



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Central/Southwest

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October 11, 2016

An Agenda Change Request (ACR) has been submitted to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.015(a), Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bears, in Game Management Units 7 and 15.

With respect to the board's ACR acceptance criteria (5 AAC 92.005):

- (A) The department is unaware of any conservation concerns that require immediate board action to address a biological concern or a loss of hunting opportunity for black bears in Units 7 and 15.
- (B) The department is unaware of any error in regulation.
- (C) The department is unaware of any unforeseen effects of regulations that should be addressed in a change to a regulation.

The department is unaware of any conservation concerns, errors in regulation, or unforeseen effects of regulations. The board has not yet determined if there are customary and traditional uses of black bears in that portion of Unit 15C that is outside the Anchorage–Matsu–Kenai Peninsula Nonsubsistence Area.

The department is aware of the concerns that a possible reduction in bear numbers has occurred in the identified area, but does not have any biological information to confirm the reports. According to the ACR, changes in the bear population were not apparent until the fall of 2015. While overall numbers of black bears have likely decreased along the coastal fringe, no survey data are available to assess if a decline has occurred. Black bear sightings are common in alpine habitat throughout most of this area during fall goat surveys conducted by department staff. The department is initiating a research project on black bears in 2017 that may provide more insight into black bear population dynamics in this area.

Black bears are an important big game animal for harvest throughout Unit 15 (299 bears harvested annually from RY2010–RY2014) and subunit 15C accounts for the majority of harvest (61%–80% from RY2010–RY2014) in Unit 15. Black bear harvest in Unit 15C peaked during RY2010 when 325 bears were taken. During RY2014, the harvest was 118 bears (a 64% reduction).

Black bears are also taken in the southern portion of Unit 7, where approximately 14 black bears were taken annually from RY2010–RY2014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Dale".

Bruce Dale, Director

Division of Wildlife Conservation