

Proposing Changes to Federal Subsistence Hunting and Trapping Regulations

Winter 2025 Council Training



Ways to change Federal subsistence regulations

Special Action Requests

- For short-term changes to regulations
- Can be submitted at any time
- Only for cases when there have been unusual or significant changes that need addressing sooner than the next regulatory cycle

Proposals

- For changes to codified regulations
- Must be submitted by the annual deadline
 - Odd years: Wildlife (April 4, 2025)
 - Even years: Fish
- Can apply to a broader set of regulations and contexts

To submit proposals:

Public

- Mail or hand deliver to the Office of Subsistence Management at 1011 E Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503
- Hand deliver it to OSM staff at any Regional Advisory Council meeting
- Submit proposal through the www.regulations.gov portal

Councils

- Council members suggest proposals during winter meetings
- Councils must make a motion and vote to submit proposal on the record
- OSM staff draft proposal and submit

Questions? Contact OSM at Subsistence@ios.doi.gov or (800) 478-1456

Proposals must include:

- Your name, contact information, and (if applicable) organization
- Which regulation(s) you wish to change. Include management unit number and species. Quote the current regulation if known
- How you would like the changed regulation(s) to be written
- An explanation of why this change should be made
- Any additional information that you believe will help the Federal Subsistence Board evaluate the proposed change

Questions? Contact OSM at Subsistence@ios.doi.gov or (800) 478-1456

Why may a proposal be invalid?

- Proposals may be *invalidated* if they pertain to areas, species, or anything else that are outside the Federal Subsistence Board's jurisdiction, such as:
 - Harvest of halibut, marine mammals, migratory birds, or plants
 - Use of non-Federal lands (i.e. State or Native lands)
 - Commercial fishing in marine waters

Wildlife Proposals may request changes to:

- Subparts C and D of Subsistence Management Regulations in the Code for Federal Regulations (CFR)
- Subpart C includes:
 - § ____.24 – Customary and Traditional Use determinations
- Subpart D includes:
 - § ____.25 – Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife and shellfish: general regulations
 - § ____.26 – Subsistence taking of wildlife

Specifically, Wildlife Proposals may request changes to:

- Harvest limits (# of animals, sex restrictions, antler/horn restrictions)
- Season lengths/dates
- Methods and means (e.g., snare, baiting, bow/arrow)
- Permit requirements
- Closures / restrictions to non-federally qualified users
- Restrictions to prioritize harvest among federally qualified subsistence users (§804)
- Establish new hunts
- Change hunt area boundaries or Unit boundaries
- Recognize customary and traditional use of a resource by a community
- Other general regulations (sealing requirements, definitions, salvage requirements)

Thanks and Any Questions?



Would anyone like an example?

Example: Changing Harvest Limits

WP24-25: Wester Interior Council requested that the sheep harvest limit in Units 24A and 24B be reduced from 3 sheep to 1 sheep and that harvest be restricted to rams only due to conservation concerns. (*Adopted*)

Proposed regulation:

Unit 24—Sheep

Units 24A and 24B (excluding Anaktuvuk Pass residents), that portion within the Gates of the Arctic National Park, ~~3 sheep, no more than one of which may be a ewe~~ 1 ram, by Federal registration permit only, with exception for residents of Alatna and Allakaket who will report by a National Park Service community harvest system Aug. 1–Apr. 30.

Example: Changing seasons

WP24-19: Native Village of Kwinhagak requested that the fall Moose season in Unit 18 be extended an additional 15 days, stating that subsistence needs were not being met before end of season due to changing climate and noting there was increased reliance on moose as caribou have become less available. (*Adopted*)

Proposed Regulation

Unit 18—Moose

Unit 18 – south of the Eek River drainage and north of the Goodnews River drainage—1 antlered bull by State registration permit

Sep. 1 – ~~Sep. 30~~ Oct. 15

Example: Methods and Means

WP16-70: Resident of Homer requested hunting brown bears over bait be prohibited in Unit 25D, stating concerns for effects of increased hunting on brown bears. (*Rejected*).

Proposed Regulation:

Unit 25D – Brown Bear

Unit 25D – 2 bears every regulatory year

July 1 – June 30

§_____.26(n)(25)(iii)(A) *You may use bait to hunt black bear between April 15 and June 30 and between August 1 and September 25; ~~in Unit 25D you may use bait to hunt brown bear between April 15 and June 30 and between August 1 and September 25;~~ you may use bait to hunt wolves on FWS and BLM lands.*

Example: Permit Requirements

WP24-27: BLM and NPS jointly requested that drawing permits instead of registration permits be required to hunt muskoxen in Units 22 and 23 to reflect how hunts were currently being administered. (*Adopted*).

Proposed regulation:

Unit 23 – Muskox

Unit 23, that portion north and west of the Kobuk River drainage – 1 bull by Aug. 1 – Mar. 15

*State permit or Federal ~~registration~~ **drawing** permit.*

Example: Unit-specific Provisions

WP24-10: Koniag, Inc. and Kodiak NWR jointly requested that the requirement to obtain a State locking tag for brown bears in Unit 8 be eliminated, stating that (1) surrounding GMUs did not have this requirement and that (2) the cost/accessibility of obtaining tags was deterring participation in the hunt and reducing ability to pass on subsistence knowledge. (*Adopted*).

No initial Federal regulation. State regulation requiring locking tags for brown bears applied.

Proposed regulation

Unit 8 – Unit-specific Regulations

You may hunt brown bear in Unit 8 with a Federal registration permit in lieu of a State locking tag if you have obtained a Federal registration permit prior to hunting.

Example: Unit-specific Provisions

WP24-08: Alaska Wildlife Alliance requested that quarter mile trapping and hunting setbacks be established from wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway, stating the structures may concentrate wildlife presence and result in targeted harvest. (*Adopted*).

50 CFR 100.26(n)(7)

(ii) In the following areas, the taking of wildlife for subsistence uses is prohibited or restricted on public lands:

(C) You may not hunt, trap, or take wildlife within a quarter mile of wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway.

Example: Closures/Restrictions

WP24-30/31: Northwest Arctic Council requested that caribou hunting on Federal public lands in Unit 23 be closed to non-federally qualified users from Aug. 1 - Oct. 31, stating that this closure would help address conservation concerns while maintaining a meaningful Federal subsistence priority. (*Adopted with modification*).

Unit 23–Caribou

Unit 23—that portion which includes all drainages north and west of, and including, the Singoalik River drainage— 5 caribou per day by State registration permit as follows:

Bulls may be harvested

July 1–June 30

Cows may be harvested. However, cows accompanied by calves may not be taken July 15–Oct. 14.

July 15–Apr. 30

Federal public lands are closed to caribou hunting from Aug. 1–Oct. 31, except by federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations

Example: §804 Restriction

(prioritization among federally qualified users)

WP24-16: Bristol Bay Council requested that rural residents of Unit 9C be added to the list of communities eligible to harvest caribou in Unit 9E, stating that residents of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek have many generations of customary and traditional use of caribou in this area. *(Adopted)*.

Unit 9E—Caribou

1 bull by Federal registration permit (FC0915) or State permit.

May be announced

*Federal public lands are closed to the taking of caribou except by residents of **Unit 9C**, Unit 9E, Nelson Lagoon, and Sand Point.*

Example: Establish Hunt

WP22-25b: Resident of Alaska requested that a Federal subsistence sheep hunt be established in Unit 7 to provide rural residents of Unit 7 the opportunity to engage in subsistence sheep hunting. (*Adopted with modification*).

Unit 7- Sheep

1 sheep by Federal registration permit. The season may be opened or closed by announcement of the Kenai Wildlife Refuge manager in consultation with ADF&G and the chair of the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council.

~~*No Federal open season*~~

Aug. 10- Sep. 20

Example: Hunt Area Boundaries

WP24-18: Togiak NWR requested that the Nushagak caribou hunt area in Unit 17 be expanded so that the hunt area includes the areas the herd had begun using in recent winters. (*Adopted with modification*).

Unit 17—Caribou

Units 17A and 17C, that portion of 17C south of and including the Tuklung River drainage, 17C south of the Igushik River, and 17A east of the Kanik River and Kulukak Bay—up to 5 caribou by Federal registration permit (FC1702). Aug. 1-Mar. 31

Public lands are closed to the taking of caribou except by federally qualified users unless the population estimate exceeds 900 caribou.

Example: Unit Boundaries

WP24-24: Western Interior Council requested that Unit 19A be divided into two subunits to align Federal and State subunit boundaries, which would reduce regulatory complexity. (*Adopted*).

50 CFR 100.26(n)(19)(i)

*(A) Unit 19A consists of the Kuskokwim River drainage downstream from and including the ~~Moose Creek~~ **George River drainage and downstream from and excluding the Downey Creek drainage**; ~~on the north bank and downstream from and including the Stony River drainage on the south bank, excluding Unit 19B~~;*

(D) Unit 19D consists of the remainder of Unit 19.

*(E) Unit 19E consists of the Kuskokwim River drainage upstream from and excluding the **George River drainage and upstream from and including the Downey Creek drainage***

Example: Customary and Traditional Use Determination

WP24-22: Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council requested that the Board recognize Unit 18 residents' customary and traditional use of muskoxen in the mainland area of Unit 18, which would allow those residents to harvest muskoxen under Federal subsistence regulations if/when a harvestable surplus was available. (*Adopted*).

Customary and Traditional Use Determination—Muskoxen

Unit 18, Nelson Island and Nunivak Island

*No Federal subsistence
priority*

Unit 18, remainder

Rural residents of Unit 18

Example: General Regulations

WP22-33: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission requested that the sealing requirement for black bear in Units 11 and 12 be eliminated, stating that (1) the travel necessary to meet this requirement posed an unnecessary burden and (2) Federal regulations were more stringent than State regulations. *(Adopted)*

§__.26

(j) Sealing of bear skins and skulls. (1) Sealing requirements for bear apply to brown bears taken in all Units, except as specified in this paragraph (j), and black bears of all color phases taken in Units 1-7, ~~11~~13-17, and 20.