

PROPOSAL 144

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

Allow nonresident sheep hunting by drawing permit only in portions of Units 24A and 26B and reduce the season as follows:

Limit nonresident sheep hunters in Units 24A and 26B west of the Sagavanirktok River to draw-only hunts with a limited allocation and shorten the season.

Unit 24A within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area, Unit 24A Remainder, and Unit 26B west of the Sagavanirktok River:

Nonresidents

One ram with full curl horn or larger by drawing permit only, every four regulatory years; 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, federal sheep hunting closure

Just prior to the 2022 sheep hunting season, the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) closed all sheep hunting on federal lands in Unit 24A and 26B west of the Sagavanirktok River for two years based on conservation concerns for the sheep population.

This temporary closure will be reviewed in two years at which time the FSB will determine whether to open sheep hunting opportunity again for both federally qualified subsistence users (FQU) and non-federally-qualified users (NFQU).

Much of this closure area is within the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA) where bowhunters are able to access sheep country from the road and is very popular with resident sheep hunters.

Guides have taken advantage of no limits on nonresident sheep hunters in these areas by booking more hunts for nonresident sheep hunters who want to attempt to harvest a Dall sheep ram with a bow. Nonresident sheep hunters are now harvesting a bit over 40% of the rams in these units, and that impact was part of why the FSB shut down sheep hunting.

Nonresident sheep hunters need to be limited across the state to draw-only hunts with a limited allocation and that especially needs to happen in these units. Limiting nonresident sheep hunters now sends a message to the FSB that the Board of Game is willing to take action on reducing overall harvests on declining sheep populations by non-Alaskans and will go a long way in encouraging the FSB to again open these lands to sheep hunting by both FQU and NFQU. If nothing is done to limit nonresident sheep hunters, it is doubtful the FSB will open sheep hunting at all in the near future to NFQU.

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska

(HQ-F23-016)
