

# Black Bear Trapping Regulations

Proposal 36 (deferred)

Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Wildlife Conservation



## Review

- ◎ Historically, black bears have variously been treated as big game animals or furbearers in North America.
  - In Canada, sale of bear skins has been legal in all provinces for over 300 years without conservation issues. Trapping legal in most provinces (all if First Nations are considered)
  - In Alaska, black bears were variously classified as big game or furbearers by Alaska Game Commission—sale of black bear hides was allowed by BOG as recently as the 1960s
  - Maine has allowed trapping for many years—currently, 250 trappers take about 75 bears/year
  - **Board has received at least 18 proposals over the past 10 years to allow sale of bear skins or snaring**

## Black Bears as a Furbearer

- ⊙ Black bears added to the definition of “furbearer” at January 2010 meeting in response to Yukon Flats AC proposal to allow sale of black bear hides—1 July 2010
  - Does not automatically allow bear trapping.
  - Does allow board to establish trapping seasons if the Board chooses to do so.

## Purpose of Trapping Proposal

- ⊙ Be responsive to Alaskans who want help with bear/moose management issues
  - Problem animals around fish camps and cabins
  - Predation on moose calves in hunting areas around villages
  - Avoid having to implement more aerial wolf control
  - Convince people to use more selective methods in dealing with problem bears
- ⊙ Provide examples of management situations that might be addressed with bear trapping
- ⊙ Promote discussion among ACs, the public, the Board about how trapping could be used to help manage black bears

## Policy Considerations

- ◎ Draft Bear Policy is before the Board.
  - Trapping not intended to provide additional opportunity for harvest—it is intended as a management tool
  - Focus trapping into small areas where it is likely to solve existing problems, not create new ones

## Practical Considerations if the Board Authorizes Open Trapping Seasons

- ◎ Methods and Means
- ◎ Bag limit—any black bear
- ◎ Incidentally Caught brown/grizzly bears
- ◎ Nonresident participation
- ◎ Age Limit
- ◎ Same-day-airborne
- ◎ Uncaptured brown/grizzly bears near traps
- ◎ Periodic trap check requirement

## Practical Considerations (con't)

- ⊙ Bait-site/trap site considerations
- ⊙ Commercial Use
- ⊙ Controlled Use Areas
- ⊙ Conservation Concerns
- ⊙ Human Safety Concerns
- ⊙ Land Status

## Units Under Consideration, Seasons

- ⊙ GMUs--with history of proposals for bear trapping
  - Unit 12, that portion north of the Alaska Highway and west of the Taylor Highway
  - Unit 16B
  - Unit 19A
  - Unit 19D
  - Unit 20E
  - Unit 21
  - Unit 25D, outside the Dalton Highway Corridor
- ⊙ April 15 – June 30 and July 1 – Oct 15
- ⊙ Trappers must register with ADF&G or registration permit required, may be closed by emergency order when xx brown bears are incidentally taken.

## Areas Under Consideration

- ◎ Yukon Flats, McGrath, and middle Kuskokwim has been the focus of discussion, but Department worked with other ACs who also have concerns (e.g. 20C, 12-20E).
  - Areas are large--intended to become smaller
  - Smaller areas described in regulation?
  - Smaller areas established under permit conditions?

## Salvage Requirement

- ◎ Default
  - Hides only
  - Meat can be sold
- ◎ Recommend
  - Either meat or hide
  - Meat cannot be sold
- ◎ Considered
  - No salvage requirements

## Methods and Means

### ⊙ Default

- All snares, leg-hold traps
- Firearms (rimfire and centerfire)
- Archery

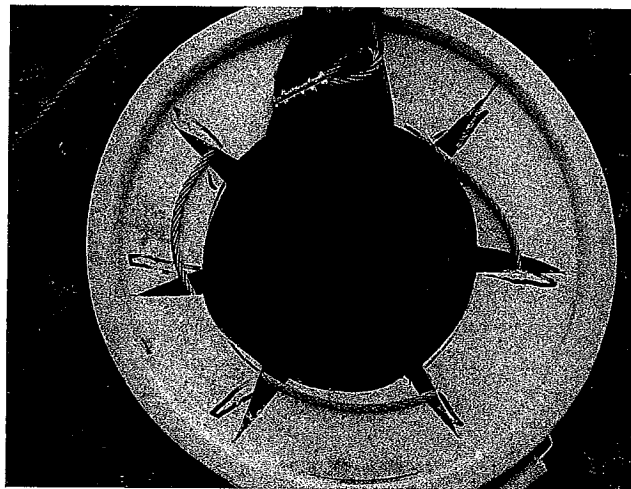
### ⊙ Recommend

- Bucket foot snares--selectivity, non-target catch
- Centerfire firearms-archery not likely in rural areas

### ⊙ Considered

- Archery and Muzzleloader – this would entail developing minimum equipment standards similar to those used in big game hunts

## The Bucket Snare



## Bucket Snare-Description/Use

- ⊙ Adaptation/modification of Aldrich foot-snare
- ⊙ Selective, humane, efficient, and cost effective
- ⊙ Much better benefit/unit effort than hunting
- ⊙ Very little bait used or clean-up necessary
- ⊙ Positive results in Unit 16B pilot program
  - 139 black bears captured
  - 15 non-target brown bears captured
  - 12 brown bears released unharmed
  - Little (minor swelling) to no foot injury to bears caught

## Bag Limit

- ⊙ Default—must be defined by Board
- ⊙ Recommend—any bear
  - Note: although bucket snares are quite selective, depending on how they are set, some females or cubs will be taken

## Incidentally Caught Brown Bears

- ◎ Default
  - Remain property of the state
- ◎ Recommend
  - Remain property of the state unless moose management goals can't be achieved
- ◎ Considered
  - Allow trappers to keep brown bears
  - Harvested bears need to be skinned and hide and skull delivered to the department

## Nonresident Participation

- ◎ Default
  - Residents and non-residents
- ◎ Options
  - Residents and non-residents (when a nonresident is accompanied by a resident over the age of 16 who is registered to trap bears)
  - Confounded by how incidentally caught brown/grizzly bears and protective or young bears are handled
  - Residents only
  - Require guide for nonresidents



## Minimum Age

- ⊙ Default
  - No minimum age
- ⊙ Recommend
  - Age limit--16 years and older

## Same-day Airborne Shooting of Black Bears

- ⊙ Default
  - Same-day airborne permitted for trapping
- ⊙ Recommend
  - Allow same-day airborne, greater than 300 feet of aircraft

## Uncaptured Brown Bears Near Traps

### ⊙ Default

- Not allowed to be legally taken, except DLP

### ⊙ Recommend

- Allow protective or dependent bears to be killed if within xxx distance of trap

## Trap Check Requirement

### ⊙ Default

- No requirement

### ⊙ Recommend

- Every 2 days

Note: Department does not recommend trap check intervals for other trapping in winter—primarily for safety concerns

### Black Bear Bait Site Registration Trapping Permit Recommendations

- ⦿ Must register with the department
- ⦿ Must be clearly marked
- ⦿ Must be cleaned up after use
- ⦿ Must be away from public roads, trails and railroad, and houses or permanent dwellings, businesses and schools, and campgrounds and public recreation facilities
- ⦿ Only biodegradable materials can be used for bait

### Other Black Bear Trapping Recommendations

- ⦿ Default
  - Trappers can receive payment for taking people on traplines
  - must report harvest of incidentally taken brown bears within 5 days
- ⦿ Cub black bears and sows with cubs may be taken

## Commercial Use

### ⦿ Default

- Trappers can receive payment for taking people on traplines

## Controlled Use Areas

⦿ Technically, the following areas will be open for the use of mechanized vehicles for bear trapping (current regulations only apply to hunting)—probably not a major issue.

- Glacier Mountain CUA
- Ladue River CUA
- Upper Kuskokwim CUA
- Holitna - Hoholitna CUA

## Conservation Issues

- ◎ ADF&G does not anticipate conservation issues with black bears or with brown/grizzly bears, even if the Board opens large areas to trapping.
  - Number of bears taken will be relatively small
  - Brown/grizzly bears much more resilient to harvest than previously thought—bears can tolerate higher percentage harvest than ungulates (where predation occurs)
  - Relatively few people will participate
  - Harvest cap on brown/grizzly bears
  - Reporting/sealing requirements for brown/grizzly bears

## Human Safety Concerns

- ◎ ADF&G does not consider this a major issue—probably similar to hunting brown/grizzly bears
  - Bucket snares are selective for black bears
  - Bear snaring clinics
  - Age limit—could be raised if Board thinks 16 is too young

## Land Status

- ◎ Parts of some units include Regional Village Corporation Lands, NPS and USFWS lands
- ◎ Regional Corporation—access for non-shareholders
- ◎ NPS lands in 20E and 19D
  - No intention to allow bear trapping—no villages, no benefit
- ◎ Yukon Flats
  - USFWS supports Yukon Flats Moose Management Plan including reducing predation on moose—more discussion needed with Service

## Status of Current Proposal

- ◎ Amended by the Board at October 2010 meeting—Units 16 and 19D removed from proposal and proposal deferred to March 2012 (Interior) meeting in Fairbanks to stay in existing Board cycle