

Sitka Area – Unit 4

PROPOSAL 10

5 AAC 85.030. Hunting seasons and bag limits for deer.

Decrease the bag limit to four deer in Unit 4, Remainder as follows:

Decrease bag limit for deer in Unit 4 Remainder (the area outside of the area of Chichagof Island east of Port Frederick and north of Tenakee Inlet including all drainages into Tenakee Inlet) from six deer to four deer.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Decreasing the bag limit would have minimal impact on most sport hunters while reestablishing a clearer priority for federally qualified subsistence hunters. Returning the bag limit to the historically more common four deer should reduce conflict between rural and urban hunters.

Background: In 2019, the Alaska Board of Game voted to increase the deer bag limit in Unit 4 from four to six deer, replacing a four deer bag limit that had been in place since 1992. While ADF&G data suggest the Unit 4 deer populations are healthy, and that there remain populations that satisfy what the Board of Game calls “amounts necessary for subsistence,” federally qualified hunters have noted that they are finding it more difficult to meet their subsistence needs. Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act mandates that the Federal Subsistence Board ensure that “subsistence needs” are met. In the latest round of the Federal Subsistence Board process, federally qualified hunters have cited conflicts with non-federally qualified hunters, asking for broad closures of federal land to non-federally qualified hunters. To help avoid such drastic closures, advisory committees, advocacy groups, and individual Juneau hunters have volunteered to work with federally qualified hunters as well as the Federal Subsistence Board to reduce these conflicts and find compromises--this proposal represents part of that effort.

While reducing the bag limit will likely have minimal impact on the deer population or individual hunter harvests, it will encourage more conservative approaches while discouraging individuals from taking more than is needed, especially when deer populations are most vulnerable.

According to ADF&G data, from 1997-2019 the estimated average annual harvest in Unit 4 has been 5,725 deer. Harvest has remained fairly stable, with between 5,000-7,000 deer harvested annually. The exception being the severe winter of 2006/2007 when high harvest was followed by significant overwinter mortality of deer throughout Unit 4. This resulted in a precipitous decline in harvest from 7,900 deer in 2006 to 1,932 deer in 2007. Based on harvest and other indicators of deer abundance, managers believe the deer population had fully recovered by the 2013 season. Very few individual non-federally qualified hunters harvest a six deer limit in Unit 4; however, there are conditions when it is possible to take this many deer in a single day. These conditions typically coincide with deep snow, which forces the deer to the beach—that is, precisely when the deer are most vulnerable to overharvest and winterkill, as these data from the 2006/2007 winter suggest. Finally, as there is not much hunting effort in Unit 4 from hunters outside of Southeast Alaska, this change would impact almost exclusively residents of Juneau.

PROPOSED BY: Kevin Maier

(EG-F22-081)

PROPOSAL 11

5 AAC 85.030. Hunting seasons and bag limits for deer.

Decrease the bag limit to four deer in Unit 4, Remainder as follows:

General Season

Unit 4, Remainder

Residents and Nonresidents

Bag limit: **four** deer total (see details in season dates below)

Season dates:

Bucks: August 1 – September 14

Any deer: September 15 – December 31

Hunt requires harvest ticket

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to address concerns with deer hunting harvests across Unit 4 by reducing the bag limit for both residents and nonresidents to four deer in Unit 4 Remainder. Until the last Southeast Region meeting in Petersburg, the bag limit for deer in Unit 4 was set at four. This bag limit was broadly accepted across the region and has provided enough meat for individuals and families for years, even decades. The four deer bag limit also was successful through population declines due to bad winters in the mid-2000s'. Unit 4 is special because of the quality of habitat and the lack of natural predators. The four deer bag limit is a success in how stable it has been over the years and well the deer have done.

Having lived in Southeast Alaska for almost 70 years, I remember many years where hunting has not been as good as it has been recently. I also remember times when hunting was pretty good, like it has been for the past few years. I have watched the habitat change over the years both for the better and worse. I've lived and worked with generations of biologists and different Boards of Game, I was just a kid in the early days of statehood. Through most of it all, the four deer bag limit was successful in taking care of the deer population and keeping my family with enough opportunity to eat well.

The recent proposals to close deer hunting to folks in Juneau, Ketchikan and the rest of the world in large parts portions of Unit 4 sadden and trouble me deeply. How did we get here when we have a healthy deer population? There have been times when we had more hunters in the field than now. It used to be in the old days boats were slower and hunters hiked more. Maybe some of the "crowding" we see has to do with how focused hunters have become on hunting the beach instead of climbing up in the muskeg. What I do know is that a four deer limit worked for a long time and I'm sure it will work again.

A four deer limit in Unit 4 Remainder is sustainable in good years and bad years and that is what matters most. This proposal will take us back to a tried-and-true bag limit for deer in Unit 4. On the allocation side, I hope my friends and neighbors across the region can come together and share the country with each other like we always have done. Folks in Juneau and Ketchikan enjoy deer meat too and a lot of those folks have kids who are learning to hunt. Why is it that adults are working to cut the country up for themselves and cut out the kids? There are many folks in Juneau and Ketchikan that grew up in areas that might be closed by the feds. As far as subsistence goes, southeast Alaska has an abundance of fish and game to this day. I think four deer per hunter is a

good number when you factor in all the other animals we can harvest and the opportunities we have to use proxies for old-timers who can't hunt for themselves anymore. I never have been worried about "only" being able to take four deer when you factor in all of our opportunities.

Even if this proposal has no effect on the federal closures it is still important to consider. Four deer per person is a good number. A family of four hunters can take 16 deer per year with this limit, a nice amount of deer meat. If the feds decide to cut out Alaskans, well, then the only legal place to take deer will be below the tideline. All of this is a tragedy putting Alaskans against Alaskans when we have enough deer to go around. If there is an opportunity to pass this proposal and keep the lands open to hunting like they always have, I urge you to act. I also urge you to act if this proposal will help with the feds because there will be less country to hunt and a four deer limit worked for a long time.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Johnson (EG-F22-089)

PROPOSAL 12

5 AAC 92.510. Areas closed to hunting.

Open the Mitchell Bay Closed Area in Unit 4 to brown bear hunting as follows:

It is proposed to open:

“Mitchell Bay Area: Kootznahoo Inlet, Kanalku Bay, Favorite Bay and all land within 660 feet of mean high tide within that area; area open to the taking of brown bears”.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Open the Mitchell Bay Closed Area: Kootznahoo Inlet, Kanalku Bay, Favorite Bay and all land within 660 feet of mean high tide within that area; area currently closed to taking brown bears. We ask that the area be opened due to recent food security concerns brought forward by Angoon community members to the Federal Subsistence Board. The request to close Unit 4 Admiralty Island, west side to the taking of Sitka Black Tail deer by non-qualified subsistence users; reasons stated was the number and access to Sitka black-tailed deer.

It is known and accepted that brown bear prey on deer and fawns each year. Having a large area and complete bay complex immediately adjacent to and just north of the village and City of Angoon where brown bear hunting is closed could be a factor limiting deer numbers available for human harvest. This area also has a landfill that creates human/bear conflicts that could likely be reduced by opening the area around the village to hunting.

Unit 4 brown bear under the direction of ADF&G and the Brown Bear Management Strategy (BBMS) is very well managed at a 4% harvest level and has been under the harvest thresholds for over eight years. If there are private lands within this Controlled Use Area, access to that land should be controlled by the landowner and not the State of Alaska dictating the closed area. There is no biological reason that this area needs to be closed to the taking of brown bear

PROPOSED BY: Zach Decker (EG-F22-047)

PROPOSAL 13

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

Change the RB088 hunt boundary in Unit 4 to include Northeast Chichagof, and increase the allowable harvest for brown bear as follows:

Proposed Regulation:

(Outside drainages) Chichagof Island East Point (57.80'N 134.94 W) following the common Big Game Commercial Services Board Guide Use Area (GUA) line of 04-11 to 58.02'N 135.96 W to 57.96 N-136.09 W following GUA line 04-15 to including Yakobi and other adjacent islands; Baranof Island south and west of a line which follows the crest of the island from Nisemi Point (57°34' N. lat.,135°25' W. long), to the entrance of Gut Bay (56°44' N. lat.,134°38' W. long), including the drainages into Gut Bay, Kruzof Island, and other adjacent islands.

Allow ADF&G under the Brown Bear Management Strategy (BBMS) to increase allowable harvest in these areas and GUA 04-11, 04-16, 04-15 *up to* 15% on their discretion to help reduce brown bear/human conflict and therefore reduce Defense of Life or Property (DLP) loss.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Change the RB088 open area to include Northeast Chichagof. This area that is commonly referred to by ADF&G and the USFWS land managers as Northeast Chichagof is inclusive of the City of Hoonah that includes such areas defined by the Big Game Commercial Services Boards as Guide Use Area (GUA) 04-11 and 04-16. Recent wildlife proposal 22-08 to the Federal Subsistence Board to reduce the bag limits of Sitka black-tailed-deer to non-federally qualified users to two bucks indicates local concern of food security for this area. Another Federal Subsistence Board proposal for the Pelican Area (GUA 04-15) to restrict non-local harvest of deer similar to proposal 22-08 has also been submitted over the concern of food security in the area.

Further, Defense of Life or Property (DLP) reports for the last ten years includes 42 brown bear DLP in the GUA 04-11 and GUA 04-16 area reported to Sitka ADF&G. These numbers seem to support the indication that a high number of bears reside in this area.

Year	Sitka	Hoonah NE Chichagof	Angoon
2012	0	3M, 2F	0
2013	1M	2M, 2F	0
2014	1M	1F	0
2015	0	0	0
2016	1M, 2F	2M, 2F	0
2017	3M	1M, 2F	1M
2018	2M, 3F	8M, 5F	1M
2019	1F	1M, 2F	3M
2020	3M	3M, 2F	2M
2021	5M, 8F	4M	0

The regulation for RB088 currently reads:

(Outside drainages) Chichagof Island south and west of a line which follows the crest of the island from Rock Point (58° N. lat., 136°21' W. long.), to Rodgers Point (57°35' N. lat., 135°33' W. long.) including Yakobi and other adjacent islands; Baranof Island south and west of a line which follows

the crest of the island from Nismeni Point (57°34' N. lat.,135°25' W. long), to the entrance of Gut Bay (56°44' N. lat.,134°38' W. long), including the drainages into Gut Bay, Kruzof Island, and other adjacent islands.

Note: The author submitted attachments with this proposal which are available on the Board of Game proposal book webpage at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook or by contacting the ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4046.

PROPOSED BY: David Summers (HQ-F22-002)

PROPOSAL 14

5 AAC 85.020. Hunting seasons and bag limits for brown bear.

Change the brown bear hunt area for RB088 in Unit 4 to include all of Lisianski Inlet drainage as follows:

Proposed regulation reads:

(Outside Drainages) From Point Lucan outside of the Port Althorp closed area following the Althorp Peninsula ridge common line of Guide Use Area 04-15 south and west of a line which follows the crest of the island including Yakobi and other adjacent islands to (57.82701, -135.86404) over to (57. 79173, -135.99264) south and west of a line which follows the crest of the island to Point (57°34' N. lat,135°25' W. long), to the entrance of Gut Bay (56°44' N. lat., 134°38' W. long), including the drainages into Gut Bay, Kruzof Island, and other adjacent islands.

Note: The author submitted maps with this proposal which are available on the Board of Game proposal book webpage at www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.proposalbook or by contacting the ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4046.

See red line on the submitted map for illustration.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Change RB088 hunt boundary to follow the common Big Game Commercial Services Board border of Guide Use Area (GUA) 04-15. Opening all of Lisianski Inlet to remain open until May 31. Change in boundary line would allow user to better understand open and closed areas of hunt RB088. This change would align GUA 04-15 hunt area with RB088 regulation. Change in regulation would allow hunters to use both sides of the inlet making the regulation easier to understand.

Current regulation reads:

(Outside drainages) Chichagof Island south and west of a line which follows the crest of the island from Rock Point (58° N. lat., 136°21' W. long.), to Rodgers Point (57°35' N. lat., 135°33' W.long.) including Yakobi and other adjacent islands; Baranof Island south and west of a line which follows the crest of the island from Nismeni Point (57°34' N. lat., 135°25' W. long), to the entrance of Gut Bay (56°44' N. lat.,134°38' W. long), including the drainages into Gut Bay, Kruzof Island, and other adjacent islands.

See yellow line on the submitted map for illustration.

PROPOSED BY: David Summers (HQ-F22-003)
