



Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Headquarters

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An Agenda Change Request (ACR 3) has been submitted to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.055(a)(4) Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep. The proponent is asking the board to close the sheep season in Unit 19C for two years or shorten the season.

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

- A. The department is unaware of any error in regulation.
- B. The department is unaware of any effects of regulations that were unforeseen when the regulation was adopted.
- C. There may be a biological concern if existing regulations remain in place, although ADF&G does have emergency order authority to close seasons if necessary. The Unit 19C sheep population experienced a large decline in sheep in 2019. It also likely experienced a large decline in 2020, although we were unable to survey this summer. Due to biological concerns, the RY20 winter hunt (RS380) was closed by emergency order. In addition, there was a very poor lamb cohort in 2013 and those sheep would be 8 years old in RY21. Combined, these effects suggest few full curl rams will be available in RY21 and hunting will be poor.
- D. The department is unaware of any unforeseen or unexpected events that would otherwise restrict or reduce a reasonable opportunity for customary and traditional wildlife uses as defined in AS 16.05.258(f).
- E. The department is unaware of any unexpected resource situations that would cause a biologically allowable resource harvest to be precluded by delayed regulatory action.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for sheep in Unit 19, and an amount reasonably necessary of 1-5 sheep. There is a youth only hunt from August 1-5 and a fall hunt administered by general season harvest ticket from August 10 – September 20. There is also a registration permit hunt (RS380) in Unit 19C with a bag limit of one sheep with $\frac{3}{4}$ -curl horn or smaller; excluding rams with both tips broken, lambs, and ewes with lambs during Oct 1–Apr. 30; the structure of this hunt provides subsistence opportunity according to the pattern of customary and traditional uses. However, this hunt did not open in RY20 due to concerns that harvest of ewes and young rams would not be biologically sustainable while this population is at low numbers.

Sheep seasons in Unit 19C were discussed at the March 2020 Board of Game meeting in Fairbanks. The board considered Proposal 52 which requested to change the nonresident sheep hunts in Units 20 remainder and 19C to drawing permit hunts and limit the allocation of nonresident permits to 50 permits for each hunt. Residents would continue to hunt under harvest ticket or registration permit (RS380) in Unit 19C and under harvest tickets in Unit 20 remainder. The proposal failed.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting for Unit 19 regulations is during winter/spring of 2022/2023. If the board accepts this ACR, the department recommends the proposal come before the board at its March 2021 meeting in Fairbanks to allow for more public input.

Sincerely,



Eddie Grasser
Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation