

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME FINDINGS
CONTROL OF WANTON WASTE IN THE
HOLITNA/HOHOLITNA RIVER DRAINAGES
97-107-BOG

During its March 13 - 23, 1997 meeting in Anchorage, the Board of Game (BOG) heard extensive public testimony and advisory committee reports regarding concern over the ongoing and escalating occurrences of wanton waste in the Holitna/Hoholitna River drainages (HHRD). Based on these reports and additional information provided by Division of Wildlife Conservation and Wildlife Protection staff and considerable deliberation the BOG makes the following findings:

1. Moose population numbers in the HHRD remain unknown, but biological factors indicate that the population is currently healthy and relatively stable. The area also comprises a major migration route and expansion habitat for the growing Mulchatna caribou herd. Both of these populations are highly relied upon and utilized by state residents for subsistence purposes.
2. As referenced in BOG Findings 92-59-BOG, there are at least three distinct human use patterns in the HHRD: Lower Kuskokwim, Middle Kuskokwim, and floater/drifter. In addition, some guided hunting occurs in both Game Management Units 19A and 19B.
3. In recent years there has been a significant increase of observed instances of wanton waste and improper meat salvage by floater/drifter hunters in the area. The duration of floater/drifter hunts ranges from approximately one week in Unit 19B, to an additional two weeks to the next pick-up point in Unit 19A (or three weeks total).
4. The amount of time necessary to complete such a lengthy float is conducive to meat spoilage, especially when the meat has been boned out. Additionally, boning of meat presents a much greater level of difficulty for enforcement personnel to "prove" that an animal was not properly salvaged. The BOG finds these particularly offensive to the state's high regard for harvest of ungulates for their meat as reflected in the laws concerning wanton waste, intensive management and subsistence preference and priority.
5. An increasing component of the floater/drifter use group is comprised of nonresident hunters who have little to no idea how large of an animal a moose is, no frame of reference to realistically judge antler size, and often lack the basic knowledge necessary to properly take care of the substantial amount of meat that one animal provides.

Accordingly, the BOG takes the following regulatory action to address these problems:

- A. A moose or caribou taken in the HHRD in Unit 19B by a hunter accessing the area by aircraft must be transported out of Unit 19B by aircraft.
- B. The edible meat of the front quarters, hindquarters, and ribs (excluding the vertebrae and the pelvis) of any moose or caribou taken in Unit 19B or in the Holitna/Hoholitna Controlled Use Area (HHCUA) must remain on the bone until it has been transported out of Unit 19B or the HHCUA.
- C. A nonresident hunter in Unit 19B must have attended an ADF&G approved hunter orientation course (to include antler size recognition or restrictions and meat care) or must be accompanied by a registered guide or resident family member within second degree of kinship.
- D. Any hunter passing an ADF&G established check station must stop at the check point.

Based on all the information presently available the BOG believes that the above regulations will significantly reduce the level of wanton waste in the HHRD and HHCUA without imposing further access restrictions on other user groups.

Date: April 19, 1997
Juneau, Alaska

Vote: 7-0


Larry Holmes, Chair
Alaska Board of Game