

PROPOSAL 158

5 AAC 85.055. Hunting seasons and bag limits for Dall sheep.

Allow nonresident sheep hunting by drawing permit only in portions of Units 25A, 26B, and 26C as follows:

Limit nonresident sheep hunters within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge:

Units 25a, 26B, and 26C within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Guide Concession Areas 1 -16

Nonresident Hunters

**One ram with full curl horn or larger
by drawing permit only, every four
regulatory years; up to 7 permits may
be issued** [ONE RAM WITH FULL CURL HORN
OR LARGER EVERY FOUR REGULATORY YEARS]

Aug 10 – Sept 20

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

Federal management of sheep within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, allowing feds to manage a state resource.

Recent sheep declines are a growing concern for federal land managers. Within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), all guides have exclusive concession areas, and the number of sheep hunting clients and sheep those clients can harvest is determined by the approved federal guide concession prospectus application submitted by the guide.

For example, if a guide has a concession within ANWR and he or she is approved to run seven sheep clients and harvest a maximum of seven sheep annually, that agreement is within the contract that runs for ten years. The refuge manager has no means to change that contract and lower that allocation when sheep are in decline and there are conservation concerns. All the refuge manager can do is recommend to the guides with concessions and 10-year contracts to voluntarily take less sheep. And while some guides do voluntarily take fewer sheep hunting clients and fewer sheep, some do not.

This essentially leaves sheep conservation decisions in the hands of guides who charge upwards of \$25,000 for a guided sheep hunt.

State Management of our Wildlife Resources

For a long time now, the Board of Game and the department have rightly been decrying “federal overreach” of our state game management and have pushed for state management of our wildlife resources on federal lands. But the Board of Game and the department are entirely hypocritical when it comes to allowing the feds to manage our sheep on federal refuge and National Park Service lands. The board and department are perfectly willing to have the feds manage our sheep within ANWR.

As sheep populations decline, the board needs to take control of sheep management on National Park Service and refuge lands and set allocations for nonresident sheep hunters. If the feds believe that current

allowable allocations of sheep to guides with exclusive concession contracts under the federal system are too high, yet have no way of lowering those allocations, it is a problem that the state needs to address.

There are sixteen exclusive guide concession areas within ANWR. The wildlife resources in each of those areas belong to the state and should be managed by the state! The Board of Game needs to take control of sheep management within ANWR and stop allowing the feds to manage our declining sheep resource.

There should be no opposition by guides to draw permits within exclusive concession areas, as each guide with an exclusive concession is guaranteed the clients who draw for that area. It is our understanding that most of the current federally approved sheep allocations to guides within ANWR are six to seven sheep. We suggest “up to” language as high as those current allocations, that would allow the department to manage sheep allocations within ANWR as they best see fit, so when sheep are in decline, allocations to nonresidents can be adjusted under state management regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska

(HQ-F23-017)
