that may be too liberal with respect to this herd. The Teshekpuk herd is much smaller than the Western Arctic herd and if not addressed may be susceptible to overharvest under the current combined ANS. In light of the recent declines of both the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk herds, and recognizing the importance of the Teshekpuk herd as a primary food source of subsistence caribou for several North Slope communities, the Council feels it is necessary to re-evaluate managing the two herds separately in order better protect the smaller Teshekpuk herd.

The Council recognizes the complexity of managing for overlapping caribou herds; however, the recent dramatic declines of both Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds warrants a closer evaluation for management of the smaller, more vulnerable Teshekpuk herd. Thank you for your consideration.

PROPOSED BY: North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (EG-F16-095)

Note: This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as proposal 2 and the Interior/Northeast Arctic Region meeting as proposal 103.

PROPOSAL 103 - 5 AAC 92.010. Harvest tickets and reports; and 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou. Modify the hunt structure of the Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds as follows:

The Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) recommends that the Board of Game (board) modify the hunt structure for the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) and Teshekpuk caribou herd (TCH) in Units 21, 23, 24, and 26 by establishing registration permit hunts within the range of these herds. For Unit 22, also within the range of these herds, the board adopted regulations that include a registration permit hunt structure during the March 2016 statewide meeting. Registration permit hunts provide additional tools to monitor harvest and manage caribou herds above what is offered by the registration system that is currently employed.

In preparation for upcoming regulatory years, ADF&G anticipates needing flexibility to actively manage harvest over a very large area of the state if either the WAH or TCH decline to the point that the current hunt management structure is no longer practical for one or both herds. For example, a registration permit allows flexibility to open and close seasons and areas based on seasonal access to caribou, without the need for further board action. Transition from the current harvest registration system to a registration permit hunt would be a significant change to increase ADF&G's ability to monitor harvest and allow for more responsive management.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The WAH peaked at 490,000 caribou in 2003. In 2013 the herd was estimated at 235,000 indicating a ~7% annual rate of decline between 2003 and 2011; the rate increased to an estimated ~15% annually between 2011 and 2013. The 2015 census failed due to poor photography conditions; however, other metrics suggest the herd is currently declining at a reduced rate, estimated at ~7% annually, with a population projection of approximately 200,000 as of 2015. The intensive management harvest objectives for the WAH are 12,000–20,000, with a population objective of over 200,000. Prior to regulatory year 2015 (RY2015 = July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016), harvests were estimated at 12,000 caribou per year based on data and patterns available through community harvest assessments. ADF&G is concerned that cow harvest has exceeded 2% since RY2011, but does not have the tools to evaluate the sex composition of the harvest efficiently.

The TCH was estimated at approximately 39,000 in 2013, and 41,500 in 2015. Given confidence limits associated with both estimates, herd growth is implied to have been stable between 2013 and 2015. Minimum counts in those two years were 32,000 and 35,000, respectively. Prior to RY2015, harvests have been estimated at approximately 2,300 per year, through the use of community harvest assessments. If the herd remains stable, these harvests are likely to be near sustainable levels, but additional capability to monitor harvest and adjust seasons, particularly in areas of herd mixture, is increasingly important. The intensive management harvest objectives for the TCH are 900–2,800, with a population objective of 15,000–28,000.

The combined amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence for the WAH and TCH is a range of 8,000–12,000. The combined harvestable surplus in 2015 for the two herds, based on a 6% harvest rate, would be approximately 14,500.

Establishing registration permit hunts for these herds will provide managers with additional tools to ensure that harvest levels do not exceed allowable rates for the WAH, which could further depress this population. In addition to providing additional information on harvest levels, the registration permit system will provide annual information on the timing and sex of harvest throughout the herd's range, which is becoming increasingly important to evaluate the effects of harvest on the herd's population status. Another benefit to a registration permit is the ability for the board to require mandatory reporting so harvest can be monitored more closely to prevent overharvest, while maximizing opportunity relative to what is available.

There are no proposed changes to bag limits or seasons; the only change ADF&G is requesting at this time is a change in hunt structure to a registration permit hunt. Restrictions to limit harvest with seasonal quotas, annual bag limits for one or both sexes, or changes to hunting seasons may be necessary for future hunt management. If changes to seasons and bag limits become necessary in the future, the changes would be more easily implemented under the registration permit hunt structure proposed.

ADF&G will present an overview of WAH and TCH hunt management during the January 2017 Board of Game meeting to discuss the potential for changes to seasons and geographic opportunity with the board. The board adopted regulations during the March 2016 meeting that changed bag limits and reporting mechanisms in Unit 22 that we anticipate will allow ADF&G to evaluate initial implementation of a registration permit hunt and annual bag limit in a portion of the WAH range.

ADF&G is seeking public input through this proposal related to regulatory options for ensuring the continued viability of these herds. ADF&G intends to actively engage state and federal advisory committees, effected communities, local governments, and the Western Arctic Herd Working Group in formulating refinements to this proposal. ADF&G also anticipates collecting new information on abundance and herd demographics in the interim before the January 2017 Board of Game meeting. Given the potential for falling below intensive management objectives, ADF&G will prepare an intensive management feasibility assessment for the January 2017 Board of Game meeting.

The public is encouraged to evaluate this proposal, and to provide advice on means for reducing harvest, while minimizing impacts to hunters and users of caribou throughout the ranges of both herds.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-135)

PROPOSAL 104 - 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou. Expand the bag limits for caribou in Units 24A, 25A, 25D, 26B and 26C as follows:

Units and Bag Limit	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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(19)
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Remainder of Unit 24(A)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

**5 caribou; however, cow caribou
may not be taken May 16—June 30**

July 1—June 30

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

**5 caribou; however, cow caribou
may not be taken May 16—June 30**

July 1—June 30

[REMAINDER OF UNIT 24(A), AND
REMAINDER OF UNIT 24(B)]

[RESIDENT HUNTERS:]
[5 CARIBOU PER DAY, AS
FOLLOWS:]

[UP TO 5 BULLS PER DAY;
HOWEVER, CALVES
MAY NOT BE TAKEN;]

[JULY 1—OCT. 14]
[FEB. 1—JUNE 30]

[UP TO 5 COWS PER DAY;
HOWEVER, CALVES MAY
NOT BE TAKEN]

[JULY 15—APR. 30]

[NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:]
[1 BULL; HOWEVER, CALVES
MAY NOT BE TAKEN]

[AUG. 1—SEPT. 30]

Unit 24(B), that portion south
of the south bank of the Kanuti
River, upstream from and including
that portion of the Kanuti-Kiloitna
River drainage, bounded by the southeast
bank of the Kodosin-Nolitna Creek, then
downstream along the east bank of the
Kanuti-Kiloitna River to its confluence
with the Kanuti River

1 caribou

Aug. 10—Mar. 31

Aug. 10—Sept. 30

Remainder of Unit 24(B)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

5 caribou per day, as follows:

up to 5 bulls per day; however,

July 1—Oct. 14

calves may not be taken;

Feb. 1—June 30

up to 5 cows per day; however,
calves may not be taken

July 15—Apr. 30

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull; however, calves may not
be taken

Aug. 1—Sept. 30

...

(20)

Unit 25(A), those portions east
of the east bank of the East
Fork Chandalar River extending
from its confluence with the
Chandalar River upstream to
Guilbeau Pass, Unit 25(B), and
Unit 25(D), excluding the drainage
of the west fork of the Dall River
west of 150° W. long.

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

10 caribou; **however, cow caribou
may not be taken May 16—June 30**

July 1—June 30
[JULY 1—APRIL 30]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

2 bulls

Aug. 1—Sept. 30

Remainder of Unit 25(A)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

**5 caribou; however, cow caribou
may not be taken May 16—June 30**

July 1—June 30

[10 CARIBOU; HOWEVER, COW
CARIBOU MAY NOT BE TAKEN
MAY 16—JUNE 30]

[JULY 1—JUNE 30]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

5 caribou; however, cow caribou
may not be taken May 16—June 30

July 1—June 30

...

(21)

...

[UNIT 26(B), THAT PORTION NORTH OF 69° 30' N. LAT. AND WEST OF THE EAST BANK OF THE KUPARUK RIVER TO A POINT AT 70° 10' N. LAT., 149° 04' W. LONG., THEN WEST APPROXIMATELY 22 MILES TO 70° 10' N. LAT., AND 149° 56' W. LONG., THEN FOLLOWING THE EAST BANK OF THE KALUBIK RIVER TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN]

[RESIDENT HUNTERS]:
[5 CARIBOU PER DAY; HOWEVER COW CARIBOU MAY NOT BE TAKEN MAY 16—JUNE 30]

[JULY 1—JUNE 30]

[NONRESIDENT HUNTERS]:
[5 CARIBOU]

[JULY 1—APR. 30]

Unit 26(B), that portion south of 69° 30' N. lat. and west of the Dalton Highway

5 caribou; however, cow caribou may be taken only July 1—Oct. 10

July 1—Oct. 10
May 16—June 30

July 1—Oct. 10
May 16—June 30

Unit 26(B), that portion south of 69° 30' N. lat. and east of the Dalton Highway

5 caribou; however, cow caribou may **not** be taken **May 16—June 30**
[ONLY JULY 1—MAY 15]

July 1—June 30

July 1—June 30

Remainder of Unit 26(B)

5 caribou; **however, cow caribou may not be taken May 1—June 30**

July 1—June 30
[JULY 1—APR. 30]

July 1—April 30

(22)

Unit 26(C)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

10 caribou; however, cow caribou may not be taken

July 1—June 30

May 1—June 30

[ONLY BULL CARIBOU

[JULY 1—APRIL 30]

MAY BE TAKEN

[JUNE 23—JUNE 30]

JUNE 23—JUNE 30]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS

2 bulls

Aug. 1—Sept. 30

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The proposed changes are recommended to align Central Arctic caribou herd seasons and bag limits as much as possible within the herd's range. These changes will also simplify and clarify regulations, and in some cases, increase opportunities for hunters. Changes recommended for the Porcupine caribou herd represent increased opportunity by extending seasons during late spring and summer.

Central Arctic caribou herd (CAH): The Central Arctic caribou herd was estimated at 50,750 caribou in 2013. The herd is either stable or slightly declining. The annual harvest rate is $\leq 2\%$, and increased opportunity will likely result in little effect on annual harvest rates. As a result, the Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) recommends the following changes for CAH hunts:

Unit 24A north of the south bank of the Kanuti River (Remainder of Unit 24A)

- Change the seasons and bag limits to align with seasons and bag limits in the majority of the CAH range. The current season and bag limit reflects the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) regulations, but the WAH rarely ranges into Unit 24A. Northern Unit 24A is occupied mostly by CAH during late fall through early spring. Hunters typically access caribou via the Dalton Highway in October and November. Currently, the season is closed 15 October—31 January because it is under the WAH regulations. In addition, the take of calves is prohibited under the WAH regulations, which is unnecessarily restrictive for CAH.
- The Hodzana caribou herd also occupies a portion of Unit 24A north of the Kanuti River to the South Fork Koyukuk River. Even though this is a small herd, we recommend keeping the seasons and bag limits similar to the CAH because annual harvest on the Hodzana caribou herd is very low (<5 caribou annually). The Hodzana herd has not been reviewed by the board for a finding of customary and traditional uses (C&T) or amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS). The nearby Galena Mountains herd, Wolf Mountain herd, and Ray Mountain herd have a positive C&T finding and a combined ANS of 150–200 caribou.
- The new season and bag limit would be five caribou during 1 July—30 June; however, cow caribou may be taken only during 1 July—15 May. This aligns regulations with adjacent Unit 26B, east of the Dalton Highway, and adjacent Unit 25A west of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River as recommended in this proposal (see below).

Unit 25A, west of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River

- Change the bag limit to align with the bag limit in the majority of the CAH range. This portion of Unit 25A encompasses most of the wintering grounds of the CAH, although some or many Porcupine herd caribou also mix with CAH during winter in this area. The

new season and bag limit would be five caribou, 1 July—30 June; however, cow caribou may be taken only 1 July—15 May.

Unit 26B North of 69° 30' N. lat. (Remainder of Unit 26B)

- Increase opportunity for resident hunters by extending the bull season from 1 July—30 April to no closed bull season for residents only. This will provide additional opportunity for resident hunters, particularly those living in Nuiqsut.

Northwest portion of Unit 26B

- Align the seasons and bag limits with the portion of Unit 26B north of 69° 30' N. lat. (Remainder of Unit 26B, above) as recommended in this proposal. This would change the season and bag limit for residents from five caribou per day, 1 July—30 April to five caribou total, 1 July—30 June; however cow caribou may be taken only 1 July—30 April. The Northwest portion of Unit 26B regulations were originally aligned with adjacent Unit 26A regulations for residents of Nuiqsut. However, the Teshekpuk caribou herd in Unit 26A is in decline, and regulations for that herd have changed dramatically, making aligning seasons for that small portion of northwest Unit 26B unnecessary. Although some hunting by Nuiqsut residents takes place in Unit 26B, most hunting by this community occurs in Unit 26A.

Porcupine caribou herd (PCH): The Porcupine caribou herd was estimated at 197,000 caribou in 2013. The herd is either stable or increasing. Hunting pressure on this herd is relatively low because the herd is frequently inaccessible to hunters. The combined annual harvest rate between Alaska and Canada is $\leq 4\%$. The department recommends the following changes for PCH hunts:

Unit 25A, east of the east bank of the East Fork Chandalar River

- Extend the season for residents to provide additional opportunity. We recommend changing the season for residents from 1 July—30 April to 1 July—30 June; however, cow caribou may be taken only 1 July—15 May.

Unit 26C

- Extend the bull season for residents only in Unit 26C from 1 July—30 April and 23—30 June seasons to a no closed bull season. Extending the bull season during May and June in Unit 26C would provide additional opportunity mostly for residents of Kaktovik during a period of time when the PCH caribou are accessible to them.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-141)

PROPOSAL 105 - 5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou. Change the nonresident bag limit for caribou and resident cow season in Unit 26B as follows:

	Residents	Nonresidents
Unit 26B Northwest portion: north of 69°30' and west of the east bank of the Kuparak River to a point at 70°10' N. lat., 149°04' W. long., then west	No Change	<u>Two caribou</u> [5 CARIBOU TOTAL] <u>Bull only</u> no closed season

approximately 22 miles to 70°10' N. lat. And 149°56' W. long., then following the east bank of the Kalubik to the Arctic Ocean

Unit 26B South of 69°30' N. lat. and west of the Dalton Highway	Cows <u>Aug. 1</u> [JULY 1]—Oct. 10	<u>Two caribou</u> [5 CARIBOU TOTAL] <u>Bull only</u> July 1—Oct. 10 May 16—June 30
Unit 26B South of 69°30' N. lat. and east of the Dalton Highway	Cows <u>Aug. 1</u> [JULY 1]—May 15	<u>Two caribou</u> [5 CARIBOU TOTAL] <u>Bull only</u> no closed season
Unit 26B remainder	Cows <u>Aug. 1</u> [JULY 1]—April 30	<u>Two caribou</u> [5 CARIBOU TOTAL] <u>Bull only</u> July 1—April 30

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? **Nonresident and resident caribou harvest allocation and seasons in Unit 26B.** In 2010 the Board of Game (board) passed a heavily amended proposal (#104A) from the Department of Fish & Game that substantially increased harvest allocations for Central Arctic caribou herd (CAH) in Unit 26B for both residents and nonresidents, while at the same time greatly expanding the seasons.

The board increased the allocation to both residents and nonresidents from two to five caribou, and allowed nonresidents to also take cows starting July 1, when cows with newborn calves are heavily lactating and the calves are completely dependent on the mother.

Since 2010, and with caribou hunting in other parts of the state being limited, there has been an influx of resident and nonresident caribou hunters in Unit 26B that has led to increased harvests, including the take of cow caribou.

We don't believe the board should ever allow a nonresident harvest of five bull caribou anywhere in the state – let alone include the taking of cows during the time they are raising calves. It's hard enough to take care of the meat of two caribou, and allocating five caribou to nonresident hunters who for the most part don't intend to take the meat home only increases the potential for wanton waste.

We also have concerns with the increased resident allocation, particularly the cow allocation and season.

With more areas like Unit 23 facing possible closures to caribou hunting, the pressure on the CAH will likely increase and exacerbate these issues. Here is a scenario that plays out again and again on the North Slope: A group of nonresident hunters fly out of Happy Valley or Fairbanks or Deadhorse or Kavik and are dropped off to “intercept” migrating caribou. The day after being

dropped off they hike and scout and see a small band of caribou and each take one. They butcher and begin packing the meat back to camp. The next day several hundred caribou walk right through camp and with a five caribou allocation the hunters begin to shoot the largest bulls they see. Often there is little consideration for wounding loss. It isn't until after the shooting stops that they realize the predicament they have put themselves in. How are they going to care for all the meat for the next five days until their pickup? They call for an earlier pickup but the air carrier can't make it for a few days. The weather turns unseasonably warm, there are no trees or sticks to set up to hang meat and the meat sits in game bags on the ground until their air charter arrives to fly them, the coveted antlers, and the mostly spoiled meat, back to civilization.

Scenarios like this on the North Slope are unfortunately common with nonresident hunters who've never been to Alaska before and have been told they can donate all the meat to the food bank in Fairbanks when they return. When spoiled meat is transferred to the food bank, the end result is tons of waste getting thrown out by the processors and no penalty to the hunters.

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska (EG-F16-105)

PROPOSAL 106 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Open a resident archery season for brown bear in Unit 26B as follows:

Add a new resident-only registration permit hunt and season for grizzly bear within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA):

Unit 26B Resident Only

RB XXX - one bear every regulatory year by permit within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area by bow and arrow only, Aug. 10—Aug. 24.

(RB 988 permit could be used after August 24)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Resident grizzly bear hunting opportunity in the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area in Unit 26B. The current resident fall registration hunt (RB988) for grizzly bear in Unit 26B on the North Slope does not begin until August 25. Bowhunters who hunt caribou within the DHCMA earlier in August do not have an opportunity to harvest a bear they may see while hunting.

With the liberalized grizzly bear harvests on the North Slope later in August, including a nonresident permit hunt, and the desire to curb grizzly bear predation of muskox, allowing bowhunters within the DHCMA additional opportunity to harvest a bear earlier in August would likely not result in much additional harvest and could just help some of the muskox herds that congregate within the DHCMA.

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska (EG-F16-104)

PROPOSAL 107 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Lengthen the hunting seasons for brown bear in Unit 26B, and change the nonresident drawing permit to a registration permit as follows:

Unit 26B brown/grizzly bear:

Residents, August **10** [25] to December 31 by registration permit

Residents, January 1 to May 31 by registration permit

Nonresidents, August **10** [25] to December 31 by **registration** permit

Nonresidents, January 1 to May 31 by **registration** permit

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unit 26B brown/grizzly bear season and permit requirements. Eliminate DB987 and require nonresidents to obtain a registration permit to hunt brown/grizzly bear in Unit 26B. Additionally, establish the season opening date for residents and nonresidents to be August 10. The season closing date for residents and nonresidents will remain May 31.

Moose and caribou numbers in Unit 26B are lower than I have seen them in the 37 years I have hunted this area. The bear population is healthy and could sustain additional harvest and the additional harvest of bears would be beneficial to the moose and caribou.

PROPOSED BY: Richard Guthrie (EG-F16-071)

PROPOSAL 108 - 5 AAC 99.025. Customary and traditional uses of game populations.

Reevaluate the customary and traditional use finding for brown bear in Unit 25D as follows:

Please revisit the customary and traditional use (C&T) findings for brown bear in Unit 25D.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It has come to our attention that there is a negative finding for C&T for brown bears in Unit 25D. We don't believe that this is an accurate representation of usage in the flats, and since the current regulation is liberal at two bears per regulatory year for residents, we would like this C&T finding revisited.

PROPOSED BY: Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-047)

PROPOSAL 109 - 5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear. Lengthen the brown bear hunting seasons in Units 25 and 26 as follows:

Hunting seasons for brown bear:

Units 25A, 25B, 25D, 26B, 26C (except the Dalton Highway Corridor)

Residents and nonresidents: August 1—June 30

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal would add ten days to the beginning of grizzly seasons in Units 25A, 25B, 26B, and 26C; and align Unit 25D with these areas for regulatory simplicity in remote Eastern Arctic units. Grizzly bear hunting seasons in these areas actually opens later in the fall than some areas much farther to the south.

Some caribou hunters hunt before the bear season is open and sheep hunters are in the field a few days before the season opens in most areas. The opportunity to harvest a bear is not being realized by these hunters. Take is relatively low by hunters on bear even with long seasons in most of these areas. Hide quality on bears in the arctic is generally acceptable this time of year and seasons currently open earlier farther to the West. Most of the area within these units has relatively light harvest of grizzly bears at this time. In Unit 26B where pressure is higher, the take is limited by drawing and registration permit so take should not increase at all with longer seasons. Unit 25D seasons incorporate a needless winter break and there is a two bear limit in this area, indicating the desire to take more bears. Some guides in the Brooks Range take dedicated grizzly hunters in mountainous areas and this would allow them to take these hunters before sheep season, slightly reducing crowding cited by sheep hunters as undesirable. Other considerations: Open season July 15; apply this proposal only in Unit 26 where seasons are drastically shortened by weather. Do not apply this proposal to Units 26B and 25D due to slightly more complicated regulations already in place (this may be acceptable); retain the resident opener in Unit 25D of July 1 (this is likely desirable, but complicates the proposal slightly).

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist (EG-F16-008)

PROPOSAL 110 - 5 AAC 85.015. Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear. Increase the bag limit for black bear in Unit 25B as follows:

Resident and nonresident hunters: [3] **5 bears.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Increase the resident and nonresident black bear hunting bag limit in Unit 25B from three bears to five bears. Black bear densities in the Yukon Flats are very high. Hunting pressure is low. This provides opportunity for hunters who would utilize this bag limit. It also aligns the bag limit with adjacent Unit 25D.

If nothing is changed, confusion about bag limits near boundary of Unit 25D would persist when there is no biological concern. Alternative solution is to increase the resident bag limit to five bears and leave the nonresident bag limit at three bears.

PROPOSED BY: Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-044)

PROPOSAL 111 - 5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping; and 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game; exceptions. Open a snaring season for black bear in Unit 25D as follows:

Allow black bear snaring in Unit 25D for five years, or until the Board of Game revokes the practice, or until the moose population objective is met.

Season dates:

July 1–December 31

Sets must be checked daily.

If X number of brown bears are caught incidentally then the season will be closed by emergency order, where X is a number that the Alaska Department of Fish & Game establishes in order to prevent overharvest of brown bears.

Snares must be labeled in a manner similar to bear bait stations to alert other trail users of the presence of snares.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? At the Yukon Flats Advisory Committee meeting held in December of 2015, once again a lot of concern of committee members and those members of the public that were attending revolved around the low moose population in the Yukon Flats as well as the high numbers of predators. Several ideas were discussed in order to increase the take of predators, both by individuals as well as by the state. One of the ideas that was discussed was to create a season for bear snaring in Unit 25D. While foot snaring is a nontraditional way, it is traditional to take bears via neck snaring. By creating a season for neck snaring bears in Unit 25D, the Board of Game will be allowing residents to continue a traditional way of harvesting this resource.

PROPOSED BY: Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-046)

Note: Alaska Statute 16.05.783 only allows same day airborne for taking of wolves as part of a predator control program authorized by the Board of Game.

PROPOSAL 112 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions; and 92.095. Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions. Allow same-day airborne hunting for wolf in Unit 25D as follows:

Allow same-day airborne for wolf hunting in Unit 25D.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? At the Yukon Flats Advisory Committee meeting held in December of 2015, once again a lot of concern of committee members and those members of the public that were attending revolved around the low moose population in the Yukon Flats as well as the high numbers of predators. Several ideas were discussed in order to increase the take of predators, both by individuals as well as by the state. One of the ideas that was discussed was to allow same-day airborne for wolf hunters in Unit 25D to help bolster the moose population as well as give those interested an opportunity to take more wolves.

PROPOSED BY: Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-043)

PROPOSAL 113 - 5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. Modify the resident bag limit for Dall sheep in Units 24B, 25A, 26B, and 26C as follows:

Change the three sheep bag limit for residents to three rams.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The harvest of ewe Dall sheep in declining populations in Units 24B, 25A, 26B, and 26C. The harvest of ewes is additive mortality. AS 16.05.258(b) states "The appropriate board shall determine whether a portion of the

game population identified under (a) can be harvested consistent with sustained yield." Based on Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) Dall sheep population estimates by both the ADF&G and the National Park Service sheep populations have been declining in the Brooks Range for 20 years. Testimony from fish and game advisory committees, federal regional advisory councils, and individuals at the March 2016 Statewide Board of Game meeting stated they have also witnessed drastic declines in Dall sheep populations in the central and eastern Brooks Range. Inadequate harvest reporting of ewes by both the ADF&G and the federal land managing agencies does not relieve the Board of Game from their obligations to manage declining game populations conservatively consistent with the Alaska Constitution Article 8, Sec. 4 Sustained Yield.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Outdoor Council (EG-F16-076)

Note: This proposal is scheduled for the Arctic/Western Region meeting as proposal 34 and the Interior/Northeast Arctic Region meeting as proposal 114.

PROPOSAL 114 - 5 AAC 85.057. Hunting seasons and bag limits for wolverine. Lengthen the hunting season for wolverine in Unit 26 as follows:

Units & Bag limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresidents Open Season
(1) Units 1–5 (General hunt only) 1 wolverine	Sept. 10—Feb. 15	Sept. 1—Feb. 15
Units 6–10, 12, 15, 16(B) and 17– 25 [26] 1 wolverine;	Sept. 1—Mar. 31 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1—Mar. 31
Units 11, 13, 14, and 16(A) 1 wolverine	Sept. 1—Jan. 31 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1—Jan. 31
<u>Unit 26</u>	<u>July 15 - March 31</u> <u>(General hunt only)</u>	<u>July 15—Mar. 31</u>

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Hunters in Unit 26 (all subunits) almost never get a chance to take a wolverine while hunting in the fall because the season opens after they are likely done hunting. The wolverine season opens September 1, and it is common practice to be off the north side of the Brooks Range by September 1 to avoid being caught by approaching winter. Wolverine hides are acceptable in the arctic in the summer for most hunters (as opposed to trappers). Most hunters will have very few opportunities to take a wolverine in their lifetime and would be thrilled with slightly less underfur on an otherwise very good

specimen. Starting wolverine season July 15 is much more reasonable. Another alternative would be August 1. Another alternative would be to include all Arctic Units (22-26) This proposal is submitted to both the Arctic and Western Region and the Interior and Eastern Arctic Region meetings to cover all subunits in Unit 26.

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist (EG-F16-006)

PROPOSAL 115 - 5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping. Lengthen the trapping season for lynx in Unit 25 as follows:

5 AAC 84.270 Furbearer Trapping

Extend the lynx trapping season in all of Unit 25:

Units 25A, 25B, 25D: Nov. 1—**March 31** [LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY]:

Unit 25C: Nov. 1—**March 31** [MARCH 15]:

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Extend the lynx trapping season in all of Unit 25 to March 31. The Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Committee submitted a companion proposal to the Federal Subsistence Board to extend lynx trapping seasons to March 31.

Although lynx will not necessarily be targeted during the month of March, trappers will be able to keep lynx if they are caught incidentally while trapping wolves and wolverine.

Alternative solution is to extend the lynx trapping season in Units 25A, 25B, and 25D to March 15 to align with adjacent Unit 25C for the state seasons.

PROPOSED BY: Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EG-F16-045)
