

ALASKA
SPECIES MANAGEMENT POLICIES

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ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

GAME DIVISION

December 1971

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who made this estimate mukoyen

INTRODUCTION

The bountiful and unique wildlife of Alaska remains intact and essentially unchanged in distribution and abundance from prehistoric estimates even though contact with western culture has dominated the economics of the land for nearly two centuries. The wildlife of no other comparable land mass has fared so well. It is even more remarkable because the wildlife survived intensive exploitation during the period of domination by the Russians when the gathering and exportation of valuable fur animals was a major objective of their occupation, and it survived the U.S. colonial period when exploitation of fur, valuable minerals and paternal neglect were formal policies. Market hunting of all game was a way of life during most of the U.S. colonial period. Yet when Alaska became a state in 1959, the unparalleled wildlife resource that so perfectly complements the state's scenic splendor was essentially intact.

These many and diverse species of game (in Alaska all mammals and birds are classified as game) survived in spite of man because their habitat was not greatly altered. Thus over utilization such as occurred with the sea otter merely resulted in temporary reductions in numbers. Now, however, Alaska is about to plunge into a period of dramatic mobilization of natural resources, both renewable and nonrenewable. This comes at a time when the very habitat that has sustained our wildlife through previous exploitative periods is being partitioned among the various claimants; the federal government, the natives and the state.

Only through land use planning that leads to the protection of habitat can the benefits of Alaska's wildlife resource be fully realized by her citizenry. The Department assumes that such planning will take place and has formulated a general policy and a series of specific policies to ensure perpetuation of the resource while providing maximum benefits for the people.

The General and Species Policies are intended to convey to the public the wildlife management philosophies of the Department of Fish and Game's professional staff.^{1/} These policies will assist in the vital work of implementing comprehensive land use planning and will serve as standards for program evaluation. The policies will also assist in evaluating the inevitable jurisdictional disputes between the state and the federal government over management of indigenous game.

These policies will provide the guidelines for the initial development of specific area wildlife management plans for presentation to the public and the Board of Fish and Game.

^{1/} For the purposes of the policy statements the Board of Fish and Game is considered separate from the Department.

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage all game species on the sustained yield principle in the best interests of the resource and the people of the State, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for all game species, and encourages the development of comprehensive land use planning.

The Department recognizes that there are many uses of game, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes that responsible game management must be based on scientific knowledge.

The Department will manage game species to provide sustained yields of animals for humans and for wild carnivore populations that depend upon them for food. Whenever substantial conflicts arise between humans and predators over the use of prey, the predator population will be managed to minimize such conflicts.

In many areas of the state, recreation is the most important use of game. Recreational uses include: sport hunting and trapping in their various forms; observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of or observing animals in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans, and holds that these recreational uses are generally compatible.

The Department recognizes recreational hunting and trapping as the dominant uses of game in much of the state. Consistent with its responsibility to manage game species in the best interests of the resource and the people, the Department will manage the resource on the basis of a) maximum overall recreational opportunity, b) maximum sustained yield of animals to be harvested, c) maximum aesthetic appeal to the user. Regulatory zoning of recreation in time and space may be used to obtain an optimum level of recreational wildlife uses.

In some areas game will be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to make use of remote areas, and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance

wildlife oriented activities.

In selected areas with highly developed access and high hunter use, certain game species will be managed consistent with the maximum sustained yield principle.

Certain areas will be managed to provide hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality. Management techniques may include, but are not limited to, regulation of access, regulation of sex and age of animals taken, and population manipulation.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where game populations and/or habitat can be manipulated to provide better information on management techniques.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of game through public information and education and in its management plans will provide for such activities.

The Department recognizes that some of the state's population is partially dependent on wildlife for food. In areas where people are primarily dependent on game for food the Department will provide for liberal seasons and bag limits, within the limitation of maximum sustained yield.

The Department does not consider the harvest of moose, elk, sheep, deer, muskox, polar bear, bison, brown/grizzly bear, black bear, goat, waterfowl, and game birds for sale or barter of hides, meat, antlers or horns a proper use of the resource and will oppose it. However, when compatible with recreational and food source demands, commercial utilization of other game species may be provided for in the Department's management plans.

*stop the sale
of polar bear
hides?*

The domestication of game animals for commercial purposes is normally not considered a wise use of the resource and usually will be discouraged by the Department.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct research in Alaska involving game species. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interest of the species and the people of the state. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information on game species.

The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export of game species, for stocking, public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

*Raptor
permits?*

Does this cover raptors?

The Department recognizes that transplanting game species for restocking former ranges or vacant habitat may be a useful management tool. Importing and transplanting of game will be generally opposed, but may be approved if substantial public benefit can be shown. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable population of the transplanted species, as determined by comprehensive study.
- 2) Prior study must establish that the introduction of a species will not adversely affect the numbers, health, or utilization of resident species.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the removal of an animal or the reduction in numbers of a species in response to a specific problem. Control will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has determined a valid need exists.

Whenever possible, control will be effected by recreational hunting. When control by the Department or its designees is necessary, humane methods will be employed.

It is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by wildlife. Reasonable efforts must be made to protect life and property by means other than the destruction of game.

Poison bait and other nonselective means will not be used.

Bounties are not considered a desirable means of control.

MOOSE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The great size and massive antlers of the moose (*Alces alces*) have captured the imagination of people for years. One naturalist reported 1900 years ago that moose had no joints in their hind legs and so could not lie down, but slept leaning against a tree! The lip was reported to be so long that the moose had to graze while walking backward. Otherwise the lip would fold up, preventing the moose from eating!

necessary ???

Modern accounts of the moose and its ways are less imaginative, but no less interesting. Most serious studies of moose in North America have occurred within the last 40 years. In Alaska, knowledge of the moose has increased rapidly in the last 20 years. This knowledge has provided a framework for increasingly effective use and management of moose.

In contrast to the early days of Alaskan history when scattered small groups of Athabascans depended on moose for a livelihood, Alaska now has a growing human population, many of whom are interested in moose for recreation as well as a source of food. At the same time, land use practices are changing rapidly, and the welfare of moose along with other natural resources are being affected. Therefore, the knowledge gained in the last 20 years will not remain adequate, but must continue to grow. At the same time, our ability to manage the moose populations must improve. Guidelines for the management of moose are needed so that Alaska can be assured of the continuing benefit of sufficient moose for the people's use and enjoyment.

The following policy outlines present and anticipated uses, needs and problems relating to management and land use, and the Department's operating philosophy in relation to these considerations.

MOOSE POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State to manage moose on the sustained yield principle for the benefit of the resource and the people of the State. The Department also recognizes that national interests must be considered.

not necessary already in general policy statement

The Department recognizes that there are many uses of moose, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes that recreation is presently the leading use of moose in the State. Recreation includes hunting, observation, and enhancement of the outdoor experience, including wilderness experience. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for

all these recreational uses in its management plans, and holds that these recreational uses are generally compatible.

In most areas of the State, moose will be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to make use of remote areas, and to enjoy various other experiences which enhance wildlife-oriented activities. Sport hunting with the gathering of meat as an important consideration has traditionally been the dominant use of moose in Alaska. This use will be encouraged in most areas, and salvaging of all edible meat will remain a condition of taking moose.

In selected areas with highly developed access and high hunter use, or where the human population is partially dependent upon moose for food, moose will be managed for the maximum sustained yield of animals. Management techniques may include harvest of moose of all sexes and ages, liberal seasons and bag limits, access improvement, and habitat manipulation.

Moose in certain areas of the State will be managed to provide hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality, including the opportunity to take outstanding trophies. Management techniques may include, but are not limited to, regulation of access and seasons, regulation of sex, age, and antler conformation of moose harvested, population manipulation, and preservation of the natural characteristics of the area.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of moose through public information and education, and in its management plans will provide for such activities. Although hunting is generally considered compatible with recreational observation of moose, certain areas exceptionally suited to moose viewing as the primary objective may be zoned in time or space to restrict hunting in favor of observation of moose in their most natural population and social structure.

The Department recognizes that moose are a vital food source for carnivores in some areas, and will provide for this use where significant competition with human use does not occur.

The Department recognizes that moose are important aesthetic and biological components of the wilderness ecosystem. Selected areas may be managed to achieve or retain a wilderness atmosphere. In these areas the management of moose will be aligned with management objectives of the area.

Selected areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where moose populations, moose habitat or both may be manipulated to provide

additional knowledge of moose ecology.

The Department has demonstrated that transplanting moose for restocking former ranges or stocking vacant habitat can be a useful management tool. It is also recognized that transplants often have unforeseen detrimental effects. Proposed transplants which show potentially substantial public benefit will be reviewed by the Department. To be approved transplants must meet the following requirements: 1) the proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable moose population as determined by comprehensive study; 2) prior study must establish that the introduction of moose will not adversely affect the numbers, health or utilization of resident species.

*already in
general
policy
statement*

Moose are one of the few still-wild species that have been domesticated with any success. In some nations moose meat and byproducts are important commercial commodities. In Alaska recreational hunting of moose is now and will probably continue to be the major use of moose, with food gathering and other recreational pursuits being additional important considerations. In remote areas, where food gathering is the primary use of moose, regulations are sufficiently liberal to allow the taking of an adequate food supply. The Department, therefore, feels that the need for commercial harvesting or domestication of moose for the sale of animal products is low at the present time, and that the potential conflicts between commercial and recreational use of this resource should not be encouraged by advocating commercial use of moose.

*could be argued
If higher product
could be obtained
domestication
should this
receive due
consideration*

The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export of moose for stocking, public education and scientific study but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes that research involving moose in Alaska may be done by other organizations or by individuals. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations for the benefit of the species and the people of the State. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals who conduct legitimate research on moose.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring control of moose. Controls will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has determined a valid need exists. The Department will discourage undue competition with moose by domestic animals or marginal agricultural ventures. When possible, control will be effected by recreational hunting. With respect to private property, the Department's policy is that it is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by moose. Reasonable efforts must be made to

protect life and property by means other than the destruction of moose. Where control by removal of moose is necessary, humane methods will be used and meat will be salvaged.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining and creating suitable habitat for moose and advocates the development and implementation of comprehensive land use planning for Alaska.

Protection and manipulation of habitat are of foremost importance in moose management. Much of the highly productive moose range is in early post-disturbance successional stages. Therefore, disturbances such as fire, logging in small blocks, and selective land clearing will be encouraged where moose production is the best use of the land. When possible the Department will engage in habitat manipulation by the use of fire, mechanical means, or other methods.

Some moose populations depend upon climax sub-alpine, successional riparian, or marshy lowland plant communities for vital activities such as mating, calving and feeding. Such crucial habitat areas will be identified, designated and reserved for these uses.

The Department recognizes the need to provide access for moose hunters and observers. In areas where moose are managed for maximum sustained yield of animals, access may take the form of roads, airstrips, snow machine trails, hiking trails, canoe routes, boat landings and horse trails. The Department will disseminate information about access. In areas managed primarily for maximum aesthetics, access may be restricted to those nonmotorized means listed above.

CARIBOU MANAGEMENT POLICY

The barren ground caribou (Rangifer tarandus) is an important part of Alaska's fauna. Much of this importance stems from the recreational hunting of sportsmen as well as the sustenance derived from the animal. This species also has significant aesthetic value.

Caribou habitat requirements include climax boreal forest, alpine and arctic tundra; a sharp contrast to the transitional flora utilized by most other cervids. These ranges produce a relatively small volume of usable caribou forage per unit area and are easily damaged by fire and land development activities. Caribou have evolved a habit of nearly constant movement that is necessary to fulfill nutritional requirements and to prevent overgrazing and excessive trampling. Successful caribou management requires the retention of large areas of suitable habitat that allows unrestricted movement of caribou.

At present there are 13 recognized caribou herds in Alaska. They are the Adak, Alaska Peninsula, Arctic, Beaver, Chisana, Delta, Fortymile, Kenai, McKinley, Mentasta, Mulchatna, Nelchina, and Porcupine herds.

Future caribou management programs must consider the responsibilities to our Canadian neighbors for those populations which traditionally cross our borders. Close cooperation must be maintained so as to provide mutually beneficial management programs.

Although caribou are an important source of protein for many residents of the state, it is recognized that sustenance demands are decreasing and will eventually be a minor consideration for management purposes. Recreational and aesthetic uses will far outweigh the other uses of the resource. However, this transition will be slow and will occur only as human cultural and social values are altered.

In light of the trophy aspects associated with recreational hunting of large antlered bulls and the demands of nonconsumptive users, special management consideration will have to be given, in some areas, to the maintenance of these values. Management plans must recognize that personal criteria vary by individual when defining "trophy" and "quality"; thus, a progressive program must be initiated to allow for optimum selection opportunities by recreational users.

CARIBOU POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage caribou on the sustained yield principle for the benefit of the resource and the people of the State, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

not necessary

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for caribou and advocates the development of comprehensive land use planning. As caribou are entirely dependent on large undisturbed areas of habitat, it is mandatory that the land management plans for the species be interwoven with those of other species which require more transitional ranges.

The Department recognizes there are many uses of caribou, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

Sport hunting with the gathering of meat as an important consideration is currently a dominant use of caribou in Alaska. This use will be encouraged in most areas, and salvaging of all edible meat will remain a condition of taking caribou.

The Department recognizes that some of the state's human population is partially dependent on caribou for food. ~~In areas where people are primarily dependent on caribou for food,~~ *In these areas* the Department will provide for liberal seasons and bag limits, within the limitations of maximum sustained yield.

In areas of the state where the sale or barter of caribou is an economic necessity, the Department will allow for this type of commercial utilization. However, this type of use will generally be discouraged. As reindeer are available, the Department will generally not approve the domestication of caribou for commercial purposes.

In many areas of the state, recreation is the most important use of caribou. Recreational uses include: sport hunting in its various forms; observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of or observing animals in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans, and holds that these recreational uses are generally compatible.

In some areas caribou will be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to make use of remote areas, and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance wildlife oriented activities. Regulatory zoning of recreation in time and space may be used to obtain an optimum level of recreational wildlife uses.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of caribou through public information and education and in its management plans will provide for such activities.

tion, has been the dominant use of elk in Alaska. This use will be encouraged, and the Department will require that all edible meat be salvaged as a condition of taking elk.

In some areas of the State, elk will be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to make use of remote areas and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance wildlife oriented activities.

In selected areas with highly developed access and high hunter use, elk will be managed for the maximum sustained yield of animals.

Certain areas of the State will be managed to provide hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality. Management techniques may include but are not limited to regulation of sex, age and antler conformation of animals taken and population manipulation and preservation of natural characteristics of the area.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of elk through public information and education, and its management plans will provide for such activities. Although hunting is generally considered compatible with recreational observation of elk, certain areas exceptionally suited to elk viewing as the primary objective may be zoned spatially or temporarily to exclude hunting in favor of observation of elk in their most natural population and social structure.

The Department holds that elk management must be based upon sound scientific decisions and a few areas of elk range may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where elk populations and/or habitat can be manipulated to provide better opportunities for applied or basic research.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct research in Alaska involving elk. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interest of the species and the people of the State. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information concerning elk.

The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export of elk for stocking, public education, and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department has demonstrated that transplanting elk to vacant habitat can be a useful tool. It is also recognized that transplants

often have unforeseen detrimental effects. Proposed transplants which show potentially substantial public benefit will be reviewed by the Department. To be approved transplants must meet the following requirements: 1) the proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable elk population as determined by comprehensive study; 2) prior study must establish that the introduction of elk will not adversely affect the numbers, health or utilization of resident species.

Elk have been domesticated with apparent success in other areas. The Department feels, however, that in Alaska the harvest or domestication of elk for sale or barter of elk hides, meat, antlers or other products are improper uses of the resource and will oppose them.

The Department recognizes the importance of maintaining and creating suitable habitat for elk and encourages the development of comprehensive land use planning.

Protection and manipulation of habitat are of foremost importance in elk management. Much of the productive elk range is composed of important "fringe" areas where early post-disturbance successional stages merge with mature climax forest and a combination of food and cover is produced. Therefore disturbances such as fire, logging in small blocks, and selective land clearing will be encouraged where elk production is the best use of the land. When possible, the Department will engage in habitat manipulation by mechanical means or fire.

The Department recognizes the need to provide access for elk hunters and observers. In areas where elk are managed for maximum sustained yield of animals the access may take the form of roads, airstrips, snow machine trails, hiking trails, canoe routes, boat landings, horse trails and dissemination of information about access. In areas managed primarily for maximum aesthetics, access will be restricted to those nonmotorized means listed above.

DEER MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Sitka black-tailed deer (Odocoileus hemionus sitkensis) is an important big game species in the south coastal regions of Alaska. Its natural range includes most of the mainland and islands of southeast Alaska. This range has been extended by successful introductions to Prince William Sound, the Yakutat area and Kodiak and Afognak Islands.

Throughout their range, deer probably provide more recreational hunting than any other game species. Their small size, compared to other Alaskan ungulates, makes them easy for the hunter to carry and the meat is of excellent quality.

South coastal Alaska is the northern limit of deer habitat. The primary limiting factor is usually winter food availability (controlled by snow depth) and populations fluctuate with severity of winters. In the past, hunting has had little impact on most deer populations in Alaska; however, management plans must anticipate increasing use and all users must be considered.

A deer management policy must be sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing needs and conditions and must be based on sound biological data.

DEER POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage deer in accordance with the sustained yield principle to perpetuate the species and for the benefit of the people of the State and also recognizes that national interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes that there are many uses of deer, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, that management plans must consider all uses and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing conditions.

The Department recognizes that deer management must be based on scientific knowledge.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for deer and advocates comprehensive land use planning. Available winter range is often a limiting factor on deer populations. Small forest openings enhance deer range. The Department will encourage forest practices which are beneficial for deer.

The Department considers recreation the most important use of deer.

Recreational use includes: sport hunting, observation, photography, and aesthetic use including wilderness experience. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its deer management plans.

The Department considers recreational hunting the dominant use of deer in most of the State. Consistent with its responsibility to manage deer for the benefit of the people, the Department will manage deer to provide for a) maximum hunting opportunity, b) maximum sustained yield of deer and c) maximum aesthetic appeal to the user.

Most areas will be managed to provide greatest hunting opportunity consistent with the maximum sustained yield principle. In these areas, development of access and establishment of hunter facilities will be encouraged. Land management practices will be recommended which favor high sustained yields of deer.

Some areas will be managed to provide deer hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality. This recognizes the right to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to enjoy pristine areas and other associated factors which enhance recreational hunting. Management techniques may include regulation of access, regulation of sex, age and number of deer taken and preservation of the natural beauty of the hunting area. The Department recognizes that the importance of some areas is due to the combination of wildlife, fish and aesthetic values of which deer are only a part. The Department will encourage land classifications in these areas which will protect the total recreational and aesthetic qualities.

The Department recognizes that some hunters are primarily interested in taking deer of large size or with exceptional antler development and that some areas produce more of these animals than others. Some areas may be managed for the production of trophy deer. Regulations and bag limits in these areas will favor the production of trophy animals.

The Department recognizes that there are nonhunting uses of deer. Some areas, exceptionally suited for viewing or where hunting is not compatible with other dominant uses, may be zoned to restrict hunting in favor of other uses.

A few areas may be reserved for scientific studies where deer populations and/or habitat may be observed or manipulated to provide information useful for managing deer.

The Department recognizes that some wild carnivores are partially dependent on deer for food. The Department will manage deer for carnivore as well as human use. If substantial conflicts occur between humans and carnivores over the use of deer, the carnivore population will be managed in a manner which will minimize such

conflicts, but will not jeopardize the carnivore species.

The Department recognizes that transplanting deer to former or vacant habitat may be a useful management tool. Proposed transplants of deer will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following requirements to be approved:

- 1) A substantial public benefit must be shown.
- 2) A comprehensive study must show that the proposed transplant site provides sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable deer population.
- 3) Prior investigation must consider whether introduction of deer will adversely affect the numbers, health, and utilization of resident plant and animal species.

The Department does not consider the harvest of deer for any commercial purpose a proper use of deer and will oppose such use.

The Department recognizes that other organizations may conduct research in Alaska involving deer. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make appropriate recommendations. The Department will cooperate with other organizations or individuals whose research may provide useful information concerning deer.

The Department may issue permits for capturing, holding and exporting deer for transplanting, public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes that situations may occur requiring the removal of a deer or the reduction of deer numbers in response to a specific problem. Control will be implemented only after an investigation by the Department has shown a valid need exists. When possible, control will be by recreational hunting. When control is necessary, humane methods will be employed.

It is the owner's responsibility to protect private property from damage by deer. Reasonable effort must be made to protect property by means other than the destruction of deer.

PROPOSED DALL SHEEP MANAGEMENT POLICY

Dall sheep (Ovis dalli) symbolize Alaska's remote mountainous areas. Their distribution is limited to the mountains of Alaska and western Canada and because of this, they represent true wilderness to those who come in search of them. *not always true*

Dall sheep numbers are necessarily limited by stringent habitat requirements. Sheep require range that is relatively snow-free in winter, supports the proper vegetation, and provides adequate escape terrain. In addition, sheep distribution is possibly restricted by social habit.

The climax nature of sheep range, coupled with great vulnerability to winter snow and weather conditions, leads to fluctuations in sheep numbers under completely natural conditions. For the same reasons, sheep populations are easily harmed by human disturbance of habitat.

The above considerations, in addition to a very strong tradition dictating harvest of only males with 3/4 curl or larger horns, makes Dall sheep a most difficult species to manage. Climax range cannot be rehabilitated, weather cannot be controlled and, with present knowledge and attitudes, fluctuations cannot be effectively damped. These facts indicate, at present, a conservative approach to management, with stress on research.

DALL SHEEP POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage sheep on the sustained yield principle in the best interest of the species and the people of the State, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for sheep, and advocates the development and implementation of comprehensive land use planning.

The Department recognizes there are many uses of sheep, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes that responsible Dall sheep management must be based on scientific knowledge, and that management techniques for sheep might change with future advances in knowledge.

In most areas of the state, recreation is the most important use of sheep. Recreational uses include: sport hunting; observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of or observing

animals in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans, and holds that these recreational uses are generally compatible.

The Department recognizes that recreational hunting, with trophy considerations usually very important, is the dominant use of sheep in much of the state. Consistent with its responsibility to manage game species in the best interests of the species and the people, the Department will manage the resource on the basis of a) maximum overall recreational opportunity, b) maximum aesthetic appeal to the user, and occasionally c) maximum sustained yield of animals. Regulatory zoning of recreation in time and space may be used to obtain an optimum level of recreational wildlife uses.

In some areas sheep will be managed to provide maximum recreational hunting opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to make use of remote areas, to take outstanding trophies, and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance wildlife oriented activities.

Certain areas will be managed to provide hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality. Management techniques may include, but are not limited to, regulation of access, regulation of sex and age of animals taken, and population manipulation.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of sheep through public information and education and its management plans will provide for such activities. Although hunting is generally considered compatible with casual recreational observation of sheep, certain areas exceptionally suited to sheep viewing as the primary objective may be zoned in space or time to exclude hunting in favor of observation of sheep in their most natural population and social structure.

The Department recognizes that sheep are important aesthetic and biological components of the wilderness ecosystem, and in selected areas will manage sheep populations to retain or reestablish their most pristine environmental relationships.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where sheep populations and/or habitat can be manipulated to provide opportunities for basic or applied research.

The Department will manage sheep to provide sustained yields of animals for humans and for wild carnivore populations that depend upon them for food. Whenever substantial conflicts arise between humans and predators over the use of sheep, the predator population will be managed to minimize such conflicts. In no case will the predator population be eliminated in favor of human users.

The Department does not consider the harvest of sheep for sale or barter of hides, meat, horns or other parts a proper use of the resource and will oppose it.

The domestication of Dall sheep for commercial purposes is normally not considered a wise use of the resource and will be discouraged by the Department.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct research in Alaska involving Dall sheep. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interest of the species and the people of the state. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information on sheep.

The Department may issue permits for capturing, holding and exporting of Dall sheep for stocking, public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes that transplanting sheep for restocking former ranges or vacant habitat may be a useful management tool. However, since most big-game transplants achieve only limited success and often cause unforeseen environmental difficulties, they will be generally opposed. Transplants may be approved if substantial public benefit can be shown. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable sheep population as determined by comprehensive study.
- 2) Prior study must establish that the introduction of sheep will not adversely affect the numbers, health, or utilization of resident species.

The Department recognizes that there is crucial and limited Dall sheep habitat in Alaska, and will discourage undue competition with sheep by human encroachment. Since sheep habitat is limited and irreplaceable, critical habitat areas will be recognized, designated and protected.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the removal of sheep or the reduction in numbers of the species in response to a specific problem. Control will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has determined a valid need exists and in no case will sheep be eliminated in response to such a problem. Whenever possible, control will be effected by recreational hunting. When control by the Department or its designees is necessary, humane methods will be employed.

It is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by sheep. Reasonable efforts must be made to protect life and property by means other than the destruction of game. Poison bait and other nonselective means will not be used.

The Department recognizes the need to manipulate access for recreational users of sheep. Since aesthetic and wilderness values are important in recreational uses of sheep, and since sheep are very vulnerable to human disturbances, regulation of access will in many cases consist of providing the public with information about trails, scattered airstrips, and other facilities calculated to produce low human densities.

MOUNTAIN GOAT MANAGEMENT POLICY

The mountain goat (Oreamnos americanus) is an inhabitat of the coastal mountain ranges of Alaska from the Panhandle northeast to the Susitna River. Small local populations also occur in the Talkeetna and Wrangle mountains.

Over most of their range mountain goats are relatively abundant and have suffered adversely only in areas of intensive human activity. Areas exist, particularly away from the coast, where mountain goat populations have declined. These declines may be due to hunting or other unknown factors. Some evidence suggests that mountain goat population trends on inland ranges may not be related to normal fluctuations occurring in coastal populations.

Mountain goat transplants have been made to Baranof, Chichigof and Kodiak Islands. Populations have become well established on Baranof and Kodiak Island and hunting is now permitted. The status of the Chichigof introduction is still uncertain.

Mountain goat hunting in Alaska is primarily a recreational pursuit. Although some subsistence-type hunting does occur it is conducted within the regulations established for sport hunting. Trophies and meat are generally considered secondary benefits of a successful hunt, although, both horns and hides are high in trophy value and the meat is excellent.

MOUNTAIN GOAT POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage mountain goats on the sustained yield principle for the benefit of the people of the State, and also recognizes that national interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes there are many uses of mountain goats, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for mountain goats, and encourages the development of comprehensive land use planning that will provide for preservation of important mountain goat ranges.

The Department recognizes recreational uses as the only legitimate use of mountain goats. Recreational uses include: sport hunting in its various forms; observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the rewards of being aware of or observing mountain goats in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans, and

holds that these recreational uses are generally compatible.

The Department recognizes recreational hunting as the dominant uses of mountain goats in much of the state. Consistent with its responsibility to manage game species for the benefit of the people, the Department will manage mountain goats on the basis of a) maximum overall recreational opportunity, b) maximum sustained yield of animals to be harvested, c) maximum aesthetic appeal to the user. Regulatory zoning of recreation in time and space may be used to obtain an optimum level of recreational use.

In selected areas mountain goats will be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to make use of remote areas, and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance wildlife-oriented activities.

In selected areas with highly developed access and high hunter use, mountain goats will be managed consistent with the maximum sustained yield principle.

Certain areas will be managed to provide hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality. Management techniques may include, but are not limited to, regulation of access and population manipulation.

Areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where mountain goat populations and/or habitat can be manipulated to develop and test new management techniques.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of game through public information and education and in its management plans will provide for such activities. Although hunting is generally considered compatible with other recreational uses, certain areas exceptionally suited to nonhunting uses may be specially zoned in favor of a nonhunting use.

The Department recognizes that transplanting mountain goats for restocking former ranges or vacant habitat may be a useful management tool. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable mountain goat population as determined by comprehensive study.
- 2) Prior study must establish that the introduction of mountain goats will not adversely affect the numbers, health, or utilization of resident species.
- 3) A definite need for or a significant benefit must be demonstrated.

The Department does not consider the harvest of mountain goats for sale or barter of hides, meat, or horns a proper use of resource and will oppose it.

The domestication of mountain goats for commercial purposes is not considered a wise use of the resource and will be discouraged by the Department.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct research in Alaska involving mountain goats. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations for the benefit of the species and the people of the state. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information on mountain goats.

The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export of mountain goats for stocking, public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

BISON MANAGEMENT POLICY

The American bison or buffalo (Bison bison) is one of the more interesting species of big game in Alaska and has achieved an importance out of proportion to its numbers. This importance relates to its size, the high regard hunters have for it as a trophy and meat animal, and its status as a symbol of the original wildlife populations of North America.

The bison is an exotic to the state, having originally been transplanted from Montana. The species has, however, become well established in certain locations in the state and public interest is high in maintaining and proliferating these populations. Because the bison is an animal largely dependent upon a grassland type, the potential for expansion of bison within the state is limited.

BISON POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage bison on the sustained yield principal in the best interests of the people of the state.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining and developing suitable habitat for bison and encourages the development of comprehensive land use planning.

The Department recognizes that there are many uses of bison, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

Recreation is the most important use of bison. Recreational uses include: sport hunting; observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of or observing bison in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans and holds that they are generally compatible.

The Department recognizes recreational hunting as the dominant use of bison in the state. Consistent with its responsibility to manage bison in the best interests of the resource and the people, the Department will manage the resource on the basis of: a) maximum overall recreational opportunity, b) maximum sustained yield of animals to be harvested, c) maximum aesthetic appeal to the user.

In some areas, bison will be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions,

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to make use of remote areas, and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance wildlife orientated activities.

In selected areas with highly developed access and high hunter use, bison will be managed according to the maximum sustained yield principle. Management techniques may include close regulation of hunter activities under a permit system, regulation of access, regulation of sex and age of animals taken, and population manipulation.

In some areas, recreational observation of bison is one of the more important uses of the resource and the Department will encourage such observation through public information and education activities and will provide for such activities in its management plans.

The bison is one of the few game animals that has been successfully domesticated, both in Alaska and elsewhere, and is one of the few which the Department may, by law, allow private ownership and domestication. Under most circumstances, however, the Department does not consider the removal of wild bison to private ownership for commercial or other purposes a wise use of the resource and will usually discourage this use.

The Department recognizes that other organizations may conduct research in Alaska involving bison. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interests of the people of the state. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information on bison.

The Department may issue permits for capturing, holding, or exporting of bison for stocking, public education, and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes that transplanting bison for stocking vacant habitat may be a useful management tool. Transplanting of bison will be approved only if substantial public benefit can be shown. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved: 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable population of bison as determined by comprehensive study, 2) Prior study must establish that the introduction of bison will not adversely affect the numbers, health, or utilization of resident species.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the removal of an animal or the reduction in numbers of a bison herd in response to a specific problem. Control will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has determined a valid need exists.

Whenever possible, control will be effected by recreational hunting. When control by the Department or its designees is necessary, humane methods will be employed and the animals will be salvaged.

It is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by bison. Reasonable efforts must be made to protect life and property by means other than the destruction of bison.

MUSKOX MANAGEMENT POLICY

The muskox (Ovibos moschatus) is one of the most interesting and controversial game animals in Alaska. It is an animal adapted to existence in the high arctic and excites the imagination of many who consider it a unique and endangered species.

Muskoxen are found in Greenland and across Canada's northern arctic. They were once endemic to the northern coast of Alaska but disappeared from Alaska during the 1850's, probably as a result of over hunting by Eskimos and the effects of marginal climate and/or habitat conditions. Few, if any, white men ever saw a muskox from the original Alaska population.

The species was reintroduced to the state in the 1930's by the Federal government, with 34 animals transplanted to Nunivak Island. This population increased to about 760 animals by 1968 but began to decrease due to population pressure and decline of their habitat. Muskoxen from Nunivak have been reintroduced to various locations in Alaska's arctic with the hope of establishing them throughout their former range along the arctic slope. Because the parent herd on Nunivak is on a National Wildlife Refuge under the management jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, close cooperation and joint agreement of objectives is necessary to achieve satisfactory management of this species.

MUSKOX POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage muskox on the sustained yield principal in the best interests of the people of the state and also recognizes that national interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes that there are many uses of muskox, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes that responsible muskox management must be based upon scientific knowledge.

In many areas of the state recreation is the most important use of muskox. Recreational uses include: 1) Carefully regulated sport hunting; 2) observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and 3) wilderness experience which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of, or observing, animals in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans and holds that these recreational uses are generally

compatible.

The muskox is unique among Alaskan game animals in that one of the primary goals of management will be to manage certain populations (for example, Nunivak Island) to produce the maximum number of animals for restocking of vacant or former habitat in the state. Management of these populations must therefore be aimed at maximum health and productivity of the herd to produce the maximum number of young for transplanting. Due to the impracticality of transplanting adult bulls, management of these populations, will of necessity involve the removal of surplus males by other means, preferably sport hunting.

In areas where sport hunting of muskoxen is allowed they will be managed to provide hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality. Management techniques may include, but are not limited to, regulation of access, regulation of sex and age of animals taken, temporal and spacial zoning of hunting activities, and regulation of methods and means used to take muskoxen.

Although muskox flesh is highly palatable, the Department does not consider the taking of muskoxen primarily for food a wise use. The Department does not consider the harvest of muskoxen for the purpose of commercial sale or barter of hides, meat or horns a proper use of the resource and will oppose it.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct research in Alaska involving muskox. The Nunivak Island herd, in particular, offers a unique opportunity for scientific study because it is the only known completely successful transplant of wild muskox. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interests of the people of the state. The Department will cooperate with the Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife and other investigators whose research may provide useful information on muskox.

Opportunities for recreational viewing will be limited due to the remoteness of muskox habitat. The Department will encourage appreciation of muskoxen through public information and education programs.

The muskox is one of the few species of Alaskan game animals that offers some potential for domestication for commercial purposes. The Department will continue to recognize scientific investigations designed to determine the feasibility of this use. The Department will oppose domestication as the only use of the species, or domestication in situations that will materially interfere with management of wild muskoxen.

The Department recognizes that transplanting muskoxen to restock former ranges or vacant habitat may be a useful management tool. Proposed

transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved: 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable population of muskoxen as determined by comprehensive study: 2) Prior study must consider whether the introduction of muskoxen will adversely affect the numbers, health or utilization of resident species.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for muskoxen and encourages the development of comprehensive land use planning. The Department will continue to assist and support the Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife in their program of range management on Nunivak Island.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the control of muskoxen by means other than transplanting and hunting. When control by the Department or its designees is necessary, humane methods will be employed. Control methods will be directed toward reestablishing proper sex and age composition of the herd. Maximum scientific educational and welfare use will be made of all animals taken.

The Department may issue permits for capture, holding, and exporting muskoxen for stocking, public education, scientific study or domestication, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee. Permits will not be issued unless substantial benefits which are consistent with the primary objectives of muskox management can be shown.

BROWN/GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Alaska contains one of the largest populations of brown/grizzly bear (Ursus arctos) remaining on the North American continent. A true "wilderness" species the large carnivores have slowly retreated from the advance of civilization with only remnant populations remaining in the contiguous United States. Even those few remaining constantly compete for space with humans who seem unable to draft an acceptable policy of coexistence.

The eventual fate of the brown/grizzly bear may not entirely depend on the creation of vast tracts of unspoiled "wilderness" The obvious conflicts occurring in large national parks support this assumption. Instead, the future of the bears lies in the reassessment of human values to include reasonable cohabitation. Bears are not constant competitors and usually the major conflicts have resulted from improper land planning and classification, marginal economic pursuits, and basic misunderstandings of bears and their behavior.

This lack of understanding reaches into the ranks of naturalists and scientists who, until recently, listed several different species of brown and grizzly bears. Scientists have recently reclassified all brown and grizzly bears as one species. In popular usage the term grizzly bear is applied by most people when speaking of those found in interior and northern Alaska. The bears in these areas are usually smaller than the so-called "brown" bears found along the coast, possibly because they lack the rich supply of fish and other food available to coastal bears. Trophy classification of the two groups, based upon arbitrary geographical boundaries, has further confused their scientific classification.

Although brown/grizzly bears are sometimes taken for food, their greatest values are associated with recreational "trophy" hunting and their aesthetic appeal to the photographer and other nonconsumptive users. All of these uses must be provided for in management plans. In addition, management planning must consider that personal criteria vary by individual when defining "trophy" and "quality"; thus, a progressive program must allow optimum selection opportunities by recreational users.

BROWN/GRIZZLY POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage brown/grizzly bears on the sustained yield principle for the benefit of the resource and the people of the State, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for brown/grizzly bears, and encourages the development and implementation of comprehensive land use planning.

The Department recognizes there are many uses of brown/grizzly bear, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

In most areas of the State, recreation is the most important use of brown/grizzly bears. Recreational uses include: sport hunting in its various forms; observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of or observing animals in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans, and holds that these recreational uses are generally compatible.

Sport hunting has traditionally been the dominant use of brown/grizzly bears in Alaska. This use will be encouraged in most areas, and salvaging of hides and/or meat will remain a condition of taking bears. Regulatory proposals will consider pelt primeness and continued protection of cubs and sows with cubs.

In some areas brown/grizzly bears will be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunity. This concept recognizes the value of the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to enjoy uncrowded conditions, to make use of remote areas, and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance wildlife oriented activities. Regulatory zoning of recreation in time and space may be used to obtain an optimum level of recreational wildlife uses.

In selected areas with highly developed access and high hunter use, brown/grizzly bears will be managed consistent with the maximum sustained yield principle.

Certain areas will be managed to provide hunting opportunities of the highest aesthetic quality. Management techniques may include, but are not limited to season manipulations, regulation of access and regulation of sex, age and numbers of animals taken.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of brown/grizzly bears through public information and education and in its management plans will provide for such activities.

The Department does not consider the harvest of brown/grizzly bear for sale or barter of hides or meat a proper use of the resource and will oppose it. The Department will not approve the domestication of brown/grizzly bears for commercial purposes.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where brown/grizzly bear populations and/or habitat can be studied and manipulated to provide opportunities for research.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct research in

Alaska involving brown/grizzly bears. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interest of the species and the people of the State. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information concerning bears.

The Department may issue permits for capturing, holding and exporting brown/grizzly bears, for stocking, public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes that transplanting brown/grizzly bears for restocking former ranges or vacant habitat is usually infeasible but under ideal conditions may be a useful management tool. Importing and transplanting of bears will be generally opposed, but may be approved if substantial public benefit can be shown. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable population of brown/grizzly bears as determined by comprehensive study.
- 2) Prior study must establish that the introduction of brown/grizzly bears will not adversely affect the numbers, health, or utilization of resident species.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring control of brown/grizzly bears. Controls will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has determined that a valid need exists but shall never be carried out to such an extent as to endanger the bear population in question. The Department will discourage undue competition with bears by domestic animals or marginal agricultural ventures.

Whenever possible, control will be effected by recreational hunting. It is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by brown/grizzly bears. Reasonable efforts must be made to protect life and property by means other than the destruction of bears. Where control by removal of bears is necessary, humane methods will be used and the hide and skull will be salvaged. Poison bait and other nonselective means will not be used.

The Department recognizes the need to provide access planning and control for brown/grizzly bear hunters and observers. In some areas where bears are managed for maximum sustained yield and/or maximum recreational opportunity, access may take the form of roads, airstrips, hiking trails, canoe routes, boat landings, horse trails, and dissemination of information about access. In areas managed primarily for trophy hunting and/or other uses, access may be restricted to some or all of those nonmotorized means listed above. Seasonal time and area zoning may allow for compatible uses of the resource, however, and will be encouraged.

POLAR BEAR MANAGEMENT POLICY

The polar bear (Ursus maritimus) is an important and unique game species which, in some parts of its range, is under management jurisdiction of the State of Alaska. People throughout the world have an interest in this species because of its uniqueness as a large carnivore sparsely distributed in a habitat that is largely unknown and inimical to man.

National as well as international aspects of polar bear management have aroused considerable interest. Many bears are born on land controlled by one or another of the various nations surrounding the polar basin and spend much of their lives in international waters, sometimes moving from one national sector of the high seas to another. A comprehensive polar bear management policy must recognize international, national, and state interests from ecological, recreational, economic and scientific standpoints.

The challenge in polar bear management is to maintain rational management of the species, withstanding economic pressure on one side and emotion-alism by those who consider this species endangered on the other.

POLAR BEAR POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage polar bear on the sustained yield principle in the best interests of the people of the state and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes that there are several uses of polar bear, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses. The Department recognizes that responsible management of polar bear must be based upon scientific knowledge.

Recreation is the most important use of polar bear in Alaska. Recreational uses include: sport hunting, primarily for the trophy value of the species; observation, incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of or observing animals in natural interactions with their environment. Because of the remoteness of polar bear habitat, recreational use through observation is likely to be minimal. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in management plans and holds that these uses are generally compatible.

The Department recognizes trophy hunting of polar bear as the dominant use in the state. One of the primary goals of management will be to

provide maximum opportunity for recreational hunting of high aesthetic quality. Various management techniques will be employed to achieve this objective:

- 1) Seasons will be long to provide hunting opportunity to a maximum number of persons and to keep concentrations of hunters to a minimum,
- 2) Cubs and females with cubs will be protected,
- 3) The Department will encourage the development of polar bear hunting from the ground, ice, or water only and oppose the use of aircraft in taking bear.

Observation and photography of polar bear is a limited recreational use which could become more popular in the future. The Department will encourage this use and provide the public with information relating to it.

The Department recognizes that some coastal residents utilize polar bear as a source of food and will make allowances for this use in management plans.

The Department does not consider the harvest of polar bear for the purpose of selling the hide a valid or wise use and will oppose it.

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proposed*

The Department recognizes the continuing need for studies of polar bear biology and ecology and realizes that some of these studies may be conducted by cooperating agencies or individuals. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make suitable recommendations. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information on polar bear.

The Department may issue permits for capturing, holding and exporting of polar bear for stocking, public education, and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for polar bears and encourages the development of comprehensive plans that will consider the effect of industrial development on the biological components of this habitat.

BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Unlike most species of Alaska's fauna, black bears (Ursus americanus) also occur in each of the 48 contiguous United States, as well as throughout sub-arctic Canada. Within Alaska, the black bear is the most commonly observed large carnivore, and perhaps the most adaptable to human encroachment on its range. It is found in most forested areas of Alaska, with the exception of the Seward and Alaska Peninsulas and Kodiak and some other islands.

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occur on
the Seward
Peninsula*

Because of their ability to live near human settlement, black bears provide many with their best opportunity to observe an impressive predator under wild conditions. However, when precautions are ignored, black bears frequently become nuisance animals near human habitation. Black bears also kill young moose and deer, although the extent of predation is probably slight.

BLACK BEAR POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage black bears on the sustained yield principle in the best interests of the species and the people of the State.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable wild or semi-wild habitat for black bears, and advocates the development and implementation of comprehensive land use planning.

The Department recognizes there are many uses of black bears, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

Recreational uses of black bears are the most important uses throughout the state. Recreational uses include sport hunting; observation, both incidental to other activities and as the primary objective; and wilderness experience, which includes the aesthetic rewards of being aware of or observing bears in natural interactions with their environment. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all of these recreational uses in its management plans, and holds that they are generally compatible.

The Department recognizes recreational hunting as the dominant use of black bears in much of the state. Consistent with its responsibility to manage game species in the best interest of the species and the people, the Department will manage the resource on the basis of a) maximum overall recreational opportunity, b) maximum aesthetic appeal to the user, c) maximum sustained yield of animals to be harvested. Regulatory zoning of recreation in time and space may be used to obtain an optimum level of recreational wildlife uses.

Black bear hunting is most often trophy-related recreation. It involves

the opportunity to be selective in hunting, to obtain a pleasing trophy, to enjoy uncrowded hunting conditions, to make use of remote areas, and to enjoy various other aspects which enhance wildlife oriented activities. Certain areas will be managed to maximize high-quality recreational hunting, opportunity consistent with the above considerations. Management techniques may include but are not limited to, regulation of access regulation of sex and age of animals taken, and population manipulation.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of black bears through public information and education, and its management plans will provide for such activities. Although hunting is generally considered compatible with casual recreational observation of bears, certain areas exceptionally suited for black bear viewing as the primary objective may be zoned in space or time to exclude hunting in favor of observation of bears in their most natural population and social structure.

The Department recognizes that black bears are important aesthetic and biological components of the wilderness ecosystem, and in selected areas will manage them to retain or reestablish their most pristine environmental relationships.

The Department recognizes the blue (Glacier Bear) of the black bear are unique and desirable varieties and will manage populations containing these color phases in favor of these genotypes.

The Department recognizes that some of the state's human population is partially dependent on black bears for food. In areas where people are primarily dependent on game for food the Department will provide for liberal seasons and bag limits, within the limits of maximum sustained yield.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where bear populations and/or habitat can be manipulated to provide better opportunities for applied or basic research.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct black bear research in Alaska. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interest of the species and the people of the state. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information.

The Department does not consider the harvest of black bears for the sale or barter of hides, meat or other parts as a valid use and will oppose such harvest or sale.

The Department does not consider domestication, taming, or restraint of black bears by private or commercial ventures as valid uses and will oppose such uses.

The Department may issue permits for capturing, holding and exporting

black bears for stocking, public education or scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes that transplanting black bears for restocking former ranges or vacant habitat may someday become a useful management tool. Transplanting black bears may be approved if substantial public benefit can be shown. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable population of bears as determined by comprehensive study.
- 2) Prior study must establish that the introduction of bears will not adversely affect the numbers, health, or utilization of resident species.

Whenever substantial conflicts are proven to arise between humans and black bears over the use of prey, the bear population will be managed to minimize such conflicts. In any such cases, the various recreational, trophy and aesthetic values of the bears will be considered equally with similar values of the prey species in the final management decision and in no cases will black bears be completely eliminated.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the removal of an animal or the reduction in numbers of black bears in response to a specific problem. Control will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has determined that a valid need exists. Whenever possible, control will be effected by recreational hunting. When control by the Department or its designees is necessary, humane methods will be employed.

It is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by bears. Reasonable efforts must be made to protect life and property by means other than the destruction of bears. Poison bait and other non-selective means will not be used. Bounties are not considered a desirable means of control.

Although access is important in maximizing recreational opportunity, the Department recognizes that black bears thrive best in at least semi-isolated circumstances and that the primary recreational uses of black bears are best served in uncrowded conditions. Therefore access to black bears will be provided primarily by methods encouraging low human densities, such as public information, hiking trails, canoe routes, horse trails, air strips. Zoning by time will be employed where several compatible uses are possible in one area.

WOLF MANAGEMENT POLICY

The wolf (Canis lupus) preys primarily upon large mammals; as a result, it is one of the most controversial components of the world's fauna. Because of the wolf's proclivity for eating large mammals, man has actively attempted to limit and in some cases eliminate the wolf as an undesirable competitor. Control efforts have successfully depressed wolf numbers in western Europe and parts of Asia; in Russia an intensive campaign to exterminate the wolf was launched after World War II with apparent success in some areas. In North America, wolves are now rare in Mexico, and absent from the conterminous United States except in Minnesota (remnant populations also exist in a few states and strays may occur in some states bordering Canada and in some national parks). They range in abundance from rare to common throughout Canada; generally they have been depressed only in areas devoted to agriculture.

In Alaska, wolves occur throughout the mainland and some of the major islands in southeast Alaska wherever big game populations are sufficient to sustain them. Their distribution in Alaska has not been greatly affected by civilization except in the immediate vicinity of urban areas and on the reindeer grazing ranges of the Seward Peninsula where continuous formal control by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife has greatly reduced their numbers.

The challenge today is to establish management policies that will insure perpetuation of the species during the forthcoming period when many nonrenewable and renewable resources are being exploited, often without cognizance of long term implications to other values. The mobilization of resources for industry comes at a time when additional insight into predator-prey relationships is probable and at a time when cultural values are being reassessed. Pressure from this ecological awakening may assist in gaining recognition for rational management of all wildlife, including the wolf.

Traditional management has emphasized maximum production of ungulates for utilization by man, primarily for subsistence and recreation. Now, however, there is a considerable movement toward protecting all components of the environment and aesthetic or nonconsumptive uses will gain prominence in land use practices. To a considerable extent, a meaningful management policy for wolves is dependent upon a comprehensive land use policy for all lands within the state. Since wolves are largely dependent upon ungulate populations, they will survive if ungulates are managed successfully, providing they receive a minimum of protection from humans. In this sense wolves can be considered an indicator of our stewardship of Alaska's land. Land areas supporting a substantial population of wolves have not been severely abused by man.

Additional information on the ecology of wolf populations and their relationship to ungulate and small mammal populations is required in

In conflict with most other statements and general policy where predation will be controlled to minimize conflicts with humans

order to sustain a progressive management policy.

WOLF POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate to manage wolves on the sustained yield principle for the benefit of the species and of the people, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes that successful management of wolves is directly related to maintaining adequate prey abundance which in turn is dependent upon development of a comprehensive land use program for all lands within the state. The Department will encourage the development of a land use plan.

The Department recognizes that there are many potential uses of the wolf resource and that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future. Management plans must consider all probable uses.

The many uses of the wolf resource dictate that priorities of use be assigned. These assignments are made in the specific management policies listed below and further elaborated upon in area management plans.

The Department holds that recreation is the most beneficial use of the wolf population. In this context, recreation includes sport hunting in all of its forms, and aesthetic uses. The Department holds that these uses have the highest priority and that they are compatible when applied within the sustained yield concept.

Aesthetic uses here are limited to viewing and listening to wolves in their natural state where they are a natural component of the fauna.

*How about a
pelt on the
wall*

Wolf pelts are in considerable demand in the domestic and commercial fur trade. Accordingly, the Department supports the concept of reasonable seasons and bag limits in those areas where wolf populations are sufficiently high and during the period when pelts are prime for the purpose of allowing trappers the opportunity to kill wolves for their pelts. Trapping may include using aircraft in taking wolves where wolf populations are high and when other methods and means for effecting adequate harvests are not feasible.

*these two
statements
appear to
conflict*

Aerial hunting of wolves is generally not considered a desirable means for sport hunting and the Department will not encourage it. Nevertheless when wolves are abundant to the point of seriously affecting man's utilization of a prey species, aerial hunting of wolves is preferable to the use of toxicants.

*General policy
says poisons
will not be
used*

Control as used in this policy statement refers to the physical manipulation of a wolf population for a specific purpose after a need for control has been clearly demonstrated.

Control when implemented shall consist of removing only that portion of the wolf population necessary to achieve the required protection for the threatened prey population. Control shall be carried out with humane means excluding toxicants (Alaska Statutes, Title 16, Powers of the Board). Whenever possible control shall be effected through aerial shooting, hunting, trapping and snaring under recreational use. Chemosterilants may be employed if the need for control is not immediate and if this technique becomes feasible. If the foregoing techniques are not adequate the Department may engage in aerial shooting, trapping and snaring of wolves to effect the desired control.

Control to benefit game population will be exercised by the Department only after it has been clearly demonstrated through investigation that wolves are the primary mortality factor to a game population and that their continued use of the game population threatens its existence or competes excessively with human utilization of the same game population. Furthermore, before control by the Department is undertaken the Department shall determine that recreational use of the wolf population as herein defined will not provide the required abatement of predation.

what if it is one of primary factors of mortality? maybe not a primary factor but as the only one we can manipulate

The responsibility for control to benefit agricultural interests rests largely with the individual engaged in the affected agricultural practice as provided for in the "Emergency Taking Regulation" Article 10. Section 370. 1970-71 Regulations.

On federal lands the Department of Interior claims some jurisdiction over the wildlife resource and the procedures for implementing control are currently undergoing review. Regardless of the decision by the Federal Departments the State maintains primary responsibility for the welfare of wolf populations and for control that affect these populations. If the Department becomes involved in control for the benefit of agriculture when the agricultural interests cannot defend themselves control implemented by the Department will follow the same steps set forth above.

Government or Bureau? Does the Dept. wish to be controlling agent instead of Fed? i.e. Bureau

It is remotely possible that wolves could be vectors of disease organisms detrimental to public health. If such a situation should be demonstrated control would be implemented as set forth above.

Control by State mandatory control unaffected for benefit of man

The Department recognizes that the transplanting of wolves may be a useful tool. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) It must be established by prior study that the introduction of wolves will not materially impair the populations, health or utilization of indigenous organisms.
- 2) A definite need for or a significant potential benefit from the transplant of wolves must be demonstrated.

3) The proposed transplant site must be proven to support suitable habitat for wolves by an adequate ecological study.

The Department recognizes that successful management of the wolf resource is in part dependent upon a further understanding of the relationships of the wolf to its environment. Research activities by the Department and qualified cooperators will be encouraged in order to provide a continuous flow of information that will provide the basis for a continued refinement of management policies.

The Department may issue permits for the capture and export of live wolves but only for purposes of stocking, public enjoyment and education.

WOLVERINE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The wolverine (Gulo gulo) has been the object of considerable mythology throughout its circumpolar range. Much of the folklore stems from the wolverine's tendency to utilize a wide variety of food--food often gathered by another. These habits brought the wolverine into conflict with man. As the wolverine is also equipped with powerful jaws, offensive musk glands and the seemingly insatiable appetite common to weasels, man concerned himself more with eliminating this competitor and in furthering the folklore than he did with attempting to learn facts about the wolverine. As the wolverine was gradually extirpated or greatly reduced in numbers, particularly in Fennoscandia and in the conterminous United States, man finally did notice and within the past 15 years a number of studies, in Fennoscandia and Russia and the United States, have been reported.

*still maintain
a large
extermination
program*

Wolverines never were common in any part of their circumpolar range. They can be considered a rare species even without man's interference. In Alaska they occur throughout the mainland and on some of the major islands in southeastern Alaska, wherever there are sufficient game populations to sustain them.

Their distribution in Alaska has not been greatly affected by civilization. The challenge today is to establish management policies that will insure perpetuation of the species during the forthcoming period when many of the nonrenewable and renewable resources are being exploited. The mobilization of resources for industry comes at a time when there is a cultural reassessment afoot in the country. This pressure may assist in gaining recognition for rational management of all wildlife including the wolverine.

Additional information on the ecology of wolverine populations and their relationships to ungulate and small mammal populations is required in order to sustain a progressive management policy.

WOLVERINE POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate to manage wolverine on the sustained yield principle for the benefit of the species and of the people, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered. The Department recognizes that successful management of wolverines is directly related to maintaining adequate prey abundance which in turn is dependent upon development of a comprehensive land use program for all lands within the state. The Department will encourage the development of a land use plan.

The Department recognizes that there are many potential uses of the

wolverine resource and that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future. Management plans must consider all probable uses of the resource.

The Department holds that recreation is the most beneficial use of the wolverine population. In this context recreation includes aesthetic uses and sport hunting in all of its forms. The Department holds that these uses have the highest priority and that they are compatible when applied within the sustained yield concept.

Wolverine pelts have considerable value in the domestic and commercial fur trade. Accordingly, the Department supports the concept of reasonable seasons and bag limits during the period when pelts are prime for the purpose of allowing trappers the opportunity to ~~kill~~ *take* wolverine for their pelts.

As wolverine populations are presently understood, it seems most unlikely that control will ever need to be implemented (control as used in this policy statement refers to the physical manipulation of a population for a specific purpose after a need for control has been clearly demonstrated). In the unlikely event that this conclusion is proved in error, control, when implemented, shall consist of removing only that portion of the wolverine population necessary to achieve the required protection for the threatened prey population. Control shall be carried out with humane means excluding toxicants (Alaska Statutes, Title 16, Powers of the Board).

*already in
general
statement*

Whenever possible, control shall be effected through trapping and snaring under recreational use. Chemosterilants may be employed if the need for control is not immediate and if this technique becomes feasible. If the foregoing techniques are not adequate the Department may engage in aerial shooting, trapping and snaring of wolverines to effect the desired control.

Control to benefit game populations will be exercised by the Department only after it has been clearly demonstrated through investigation that wolverines are the primary mortality factor to a game population and that their continued use of the game populations threatens existence of a species or competes excessively with human utilization of the same game population.

Furthermore before control by the Department is undertaken the Department shall determine that the recreational use of the wolverine population as herein defined will not provide the required abatement of predation.

Responsibility for control to benefit agriculture rests largely with the individual engaged in the affected agricultural practice as provided for in the "Emergency Taking Regulation" Article 10, Section 370, 1970-71 Game Regulations.

*statute involved
if regulation
as this appears
in one year
policy in for
several years*

government or Bureau's

On federal lands the Department of Interior claims some jurisdiction over wildlife resources and the procedures for implementing control are currently undergoing review. Regardless of decisions by federal departments, the State maintains primary responsibility for the welfare of wolverine populations and for control activities that affect these populations. If the Department becomes involved in control for the benefit of agriculture when the agricultural interests cannot defend themselves control implemented by the Department will follow the same steps set forth above.

It is remotely possible that wolverines could be vectors of disease organisms detrimental to the public health. If such a situation should be demonstrated control would be implemented as set forth under "Control".

The Department recognizes that the transplanting of wolverine may be a useful management tool. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) It must be established by prior study that the introduction of wolverines will not materially impair the populations, health or utilization of indigenous organisms.
- 2) A definite need for or a significant potential benefit from the transplant of wolverines must be demonstrated.
- 3) The proposed transplant site must be proven to support suitable habitat for wolverine by an adequate ecological study.

The Department recognizes that the successful management of the wolverine resource is in part dependent upon further understanding of the relationship of the wolverine to its environment. Research activities by the Department and qualified cooperators will be encouraged in order to provide a continuous flow of information that will provide the basis for a continued refinement of management policies.

The Department may issue permits for the capture and export of live wolverine but only for the purpose of stocking, public enjoyment and education.

SEAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

In Alaskan waters there are five species of true (phocid) seals, including: the harbor seal (Phoca vitulina) ringed seal (Phoca hispida), bearded seal (Erignathus barbatus), ribbon seal (Phoca fasciata) and the northern elephant seal (Mirounga angustirostris). Of these only the harbor seal occurs along most of Alaska's coastline. The arctic seals (ringed, bearded and ribbon seals) are confined to the Bering Sea and waters north of the Bering Strait, while the elephant seal is an occasional visitor to southern Alaska.

To many coastal-dwelling Eskimos, arctic seals (the ringed, bearded, and ribbon seals) constitute an important source of food, clothing, equipment and income. Sport and commercial hunting is carried out but is not a major use of the resource. Few conflicts between seals and fisherman arise primarily because the arctic seals feed on crustaceans and benthic fish.

In areas south of Bristol Bay the harbor seal is harvested in significant numbers by commercial hunters and is also taken by sport hunters. Few seals are taken for subsistence purposes. Because they are fish eaters and are known to take salmon, harbor seals are often viewed as competitors by salmon fishermen. Until recently a bounty was paid for these seals.

SEAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage seals on the sustained yield principle in the best interests of the resource and the people of the State, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

*There is part
of the general
Policy
statement
not needed
here.*

The Department recognizes there are many uses of seals, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes that many residents of coastal villages in arctic Alaska are dependent upon seals for a substantial part of their food supply. The Department holds that this use is the most beneficial use of the seal resource in that area and has priority over all other uses. The Department will provide for liberal seasons and bag limits consistent with the maximum sustained yield concept of wildlife management.

In all areas south of the arctic region, sport hunting for seals is recognized by the Department as a high priority use and will be encouraged commensurate with the status of local seal populations.

Where serious conflicts develop between sport and commercial hunting sport hunting will be given priority consideration. Where sport hunting becomes the major use of the resource, seasons and bag limits will be

established to provide maximum recreational opportunity. Pelt primeness under these circumstances will not be the major factor for determining hunting seasons.

Commercial hunting of seals for their pelts in selected areas of the state is recognized by the Department as a desirable use of the resource. In these areas seals will be managed for maximum sustained yield of animals and to provide maximum value of pelts.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of seals through public information and education and in its plans will provide for such activities. In general, hunting is considered compatible with recreational observation.

Certain areas exceptionally suited to seal viewing may be zoned temporarily or permanently to exclude hunting in favor of observation of seals in their most natural population and social structure.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the removal of a seal or the reduction in numbers of seals in response to a specific problem. With respect to seals engaged in depredations of fish caught by fishermen, the Department's policy is that it is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by seals. This may include destruction of the animal, however, such control shall be directed only at those seals involved in fish depredations or gear destruction activities.

The Department will become involved in reducing a seal population in a specific area only after it has been clearly demonstrated through investigation that seals are the primary mortality factor to a fish population and their continued use of the fish competes excessively with human utilization of the same population. Control, when implemented, shall consist of removing only that portion of the seal population necessary to achieve the desired results. In all such cases, the commercial and recreational values of seals will be weighed against similar values of the fish species.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where seal populations can be manipulated to provide better opportunities for applied or basic research.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct research in Alaska involving seals. The Department will request descriptions of proposed studies when desirable and make recommendations to benefit the species and the people of the State. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information concerning seals.

The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export

of seals for public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for seals and encourages the institution of controls on the use and development of the marine environment.

SEA LION MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Steller sea lion (Eumetopias jubata) is a common resident of the littoral zone of the North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea. In Alaska the largest rookeries are found on the Aleutian Islands and along the Alaska Peninsula.

Although sea lions are well adapted to a life in the sea, they do utilize selected land areas, generally remote island beaches exposed to the open sea, where they come ashore to rest or breed and give birth to their young. Normally they do not migrate, although population shifts occur at various times of the year.

Sea lions are primarily fish eaters but are known to feed on crab, bivalves, octopus and other food items in the sea. It is because of their food habits, especially when they feed on fish such as salmon or halibut, that they sometimes feel the wrath of a fisherman. Control measures are exercised by many individual fishermen in order to protect their catch. Often, however, killing of sea lions is carried out indiscriminately.

Once extensively utilized by natives of Alaska, sea lions today are harvested in relatively small numbers for the fur trade. The potential for greater use, particularly by commercial enterprises requiring animal protein for human or animal consumption, is considerable. Any management plan must consider future consumptive uses of the resource.

SEA LION POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage sea lions on the sustained yield principle in the best interest of the resource and the people of the State, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes that present use of sea lions is limited, that the potential for greater use is considerable, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all these aspects.

The Department recognizes that in selected areas sea lions are important for viewing, commercial products, and scientific study, and will provide for all these uses in its management plans.

The Department recognizes that the pelts of sea lions are commercially valuable and that other parts of the animal may become valuable in the near future. The Department supports the concept of a carefully regulated harvest in certain areas. In these areas sea lions will be managed for a maximum sustained yield of animals.

Sport hunting for sea lions has never been a common use of the resource and it does not appear that it will be in the foreseeable future. Sport hunting with no subsequent utilization of the animal is not considered a wise use of the resource and will be opposed by the Department.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of sea lions through public information and education and in its plans will provide for such activities. Properly conducted harvesting does not unduly disturb the remaining animals and is generally considered compatible with recreational observation. Certain areas exceptionally suited to sea lion viewing may be zoned, temporarily or permanently, to exclude hunting in favor of observation of sea lions in their most natural population and social structure.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the removal of a sea lion or the reduction in numbers of sea lions in response to a specific problem. With respect to sea lions engaged in depredations on fish caught by fishermen, the Department's policy is that it is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by sea lions. This may include destruction of the animal. Such control, however, shall be directed only at those sea lions involved in depredations on fish or destruction of gear.

The Department will become involved in reducing a sea lion population in a specific area only after it has been clearly demonstrated through investigation that sea lions are detrimental to a fish population and are competing excessively with human utilization of the fish resources. In such cases the commercial and recreational values of sea lions will be weighed against similar values of the fish species. Control, when implemented, shall consist of removing only that portion of the sea lion population necessary to achieve the desired results.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where sea lion populations can be manipulated to provide better opportunities for applied or basic research.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct sea lion research in Alaska. The Department will request descriptions of proposed studies, when desirable, and make recommendations to benefit the species and the people of the State. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information concerning sea lions.

The Department may issue permits for the capturing, holding, and exporting of sea lions for public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for sea lions and encourages the institution of controls on the use and development of the marine environment.

SEA OTTER MANAGEMENT POLICY

The sea otter (Enhydra lutris) is historically a valuable furbearer and, more recently, a popular subject for observation.

Excessive commercial hunting for furs between 1742 and 1911 reduced the numbers of sea otters to a dangerously low level. Under 50 years of complete protection, and careful management since Alaska became a state, sea otter numbers have increased. Today the species is in excellent condition. Populations have completely recovered in portions of its range although in some areas are still below their maximum size. Through natural dispersal and Department transplants, there are now at least small numbers of sea otters in most major parts of their former range.

In those areas where populations have completely recovered, an annual, harvestable surplus is being produced. While sea otter pelts are not as valuable as they were in the 19th Century, they still command high prices necessitating strict control of harvesting. However, through careful management, surplus animals can be safely harvested.

Sea otters are entertaining to watch. They are relatively tolerant of humans and their habits are such that they may be viewed frequently and for long periods of time. Much of the current appeal of this species is based on its recovery from near extinction. Many people who will never have the opportunity to see a sea otter, derive satisfaction from knowing that they still exist as a natural component of the fauna.

SEA OTTER POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage sea otters on the sustained yield principle in the best interests of the species and the people of the State, and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

The Department recognizes that there are many uses of sea otters, that present priorities may not be the priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department will strive to produce, in selected areas, maximum yield of animals for recreational opportunity. Recreational uses include observation, enhancement of the wilderness experience, and scientific study. Sport hunting for sea otters is not considered a wise use of the resource and will be discouraged.

The Department recognizes recreational observation as the dominant use of sea otters. The Department will encourage recreational

observation through public information and education and in its management plans will provide for such activities. Properly conducted harvesting does not unduly disturb the remaining animals and is generally considered compatible with recreational observation. However, certain areas exceptionally suited to sea otter viewing may be zoned spatially or temporarily to exclude harvesting in favor of observation of sea otters in their natural environment.

The Department recognizes that sea otters are important aesthetic and biological components of the wilderness ecosystem, and in selected areas will manage sea otter populations to retain or reestablish their original environmental relationships.

The Department recognizes that sea otter pelts are commercially valuable and that sea otters have traditionally been regarded as furbearers. The Department supports the concept of a carefully regulated harvest in certain areas provided that:

- 1) The population of the area is producing a harvestable surplus.
- 2) The surplus is not contributing to the repopulation of an adjacent area.
- 3) The harvest does not significantly impair the opportunity for the public to observe the species.

In areas where harvesting is designated as the primary use, the Department will manage sea otters for a maximum sustained yield of animals.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where sea otter populations and/or habitat can be manipulated to provide opportunities for applied or basic research.

The Department recognizes that other organizations conduct sea otter research in Alaska. The Department will request a description of proposed studies and make recommendations in the best interest of the species and the people of the state. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information concerning sea otters.

The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export of sea otters for stocking, public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities and transportation are available to the permittee.

The Department has demonstrated that transplanting sea otters for restocking former ranges is a useful management tool in some instances. Future sea otter introductions may be approved if substantial public benefit can be

shown. Proposed transplants will be reviewed by the Department and must meet the following minimum requirements to be approved:

- 1) The proposed transplant site must provide sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable sea otter population as determined by comprehensive study.
- 2) Prior study must establish that the introduction of sea otters to areas that did not historically support sea otter populations will not adversely affect the numbers, health or utilization of resident species.

Production of sea otters for transplant will have a higher priority than harvesting as long as such transplants will contribute significantly to the repopulation of former sea otter habitat.

The Department will become involved in controlling sea otter populations only after it has been clearly demonstrated through scientific study that sea otters are the primary mortality factor to a fish or shellfish population and that their continued use of the fish or shellfish population threatens its existence or competes excessively with human utilization of the same population. Control, if implemented, will consist of removing only that portion of the sea otter population necessary to achieve the desired results. In all such cases, aesthetic, recreational, ecological and commercial values of the sea otter will be considered equally with those of the prey species.

Sea otters have strict requirements for food and clean sea water, making them difficult and expensive to hold in captivity. The Department feels that fur farming of sea otters is not feasible and is an improper use of the resource and will oppose it.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for sea otters. It will discourage undue competition with sea otters by fishing and industrial practices and will encourage the institution of water quality standards and zoning the use of the marine environment to reduce such competition.

WALRUS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Pacific walrus (Odobenus rosmarus) has played and continues to play a key role in the settlement and support of residents along the coasts of the Bering and Chukchi Seas. For centuries, walruses provided meat, skins, oil, ivory and other products essential to the well being of a succession of Eskimo cultures. Drastic reduction of Pacific walruses during the late nineteenth century was a major factor contributing to the collapse of several Eskimo settlements in the northern Bering Sea region. Historical records indicate that as many as 100,000 walruses were taken for commercial purposes by whalers during the decade from 1870-1880. The number of Pacific walruses probably reached a low point between 1930 and 1950, when an estimated 45,000 animals existed. Since that time the population has continued to increase and at present is estimated to be about 100,000 animals.

Walruses are of great importance to the contemporary subsistence economy of western Alaska. They also provide the basic raw material for home industry and retail sale of artifacts which are marketed throughout the state. In the subsistence economy, walruses provide a major and relatively reliable source of food and locally important by-products. Within the cash economy, they are of increasing importance because of the established demand for ivory and the expanding demands for other products such as hides.

The philosophical attitudes of coastal residents concerning the walrus are changing in relation to the purposes for which they are hunted. Subsistence hunters considered themselves successful when an adequate supply of meat was secured. Magnitude of the harvest depended on the need for food. In the present subsistence-cash economy, hunting is continued long after the need for food has been met. Larger harvests mean greater monetary returns to the hunters and fewer men are now willing to stop hunting when walruses are still available. A trend toward increased hunting, primarily for ivory, has been evident during recent years. Both male and female walruses possess tusks and therefore are both equally suitable to hunters. All of the prerequisites for a return to the era of commercial exploitation are present.

Regulations imposed since statehood have effectively protected the female segment of the walrus herds and still provided for food requirements of coastal residents. The harvestable surplus of males is finite, and careful attention is necessary to insure that this segment of the herd is not subject to over-exploitation.

The greatest challenge to successful walrus management in the immediate future will involve manipulation of animal harvests to provide primarily for the food requirements of coastal residents and secondarily, for a necessary limited cash income based on ivory, other walrus products, and the returns derived from accommodating sport hunters.

Based on our knowledge of "standing stock" and productivity of the Pacific walrus population, expanded commercial harvests by either American or Soviet hunters cannot be tolerated.

WALRUS POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage walruses on the sustained yield principle in the best interests of the people of the State and also recognizes that national and international interests must be considered.

not need as a part of general policy statement

In managing walruses the Department recognizes that national and international interests must be considered, that there are many present and potential uses of walruses, that present priorities may not be priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes that many residents of coastal villages in Northern Alaska are dependent upon walruses for a substantial part of their traditional food supply. The Department holds that this is the most beneficial use of the walrus resource in that area and at present has priority over all other uses. The Department will provide for seasons and bag limits consistent with this use of the resource within limits imposed by the walrus population level and its productivity.

Hunting of walruses primarily to obtain ivory for use in the home manufacture of arts and crafts has increased as the dependence of coastal residents of walruses as a source of food has decreased. The Department recognizes that a limited harvest of walruses, primarily for ivory used in home manufacture of carvings, is a valid use of this renewable resource until such time as alternate sources of income are available to coastal residents. However, the Department will not permit excessive walrus harvests solely for the purposes of supplying other increasing demands for raw ivory or walrus products.

Sport hunting is a minor, but increasing use of walruses and, in view of the increased monetary return to coastal residents and decreased demands on the resource, it is recognized by the Department as a high priority use. Sport hunting of walrus will be encouraged commensurate with the status of the walrus population.

The Department will encourage recreational observation of walruses through public information and education and in its management plans will provide for such activities. With the exception of established walrus hauling grounds, hunting is considered compatible with recreational observation.

Certain areas exceptionally suited to viewing walruses, particularly the hauling grounds, may be zoned to limit or exclude hunting and

other forms of disturbance, in favor of recreational and scientific observation of these animals under natural conditions.

A few areas may be reserved for controlled scientific studies where local walrus populations can be manipulated in order to provide better opportunity for applied or basic research.

The Department recognizes that other organizations and institutions conduct research from or within Alaska involving walruses. The Department will request descriptions of proposed studies and results of completed studies. Results of such studies will be considered in management deliberations related to walrus. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals whose research may provide useful information concerning walruses.

The Department may issue limited permits for the capture, holding and export of walrus for public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for walruses, and will recommend and encourage the institution of controls on development and exploitation of the marine environment.

FURBEARER MANAGEMENT POLICY

The history of Alaska has been closely tied with the utilization of the fur animal resources. The early exploration and settlement of Alaska was primarily motivated by the desire to harvest the vast fur animal resources of the area which is now recognized as the State of Alaska. The constitution of Alaska and the Alaska legislature have empowered the Board of Fish and Game to define "Fur Animals" and to provide special regulations under which they may be harvested. Beaver, coyote, arctic fox, red fox, lynx, marten, mink, weasel, muskrat, land otter, sea otter, raccoon, red squirrel, flying squirrel, ground squirrel, marmot, wolf and wolverine have been defined as fur animals. Separate management policies have been prepared for sea otter, wolf and wolverine and are not covered under the furbearers policy statement.

A great deal of diversity exists within the group defined as fur animals. Some fur animals, such as beaver and muskrat, are herbivores and others, such as otter and lynx, are carnivores. The populations of some fur animals fluctuate greatly and others are comparatively stable. For most species of furbearers, population fluctuations occur independent of present harvest levels.

In the recent past the harvest of furbearers has primarily been to obtain the pelts for their economic value. This use of furbearers is rapidly changing because of changing economic and social values. In order to accommodate these changing values it may be necessary to review this policy in the future. Considering the vast differences between the various species of fur animals and the many variations which affect their management, it is likely that specific management policies for some species may be necessary or desirable in the future.

FURBEARER POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State to manage fur animals for the benefit of the species involved and the people. The Department also recognizes that there is a high national and international interest in the harvest of furbearers and that when a fur animal species is harvested that the harvest may be on a sustained yield basis. The Department recognizes numerous uses of furbearers. Some animals are trapped for their commercial pelt value and others are shot primarily for recreation and food. To identify the uses and establish their priorities for each species would not be consistent with the purpose of this furbearer policy statement. Priorities established within this policy statement will apply in general to the group defined as fur animals, and present priorities are not necessarily priorities of the future.

The Department recognizes that the major use of fur animals is hunting and trapping for the economic value of their pelts. Several of the species defined as furbearers are also important as prey species for other animals. It is therefore, entirely in keeping with the primary management objective to manage some species of furbearers as prey species for other species of furbearers. Some fur animals, such as beaver, muskrat, lynx, and squirrel are important as human food. When the value of furbearers as food to the people of Alaska exceeds the commercial value of the pelt, populations shall be managed primarily for human food.

The Department recognizes that considerable recreation is derived from the hunting and trapping of fur animals. The Department also recognizes that there may be considerable conflict between those persons desiring to trap furbearers for the economic value of their pelts and those desiring to trap or hunt furbearers primarily for their recreational value. The Department holds that in areas where such conflicts exist recreational hunting and trapping shall assume top priority. The Department recognizes that there may be other recreational values to fur animals including observation and enhancement of the outdoor experience including wilderness experience. The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide for all legitimate uses of fur animals in its management plans. The Department holds that most uses of fur animals can be accommodated within the concept of the maximum sustained yield principle. Due to the difficulty of observing many of the shy and infrequently seen fur animals, management solely for the purpose of observation will be discouraged.

The Department recognizes the statutory provision to manage fur animals and allow their use for domestication purposes. Considering the marginal success of domesticating and rearing furbearers within Alaska and the considerable conflict through competition of domestically raised fur animals with the value of wild fur animals, the Department will discourage the use of wild fur animals to establish fur farms.

The Department recognizes that fur animal research may be done in Alaska by other organizations or individuals. The Department will request a description of the proposed studies and make recommendations for the benefit of the species and the people of the State. The Department will cooperate with other agencies or individuals who conduct legitimate research on fur animals. The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export of fur animals for stocking, education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

Numerous transplants of fur animals have been made in Alaska with great variations in the success. Even though thriving populations

of fur animals have been established in some areas, most transplants have provided little benefit to the people. Some transplants have resulted in serious conflicts between the transplanted species and indigenous fish and game species. The Department will not conduct transplants until it can be reasonably determined that conflicts with endemic species and habitat destruction will not occur.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring control of fur animals. Controls will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has determined a valid need exists. The Department will encourage other agencies and persons to anticipate obvious situations where control may be necessary. All possible control will be affected by public trapping or hunting. With respect to private property the Department's policy is that it is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by fur animals. The most reasonable means is to anticipate problems with fur animals and make reasonable efforts, other than the destruction of fur animals, to prevent or eliminate the problems. Where control by removal of fur animals is necessary, humane methods will be used and the animal will be salvaged for its maximum value.

The Department recognizes the importance of maintaining and creating suitable habitat for furbearers and advocates the development and implementation of comprehensive land use planning for Alaska. Protection and manipulation of habitat are of foremost importance in furbearer management.

The Department does not recognize the need to provide access for hunters or trappers to harvest furbearers, nor does it recognize the need to provide access for persons to observe furbearers or generally appreciate the furbearer resource. The appreciation of the furbearer resource by all users and potential users is often enhanced by the wildness or naturalness of the area. Because of the adaptability of many furbearers to the developmental activities of man, the Department does not hold that the creation of natural areas are essential to the management of furbearers on the basis of maximum sustained yield. The Department also holds that for similar reasons the establishment of areas in which furbearers may not be harvested is also inconsistent with the sustained yield principle and the wise use of the furbearer resource.

SMALL GAME MANAGEMENT POLICY

Alaska is richly endowed with small game. Seven species of upland game birds occur in the State, and every major vegetative type supports at least one species. Rock ptarmigan, willow ptarmigan, and spruce grouse occur throughout Alaska. Ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, blue grouse, and white-tailed ptarmigan have more restricted geographic ranges in the State, but nevertheless are common species in certain regions. The snowshoe hare is distributed widely throughout the Interior and southcentral regions of the state. This species is also found in certain portions of southeastern Alaska, as well as some of the islands in the Gulf of Alaska. The Arctic hare occurs along Alaska's western and Arctic coasts, as well as on the Alaska Peninsula and north slope of the Brooks Range. In remote areas grouse, ptarmigan, and hare contribute significantly to the food supply of local residents; however, they are not utilized as major food sources as are moose and caribou. In more populated regions small game hunting offers tremendous recreational potential.

Throughout Alaska small game populations fluctuate in numbers independent of present harvest levels, and hunting pressure is largely regulated by yearly abundance. Large expanses of inaccessible land, often in close proximity to population centers, serve as undisturbed breeding grounds which replenish the more heavily hunted areas. However, increase in human population, improvement of existing roads, construction of new roads, more frequent use of off-the-road vehicles, and accelerated economic development in general, are bound to put more pressure on the small game resource in the near future. Management policy must be based on sound biological data obtained through research and inventories. The Department is in the unique position of having time to anticipate future problems, as well as to plan and conduct research that will yield information essential to meet the inevitable needs of the future.

SMALL GAME POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage all species of small game on the sustained yield principle in the best interest of the people of the State.

The Department recognizes that there are numerous uses of small game, that present priorities may not be priorities of the future, and that management policies must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes recreational hunting as the major human use of the small game resource; however, the Department also recognizes the importance of small game as prey species for avian and mammalian predators. The Department further holds that observation as part of a wilderness experience, and photography of game birds and hares in their natural habitats are also valid recreational uses. These nonconsumptive uses are at present highly compatible with recreational hunting, and small game will be managed

in order to provide maximum recreational hunting benefits consistent with the sustained yield concept.

The Department recognizes subsistence hunting as a valid use of the small game resource, and will continue to provide the most liberal seasons and bag limits consistent with the sustained yield concept. Game birds and hares contribute only moderately to the food supply of subsistence hunters. Conflict between subsistence and recreational use is not likely; however, should such conflicts arise, priority of use will be established by considering specific situations, and final management decisions made which will provide for maximum benefit to the people of the State.

The Department does not recognize the hunting of small game species, with the exception of hares and rabbits, for sale or barter as wise use of the resource, and will oppose such hunting.

*why are
rabbits and
hares a
wise use*

The Department holds that taking wild game birds or hares for breeding stock on game farms or shooting preserves is not a valid use of the resource, and will not allow animals from the wild to be taken for these purposes.

Attempts to transplant exotic species of game birds have never succeeded in Alaska, and since each major vegetative type in the State naturally supports at least one species of gallinaceous bird, the Department will oppose transplants of exotic birds, rabbits, or hares. Attempts to extend the range of species endemic to Alaska have generally failed, with the exception of a few snowshoe hare transplants, consequently the Department will not conduct transplants for purpose of range extension. Should extensive habitat destruction occur resulting in greatly decreased populations, the Department will consider reintroduction of endemic species in order to accelerate natural restocking.

The need for further study of all phases of game bird and hare ecology is recognized and other agencies are encouraged to conduct well planned research projects. The Department will request, a) a description of proposed studies to avoid duplication of efforts, and b) copies of project reports in order to keep abreast of recent findings of other workers. Certain research projects may require capture or shooting of certain species and, when well justified, the Department will allow such collections to be made under the terms of a valid scientific collecting permit issued by the Commissioner. The Department recognizes the use of small game species for the purposes of education, scientific study and public enjoyment as valid use of the resource and will allow specimens to be possessed and exported for these purposes.

The Department holds that game birds pose no threat to personal property and consequently will not initiate control programs. Under certain conditions hares can be destructive to personal property; how-

ever, the Department holds that protection of property is the responsibility of the owner. The Department will provide information on effective control measures for hares, but will not initiate nor carry out such measures.

The Department recognizes the need to maintain suitable habitat for all species of small game and advocates the development of comprehensive land use planning.

The Department recognizes the need to provide access for small game hunters and observers, and will encourage development of well planned access routes integrated with plans for management for other species. With increased utilization of the resource the responsibility of closely monitoring productivity and harvest trends are recognized and accepted.

The Department will make available information on where and how to hunt, observe, and photograph various small game species. Hunting information will be presented in such a way as to promote hunting away from major road systems, thus encouraging a) a larger, but more widespread, harvest, and b) higher quality hunting experiences for sportsmen.

RAPTOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

The raptors of Alaska are birds in the orders Falconiformes (hawks, falcons and eagles) and Strigiformes (owls). The following species are known to be year round residents in parts of the State: gyrfalcon, one subspecies of the peregrine falcon, goshawk, bald eagle, golden eagle, great horned owl, great gray owl, snowy owl, hawk owl and boreal owl. The sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk, and saw-whet owl are possible winter residents in southeastern Alaska. Migratory species that nest in Alaska include: rough-legged hawk, Harlan's hawk, Swainson's hawk, peregrine falcon, merlin, kestrel, harrier, osprey, and short-eared owl. Other species known to occur rarely in the State are the Stellar's sea eagle, the white-tailed sea eagle, and the screech, pygmy, and long-eared owls.

Raptors, being predators, occupy the top trophic level and are generally distributed widely but at low densities. Presently there is great national concern that some migratory species are threatened with extinction due to contamination resulting from indiscriminant use of pesticides. While these fears are justified for peregrine falcons, ospreys, and certain other migratory species, those raptors residing in Alaska throughout the year are probably in little danger from environmental contamination in the foreseeable future.

Over the years birds of prey have been falsely held responsible for declines in abundance of game species. With the increasing public concern for the welfare of all species of wildlife and their environments, the role of raptors in the ecosystem, as well as their ability to enrich wilderness experiences, is being appreciated by a growing proportion of the human population. The art of falconry has long been recognized as an exciting and sporting method of hunting small game, and the demand for birds to be used for falconry is bound to increase.

Management policy must consider all uses, both consumptive and non-consumptive, and their priorities.

RAPTOR POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage all raptors that occur at any time of the year in the State, with the exception of the bald and golden eagle (managed by the Federal government), on the sustained yield principle for the benefit of the people of the State.

The Department recognizes that there are numerous uses of raptors, that present priorities may not be priorities of the future, and that management policies must consider all uses.

The Department recognizes the significant role of raptors in the eco-

system, and holds that the greatest benefit derived from all raptorial species is observation, photography, and enrichment of wilderness experiences. All species will be managed with this nonconsumptive use assuming the highest priority.

The Department holds that falconry (the taking of small game by use of raptors) is a sporting and legitimate method of hunting small game. The Department holds that goshawks and gyrfalcons are suitable for taking all game normally hunted by falconers in Alaska, and will allow a certain number of these raptors to be taken yearly for falconry purposes. A falconry permit will be required to take these raptors for falconry, and the number of permits issued yearly will be consistent with the sustained yield concept. The Department opposes import and export of live raptors to and from Alaska. Falconry permits will be issued only to Alaskan residents. All species of raptors other than goshawks and gyrfalcons will be managed solely for nonconsumptive uses. *why*
no justification

Snowy owls are used to a small extent as food in some regions of Alaska. The number of birds taken for this purpose is small, and has little effect on snowy owl abundance. The Department recognizes this use and will allow subsistence hunting (see Alaska Hunting Regulation, 5 AAC 81.360) of snowy owls in certain Units consistent with the sustained yield concept.

The Department holds that barter or sale of raptors taken in Alaska is not a wise use of the resource and will oppose it. *why*

The Department recognizes the need for further study on all phases of raptor biology and ecology, and encourages other agencies to conduct well planned research projects. Permits to possess raptors for this purpose will be issued; however, the Department will require a yearly report of activities and findings of such projects involving live raptors being held in captivity.

The Department considers the use of raptors by public zoos and museums for public display as valid use of the resource. However, the possession of raptors for private collections and private display is not considered wise use, and will be opposed.

The Department recognizes that the probability of extensive raptor transplant programs are remote. However, such activities will be considered as a possible means to reestablish or supplement populations that may be in danger of extinction.

The Department recognizes that conflicts sometimes occur between raptors and domestic animals, but holds that if precautions are taken to prevent losses as prescribed in the Alaska Hunting Regulations (5 AAC 81.370) depredations will not occur. Consequently, the Department will oppose the taking of raptors in defense of property.

The Department recognizes the need for maintaining suitable habitat for the various species of raptors and encourages the development of comprehensive land use planning.

The Department holds that protection of nesting sites of certain species is essential to the welfare of these species, and will work with other land managing agencies to designate and protect critical nesting areas.

WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT POLICY

Alaska is recognized as a major duck, goose, swan and shorebird production area. Seven species of geese, three species of swans and more than 35 species of ducks have been reported in the State. Over seven million waterfowl annually originate from Alaska and migrate to areas in all four flyways, Canada, Mexico and Asia. Some species both breed and over-winter in Alaska, never leaving the State.

Waterfowl production habitat is located throughout the State, but the most important areas are in river valleys and deltas, coastal marshes, and the Arctic North Slope. Wintering areas are restricted mainly to coastal regions of southcentral and southeast Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands. Some areas, although not important as wintering or production areas, are important as fall and/or spring resting areas.

Responsibilities for establishing basic harvest regulations and other management activities of a national scope are vested in the federal government. Alaska is a member of the Pacific Flyway Council, one of four flyway councils consisting of member states, created to solve flyway waterfowl problems and act in an advisory capacity to the federal government on national waterfowl management problems.

The future of waterfowl and waterfowl related recreational activities in Alaska depends on maintenance of adequate production, migration and wintering habitat. Although amount of habitat in Alaska is now large and is of good quality, future encroachment on and subsequent alteration and destruction of waterfowl habitat are imminent. The magnitude of habitat losses depends, in a large part, on the Department's and other state and federal resource management agencies' present and future activities in land use planning and environmental quality controls.

WATERFOWL POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the Constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage waterfowl on a sustained yield basis in the best interests of the resource and the people of Alaska.

The Department recognizes sound land use planning as the primary means to insure preservation of waterfowl habitat. The Department will, in accordance with land use plans, buy, lease or otherwise protect key waterfowl areas to insure future waterfowl-related recreational opportunities. When destruction or alteration of waterfowl habitat is inevitable, the Department will strive to insure minimum habitat loss and/or acquire mitigation for any losses. The Department will also, whenever possible and appropriate, improve the quality of existing waterfowl habitat.

The Department will conduct waterfowl management activities having immediate or future benefit to the Alaska public. However, the Department is cognizant of other state, national and international interests in waterfowl in Alaska and will cooperate with management activities at these levels, if pursuant to the best interests of the Alaskan public and the resource.

Sport hunting of waterfowl is recognized by the Department as the most important present use of waterfowl, and management activities will be conducted primarily to insure perpetuation and enhancement of this use. The Department will continue to investigate population dynamics of waterfowl species and will promulgate sound biological recommendations for the harvest of waterfowl by sport hunting.

The Department recognizes nonconsumptive recreational experiences as an important use of waterfowl. These experiences are considered compatible and consistent with sport hunting and will be promoted whenever possible.

The Department recognizes socioeconomic problems related to spring waterfowl hunting by natives. It also recognizes its obligation to protect and defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and state regulations prohibiting such harvest. Hunting of waterfowl primarily for food is recognized as a valid use of the resource only if it occurs within the legal framework of season lengths and limits.

Predator control to enhance waterfowl populations is not considered desirable except under the following circumstances:

- 1) Control for the protection of rare and endangered species.
- 2) Control on certain areas where a comprehensive study has demonstrated predator control will be economically feasible and will be of direct and long-term benefit to the waterfowl species in question.

The Department does not consider harvest of waterfowl for sale, trade or barter a legitimate use of this resource and will oppose legalization of this use.

The Department recognizes the importance of acquiring scientific knowledge for better waterfowl management. Therefore, it will encourage, initiate and finance research programs designed to solve management problems related to the enhancement and perpetuation of sport hunting. It will, however, cooperate in other research projects, not designed to achieve the above-stated objective, by providing a free-flow of ideas and previously gained knowledge.

The Department may issue permits for capture and/or export of waterfowl and their eggs, but only after evidence is provided that use of such permits will be for valid scientific study, education or stocking purposes.

The Department recognizes waterfowl transplants as a valid management practice under certain conditions. Transplants of waterfowl will be made of rare and endangered species and other species under the following conditions:

- 1) A substantial public benefit must be shown.
- 2) A comprehensive study must demonstrate the proposed transplant site provides sufficient and suitable habitat to support a viable waterfowl population.
- 3) A review and approval of the transplant, by the Department, must be made.

The Department considers waterfowl depredation to be a joint federal-state problem and will cooperate with the federal government in solving this problem. Potential, foreseeable depredation problems will be identified and cooperation with other appropriate agencies and individuals will be given to minimize problems.

The Department will strive to provide adequate waterfowl hunter access to hunting lands in large population areas or other high hunter-use areas, by negotiation, lease, purchase or other appropriate means.

UNCLASSIFIED GAME MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Alaska Game Regulations contain a section relating to seasons and bag limits for "unclassified game." Unclassified game includes all species of birds and mammals including feral domestic animals found in the State that are not otherwise classified as big game, small game, fur animals or marine mammals by the Game Regulations. Waterfowl are classified separately, and regulations governing their use are formulated separately in cooperation with other states and the Federal government.

Major groups of birds included as unclassified game are passerines, shorebirds, raptors, swallows, kingfishers, woodpeckers and the gulls, jaegers, alcids, and other sea birds. Major groups of mammals included are rats, mice, voles, lemmings, porcupines, bats, shrews and pikas.

Clearly, most of the species of birds and mammals of Alaska are included in the "catch-all" category of "unclassified game." This arrangement of the regulations reflects the main concern and the major emphasis of the Department, which is with game that people harvest. At the same time, the regulations reflect the concern of the Department for the birds and mammals which are not harvested for sport or food. With the exception of a few species and groups of species, there is no open season on unclassified game.

Unclassified game includes most of Alaska's resident and migratory birds and most of the small mammal species - mainly rodents. The welfare of many of the species harvested by people is dependent upon or related to the welfare of unclassified game species. Further, the enjoyment of outdoor experiences is enhanced tremendously by the presence of these animals. Appreciation for the various small birds and mammals is increasing steadily as more and more people seek outdoor recreational experiences.

The Department is responsible for the welfare of these various species. The following policy summarizes the Department's management philosophy for these important species.

UNCLASSIFIED GAME POLICY STATEMENT

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game recognizes the constitutional mandate of the State of Alaska to manage unclassified game for the benefit of the species involved and of the people. When a species is harvested, the Department recognizes that the obligation extends to management on a sustained yield basis.

The Department recognizes the singular importance of maintaining suitable habitat for the species of birds and mammals involved. The

Department advocates research to determine the needs of these species, and advocates the development of comprehensive land use planning that provides for the maintenance or development of suitable habitat.

In most cases the birds and mammals involved are dependent upon naturally occurring plant and animal communities. Such communities are subject to change through natural processes such as succession, erosion, accretion and fire, and through man-made changes such as settlement, road building, logging, mining, etc.

The Department recognizes that extensive habitat changes may threaten certain species which have very specific habitat requirements. When habitat changes are being planned for the benefit of people or of other wildlife, the Department will assess the possibility of negatively affecting such a species and attempt to provide alternative plans if a particular species or group of species appears to be seriously threatened.

The Department recognizes that there are many uses of unclassified game species, that present priorities may not be priorities of the future, and that management plans must consider all uses.

The groups of species included as unclassified game are extremely diverse, as are the habitats they occupy. Consideration of their management collectively is artificial in that it does not relate to their natural relationships. However, taken collectively these groups have several things in common, particularly in relation to human use, which makes it possible to consider them together for management purposes. First, they are not hunted, with a few exceptions; second, they constitute a large proportion of the fauna that provide the enjoyment of recreational outings and wilderness experience; third, ecologically they constitute the majority of the avian and mammalian fauna in terms of numbers of species, and possibly in bulk as well.

The Department therefore recognizes recreational observation as the dominant human use of unclassified game. Recreational observation includes casual viewing, animal watching as a hobby, and the role of the various species as part of wilderness experience. The Department will provide for this use in management plans relating to specific areas, and will encourage recreational observation in all areas.

Aside from those species of unclassified game for which hunting seasons are already provided, the Department will, in general, oppose the hunting of unclassified game, unless (1) substantial public benefit can be shown, (2) prior study has shown that the population of the species under consideration can support some degree of sport hunting, and (3) hunting can be conducted without conflict with recreational observation.

The Department recognizes that raptors present a unique problem, and considers their management under a separate policy.

The Department will oppose the harvest of unclassified game for the purpose of sale of hides, meat, feathers or other animal products. In most cases the populations of potentially valuable species in the commercial sense are insufficient to support this type of utilization.

The Department will oppose domestication of species included as unclassified game. Domestication implies the husbandry of animals for the production of animal products, including work. Most species of Alaska's unclassified game are not well suited for this use. Their primary values are as part of a natural community.

The Department recognizes and has demonstrated the usefulness of transplants of game to former or vacant habitat, but also realizes that transplants can be of negative value. Transplants of unclassified game species may be undertaken if substantial public benefit can be demonstrated. The Department will approve proposed transplants only if the following requirements are met. (1) A comprehensive study demonstrates that sufficient suitable habitat is available to support a viable population. (2) Prior investigation of the transplanted species will not adversely affect the numbers, health or utilization of resident plant and animal species.

The Department recognizes that other organizations and individuals have conducted and will conduct research involving unclassified game species. The Department will keep informed of such research, make appropriate recommendations, and represent the interests of the species involved and of the people of the State. The Department will cooperate with agencies or individuals conducting legitimate research. The Department may issue permits for the capture, holding and export of unclassified game (except raptors) for transplanting, public education and scientific study, but only after demonstration that suitable habitat or holding facilities are available to the permittee.

The Department recognizes that situations may arise requiring the removal of an animal or the reduction in numbers of a species in response to a specific problem. Control will be implemented only after an investigation by Department personnel has shown that a valid need for control exists.

Control will be effected by the Department or its designated agent, using humane means. With respect to private property, it is the Department's policy that it is the owner's responsibility to protect his property from damage by unclassified game species. Reasonable efforts must be made to protect life and property by means other than the destruction of game. Poison bait and other nonselective means will not be used. Bounties are not considered a desirable means of control.