

# Alaska OKs sale of bear hides

January 31 2006

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For the first time in Alaska's history brown bear hides may be legally sold if taken from a 2,700-square-mile northeastern section of the state.

The Alaska Board of Game said it agreed to the move as part of its effort to increase moose populations in five areas of the state where aerial wolf hunting is allowed.

Black bear hides may also be sold if they're harvested from the state's five predator control areas.

"It's a big change," Matt Robus, director of the Division of Wildlife Conservation, told the Anchorage Daily News. "It's assumed this will provide some motivation for people to go out and take more bears."

Alaskan game officials have also loosened restrictions on bear hunting in the predator control areas by increasing the length of the season and removing a \$25 fee for residents.

From 1981-88, brown bears killed 52 percent of the newborn moose calves in the areas, officials said.

Alaska Fish and Game officials estimate there are 35,000 to 40,000 brown bears in the state and more than 100,000 black bears.

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