



BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS ALASKA CHAPTER



BOG Arctic and Western Regions Proposal Comments – Fall 2009

Proposal 9 – 5 AAC 92.085(8)(D) Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions

OPPOSE

Hunting opportunity for caribou in Unit 22 is *not* limited by lack of access, as this proposal states. If this proposal were to pass, both resident *and non-resident* hunters would be able to land and shoot caribou during the fall season the same day they have been airborne.

We can find no reasonable justification to allow such a practice.

Proposal 34 – 5 AAC 92.990 (17) Modify definition of edible meat

OPPOSE

We strongly oppose passage of this proposal.

It would allow unethical resident and non-resident hunters to skirt the intent of Alaska's wanton waste law and incompletely salvage the meat of a big game animal by falsely claiming it was somehow diseased.

It would prevent adequate enforcement of Alaska's wanton waste law. Alaska Wildlife Troopers does not have the enforcement personnel or funding to investigate and prove claims of animals not harvested due to disease.

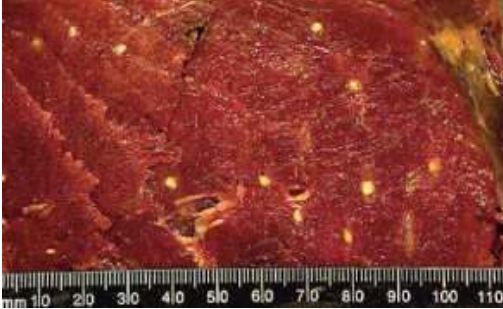
Ethical hunters, who indeed would normally salvage all the edible meat according to the current definition, could be confused (if this proposal were to pass) as to what is truly a disease that would make an animal inedible or pose a risk to humans, resulting in an increase of wanton waste of game meat.

Passage of this proposal could lead to a statewide definition of edible meat that would only compound the above concerns.

AK BHA understands that there are instances where diseased game animals are taken, and that there are some diseases that, while not prevalent, can and do pose a risk to humans. However, most diseases found in game animals don't pose a risk to humans, and

for most of those that do, humans can prevent or eliminate that risk using simple protections like wearing gloves when butchering, and thoroughly cooking the meat.

The *taenia krabbei* muscle cysts pictured below can be common in caribou and moose populations. They do not pose a risk to humans, and the meat from animals with this “disease” can be eaten dried or uncooked.



ADFG Photo

Sometimes, hunters who see these muscle tapeworm cysts incorrectly deem the meat unfit for human consumption, and if this proposal were to pass it would essentially legalize wanton waste of meat that commonly contains the *taenia krabbei* cysts.

Where there are genuine cases of wildlife with a disease such as brucellosis, that can indeed pose a risk to humans, the solution doesn't lie in a blanket allowance to leave all the meat in the field; **the solution lies in educating hunters how to gauge if an animal may be diseased before shooting, and how to protect themselves and their families after the fact if they do shoot a diseased animal.**

AK BHA is frankly skeptical with the wording of this proposal by the Arctic Advisory Committee that alludes that common-sense protections from a wide array of wildlife diseases (such as *Trichinella* and *Tularemia*), such as wearing protective gloves or cooking meat thoroughly, are not real options among the subsistence hunters in northwest Alaska.

Bear meat is known to commonly have the *trichinella spiralis* roundworm, and thanks to education efforts most all hunters know that bear meat must be thoroughly cooked to render it completely safe for human consumption. This proposal, if passed, would make it legal to just leave all bear meat because it is “diseased,” based not on the premise that some hunters *can't* protect themselves, but because those hunters **won't** take adequate precautions when cooking bear meat.

Finally, we want to also address the issue brought up in this proposal of shooting animals because they are believed to be diseased, under the premise of either a “mercy” killing or to prevent spread of that disease. It seems there are contrary arguments within this proposal. On the one hand, this proposal seems to argue that it is difficult if not impossible to always tell if a caribou is diseased, and such a thing is only determined upon butchering. On the other hand, this proposal argues that it is often easy to determine diseased caribou and that tradition dictates those animals should be killed and left there completely unsalvaged. What is the real truth here?

This proposal from the Arctic Advisory Committee goes against everything we believe hunting should stand for, and if passed would not only lead to all the negative

consequences listed earlier, but would further a divide within Alaska among groups of hunters. In the words of Selawik elder Daniel Sipahk Foster Sr., *“You don’t play with any of the animals. You don’t kill them and leave them. You must get only what you need.”*

We all must support and adhere to the basic credo of what hunting is really about, and our laws regarding wanton waste must apply to all hunters statewide.

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