

5 AAC 92.123. Intensive Management Plans VII. (a) Plans established. Intensive management plans for the following areas are established in this section:

(3) Unit 19(C) Predation Control Area.

(c) **Unit 19(C) Predation Control Area.** The Unit 19(C) Predation Control Area is established and consists of all lands within Unit 19(C) (6,711 square miles); this predation control program does not apply to any National Park Service or National Wildlife Refuge lands unless approved by the federal agencies; state and private lands are approximately 5,368 square miles, and multiple predator control areas may be utilized within the management area, however the combined active control areas will be limited to a total of 3,700 square miles, which is approximately 55 percent of the management area. The control program for this area is as follows:

(1) this is a predator control program designed to increase moose abundance and harvest by reducing predation on moose by wolves and is expected to make a contribution to the intensive management (IM) objectives in Unit 19(C);

(2) moose and wolf objectives are as follows:

(A) moose IM population objectives for Unit 19(C) as established in 5 AAC 92.108 are 4,400-5,000 moose.

(B) The bull-to-cow objective is 20 - 25:100 for Unit 19(C); this objective is within the range of historic composition rates.

(C) the moose harvest objective for Unit 19(C) is 175-200 moose; this range includes historic harvest levels.

(D) the department has determined that wolves can be removed from public and private lands within the control area to the extent possible without affecting the sustainability of the wolf population in Unit 19(C) because the control area is approximately 55 percent of Unit 19(C) and does not include all lands that the wolf population occupies; this would result in a population of no less than 60 wolves, or 45 % of the pre-control estimate of wolf abundance in the entire sub-unit.

(3) findings concerning populations and human use are as follows:

(A) the Unit 19(C) IM moose population and harvest objectives have not been achieved;

(B) wolf predation is likely a factor in the failure to achieve moose population and harvest objectives;

(C) a reduction in wolf predation in Unit 19(C) may make progress toward achieving the Unit 19(C) IM harvest objectives for moose;

(D) reducing wolf predation is has a high probability of positively impacting moose abundance using recognized and prudent active management techniques and based on scientific information;

(E) reducing wolf numbers is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns with either public or department participation;

(4) authorized methods and means are as follows:

(A) hunting and trapping of wolves by the public in the Unit 19(C) Predation Control Area during the term of the program will occur as provided in the hunting and trapping regulations set out elsewhere in this title, including the use of motorized vehicles;

(B) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may issue public aerial shooting permits or public land and shoot permits as a method for wolf removal under AS 16.05.783;

(C) department personnel will be allowed to conduct aerial wolf removal using aircraft under AS 16.05.783.

(5) time frame is as follows:

(A) through June 30, 2030, the commissioner may authorize the removal of wolves in the Unit 19(C) Predation Control Area;

(B) annually the department shall, to the extent practicable, provide to the board a report of program activities conducted during the preceding 12 months, including implementation activities, the status of the moose and wolf populations, and recommendations for changes, if necessary to achieve the objectives of the plan.

(6) the commissioner will review, modify, or suspend program activities as follows:

(A) when the mid-point of the IM population and harvest objectives for the moose population are achieved;

(B) if, after three years, the harvest of wolves is not sufficient to make progress towards the IM population objectives for wolves;

(C) wolf predation control activities may be suspended:

(i) if, after three years, there is no detectable increase in the total harvest of moose in the control area;

(ii) if, after three years, any measure such as twinning rates and short-yearling mass, consistent with significant levels of nutritional stress in the moose population is identified; or

(iii) when the moose population and harvest objectives within Unit 19(C) have been met;