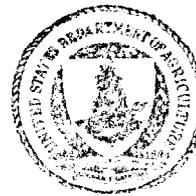


## INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



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#### ALASKA BIG BROWN BEARS TO HAVE INCREASED PROTECTION

Revised regulations under the Alaska Game Law recently promulgated by Secretary of Agriculture, Arthur M. Hyde, effective July 1, 1932, will provide an additional measure of protection for the large brown bears of Alaska. This will be accomplished by extending the areas in which a resident of the Territory is limited to an annual bag of two animals, and by granting complete protection for these bears on Afognak Island. The several varieties of the big brown bears of Alaska are the largest carnivores of the continent and for many years these animals have been much sought by big game hunters. The following statement regarding the protection of these bears has been issued by the Alaska Game Commission, through its Executive Officer, H. W. Terhune, of Juneau, Alaska, the representative of the Bureau of Biological Survey of the Commission:

"During the past few years, and particularly during the last year, much has been written about the big brown bears of Alaska by conservationists and sportsmen who have visited the Territory for comparatively short periods. Many of the articles regarding the life history and habits of the bears are of great interest and value to students of nature, while others appear to have been more or less sensational or in the nature of propaganda. The Alaska Game Commission considers that the Alaskan brown bears have had sufficient protection during recent seasons and are not in any danger of extermination, but in view of the fact

that so much attention has been focused on these unique animals during the past year, and to give them the benefit of any possible doubt, the Commission recommended the added protection afforded these bears by the new regulation.

"To correct the many unauthorized statements that have appeared regarding the measure of protection now being afforded these noble animals throughout the estimated 96,363 square miles of coastal lands and islands comprising their range, the following information and figures have been compiled from the regulations and official records of the Alaska Game Commission:

"Areas where large brown bears have complete protection consist of 8,534 square miles, or 9 per cent of the total range, and include Glacier Bay and Katmai National Monuments; Unimak Island, which lies within the Aleutian Island Reservation; Afognak Island; and four smaller areas. Although hunting is permitted in the following areas there are within them many thousands of square miles of inaccessible country that constitute virtual sanctuaries for these animals.

"In 40,938 square miles, or 42 per cent of the total range of the large brown bears, residents and nonresidents are allowed a bag limit of two animals in an open season from September 1 to June 20. During this apparently long season, however, the bears are in hibernation approximately six months. The areas coming under the limitation on season and bag limit consist of portions of the mainland, totaling 39,000 square miles, and 1,245 square miles of the most thickly populated bear range on the north side of Kodiak Island, as well as the islands of Hinchinbrook, Montague, Hawkins, Yacobi, and Shuyak.

"In 22,516 square miles, or 23 per cent of the total range of these bears, nonresidents may hunt during the same open season, while residents are permitted to hunt the year round, although both classes of hunters are limited to a seasonal bag of two. This portion of the range includes 17,160 square miles of mainland, and the islands of Admiralty, Baranof, and Chichagof.

"In 21,840 square miles of mainland and 2,565 square miles of Kodiak Island nonresidents may hunt large brown bears under the same seasonal and bag limitations, while residents are restricted by neither bag limit nor close season. This area comprises 25 per cent of the total range of the big brown bear.

"A nonresident hunting large brown or grizzly bears is required to be accompanied by a registered guide. In areas where a resident is limited either by season or bag limit or by both, he is permitted to kill a bear in defense of life or property.

"No person may take large brown bears with the aid or use of a dog, a set gun of any description, a steel bear trap having a spread of more than 9 inches, or by poison in any form. The sale of the skins of these animals is prohibited under the Alaska Game Law and regulations.

"Various estimates have been published as to the number of brown bears in Alaska, the majority of these having been made by persons who have spent a comparatively short time in the Territory and who have undoubtedly based their findings on observations over a small portion of the animals' total range. Considering both the recorded legal kill and a liberal estimate of the unrecorded legal and illegal kill, the Commission finds that the annual kill of these bears is well within the average normal annual increase to be expected from the most conservative estimates of their numbers in the Territory. Unbiased observers familiar with conditions throughout the total range state that the bear population is, with minor exceptions, well distributed.

"In view of the fact that much is yet to be done in the scientific classification of the several varieties of the brown bears of Alaska, it is not at present practicable to state definitely the exact range of many forms.

"By reason of its formidable size and uncertain temperament, the large coastal brown bear is an animal that commands the immediate respect of any sane

person coming in contact with it. There are several instances on record in which persons who have written or told of the good nature, peaceable habits, and temperament of this noble animal have, in their field studies, either first fortified themselves with a modern highpowered rifle, or had a guide standing at their shoulder similarly equipped. It is well that they did so; otherwise an interesting tale might not have been told.

"The Alaska Game Commission is an appointive nonpolitical Federal body and represents both the Government and the people of Alaska in the protection and preservation of the vast game resources of the wonderland of the North. It is fully awake to the responsibilities involved, and will immediately recommend to the Secretary of Agriculture any additional protective measures that may become necessary through changing conditions."

A census of the bears on Admiralty Island will be taken in the summer of 1932, according to a statement of the Biological Survey. This will be accomplished by such assistance as the bureau may be able to render in cooperation with the Forest Service and the Alaska Game Commission. The information thus obtained will be helpful in the preparation of a game management plan for the island. Further protection for the bears on areas adjacent to the Glacier Bay National Monument is also contemplated in plans now in course of development.

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