

## DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS WP26-01H – NORTHWEST ARCTIC

### Introduction

Please see the WP26-01 master analysis for the Issues, Proponent Statement, Regulatory History, and Discussion and Effects sections.

### Proposed Federal Regulations – Northwest Arctic

#### Muskox

**Note:** The scope of delegated authority for all of the Unit 22 and 23 muskox hunts was standardized via Proposal WP24-27. However, the authority to determine “the method of permit allocation between State and Federal permits” is not necessary for Unit 23, Cape Krusenstern National Monument (CAKR) since National Monuments are closed to anyone hunting under State regulations. Therefore, OSM did not transfer that authority into the unit specific regulations.

OSM also removed the requirement to coordinate with the NPS Regional Office for Unit 23, CAKR and Unit 23, north and west of the Kobuk River drainage. OSM added the BLM Arctic District Office to the entities for coordination for the muskox hunt in Unit 23, north and west of the Kobuk River drainage since BLM has lands in the northwestern corner of Unit 23.

#### **Unit 23—Muskox**

*Unit 23, south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drainage—1 bull by Federal drawing permit or State permit. Aug. 1-Mar. 15.*

***The BLM Anchorage Field Office manager after coordination with ADF&G, OSM, the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, and the Chair of the affected Council(s) is authorized within the regulatory parameters set by the Board, to close the season, determine annual harvest quotas, the number of permits to be issued, and the method of permit allocation between State and Federal permits.***

*Unit 23, Cape Krusenstern National Monument—1 bull by Federal drawing permit. Aug. 1-Mar. 15.*

***The Western Arctic National Parklands superintendent after coordination with ADF&G, OSM, and the Chair of the affected Council(s) is authorized within the regulatory parameters set by the Board, to close the season, determine annual harvest quotas and the number of permits to be issued.***

*Unit 23, that portion north and west of the Kobuk River drainage—1 bull by Aug. 1-Mar. 15  
State permit or Federal drawing permit.*

***The Western Arctic National Parklands superintendent after coordination with ADF&G, OSM, the BLM Arctic District Office, and the Chair of the affected Council(s) is authorized within the regulatory parameters set by the Board, to close the season, determine annual harvest quotas, the number of permits to be issued, and the method of permit allocation between State and Federal permits.***

### Sheep

**Note:** The DAL for sheep in Unit 23 specifies setting harvest limits. However, as the harvest limit for all Unit 23 sheep hunts is “one sheep,” OSM clarified this authority includes setting sex and horn-curl restrictions.

Also, the Unit 23 sheep DAL only specifies coordination with BLM. OSM clarified coordination should be with the BLM Anchorage Field Office.

### **Unit 23—Sheep**

*Unit 23, south of Rabbit Creek, Kiyak Creek, and the Noatak River, and west of the Cutler and Redstone Rivers (Baird Mountains)—1 sheep by Federal registration permit.* *May be announced.*

*Federal public lands are closed to the taking of sheep except by federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.*

***The Western Arctic National Parklands superintendent after coordination with ADF&G, OSM, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, BLM Anchorage Field Office, and the Chair of the affected Council(s) is authorized within the regulatory parameters set by the Board, to set season dates and set or adjust annual harvest quotas and harvest limits, including sex and horn-curl restrictions.***

*Unit 23, north of Rabbit Creek, Kiyak Creek, and the Noatak River, and west of the Aniuk River (DeLong Mountains)—1 sheep by Federal registration permit.* *May be announced.*

***The Western Arctic National Parklands superintendent after coordination with ADF&G, OSM, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, BLM Anchorage Field Office, and the Chair of the affected Council(s) is authorized within the regulatory parameters set by the Board, to set season dates and set or***

*adjust annual harvest quotas and harvest limits, including sex and horn-curl restrictions.*

*Unit 23, remainder (Schwotka Mountains) except for that portion within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve—1 sheep by Federal registration permit. May be announced.*

*The Western Arctic National Parklands superintendent after coordination with ADF&G, OSM, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, BLM Anchorage Field Office, and the Chair of the affected Council(s) is authorized within the regulatory parameters set by the Board, to set season dates and set or adjust annual harvest quotas and harvest limits, including sex and horn-curl restrictions.*

## **OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

One alternative considered for sheep in Unit 23 was to delegate authority to the Federal in-season manager to “close and reopen Federal public lands to nonsubsistence hunting.” Currently, Federal public lands in the Baird Mountains hunt area are closed to sheep hunting by non-federally qualified users, while the Schwotka and DeLong mountains hunt areas do not have codified closures. Wildlife Closure Review WCR26-18 is reviewing the Baird Mountains closure, and OSM’s current recommendation is to rescind the closure, in part, because the WEAR Superintendent has authority to close Federal lands to non-federally qualified users if necessary.

However, this authority was not transferred to unit specific regulations in the submitted proposal because it is boilerplate language contained in every DAL, and closure authority is more appropriately retained by the Board (see Issue section in WP26-01 master analysis). OSM did not further consider this alternative because the State sheep hunt has been closed since 2014.

## **OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

**Support** Proposal WP26-01h.

### **Justification**

See the WP26-01 master analysis.