

Findings for the Alaska Board of Game
2012-195-BOG
Unit 24(B) Moose
Intensive Management Supplemental Findings
March 9, 2012


The Board of Game finds as follows, based on information provided by Department staff, Alaska residents and other users of moose in Unit 24(B). These findings are supplemental to the findings set forth in 5AAC 92.125, and 92.108.

1. This is an experimental program that will have limited impact on the moose and wolf populations in Unit 24(B). It is designed primarily to reallocate moose from wolves to humans in the 1,360 square mile Upper Koyukuk Management Area (UKMA) and is expected to make only a small contribution to the intensive management (IM) moose harvest objective in Unit 24(B).
2. The Unit 24(B) IM moose population and harvest objectives have not been achieved. The IM objectives established by the board are for a population of 4,000–4,500 and an annual harvest of 150–250. In early winter 2010 the observable moose population size in Unit 24(B) was estimated at 1,800–3,400, based on extrapolation of population estimates from survey areas in the unit. Estimated annual harvest in Unit 24(B) was 82–109 moose.
3. Predation by bears and wolves has been identified as an important cause of the failure to achieve moose population and harvest objectives. Moose surveys in Unit 24(B) during spring 2008–2011 indicated high twinning rates (average 57 percent), thus good body condition. Fall composition surveys in Unit 24(B) indicated high productivity, with calf:cow ratios averaging 44 calves per 100 cows, but cohort survival was low with yearling bulls averaging 11 per 100 cows. These survey data and a predicted calving rate of 80 percent indicate more calves are lost during summer (due primarily to bear predation) than winter (due primarily to wolf predation).
4. Only wolf numbers will be reduced in the UKMA as a component of this predation control program because lethal bear removal is not deemed feasible at this time.
5. Nevertheless, a reduction of wolf predation within the UKMA can reasonably be expected to make progress towards achieving the Unit 24(B) IM objectives. Modeling of the current moose abundance in the UKMA using estimated abundance of 45–55 wolves, 75 black bears, 25 grizzly bears, 405 (± 97) moose, and a harvest of 20 moose annually, indicated that moose abundance should slowly increase in response to wolf control that increases calf and yearling moose survival. Wolf control alone likely will result in a positive response in moose abundance after 5 winters of control, including reallocation of some surviving moose to harvest.
6. Reducing predation is likely to be effective and feasible utilizing recognized and prudent active management techniques and based on scientific information. Based on survey results indicating wolf predation is an important source of mortality, reducing wolves in a small

geographic area will likely result in increased moose survival and additional animals available for hunter harvest.

7. Reducing predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns. The UKMA was selected based on land ownership status (minimizing federal lands), proximity to traditional moose hunting areas for the villages of Allakaket and Alatna (maximizing inclusion of navigable river corridors), and habitat suitability. Within the UKMA, 125 square miles (9.2 percent) is federal land (BLM/USFWS), 576 square miles (42.3 percent) is Alaska Native corporation land, 659 square miles (48.4 percent) is State of Alaska lands.
8. Department employees may conduct aerial, land and shoot, or ground based lethal removal of wolves using state owned, privately owned, or chartered equipment, including helicopters, under AS 16.05.783.

Vote: 7-0
March 9, 2012
Fairbanks, Alaska


Cliff Judkins, Chairman
Alaska Board of Game