

Sheep Hunting

PROPOSAL 92

5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements.

Require sheep hunters to complete an online education course as follows:

Education requirements on Unit 15 moose have shown to reduce sublegal harvest. I suggest developing an educational course and quiz to educate sheep hunters on what a legal ram is and require all sheep hunters to take it.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently there is no education to requirements for Dall sheep hunters in Alaska. With the increase in sublegal harvest as available surplus continues to decline, this will have a larger impact on the population.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? None

PROPOSED BY: Caleb Martin (EG-F24-035)

PROPOSAL 93

5 AAC 92.171. Sealing of horns and antlers.

Change the sealing requirement for Dall sheep horns from permanent to nonpermanent as follows:

To continue sealing ram horns, the department should mirror the CITES sealing requirements already in place and used for grizzly bears and several furbearers. A plastic seal similar to the CITES seals, can be placed on the skull of harvested rams at the time of sealing. A plastic seal was used on ram horns when sealing was first implemented in 2004.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal the requirement to PERMANENTLY seal (plug) ram horns. There is no scientific or enforcement reason to permanently plug ram horns. I have witnessed several sets of ram horns being permanently disfigured by improper handling during the current process of drilling a hole in the horn and implanting the permanent plug. Several areas in the state require mountain goat sealing and no permanent seal/plug is used during the process to accomplish the same goal of sealing ram horns.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? This proposal was developed in coordination with several like-minded sheep hunters.

PROPOSED BY: Jessie Dunshie (HQ-F24-009)

PROPOSAL 94

5 AAC 92.990(30). Definitions.

Change the definition for “full-curl” ram as follows:

A full-curl ram, **whose horn tip of at least one horn, when viewed squarely from the side at right angles to the center of the skull completes, a 360-degree circle.** [WHOSE TIP OF AT LEAST ONE HORN HAS GROWN THROUGH 360-DEGREES OF A CRICLE DESCRIBED BY THE OUTER SURFACE OF THE HORN], as viewed from the side (**figure 1**) [(FIGURE 1)].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Determining full curl legality of Dall sheep rams when field judging or sealing has become far too ambiguous and needs to have a clearer definition that cannot be skewed by different tests and often opinions. This would effectively remove the tube test from a sealing perspective and ensure the hunter is viewing the ram from the correct perspective while in the field. This would simplify the sealing process and still allow for a correct method of using the stick test to establish whether a ram is full-curl or not.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

PROPOSED BY: Herb Mansavage (HQ-F24-038)

PROPOSAL 95

5 AAC 92.990(30). Definitions.

Repeal the age criteria for the definition of full-curl horn ram as follows:

The proposed regulatory change would repeal the age criteria #3, for a full-curl horn of a male (ram) Dall sheep as follows:

1. The tip of at least one horn has grown through 360 degrees of a circle described by the outer surface of the horn, as viewed from the side, or
2. Both horn tips are broken; broken means the lamb tip is completely absent; horn tips that are chipped or cracked are not broken if any portion of the lamb tip is present; characteristics of the lamb tip include:
 - (i) a length of less than four inches,
 - (ii) the inside surface of the lamb tip is distinctly concave when compared to the remainder of the horn, and
 - (iii) the lamb tip is the section of a horn that is grown during the first six months of a sheep's life and is the section of horn distal of the first annulus, which is the swelling of the horn that forms during the first winter of life.

3. (THE SHEEP IS AT LEAST EIGHT YEARS OF AGE AS DETERMINED BY HORN GROWTH ANNULI)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal criteria #3 for harvest of Dall Sheep statewide. Current definition of full curl harvest by hunters attempting to count annuli rings has led to misidentification of sub-legal sheep being taken.

Statewide Dall sheep populations are far below historical carrying capacities. Rain on snow events, combined with a late spring in 2012/13, as well as similar conditions in subsequent winters, have decimated multiple cohorts of Dall sheep in most populations statewide.

Many ram groups currently do not have full-curl, or both horns broken horns. Dall sheep hunters that do not see these rams then rely on aging a sheep in the field at a distance. This method can easily lead to miscounting the annuli and result in the take of sublegal young rams. This loss of the very few young recruiting breeding rams is of critical concern to the sustainability of the Dall sheep population's recovery to carrying capacity.

Most hunters and even professional biologists can mistakenly miscount annuli rings on 3/4 and 7/8 curl rams on the mountainside. Many hunters cannot age the sheep when in hand, which can be documented with the high numbers of young rams being seized by the department at sealing. Some sub legal rams are abandoned and not documented as a loss.

Very few rams will not eventually become legal under the full curl definition criteria #1 and #2, by either achieving a full curl, or by breaking off both horn tips if left to mature, so having the aging option is unnecessary and detrimental. At this time, few rams are the true full curl definition 1. and 2. due to hunting or environmental related mortality prior to maturity being reached. It is imperative to retain all recruitment rams to maturity during this unprecedented time.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? I am the chairman of the Koyukuk River Advisory Committee. I have discussed the issue with the committee, Regional Councils, and many sheep hunters I encounter. I have discussed the issue with ADF&G staff, and other land management staff.

PROPOSED BY: Jack Reakoff (EG-F24-045)

PROPOSAL 96

5 AAC 92.990(30). Definitions.

Repeal the age criteria for the definition of full-curl horn ram as follows:

The proposed regulatory change would repeal the age criteria for a full-curl horn of a male (ram) Dall sheep as follows:

- (A) the tip of at least one horn has grown through 360 degrees of a circle described by the outer surface of the horn, as viewed from the side, or

- (B) both horn tips are broken; broken means the lamb tip is completely absent; horn tips that are chipped or cracked are not broken if any portion of the lamb tip is present; characteristics of the lamb tip include:
- (i) a length of less than four inches,
 - (ii) the inside surface of the lamb tip is distinctly concave when compared to the remainder of the horn, and
 - (iii) the lamb tip is the section of a horn that is grown during the first six months of a sheep's life and is the section of horn distal of the first annulus, which is the swelling of the horn that forms during the first winter of life.
- (C) [THE SHEEP IS AT LEAST EIGHT YEARS OF AGE AS DETERMINED BY HORN GROWTH ANNULI.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Statewide Dall sheep populations are far below historical carrying capacities. Rain on snow events in the winter, late springs, and other changing weather patterns have continued to decimate multiple cohorts of Dall sheep statewide.

Many ram groups do not contain animals with full-curl horns or horns that are broomed on both sides. Dall sheep hunters that do not see these rams then rely on aging a sheep in the field at a distance. This method can easily lead to miscounting the annuli which results in the take of sublegal rams. The loss of any animal that is sublegal in a population that is declining statewide is of critical concern to the sustainability of the Dall sheep population's recovery.

Sheep can be difficult to age, and it is not always a cut and dry process even in settings outside of the field, such as when the animal is taken to an ADF&G office to be sealed by department staff and law enforcement officers that have seen hundreds of horns.

The percentage of rams have genetics that will make it so they will not achieve full curl in their lifetime appear to be low. Another viable option for the take of a legal sheep is take one with broomed horns, which is an easier feat then counting annuli rings through a scope. Having the aging option is unnecessary and is detrimental to the recovery of sheep population. If there is a situation where a fully mature sheep is taken in the field that somehow does not meet the full curl or broomed criteria, law enforcement officers can use their discretion on issuing citations during the sealing process.

As sheep populations rebound, this change in regulation can always be reexamined and reversed if it is deemed that the removal of the age criteria has been too unfavorable to sheep hunters.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? This was not developed with others, although the Eastern Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council and the Koyukuk River Fish and Game Advisory Committee were aware of its submission.

PROPOSAL 97

5 AAC 92.085 (8). Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.

Lengthen the time period hunters are restricted from using aircraft for hunting sheep as follows:

From August 1-September 20, aircraft may only be used by and for sheep hunters to place and remove hunters and camps, maintain existing camps, and salvage harvested sheep. A person may not use or employ an aircraft to locate sheep or direct hunters to sheep during the open sheep hunting season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Game has wisely restricted the use of aircraft to “locate sheep or direct hunters to sheep during the open sheep hunting season”. In the experience of many sheep hunters this has made a very positive impact on the experience of sheep hunting and has created a much more fair chase hunt. This regulation does not, however, account for the fact that there is a youth hunt that starts in many parts of the state on August 1 during which time aircraft could be legally used to locate sheep and direct hunters. This is the antithesis of a fair chase hunt and, if/when this happens we are setting a poor example for young impressionable hunters instead of teaching them the importance of fair chase hunting that creates challenge and adventure.

Furthermore, the author of this proposal has also written a proposal to create an archery sheep season from August 6 – 9 and limiting aerial scouting during that time would be important to maintain the spirit of fair chase for that hunt as well.

It’s also worth noting that officially that the Boone and Crocket Club has the following to say:

“I. Spotting or herding game from the air, followed by landing in its vicinity for the purpose of pursuit and shooting;

With the popularity of personal aircraft in the 1960s increasing and being used for hunting to access remote areas in North America, it became apparent that some hunters were using aircraft not only to reach their hunting destination, but locate their game from the air, and in the vicinity, and pursue for a shot. In some cases, hunters were using aircraft to herd game into a more accessible situation. The Club determined that this was an unfair advantage to both the game and other hunters. At the same time the Club established this policy, some states and provinces began outlawing the practice and instituting laws prohibiting hunting the same day as flying.”

Spotting game from the air prior to harvest is clearly a violation of the basic principles of fair chase and pushing back the date for which Alaska permits this would be acting in a way consistent with fair chase and ethical hunting. Even for areas without youth hunts, pushing back the aerial scouting prohibition to the August 1 would decrease the amount number of hunters who fly to their intended

hunting areas in the couple of days prior to August 10 and then locate sheep, land near them by the 9th and subsequently kill them. Anyone who has spent extensive time in sheep terrain has seen examples of this style of “hunting”.

In the past some of the opposition to the exiting aerial scouting ban from August 10 – September 20 have complained that there is increased aviation hazard during the days immediately prior to August 10 because it’s the only time hunters have to locate sheep and move hunters into position. (There are also limited pilot position reports during that period because of the intent to keep sheep hunting locations secret.) If the period was pushed back to August 1, this would potentially create a safer situation because pilots would only be flying directly to predetermined sites to drop hunters instead the low and circuitous flying that has been cited as hazard if several pilots are doing it in the same area. This proposal could potentially decrease aviation hazard during sheep season.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? I discussed this proposal with several ADF&G biologists who agree with the spirit and sentiment of the proposal.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Forward (EG-F24-093)

PROPOSAL 98

5 AAC. 92.085 (8). Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.

Lengthen the time period hunters are restricted from using aircraft for hunting sheep as follows:

From August 1 - October 15, aircraft may only be used by and for sheep hunters to place and remove hunters and camps, maintain existing camps, and salvage harvested sheep. A person may not use or employ an aircraft to locate sheep or direct hunters to sheep during the open sheep hunting season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Aerial scouting for Dall sheep is currently allowed outside of the general season Dall sheep season of August 10 - September 20. Currently all youth hunts and some archery hunts fall outside of these general season dates and therefore aerial scouting during those seasons is allowed. Dall sheep populations are in decline. Restrictions on all aerial scouting during all open seasons will reduce pressure on sheep.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? No.

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale (EG-F24-077)

PROPOSAL 99

5 AAC 92.085 (8). Unlawful methods of taking game.

Shorten the time period hunters are restricted from using aircraft for hunting sheep, and modify the use of aircraft restrictions as follows:

My solution is to change the length of the restrictions and modify them after the first 11 days of the season as follows:

(8) From August 10th through August 20th [SEPTEMBER 20th] aircraft may not be used by and for any person to locate Dall sheep for hunting or direct hunters to Dall sheep during THIS PART OF the open sheep hunting season, however, aircraft other than helicopters may be used by and for sheep hunters to place and remove hunters and camps, maintain existing camps, and salvage harvested sheep DURING THIS PERIOD. From August 21st through September 20th aircraft cannot intentionally approach any closer than 1500 feet or 500 yards from any sheep for the purpose of hunting them.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I think the aircraft restrictions in 5 AAC 92.085 (8) are too long and overly restrictive and should be shortened and modified.

This regulation has been in place since 2015 and restricts anyone from using an aircraft to intentionally spot ANY sheep from ANY distance from the air during the entire general season, August 10th to September 20th for the purpose of hunting them. Most of the public thinks you can not even fly in sheep country during the open season under this regulation and resident hunters with their own airplanes fear being turned in to the troopers and don't even attempt to hunt later in the season because of it. Most of the sheep guides were adamantly against this regulation at first but changed their minds after they realized it had basically eliminated resident hunters after the first 10 days of the season. This was a board generated proposal that they said was to stop people from buzzing sheep and disrupting other sheep hunters hunts but it went way beyond that. It needs to be changed.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee? I developed this change and language myself.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Montgomery (EG-F24-076)

Note: Proposed amendments to 5 AAC 85.055, including changing hunts to drawing permit hunts and changing seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep, are outside the scope of the Statewide Regulations meeting.

PROPOSAL 100

5 AAC 92.057. Special provisions for Dall sheep and mountain goat drawing permit hunts.

Limit nonresident sheep hunting opportunity statewide so that nonresidents do not harvest more than 35 percent of total sheep harvest from any game management subunit as follows:

Regulatory Changes this Proposal Requests

The solution we seek with this proposal is to limit nonresident sheep hunting opportunity statewide in a manner **whereby nonresidents do not harvest more than 35 percent of the total sheep harvest from any game management subunit**. Such a harvest allocation is more than fair to nonresidents. If nonresident sheep harvest exceeds 35 percent of the total harvest in any one area, that area's allocation of permits shall be reduced. We did not suggest specific allocations for several units listed below, leaving that to the board to best determine based on Department of Fish and Game nonresident sheep harvest data.

If the allocation remains an up-to number, the department will need direction and guidance from the board as to a starting point and when a higher number of permits should be awarded.

Please note, for multiple subunits listed together, the suggested up-to number of permits is for each individual subunit.

Unit 7 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 2 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 11

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 12 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 13A, 13B Remainder, 13C Remainder, 13D Remainder, 13E

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 14A Remainder, 14B

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 15 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 2 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 16

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger

Aug 10 – Sept 20

every four regulatory years by permit;
up to X number of permits may be issued

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 19A, 19B, 19D, 19E

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger
every four regulatory years by permit;
up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 19C

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger
every four regulatory years by permit;
up to 15 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[NO OPEN SEASON]

Unit 20 Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger
every four regulatory years by permit;
up to 20 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 24A within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger
every four regulatory years by permit;
up to 10 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20
[AUG 10 – OCT 5]

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 24A Remainder, 24B Remainder

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 25A east of the middle fork of the Chandalar River, excluding the Eastern Brooks Range Management Area

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 25A within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

**Aug 10 – Sept 20
[AUG 10 – OCT 5]**

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 25B, 25C.25D

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to X number of permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 26A east of and including the Etivluk River drainage, excluding Gates of the Arctic National Park, and Unit 26C

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

Aug 10 – Sept 20

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Unit 26B within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area

Nonresident

One ram with full curl horn or larger every four regulatory years by permit; up to 10 permits may be issued

**Aug 10 – Sept 20
[AUG 10 – OCT 5]**

[ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in many units, conservation concerns, conflicts and crowding.

Problem Statement

The Board of Game (board) *has known for a long time* that unlimited nonresident sheep hunting in certain areas causes crowding and conflicts and leads to nonresident guided sheep hunters taking the majority of the sheep harvest each year.

But the board, while acknowledging these problems, has continually refused to limit nonresident sheep hunters in the known problem areas to draw-only permits – as Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) has proposed each cycle – using the rationale that nonresident draw permits with limited allocations “don’t provide stability to guide businesses.”

In 2023, after nonresident guided sheep hunters took 90 percent of the sheep harvest in Unit 19C the previous year from a severely declining sheep population, the board completely closed all nonresident sheep hunting in the subunit for five years due to sheep conservation concerns. For some reason the board preferred a complete closure to nonresident sheep hunters – which shuts down all guided sheep hunting businesses in the area – over limiting nonresident sheep hunters.

The board believes the best, and thus, *only* solution to unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity *that the board itself allows* is to limit the number of guides on state lands. The real problem, according to the board, is not too many nonresident sheep hunters who are required to be guided; it's too many guides, and the solution is a convoluted and expensive Guide Concession Program (GCP) on state lands that would ostensibly limit guides and in turn limit the number of their nonresident clients and harvests.

The board has pursued and supported a GCP as the only solution to the known problems for over a decade, but such a program requires legislative action and approval. During the 28th legislative session in 2014, a bill was introduced (SB 160) to create a GCP on state lands where most all these problems occur, but it had a million-dollar fiscal note and other issues and never even made it out of committee. After that failure the board continued to do nothing to limit nonresident sheep hunters and kept pushing for another bite at the apple. A similar bill was introduced in 2024 during the current (at time of this writing) 33rd legislative session in both chambers (SB 253/HB 396), with a smaller half-million-dollar fiscal note, that would put the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a land management agency, in control of a Guide Concession Program on state lands to regulate the number of guides and determine which guides win exclusive concessions. At the time this proposal is being drafted, with two weeks left in the legislative session, those bills are not expected to go anywhere.

For nearly 20 years now, the board has been aware of the known problems they have created by allowing unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity in certain areas but has kicked the can down the road on using their authority to limit nonresident sheep hunters.

This proposal asks the board to do the right thing now and put all nonresident sheep hunters in areas where they are not currently limited on draw permits with a limited allocation. The board could put a sunset clause on any new limits on nonresident sheep hunters, whereby should a GCP pass the legislature and be incorporated in these areas, those regulations are voided. But it's highly likely that any limits placed on nonresident sheep hunters in specific areas via a draw permit system would be the same or similar to the limits on guided hunters imposed by a GCP. The board could also stipulate that the number of permits awarded can be reviewed in cycle for that region if sheep populations rebound.

RHAK's Overall Objective with this Proposal

Our main objective is to ensure our Dall sheep populations are managed sustainably with an emphasis on protecting future resident general sheep hunting opportunities. This should also be the primary objective of the board. Our secondary objective is to reduce the crowding and conflicts and ensure nonresident sheep hunters retain *some* sheep hunting opportunities, rather than having their opportunity completely shut down in individual units.

Unlimited nonresident sheep hunting opportunity should never be allowed anywhere in the state, regardless of if it leads to sheep conservation concerns, simply because we know the problems that creates in the field that also lead to excessive nonresident harvests.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) (HQ-F24-041)

PROPOSAL 101

5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations.

Add sheep to the list of species identified as important for providing high levels of human consumptive use as follows:

5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations.

For purposes of implementing AS 16.05.255(e) - (g), the Board of Game (board) will

(1) consider the following criteria when identifying big game prey populations that are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use:

(A) harvest size: the average annual historic human harvest meets or exceeds values as follows:

- (i) caribou: 100;
- (ii) deer: 500;
- (iii) moose: 100;
- (iv) sheep: XX;**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Game (board) and Department of Fish and Game have received numerous requests to take action to benefit sheep populations that have declined across the state. Currently, sheep are not an intensive management (IM) species.

The Legislature tasked the board in statute (AS 16.05.258(e)-(g)) with adopting regulations to provide for IM programs to restore the abundance or productivity of big game prey populations the board has identified as necessary to achieve the human consumptive use goals established by the board in regulation. While there are other statutes that specify a particular species, AS 16.05.258 only speaks to big game prey populations providing the board with the ability to determine which species qualify under AS 16.05.258. To further clarify the duties of the board, the Legislature tasked the board with identifying prey populations that are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use, and the board has set an average annual historic human harvest size for the three current IM species (caribou, deer, and moose). The board then created regulations, for the purposes of implementing AS 16.05.258(e)-(g), identifying specific big game prey populations or portions of populations as important for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use, and to establish the population objectives and harvest objectives for those populations.

AS 16.05.258(e)-(g) allows for both predator and habitat management to restore big game prey population abundance. Regulations adopted by the board under that statute are specific to each

population and can include a mix of varying degrees of both predator control and habitat enhancement.

Both the board and department have received significant input on the question of designating Dall's sheep as an IM species. This proposal is an opportunity for the board, advisory committees, the public, and the department to have robust discussions and deliberations on this subject. If adopted, this proposal is the first step in a very long public regulatory process to allow IM of Dall's sheep populations and does not guarantee sheep will be intensively managed if it is adopted. If adopted, the next steps will be for the board to evaluate populations to determine if there is a positive IM finding for a given population, and if so, to establish population and harvest objectives which is typically done at the regularly scheduled board meetings for the regions where the populations are located.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F24-083)
