

WP14-40

Date: March 27, 2013

Name: Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Address: Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503

Phone: (907) 786-3888

Fax: (907) 786-3898

1. **What regulation do you wish to change? (Include management unit number and species. Quote the current regulation if known. If you are proposing a new regulation, please state “new regulation.”)**

Unit 23 – Brown Bear

*Unit 23 – 1 bear by State registration Aug.1 – May 31
permit only.*

___.26(n)(23)(iii) You may hunt brown bear by State registration permit in lieu of a resident tag in Unit 26A if you have a State registration permit prior to hunting. Aircraft may not be used in any manner for brown bear hunting under the authority of a brown bear State registration permit, including transportation of hunters, bear, or parts of bear. However, this does not apply to transportation of bear hunters or bear parts by regularly scheduled flights to and between communities by carriers that normally provide scheduled service to this area, nor does it apply to transportation of aircraft to or between publicly owned airports. See page 20 for bear sealing requirements.

2. **How should the new regulation read? (Write the regulation the way you would like to see it written.)**

Unit 23 – Brown Bear

*Unit 23 – 1 bear ~~by State registration~~ Aug.1 – May 31
~~permit only.~~*

___.26(n)(23)(iii) ~~You may hunt brown bear by State registration permit in lieu of a resident tag if you have obtained a State registration permit prior to hunting.~~ Aircraft may not be used in any manner for brown bear hunting ~~under the authority of a brown bear State registration permit,~~ including transportation of hunters, bears, or parts of bears; however, this does not apply to transportation of bear hunters or bear parts by regularly scheduled flights to and between communities by carriers that normally provide scheduled service to this area, nor does it apply to transportation of aircraft to or between publicly owned airports.

3. **Why should this regulation change be made?**

The Council wishes to eliminate the requirement for a State registration permit to take brown bear in Unit 23 on Federal lands in order to align State and Federal regulations on the taking of the species. Removing the State permit requirement would ease confusion about hunting regulations for communities on Federal lands in the Unit so that brown bear can be harvested more opportunistically without the concern of having to have a State permit for such harvest.

4. What impact will this change have on wildlife populations?

The season and harvest limit would remain the same under this proposed change, so there should be little impact to the brown bear population of the area. Eliminating the State permit requirement will merely help align State and Federal regulations.

5. How will this change affect subsistence uses?

This change would increase the opportunity for hunters to harvest brown bear if encountered while hunting other species of wildlife or as other opportunities arise while out in the field. Eliminating the State permit requirement would allow more flexibility to hunt brown bears opportunistically without the need to secure a permit in advance.

6. How will this change affect other uses, such as sport/recreational and commercial?

The proposed change should have no effect as it would only serve to align with the State for residents and non-residents alike.

WP14-41

Name: Ken Adkisson
 Organization: National Park Service
 Address: PO Box 220, Nome, AK 99762
 Phone: (907) 443-6104
 Fax: (907) 443-6139
 E-mail: ken_adkisson@nps.gov

1. What regulation do you wish to change? (*Include management unit number and species. Quote the current regulation if known. If you are proposing a new regulation, please state "new regulation."*)

Season and harvest limits for muskox in GMU 23SW: eliminate the language related to the cow hunt, and add specific language authorizing the federal manager to restrict the number of federal permits to be issued.

CUSTOMARY & TRADITIONAL USE DETERMINATION	HARVEST LIMITS	OPEN SEASONS
MUSKOX		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 23 South of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drain-age —Rural residents of Unit 23 south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drainage. 	Unit 23 south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drainage—1 bull by State or Federal registration permit (FX2302) Or 1 muskox of muskox by State or Federal permit. <i>Federal public lands are closed to the harvest of muskox except by federally qualified subsistence users. Annual harvest quotas and any needed closures for Unit 23 will be announced by the superintendent of the Western Arctic National Parklands. In consultation with ADF&G and BLM.</i>	Aug.1–Dec.31 Jan. 1–Mar. 15

2. How should the new regulation read? (*Write the regulation the way you would like to see it written.*)

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drainage.	<p>Of 1 muskox by State or Federal permit.</p> <p><i>Federal public lands are closed to the harvest of muskox except by federally qualified subsistence users. Annual harvest quotas, <u>the number of federal permits to be issued,</u> and any needed closures for Unit 23 will be announced by the Superintendent of the Western Arctic National Parklands, in consultation with ADF&G and BLM.</i></p>	Jan. 1– Mar. 15
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3. Why should this regulation change be made?

Emerging conservation concerns since 2010, prompted by significant declines in several muskox population parameters (abundance, mature bull to cow ratios, and recruitment), led to major adjustments in hunt management for the 2012-2013 hunt year that are likely to persist for the next several years. These adjustments include large reductions in the allowable harvest, the elimination of a cow hunt, and the return to State Tier II hunts in all but one of the Seward Peninsula muskox hunt areas. As a result, the existing federal regulations no longer reflect the actual hunt requirements as developed through a series of Emergency Orders and Special Actions, and additionally no longer align with existing state regulations are, consequently leading to potential confusion for the hunters and difficulties for managers in flexibly adapting hunt requirements to the changing biological conditions. The proposed changes would reduce confusion and improve management flexibility.

4. What impact will this change have on wildlife populations?

Eliminating the cow season and basing the overall allowable harvest on a conservative 1-2 percent of the total Seward Peninsula muskox population compared to the previous 8% of the population in the hunt area as had been applied in some hunt areas over the past several years will help rebuild the population. At the same time, allowing for a harvest of up to 10% of the mature bulls in a hunt area will help rebuild the mature bulls to cows ratio. Limiting the number of federal permits to be issued to a small number above the allowable harvest in order to compensate for lack of hunter success will aid in preventing a situation resulting in overharvesting.

5. How will this change affect subsistence uses?

The necessary reduction in allowable harvest levels due to conservation concerns will translate into decreased subsistence opportunity. However, increased regulatory flexibility will help managers maintain and provide for subsistence uses where and when they can. Over time, as the population parameters improve, opportunity can be expanded.

6. How will this change affect other uses, such as sport/recreational and commercial?

Over the short term, the proposed changes will not affect other users since the proposed changes only affect federally eligible users and do not add to any existing restrictions. The State has already revised its regulations and management to the effect of eliminating the drawing hunt, eliminating the cow hunt, and returning to Tier II for the Seward Peninsula in all hunt areas except GMU 22E. Over the long term, as the population rebuilds it can mean increased opportunity for other user groups.