



Brown Bear Hunting by Local Residents in Unit 23

What You Should Know



This is only a brief summary of some of the key regulations for brown bear hunting in the Northwest Arctic region.

Please consult the full regulations if you have questions or if you hunt in another area.

In Northwest Alaska (Game Management Unit 23), the options for brown bear hunting by local residents vary by what paperwork you need before hunting, what you're required to bring home from your hunt, and where you can hunt. The three hunts to choose from are the state general hunt, state subsistence hunt, and federal subsistence hunt. The general hunt is geared toward those who are primarily interested in a bear hide/skull. The subsistence hunts are designed for those seeking bear meat for human food. These differences are outlined below.

When can I hunt (season dates)?

State general and subsistence hunts: Aug. 1 - May 31

Federal subsistence hunt: open year-round

What permits do I need to get before hunting?

All hunters ages 18 and up need a hunting license.

A state subsistence registration permit (RB700) is also required for either the state or federal subsistence hunt. You can get one at the Alaska Department of Fish & Game office in Kotzebue.

What lands can I hunt on?

On state and privately-owned lands you have permission to use (including Native Corporation lands), the two state hunts apply.

On most federal lands (USFWS, BLM and some NPS), all three hunts apply.

However, on Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk Valley National Park, and Gates of the Arctic National Park ONLY the federal subsistence regulations apply, and hunting is only open to local residents. No aircraft can be used for brown bear hunting in the federal hunt.

What bears can be harvested?

Up to two brown bears may be harvested per year. There are no size requirements; however no cubs or sows with cubs may be taken.

Brown bears are considered "cubs" in their first and second years of life.

What do I need to bring home (salvage) from a bear?

State general hunt - you must salvage the entire *hide* (claws attached) *and skull*.

You may also bring home the meat if you choose to.

Brown bear meat taken under this hunt can legally be fed to pets/animals.

State or Federal subsistence hunt - you must salvage all *meat* for human consumption.

You may also bring home the hide and/or skull if you choose to.

Brown bear meat taken under a subsistence hunt may not be fed to pets/animals.

What Do I Need To Do After Harvest?

State general hunt - bear hide and skull must be sealed by a designated sealing officer within 30 days.

At time of sealing, the hide must be skinned from the skull and both must be unfrozen.

The sealing officer will record when, where and how the bear was taken, measure the skull, collect a tooth and other samples, and then lock a metal or plastic seal on the hide and skull.

Contact the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (800-478-3420) or the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (442-3241) to get a bear hide sealed.

State or Federal subsistence hunt - you must report the results of your hunt, whether successful or unsuccessful.

Sealing is not required *unless* the hide or skull will be sent in for commercial tanning or otherwise removed from Unit 23.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/selawik>

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In case of emergency: Defense of Life and Property

You may kill any bear (or other wild animal) at any time to protect human life or essential belongings you need to survive. In regulations, this is referred to as “defense of life and property” or DLP. After the scene is safe, you need to report what happened. Notify the Alaska Department of Fish & Game or the Alaska Wildlife Troopers as soon possible.

Animals taken in defense of life and property must be turned over to the state. In the case of a bear, you must salvage the hide (with all claws attached) and skull and give them to state officials.

In these situations, those responding to the call will want to know: did you provoke the attack? Did you leave out food, garbage or other attractants that brought the bear into your area? What other steps were taken to try to protect your life or property from the bear?

Using and selling bear parts

You may sell the tanned or untanned hides and/or skulls of brown bears harvested under the general hunt after they have been sealed.

You may sell handicrafts made from the skin, hide, pelt, fur or claws of a brown bear which has been legally harvested in Unit 23. Prior to selling a handicraft which includes a brown bear claw or claws, the hide (or claws not attached to the hide) must be sealed as described above. Old claws may be sealed. A copy of the ADFG sealing certificate must accompany the handicraft when it is sold.

It's illegal to sell or trade the gallbladders of bears.

For more information:

Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Kotzebue
phone: (907) 442-3420
toll-free: 800-478-3420

National Park Service
Western Arctic Parklands
Kotzebue
phone: (907) 442-3890
toll-free: 800-478-7252

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Selawik National Wildlife Refuge
Kotzebue
phone: (907) 442-3799
toll-free: 800-492-8848