

PROPOSAL 135 – 5 AAC 85.065. Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game. Close the season for Alaska hares in Unit 9 as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(2)		
Snowshoe and Alaska hares		
Units 1–5	Sept. 1–Apr. 30 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1–Apr. 30
Units 6–26, except 14(A) and 14(C), <u>and</u> <u>Alaska hares in Units 9(C),</u> <u>9(D), and 9(E)</u>	No closed season (General hunt only)	No closed season
No limit		
<u>Units 9(C), 9(D) and 9(E)</u> <u>Alaska hares only</u>	<u>No open season</u>	<u>No open season</u>
Unit 14(A) 5 per day	No closed season (General hunt only)	No closed season
Unit 14(C) 5 per day	Day after Labor Day –Apr. 30 (General hunt only)	Day after Labor Day –Apr. 30

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What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Even though snowshoe hares remain abundant in Unit 9, the once abundant Alaska hare population is now at a very low density and has a patchy distribution in the southern portion of the Alaska Peninsula. Very little is known about the Alaska hare, but the apparent decrease in abundance may have been caused by changes in habitat or predation. A small Alaska hare population has been observed Unit 9D and there are infrequent observations of Alaska hare sign near King Salmon. Although there are no estimates of abundance, hunting seasons should be closed in Units 9C, 9D and 9E to address the low density, and biological concern as a precaution for this species. While the closure of the Alaska hare season would result in a slight decrease in hunting opportunity, snowshoe hare hunting opportunity would remain open in the area. If climatic or habitat conditions favorable to Alaska hares return to the southern Alaska Peninsula, a low hunter harvest could protect localized populations for quicker recovery and recolonization.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F17-039)
