

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Comments

Wildlife Proposal WP26-02

This proposal would restrict the taking big game in Game Management Units (GMU) 1–5 to between the beginning of civil twilight in the morning until the end of civil twilight in the evening.

Position

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) **OPPOSES** this proposal. The Alaska Board of Game (BOG) met January 23-27, 2026 at their Southeast Region meeting and voted down a similar proposal (Proposal 1), Passage of WP26-02 would now cause misalignment between state and federal regulations. If the proposal passes, ADF&G recommends the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) establish a single location from which to publish civil twilight hours. This would help alleviate burden on the hunter in attempting to determine which community to base legal twilight hours.

Background

Currently, there are no legal shooting hours established in Alaska for big game under state or federal regulations. There are potential safety and ethical issues related to legal shooting hours, and state regulations prohibit the use of artificial light and night vision. The intent behind this proposal is to prohibit hunting at night when animals are hard to see, it is difficult to know what is beyond your target, and difficult to determine point of impact without some sort of assistance from light, night vision, forward-looking infrared, etc.

Many other states have laws that prohibit hunting between 30 minutes after sunset until 30 minutes before sunrise. These regulations are typically for big game however, some states have different shooting hours for small game and waterfowl. For example, Texas allows hunting for predators at night but only allows taking of big game from a half hour before sunrise to sunset. Similarly, federal waterfowl regulations in Alaska allow hunting from 30 minutes before sunrise until sunset. States such as Missouri have different shooting hours depending on species; for example, turkey hunting is allowed from a half hour before sunrise to 1 p.m., while deer hunting is allowed from a half hour before sunrise until a half hour after sunset. States with regulations on shooting hours choose a central location to base shooting time on and publish those times in the regulations. A single location is chosen because the true sunrise and sunset times differ depending on the location in the state. Shooting times vary but many states have regulations around legal shooting hours for big game.

Civil twilight offers slightly more shooting time compared to the other states who use a half hour before and after sunset for legal shooting times. For example, during the opening day of deer season on August 1 for most Southeast communities, civil twilight lasts 50 minutes, compared to the shortest amount of twilight in October with 38 minutes (times based on Wrangell Alaska, Table 1). These times are longer than more typical times of 30 minutes before and after sunrise and sunset in other states. However, other states are lower in latitude and have a shorter period of civil twilight.

The National Weather Service describes and defines twilight as the following:

In its most general sense, twilight is the period of time before sunrise and after sunset, in which the atmosphere is partially illuminated by the sun, being neither totally dark nor completely lit. However, there are three categories of twilight that are defined by how far the sun is below the horizon. Civil twilight begins in the morning, or ends in the evening, when the geometric center of the sun is 6 degrees below the horizon. Therefore, morning civil twilight begins when the geometric center of the sun is 6 degrees below the horizon and ends at sunrise. Evening civil twilight begins at sunset and ends when the geometric center of the sun is 6 degrees below the horizon. Under these conditions, absent fog or other restrictions, the brightest stars and planets can be seen, the horizon and terrestrial objects can be discerned, and in many cases, artificial lighting is not needed. Civil Twilight is also known as Civil Dawn and Civil Dusk.

Table 1.-Civil twilight times for Wrangell Alaska during the 2025 Southeast deer season.

Date	1-Aug	1-Sep	1-Oct	1-Nov	1-Dec	31-Dec
Morning	4:12 am -	5:25 am -	6:28 am -	7:32 am -	7:27 am -	7:50 am -
	5:02 am	6:05 am	7:06 am	8:13 am	8:15 am	8:39 am
	50 minutes	40 minutes 30 seconds	38 minutes	41 minutes	47 minutes	48 minutes 30 seconds
Evening	9:12 pm -	7:56 pm -	6:35 pm -	5:17 pm -	3:27 pm -	3:31 pm -
	10:02 pm	8:36 pm	7:12 pm	5:57 pm	4:14 pm	4:20 pm
	50 minutes	40 minutes 30 seconds	38 minutes	41 minutes	47 minutes	48 minutes 30 seconds
Total time	1hr 40min	1hr 21min	1hr 16min	1hr 22min	1hr 34min	1hr 37min

Impact on Federally Qualified Users

If adopted, impact to FQUs is expected to be minimal. Light necessary to shoot a big game animal past civil twilight in the evening to before civil twilight in the morning would be difficult to identify an animal and shoot without the aid of artificial light, which is currently illegal. Little opportunity, if any, would be lost if this proposal were adopted.

Impact on Other Users

If adopted, there is not likely to be an impact on other users as this is a methods and means restriction that only applies to federally qualified users.

Conservation Issues

No conservation issues are anticipated with the adoption of this regulation.

Enforcement Issues

The authors of this proposal are mainly concerned with the potential for poaching at night. Current federal regulations prohibit the use of artificial light to aid in the taking of game. The use of artificial light to take game can be difficult to prove in court. However, creating designated shooting hours could simplify law enforcement's burden in determining the legal pursuit of game.