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**ALASKA BOARD OF GAME**

**Western Arctic/Western Region Meeting**

Kotzebue, AK | January 26-29

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**Board of Game Findings and Policies**

*The following Board of Game Findings & Policies are related to the topics for the Western Arctic/Western Region meeting. All Board of Game findings are available online at: [www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.findings](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.findings)*

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**EIGHT CRITERIA WORKSHEET, BOARD OF GAME 1991**

**GMU: 26A, 24 (Anaktuvuk Pass) and 23 (Point Hope)**

**Positive C&T Finding: 1987**

**SPECIES: Caribou- Western Arctic Caribou Herd**

**ALASKA RESIDENTS USING THE SPECIES:** Residents of the Inupiat villages of Point Hope, Point Lay, Wainwright, Barrow, Atkasuk, Nuiqsut and Anaktuvuk Pass are the primary North Slope users of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH).

**1. LENGTH AND CONSISTENCY OF USE (long-term, consistent, excluding interruptions by circumstances beyond the user's control):**

The economic and cultural importance of caribou to the North Slope Inupiat has been amply documented beginning with Maguire 1853, followed by Simpson 1855, Murdoch 1892, and Spencer 1959. The archaeological record also indicates that this resource has been relied upon by inhabitants dating back possibly as far as 6,000 years (Wilson 1981). Current use and dependence on caribou by some communities in GMU 26(A) have been documented by Braund 1989 and Pedersen 1985-86.

**2. SEASONALITY (recurring in specific seasons of each year):**

Caribou are hunted during the entire open season in GMU 26(A), from 1 July to 30 June, but the main harvest usually takes place from July through October, and then again in March and April. This seasonal round pattern is deeply rooted in traditional North Slope Inupiat caribou hunting practices documented by early explorers in the region.

**3. MEANS AND METHODS OF HARVEST (efficient, economic, conditioned by local circumstances):**

Today GMU 26(A) caribou are harvested by all North Slope communities except Kaktovik in GMU 26C. Using modern firearms harvesting is carried out by individuals as well as by groups of hunters cooperating under specific rules of sharing. Winter hunting (October to April) is mainly an inland activity using snowmachine transportation, whereas summer hunting is coastal and riverine utilizing boats and all-terrain vehicles.

**4. GEOGRAPHIC AREAS (near or reasonably accessible from the user's residence):**

Caribou from this herd are at times harvested near the villages listed above, but common harvest sites are from 30 to 80 miles away. Mapping of traditional community harvest area and recent harvest locales indicates that a large area is involved in pursuing and harvesting WACH. Some caribou harvest sites appear to be particularly productive over time and receive regular use. There appears to be no significant competition between caribou hunters from the villages and non-local residents who occasionally hunt within the range of the WACH on the North Slope.

**5. MEANS OF HANDLING, PREPARING, AND STORING (traditionally used by past generations, but not excluding recent technological advances):**

Current Inupiat methods and means of handling, preparing, and storing caribou are based on a long tradition of caribou hunting, and dependence on caribou for food, clothing, shelter, and raw materials. Although bones and scraps are not widely used today, all other parts are processed for some use. Meat, organs, and the head are eaten, bones cracked and boiled to produce soup stock; the hide is used for winter bedding material and arts and crafts projects; leg skins are saved for making mukluk uppers; sinew from lower legs are saved for sewing, and hooves and antlers are crafted into a variety of craft items ranging from antler knife handles to amusing art creations made from caribou hair and hooves.

Caribou meat is sometimes air-dried, but more often is frozen after processing. Community hunters use a combination of both traditional ice cellars and modern freezers for this purpose.

**6. INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, VALUES, AND LORE (handed down between generations):**

Caribou hunting is a central land-based hunting activity among North Slope Inupiat today as it has been for generations. Hunters often travel in mixed-age groups to facilitate the transmission of and reinforcement of important values, behaviors, hunting and processing techniques, as well as sharing patterns. Teaching traditional/modern hunting skills is considered of paramount importance among North Slope residents and considerable effort is expended on this. For instance in GMU 26(A) a summer camp for North Slope children, "Upiqsu" on the Meade River, offers first-hand experience and learning about hunting and fishing activities with North Slope Inupiat elders.

**7. DISTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE (customary trade, barter, sharing, and gift giving within a definable community of persons):**

Caribou meat and hides have always been a major component of the natural resource trade on the North Slope, and early records indicate that some commercial trade may even have taken place during the whaling era. Today caribou continues to be a valuable trade and barter commodity, and, in some communities on the North Slope, a fat winter caribou might easily be traded for several spotted seals. However, sharing is, as it probably always has been, the major distribution mechanism on the North Slope. Pedersen (1990) has documented sharing of caribou meat from Kaktovik residents [GMU 26(C)] with relatives and friends in Anaktuvuk, Nuiqsut, Barrow, and even Fairbanks. The intra-North Slope community sharing of caribou is particularly evident when one community has an abundant supply of caribou meat and relatives and friends in a nearby community are doing poorly. Gift-giving of caribou may also be a mechanism for communities that lack certain resources, such as whales, to acquire caribou for ceremonial and general consumption. For instance, residents of Anaktuvuk have been known to give caribou to Barrow and Nuiqsut in return for a share in the bowhead whale harvest of these communities.

**8. DIVERSITY OF RESOURCES IN AN AREA; ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND NUTRITIONAL ELEMENTS (wide diversity, substantial elements in a subsistence user's life):**

Although caribou from the WACH are only one of a host of resources harvested by residents of GMU 26(A), they play a major role in the economy of the communities under discussion. In some years caribou have been documented as supplying a major percentage of all locally harvested meat, and being the single greatest source of sustenance for residents of some communities. Even in years when other resources may have contributed more pounds of meat to the community, caribou appear to remain the most important, and most productive, terrestrial resource in the area (Braund 1989, Pedersen 1985-86 and 1990).

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EIGHT CRITERIA WORKSHEET, BOARD OF GAME 1991

GMU: 22, Western Arctic Herd

Positive C & T Finding: 1987

SPECIES: Caribou

COMMUNITIES: St. Michael, Stebbins, Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Elim, Golovin, White Mountain, Council, Solomon, Nome, Shishmaref.

1. **LENGTH AND CONSISTENCY OF USE.** Though plentiful early in the historic period, caribou had disappeared from the Norton Sound and Seward Peninsula areas by the late 19th century. Reindeer were introduced in 1892, supplanting caribou for meat and materials. When reindeer declined in the 1930s, some villages again traveled long distances to hunt caribou. In recent decades, villages with access to caribou (primarily the eastern portion of the unit) continue to hunt them. The availability of caribou varies with the size of the herd and its migration route. With the exception of Stebbins and St. Michael, communities in this unit hunt the Western Arctic caribou herd. Stebbins and St. Michael occasionally hunt the Andreafsky caribou herd, though depend more on domestic reindeer than caribou at this time.
2. **SEASONALITY.** In most communities, caribou hunting takes place in winter and spring when the Western Arctic herd is in the southern portion of its range. Caribou hunting by Stebbins and St. Michael residents also occurs during months of snow cover when the Andreafsky herd is accessible.
3. **MEANS AND METHODS OF HARVEST.** Hunters in pairs or groups travel by snowmachine to caribou hunting grounds. Caribou are pursued by snowmachine or herded to waiting hunters, then shot with large caliber rifles.
4. **GEOGRAPHIC AREAS.** In most years, few communities have caribou in the immediate vicinity, and hunters therefore often travel long distances for the specific purpose of caribou hunting. For example, Shishmaref hunters often travel 200 miles to the Buckland and Selawik areas in search of caribou. Some Nome hunters also range widely. Koyuk, Shaktoolik, and Unalakleet hunters generally do not travel as far, particularly in recent years when Western arctic caribou have wintered nearby.
5. **MEANS OF HANDLING, PREPARING, PRESERVING, & STORING.** Caribou meat is eaten fresh, frozen, or dried. The bones are used in soup and the fat is used to make *akutuq* (Eskimo ice cream). The head, tongue, brain, heart, liver, and kidneys are consumed. Hides are used for bedding, clothing, and mukluks.
6. **INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, VALUES & LORE.** Teenage boys in villages look forward to accompanying their fathers or older brothers on caribou hunting trips. Young children at home watch their parents butcher and prepare meat and skins. Children listen as adults discuss hunting, traveling conditions, and animal behavior. In general, harvesting wild resources is a family activity.
7. **DISTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE.** Hunting parties divide their take among themselves, then widely distribute meat to other village households. This is especially true with favored resources -- such as caribou -- that require traveling some distance to harvest. The extent of sharing was evident in a 1989 study that found that 88 percent of Golovin households used caribou while only 18 percent harvested caribou. A hunter's own family often stores meat only after many other households are provided for. Caribou is also shared between villages. For example, a 1985 study found that Brevig Mission households (who do not have access to caribou) received caribou meat from Shishmaref hunters.

**8. DIVERSITY OF RESOURCES USED IN THE AREA.** Subsistence studies have documented the current use of more than 100 different species of plants and animals in the area. In Brevig Mission in 1986, for example, 50 percent of the households surveyed used more than 30 different species of wild resources.

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EIGHT CRITERIA WORKSHEET, BOARD OF GAME 1991

GMU: 23, Western Arctic Herd

Positive C & T Finding: 1987

SPECIES: Caribou

ALASKA RESIDENTS USING THE SPECIES: Deering, Candle, Buckland, Selawik, Noorvik, Kiana, Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Kivalina, Point Hope.

1. **LENGTH AND CONSISTENCY OF USE.** For thousands of years caribou has been a dietary staple for northwest Alaskans, particularly those living in inland areas. Caribou bones have been excavated from sites on the Kobuk River dating from 8,000-10,000 years ago. In historic times and probably before, declining or shifting caribou populations have periodically caused widespread human starvation. Except for these interruptions, caribou use has been continuous.

2. **SEASONALITY.** Caribou are harvested when available. The timing and routing of their migration determines each village's hunting season, and can change from year to year. In general, villages in the southern portion of the unit (Buckland, Deering, and Selawik) hunt caribou in winter and spring, while the remaining villages hunt them in fall, winter, and spring. Kivalina and Point Hope also hunt caribou in summer (July).

3. **MEANS AND METHODS OF HARVEST.** During months of snow cover, hunters shoot caribou from snowmachines with large caliber rifles. In fall, Kobuk River hunters shoot swimming caribou from boats with .22 caliber rifles. Hunters often camp in fall at traditional caribou crossing locations, watching and waiting for the animals. In the past, groups of hunters used stone, earth, or brush fences to drive caribou into corrals or lakes where they could be speared. Snares were also traditionally used to catch caribou.

4. **GEOGRAPHIC AREAS.** Over the course of the year, caribou can be found almost everywhere in the unit. With the current abundance of caribou, hunters today do not need to range as widely for caribou as they did in the past when caribou were scarce. Nevertheless, hunters frequently travel 30-40 miles to reach caribou. In fall, Kotzebue residents often travel more than 100 miles up the Kobuk and Noatak rivers to hunt caribou.

5. **MEANS OF HANDLING, PREPARING, PRESERVING, & STORING.** From centuries of experience, northwest Alaskans have learned to fully utilize caribou. The meat is eaten fresh, frozen, or dried. The bones, used in soup, are cracked to obtain the marrow. The head, tongue, brain, heart, liver, and kidneys are consumed. The fat is used to make *akutuq* (Eskimo ice cream). Hides are used for bedding, clothing, and mukluks. Antlers are made into tool handles, net sinkers, and other items. The sinew is used for thread.

6. **INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, VALUES & LORE.** Teenage boys in villages look forward to accompanying their fathers or older brothers on fall caribou hunting trips. The first caribou caught by a young man is given to an elder with blessings for his continuing success. Occasionally entire families set up camps for caribou hunting. Teenage girls help their mothers and grandmothers cut and dry caribou meat. In general, harvesting wild resources is a family activity.

7. **DISTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE.** Hunting parties divide their take among themselves, then further distribute caribou to other village households. Caribou is also sent to friends and family living outside the region. A 1987 harvest survey in Kotzebue found caribou to be the most widely exchanged resource with 57.9 percent of households receiving caribou and 40.3 percent giving some away.

8. DIVERSITY OF RESOURCES USED IN THE AREA. Most community stores are meagerly stocked with meat or fish, indicating the heavy reliance residents have upon wild resources. Although caribou is a staple in the region, other foods such as moose, sheefish, salmon, seal, whale, and berries figure prominently in local diets.

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1977 *Kuvangmiut Subsistence: Traditional Eskimo Life in the Latter Twentieth Century*. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

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## 5 AAC 96.625. JOINT BOARD PETITION POLICY

(a) Under AS 44.62.220, an interested person may petition an agency, including the Boards of Fisheries and Game, for the adoption, amendment, or repeal of a regulation. The petition must clearly and concisely state the substance or nature of the regulation, amendment, or repeal requested, the reason for the request, and must reference the agency's authority to take the requested action. Within 30 days after receiving a petition, a board will deny the petition in writing, or schedule the matter for public hearing under AS 44.62.190--44.62.210, which require that any agency publish legal notice describing the proposed change and solicit comment for 30 days before taking action. AS 44.62.230 also provides that if the petition is for an emergency regulation, and the agency finds that an emergency exists, the agency may submit the regulation to the lieutenant governor immediately after making the finding of emergency and putting the regulation into proper form.

(b) Fish and game regulations are adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Board of Game. At least twice annually, the boards solicit regulation changes. Several hundred proposed changes are usually submitted to each board annually. The Department of Fish and Game compiles the proposals and mails them to all fish and game advisory committees, regional fish and game councils, and to over 500 other interested individuals.

(c) Copies of all proposals are available at local Department of Fish and Game offices. When the proposal books are available, the advisory committees and regional councils then hold public meetings in the communities and regions they represent, to gather local comment on the proposed changes. Finally, the boards convene public meetings, which have lasted as long as six weeks, taking department staff reports, public comment, and advisory committee and regional councils reports before voting in public session on the proposed changes.

(d) The public has come to rely on this regularly scheduled participatory process as the basis for changing fish and game regulations. Commercial fishermen, processors, guides, trappers, hunters, sport fishermen, subsistence fishermen, and others plan business and recreational ventures around the outcome of these public meetings.

(e) The Boards of Fisheries and Game recognize the importance of public participation in developing management regulations, and recognize that public reliance on the predictability of the normal board process is a critical element in regulatory changes. The boards find that petitions can detrimentally circumvent this process and that an adequate and more reasonable opportunity for public participation is provided by regularly scheduled meetings.

(f) The Boards of Fisheries and Game recognize that in rare instances circumstances may require regulatory changes outside the process described in (b) - (d) of this section. Except for petitions dealing with subsistence hunting or fishing, which will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis under the criteria in 5 AAC 96.615(a), it is the policy of the boards that a petition will be denied and not schedule for hearing unless the problem outlined in the petition justifies a finding of emergency. In accordance with state policy expressed in AS 44.62.270, emergencies will be held to a minimum and are rarely found to exist. In this section, an emergency is an unforeseen, unexpected event that either threatens a fish or game resource, or an unforeseen, unexpected resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action and such delay would be significantly burdensome to the petitioners because the resource would be unavailable in the future. (Eff. 9/22/85, Register 95; am 8/17/91, Register 119; readopt 5/15/93, Register 126)

Authority: AS 16.05.251, AS 16.05.255, AS 16.05.258

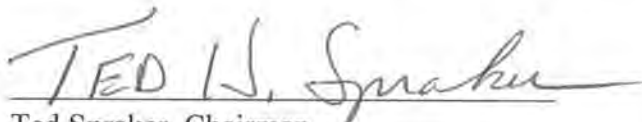
ALASKA JOINT BOARDS OF FISHERIES AND GAME

## CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BOARD-GENERATED PROPOSAL

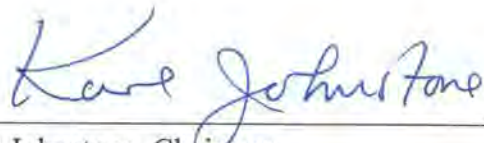
It has been suggested that criteria need to be established to guide the Alaska Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game, Board of Fisheries, and Board of Game (boards) members when deliberating on whether or not to develop a board-generated proposal. The boards will consider the following criteria when deliberating the proposed development and scheduling of a board-generated proposal:

1. Is it in the public's best interest (e.g., access to resource, consistent intent, public process)?
2. Is there urgency in considering the issue (e.g., potential for fish and wildlife objectives not being met or sustainability in question)?
3. Are current processes insufficient to bring the subject to the board's attention (e.g., reconsideration policy, normal cycle proposal submittal, ACRs, petitions)?
4. Will there be reasonable and adequate opportunity for public comment (e.g., how far do affected users have to travel to participate, amount of time for affected users to respond)?

Findings adopted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 2013.



Ted Spraker, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game  
Vote: 6-0



Karl Johnstone, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Fisheries  
Vote: 7-0

**Findings of the Alaska Board of Game  
2023-228-BOG  
BOARD OF GAME WOLF MANAGEMENT POLICY  
(Policy duration: Date of finding through July 2028  
This policy supersedes BOG policy #2016-215-BOG))**

Background and Purpose

Alaskans are proud that wolves occur throughout their historic range in Alaska. Wolves are important to people for a variety of reasons, including as furbearers, big game animals, competitors for ungulate prey animals, for customary and traditional uses for Alaskans, and as subjects of enjoyment, curiosity, and study. Wolves are important components in the natural functioning of northern ecosystems. Over time, many people have come to appreciate wolves as exciting large carnivores that contribute significantly to the quality and enjoyment of life in Alaska.

The primary purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the public, the Department, and the Board of Game on wolf management issues as the Board and the Department implement constitutional and statutory direction and respond to public demands and expectations. The Board recognizes the need for ongoing responsible wolf management to maintain sustainable wolf populations and harvests, and to help maintain sustainable ungulate populations upon which wolves are largely dependent. The Board also recognizes that when conflicts arise between humans and wolves over the use of prey, wolf populations may have to be managed more intensively to minimize such conflicts and comply with existing statutes (e.g. AS 16.05.255). Under some conditions, it may be necessary to greatly reduce wolf numbers to aid recovery of low prey populations or to arrest undesirable reductions in prey populations. In some other areas, including national park lands, the Board also recognizes that non-consumptive uses of wolves may be considered a priority use. With proper management, non-consumptive and consumptive uses are in most cases compatible but the Board may occasionally have to restrict consumptive uses where conflicts among uses are frequent.

Wolf/Human Use Conflicts

Conflicts may exist between wolves and humans when priority human uses of prey animals cannot be reasonably satisfied. In such situations, wolf population control will be considered. Specific circumstances where conflicts arise include the following:

1. Prey populations or recruitment of calves into populations are not sufficient to support existing levels of existing wolf predation and human harvest;
2. Prey populations are declining because of predation by wolves or predation by wolves in combination with other predators;
3. Prey population objectives are not being attained; and
4. Human harvest objectives are not being attained.

Wolf Management and Wolf Control

The Board and the Department have always distinguished between wolf management and wolf control. Wolf management involves managing seasons and bag limits to provide for general public hunting and trapping opportunities. These seasons provide for both subsistence and other traditional economic harvest opportunities and, as a side benefit, allow for participants to directly aid in mitigating conflicts between wolves and humans or improving ungulate harvest levels. In most cases trapping seasons will

be kept to times when wolf hides are prime. However, some hunters are satisfied to take wolves during off-prime months including August, September, April, and May. Opportunity may be allowed for such harvest.

Wolf control is the planned, systematic regulation of wolf numbers to achieve a temporarily lowered population level using aerial shooting, hiring trappers, denning, helicopter support, or other methods which may not normally be allowed in conventional public hunting and trapping. The purpose of wolf control is not to eradicate wolf populations. Under no circumstances will wolf populations be eliminated or reduced to a level where they will not be able to recover when control efforts are terminated, and wolves will always be managed to provide for sustained yield.

In some circumstances it may be necessary to temporarily remove a high percentage (>70%) of wolf populations to allow recovery of prey populations. In other situations, it may be necessary to temporarily remove a smaller percentage of wolf populations (40-70%) to allow prey populations to increase or meet human harvest objectives. Once prey population objectives have been met, wolf populations will generally be allowed to increase to or above pre-control levels.

During the 1997 review of predator control in Alaska by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences (National Research Council 1997), only two clearly successful cases were found where increased harvests of ungulates resulted from control in the Yukon and Alaska. In the last 13 years since that review, several other programs have been successful, including programs in GMUs 9, 13, 16 and 19. In addition, there is now a thirty-year history of intensive wolf and moose management and research, including 2 periods of wolf control in GMU 20A. It is clear, and well documented, that periodic wolf control has resulted in much higher harvests of moose than could be realized without control (Boertje et al., 2009). Biologists now have considerable experience successfully managing moose at relatively high density (Boertje et al., 2007). The GMU 20A case history has provided a great deal of information on what biologists can expect from intensive management programs and these programs are scientifically well founded. However, GMUs are different ecologically and new information on which areas are best suited to intensive management programs will continue to be gathered.

#### Decisions by the Board to Undertake Wolf Control

Generally, there are two situations under which the Board will consider undertaking wolf control (implementing extraordinary measures outside normal hunting and trapping). In rare cases, control may be implemented where sustained yield harvests of ungulates cannot be maintained or where extirpation of ungulate populations may be expected. More commonly, the Board may implement wolf control to comply with Alaska Statutes (AS 16.05.255) where ungulate populations are declared “depleted” or where ungulate harvests must be significantly reduced, and these populations have been found by the Board to be important for “high levels of human harvest”. In most cases when wolf control is implemented, the Board will favor and promote an effective control effort by the public. Experience has shown that often a joint effort by the public and the Department has been most effective. However, the Board recognizes that there are areas and situations where the public cannot effectively or efficiently control predation and that the Department may, under its own authority and responsibilities, conduct the necessary wolf population control activities. Such situations arise in part because public effort to take wolves tends to diminish before an adequate level of population control is achieved. In areas where wolf reduction is being conducted, ungulate and wolf surveys should be conducted as frequently as necessary

to ensure that adequate data are available to make management decisions and to ensure that wolf numbers remain sufficient to maintain long-term sustained yield harvests.

#### Methods the Board Will Consider When Implementing Wolf Control Programs

- 1) Expanding public hunting and trapping into seasons when wolf hides are not prime.
- 2) Use of baiting for hunting wolves.
- 3) Allowing same-day-airborne hunting of wolves when 300 ft from aircraft.
- 4) Allowing land-and-shoot by the public.
- 5) Allowing aerial shooting by the public.
- 6) Allowing use of Department staff and helicopters for aerial shooting.
- 7) Encouraging the Department to hire or contract with wolf trappers and other agents who may use one or more of the methods listed here.
- 8) Allowing denning by Department staff and use of gas for euthanasia of sub-adults in dens.

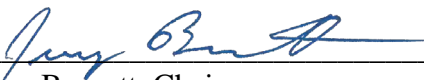
#### Terminating Wolf Control

Depending on the response to wolf control and ungulate population and harvest objectives, control may either be of short or long duration. In some cases, control may last less than five years. In other cases it may be an ongoing effort lasting many years. As ungulate harvest objectives are met, the Board will transition from a wolf control program to a wolf management program, relying to a greater extent on public hunting and trapping. In cases where ungulates respond very well and hunting is ineffective at controlling ungulate numbers for practical reasons, it may be necessary for the Board to restrict the taking of predators.

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Vote: 7-0  
January 19, 2023  
Ketchikan, Alaska

  
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Jerry Burnett, Chairman  
Board of Game

**Findings of the Alaska Board of Game**  
**2023-227-BOG**  
**BOARD OF GAME BEAR CONSERVATION, HARVEST,**  
**AND MANAGEMENT POLICY**  
**(Expiration Date: July, 2028**  
**This policy supersedes BOG Policy #2016-214-BOG)**

**Purposes of Policy**

1. To clarify the intent of the Board and provide guidelines for Board members and the Department of Fish and Game (Department ) to consider when developing regulation proposals for the conservation and harvest of bears in Alaska, consistent with the Alaska Constitution and applicable statutes.
2. To encourage review, comment, and interagency coordination for bear management activities.

**Goals**

1. To ensure the conservation of bears throughout their historic range in Alaska.
2. To recognize the ecological and economic importance of bears while providing for their management as a harvestable opportunity, food, predatory, and furbearer species.
3. To recognize the importance of bears for customary and traditional uses, viewing, photography, research, and non-consumptive uses in Alaska.

**Background**

The wild character of Alaska's landscapes is one of our most important natural resources and the presence of naturally abundant populations of brown/grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*) and black bears (*Ursus americanus*) throughout their historic range in Alaska is important to that wild character. Bears are important to Alaskans in many ways, including as food animals, predators of moose, caribou, deer and muskox, a unique species opportunity for nonresident and resident hunters, furbearers, , and as objects of curiosity, study, awe, and enjoyment. Bears are also important components of naturally functioning Alaskan ecosystems.

Bear viewing is a rapidly growing industry in selected areas of the state. The interest exceeds the opportunities provided now by such established and controlled sites as McNeil River, Pack Creek, Anan Creek, Wolverine Creek and Brooks Camp. In most areas, hunting and viewing are compatible uses but the Board may consider bear viewing as a priority use in some small areas, especially where access for people is good and bears are particularly concentrated. The Board, the Department , and the Alaska Wildlife Troopers will continue to discourage people from feeding bears to provide viewing and will continue to enforce laws against persons who feed bears illegally.

Bears are frequently attracted to garbage or to fish and hunting camps and can be a nuisance where they become habituated to humans and human food sources. Dealing with problem bears has been especially difficult in Anchorage, Juneau, and the Kenai Peninsula. The Department has worked hard, and successfully, with municipalities to educate people and solve waste

management problems. The Department 's policy on human food and solid waste management (<http://www.wc.adfg.state.ak.us/index.cfm?adfg=bears.bearpolicy>) provides guidance on reducing threats to humans and the resulting need to kill problem bears.

Bears can pose a threat to humans in certain situations. The Department has the regulatory authority to address human/bear conflicts and has developed a detailed approach to investigating incidents involving bears and humans. In addition, the Department has developed a detailed wildlife safety curriculum for use internally and by the public, with considerable focus on bears. The Department and the Board will continue to educate people about ways to minimize threats to humans and the resulting need to remove problem bears.

Alaska is world-renowned as a place to hunt brown bears, grizzly bears and black bears. Alaska is the only place in the United States where brown and grizzly bears are hunted in large numbers. The brown bear harvest has remained stable over the last 10 years, despite more liberal regulations governing take. Many of the hunters are nonresidents and their economic impact is significant to Alaska. Hunters have traditionally been the strongest advocates for bears and their habitat, providing consistent financial and political support for research and management programs.

Because bears can be both prey and predator, their relationship with people is complex. Throughout much of Interior Alaska and in some areas of Southcentral Alaska, the combined predation by bears and wolves keeps moose at relatively low levels. Bear predation on young calves has been shown to contribute significantly to keeping moose populations depressed, delayed population recovery, and low harvest by humans. People in parts of rural Alaska (e.g., Yukon Flats) have expressed considerable frustration with low moose numbers and high predation rates on moose calves in hunting areas around villages. The Board and the Department take an active role in addressing bear management issues. Because the Constitution of the State of Alaska requires all wildlife (including predators) to be managed on a sustained yield basis, the Board of Game and the Department will manage all bear populations to maintain a sustained yield, and the Board recognizes its broad latitude to manage predators including bears to provide for higher yields of ungulates (*West vs State of Alaska*, Alaska Supreme Court, 6 August 2010).

### **Brown and grizzly bears**

Although there is no clear taxonomic difference between brown and grizzly bears, there are ecological and economic differences that are recognized by the Board and Department . In the area south of a line following the crest of the Alaska Range from the Canadian border westward to the 62<sup>nd</sup> parallel of latitude to the Bering Sea, where salmon are important in the diet of *Ursus arctos*, these bears are commonly referred to as brown bears. Brown bears grow relatively large, tend to be less predatory on ungulates, usually occur at high densities, and are highly sought after by hunters for the unique hunting opportunity generally only found in Alaska and for viewing and photography. Bears found north of this line in Interior and Arctic Alaska; where densities are lower and which are usually smaller in size, more predatory on ungulates, and have fewer opportunities to feed on salmon; are referred to as grizzly bears. Brown and grizzly bears are found throughout their historic range in Alaska and may have expanded their recent historic range in the last few decades into places like the Yukon Flats and lower Koyukuk River.

Although determining precise population size is not possible with techniques currently available, most bear populations are estimated to be stable or increasing based on aerial counts, Capture-

Mark-Resight techniques (including DNA), harvest data, traditional knowledge, and evidence of expansion of historic ranges. Throughout most coastal habitats where salmon are abundant, brown bears are abundant and typically exceed 175 bears/1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (450 bears/1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>). A population in Katmai National Park on the Alaska Peninsula was measured at 550 bears/1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (1,420 bears/1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>). In most interior and northern coastal areas, densities do not exceed 40 bears/1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (100 bears/1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>). Mean densities as low as 4 grizzly bears/1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (12 bears/1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>) have been measured in the eastern Brooks Range but these density estimates may be biased low and the confidence intervals around the estimates are unknown. Extrapolations from existing density estimates yielded statewide estimate of 31,700 brown bears in 1993, but the estimate is likely to be low.

Although some northern grizzly bear populations have relatively low reproductive rates, most grizzly bear and brown bear populations are capable of sustaining relatively high harvest rates comparable to moose, caribou, sheep, goats, and other big game animals that exist in the presence of natural numbers of large predators in most areas of Alaska. In addition, grizzly bears and brown bears have shown their ability to recover relatively quickly (<15 years) from federal poisoning campaigns during the 1950s and overharvest on the Alaska Peninsula during the 1960s. Biologists were previously concerned about the conservation of brown bears on the Kenai Peninsula and brown bears there were listed by the state as a “species of special concern”. The Department implemented a conservation strategy there through a stakeholder process. In recent years it has become apparent that brown bears remain healthy on the Kenai and the Board, and the Department no longer believes there is a conservation concern.

In some areas of the state (e.g., Unit 13) where the Board has tried to reduce grizzly bear numbers with liberal seasons and bag limits for over 15 years, there is no evidence that current increased harvests have affected bear numbers, age structure, or population composition. In areas of Interior Alaska, where access is relatively poor, long conventional hunting seasons and bag limits of up to 2 bears per year have not been effective at reducing numbers of grizzly bears. In these areas, most biologists believe that as long as sows and cubs are protected from harvest it will not be possible to reduce populations enough to achieve increases in recruitment of moose.

### **Black bears**

American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) are generally found in forested habitats throughout the state. Like brown and grizzly bears, black bears also occupy all of their historic ranges in Alaska and are frequently sympatric with grizzly and brown bears. Because they live in forested habitats it is difficult to estimate population size or density. Where estimates have been conducted in interior Alaska, densities ranged from 67 bears/1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (175 bears/1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>) on the Yukon Flats to 289 bears/1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (750 bears/1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>) on the Kenai Peninsula. In coastal forest habitats of Southeast Alaska’s Alexander Archipelago, black bear densities are considered high. A 2000 estimate for Kuiu Island was 1,560 black bears/1,000 km<sup>2</sup> (4,000 black bears/1,000 mi<sup>2</sup>).

In most areas of the state, black bears are viewed primarily as food animals, but they are also sought after for their fur/hides, and as predators of moose calves. The Board classified black bears as furbearers, recognizing the desire of people to use black bear fur as trim on clothing, to enhance the value of black bears, and to enable the Board and the Department to use foot-snares in bear management programs. The classification of black bears as a furbearer has legalized the sale of some black bear hides and parts (except gall bladders) and has thus made regulations in Alaska similar to those in northern Canada in this regard.



Black bears exhibit higher reproductive rates than brown and grizzly bears. In all areas of the state black bear populations are healthy and can sustain current or increased harvest levels. However, hunting pressure on black bears in some coastal areas like Game Management Unit (GMU) 6 (Prince William Sound), GMU 2 (Prince of Wales Island) and parts of GMU 3 (Kuiu Island) may be approaching or have exceeded maximum desired levels if mature bears are to be preserved and are the subjects of frequent regulatory adjustments.

In some other parts of the state, deliberately reducing black bear numbers to improve moose calf survival has proven to be difficult or impossible with conventional harvest programs. The Board has had to resort to more innovative regulations promoting baiting and trapping with foot snares. The Department has also tried an experimental solution of translocating bears away from an important moose population near McGrath (GMU 19D) to determine if reduced bear numbers could result in significant increases in moose numbers and harvests. The success of the McGrath program has made it a potential model for other small areas around villages in Interior Alaska, if acceptable relocation sites are available.

### **Guiding Principles**

**The Board of Game and the Department will promote regulations and policies that will strive to:**

1. Manage bear populations to provide for continuing sustained yield, while allowing a wide range of human uses in all areas of the state.
2. Ensure subsistence uses of bears are provided in accordance with state law.
3. Ensure public safety near population centers.
4. Continue and, if appropriate, increase research on the management of bears and on predator/prey relationships and methods to mitigate the high predation rates of bears on moose calves in areas designated for intensive management.
5. Continue to provide for and encourage non-consumptive use of bears without causing bears to become habituated to human food.
6. Favor conventional hunting seasons and bag limits to manage bear numbers.
7. Encourage the human use of bear meat as food.
8. Employ more efficient harvest strategies, if necessary, when bear populations need to be substantially reduced to mitigate conflicts between bears and people.
9. Work with the Department to develop innovative ways of increasing bear harvests if conventional hunting seasons and bag limits are not effective at reducing bear numbers to mitigate predation on ungulates or to deal with problem bears.
10. Simplify hunting regulations for bears and increase opportunity for incidental harvest of grizzly bears in Interior Alaska by eliminating resident tag fees.
11. Recognize the increasing value of mature brown bears, especially in Units 1-6 and 8-10, and generate increased revenue from sales of brown bear tags.
12. Review and recommend revision to this policy as needed.

## **Conservation and Management Policy**

The Board and the Department will manage bears differently in different areas of the state, in accordance with ecological differences and the needs and desires of humans. Bears will always be managed on a sustained yield basis. In all non-subsistence areas, the priority is to ensure continued subsistence uses of bears in accordance with state law. In some areas, such as the Kodiak Archipelago, portions of Southeast Alaska and the Alaska Peninsula, brown bears will generally be managed for mature adult bears for hunting, and for viewing opportunities. In Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound, black bears will generally be managed as for sustainable populations for harvest, food animals, and viewing opportunities. In Interior and Arctic Alaska, black bears and grizzly bears will be managed primarily for sustainable populations, food animals, and predators of moose and caribou. Near population centers bears will be managed to ensure for public safety. In some parts of Interior Alaska, the Board may elect to manage populations of black bears primarily as furbearers.

### **Monitoring Harvest and Population Size**

The Board and the Department recognize the importance of monitoring the size and health of bear populations on all lands in Alaska to determine if bear population management and conservation goals are being met. In areas where monitoring bear numbers, population composition, and age class is a high priority, sealing of all bear hides and skulls will be required. At the present time, all brown and grizzly bears harvested under the general, drawing, or registration hunting regulations must be inspected and sealed by a Department representative. Where monitoring bear numbers and harvests is a lower priority, harvest may be monitored using harvest tickets or subsistence harvest surveys.

Harvest of black bears will generally be monitored either with harvest tickets or sealing requirements. Where harvests are near maximum sustainable levels or where the Department and the Board need detailed harvest data, sealing will be required.

Large areas of the state have subsistence brown/grizzly bear hunts with liberal seasons and bag limits, mandatory meat salvage, and relaxed sealing requirements. The Department will continue to provide for subsistence needs.

Bear viewing also is an important aspect of bear management in Alaska. Increasing interest in watching bears at concentrated feeding areas such as salmon streams and sedge flats, and clam flats is challenging managers to find appropriate levels and types of human and bear interactions without jeopardizing human safety. Bear hunting and viewing are compatible in most situations.

Nothing in this policy affects the authority under state or federal laws for an individual to protect human life or property from bears (5 AAC 92.410). All reasonable steps must be taken to protect life and property by non-lethal means before a bear is killed.

### **Managing Predation by Bears**

In order to comply with the AS 16.05.255, the Board and Department may implement management actions to reduce bear predation on ungulate populations. The Board may promulgate regulations that allow the Department to temporarily reduce bear populations in Game Management Units, Subunits, or management areas. The Board and the Department may

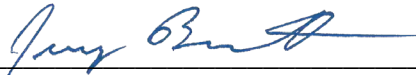
also need to reduce bear predation on ungulates to provide for continued sustained yield management or conservation of ungulates. In addition, it may be necessary for the Department to kill problem bears to protect the safety of the public under AS 16.05.050 (a) (5). In some cases, the Board may direct the Department to prepare a Predation Control Areas Implementation Plan (5 AAC 92.125 or 92.126) or in other cases the Board may authorize extensions of conventional hunting seasons or implement trapping seasons to aid in managing predation on ungulates.

To comply with AS 16.05.255 to maintain sustained yield management of wildlife populations, or to prevent populations of ungulates from declining to low levels, the Board may selectively consider changes to regulations allowing the public to take bears, including allowing the following:

- Baiting of bears
- Trapping, using foot-snares, for bears under bear management or predator control programs.
- Incidental takes of brown or grizzly bears during black bear management or predator control programs.
- Use of communications equipment between hunters or trappers.
- Sale of hides and skulls as incentives for taking bears.
- Diversionary feeding of bears during ungulate calving seasons.
- Use of black bears for handicraft items for sale, except gall bladders.
- Use of grizzly bears for handicraft items for sale, except gall bladders.
- Taking of sows accompanied by cubs and cubs.
- Same-day-airborne taking.
- Aerial shooting of bears by Department staff
- Suspension or repeal of bear tag fees.
- Use of helicopters.

The Board intends that with the exception of baiting, the above-listed methods and means will be authorized primarily in situations that require active control of bear populations, and only for the minimum amount of time necessary to accomplish management objectives. The Board allows baiting of black bears as a normal method of take in broad areas of the state and will consider allowing brown bear baiting as a normal method of take in select areas.

Vote: 7-0  
January 19, 2023  
Ketchikan, Alaska

  
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Jerry Burnett, Chairman  
Board of Game

**Findings of the Alaska Board of Game**  
**2017-222-BOG**  
**Alaska Board of Game Nonresident Hunter Allocation Policy**  
(This policy supersedes BOG policy #2007-173-BOG)

In consideration that Article 8 of the Alaska Constitution states that:

**§ 2. General Authority** — The legislature shall provide for the utilization, development, and conservation of all-natural resources belonging to the state, including land and waters, for the maximum benefit of the people.

**§ 3. Common Use** — Wherever occurring in their natural state, fish, wildlife, and waters are reserved to the people for common use.

**§ 4. Sustained Yield** — Fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands, and all other replenishable resources belong to the State shall be utilized, developed, and maintained on the sustained yield principle, subject to preferences among beneficial uses.

And, Alaska Statute 16.05.020 states that one of the primary functions of the commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game is to:

(2) manage, protect, maintain, improve, and extend the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state in the interest of the economy and general well-being of the state.

And further, that; AS16.05.255 directs that the Board of Game, among other duties, may adopt regulations for:

(10) regulating sport hunting and subsistence hunting as needed for the conservation, development, and utilization of game.

(13) promoting hunting and trapping and preserving the heritage of hunting and trapping in the state.

The Alaska Board of Game establishes this document as a general statement of its views related to nonresident hunter participation in the State of Alaska.

The Alaska Board of Game finds that:

1. Carefully controlled hunting and trapping have been used since statehood to assure that Alaska's wildlife populations are healthy and sustainably managed. Alaska's wildlife populations are minimally impacted by the hunting pressure experienced today, and most hunted populations are either stable or growing. There are few remaining opportunities in North America where a hunter can experience both the quality of largely uninhabited and undeveloped environment, minimal private land ownership boundaries, or the type of hunting opportunities that Alaska has to offer. Alaska is the

only place in the United States where coastal brown bears, caribou and Dall sheep can be hunted, for instance, and there has been great demand for hunting opportunities of these species by U.S. and foreign citizens for many generations.

2. Alaska is one of the last remaining places in the United States where there are large segments of public lands open for general season hunting opportunities. The State of Alaska maintains authority for wildlife management across multiple land ownership designations yet the board recognizes that approximately 60% of the state remains in Federal ownership and is managed for the benefit of all U.S. citizens equally. In recognition of our state's constitutional mandate to manage the state's wildlife for the "common use" and "maximum benefit" of the people, the board has maintained a resident priority for hunting opportunities through management actions such as longer seasons, less restrictive antler requirements, resident tag fee exemptions, and lower licensing fees. The board has also maintained general season opportunity to the greatest degree possible for the benefit of all hunters, resident and visitor alike.
3. Under the Common Use Clause of the Alaska Constitution, access to natural resources by any person's preferred method or means is not guaranteed, and protecting public access to those resources requires an adaptive and informed balancing of demands and needs consistent with the public interest. As such, the state has considerable latitude to responsibly, equitably, and sustainably establish priorities among competing uses for the maximum benefit of the public.
4. From region to region, Alaska often has differing patterns of use, values, and traditions related to the harvest of game. Some areas welcome nonlocal hunters more readily than others, and other areas have little concern regarding who else is hunting the area, so long as local needs are met. The board has recognized that there is no single simple allocation formula that adequately covers the needs, desires, and historical use patterns of the diverse regions of our state.
5. Nonresident hunters have played a crucial and often undervalued role in support of Alaska's wildlife conservation efforts since Territorial times. Early in the last century, nonresident hunters partnered with Alaskan sportsmen to advocate for the conservation of brown bear and grizzly populations, perhaps most notably on Kodiak Island, which reversed territorial, and later state policy that was at one point directed toward the complete elimination of some segments of these populations by any means available. Nonresident hunting groups and resident hunters successfully advocated for the creation of McKinley National Park to address market hunting depletions of Dall sheep populations in that region, and later played an important role in advocating that National Park Preserves and National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska would not only allow for hunting, in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, but that hunting and fishing would be recognized in law as priority uses under the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. These cooperative actions substantially protected continued hunting opportunities across large areas of federally managed lands in Alaska. More recently, nonresident hunters have contributed meaningfully in the

effort to prevent disease introduction in Alaska, and continue to be knowledgeable allies in safeguarding both our resources and our access to these resources in the face of external pressures.

6. Nonresident hunters typically harvest wildlife at low levels across the state, with few known exceptions. While most big game animal populations are typically harvested at a rate of less than 10 percent by nonresidents, there are some areas where it can be higher (e.g. nonresident sheep harvests averages between 35 and 40% annually and brown/grizzly bear harvests typically exceed resident harvest in much of the state.
  - The board recognizes that, in recent years, there has been a renewed effort to restrict or eliminate nonresident hunter opportunity, especially in relation to Dall sheep harvest. The board conducted an extensive survey of sheep hunter perceptions and experiences; requested that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game gather all known data regarding hunter participation and harvest rates statewide; and, convened a Dall sheep working group made up of Alaskan residents to discuss the known data, survey results, and issues more broadly in an open setting.
  - Nonresident hunter numbers are restrained due to many factors, such as the guide requirement for Dall sheep, mountain goat and brown bear/grizzly, a law primarily addressing hunter safety issues. This requirement also results in higher success rates due to the greater experience and area familiarity of hunting guides. Nonresident sheep hunters have also been limited by federal guide concessions, which have capped the number of guides in large portions of sheep ranges and held them to predetermined numbers on 10-year cycles. The competitive bidding nature for obtaining rights in these areas requires that guides hold to the number of clients they have proposed during their tenure, allowing for predictable participation and anticipated harvest rates.
7. Despite comparatively low participation and harvest rates for most species due to restricted opportunity, nonresident hunters provide the majority of direct funding into Alaskan wildlife management programs through relatively expensive license and big game tag fees. This level of funding has allowed for stable wildlife management and educational activities for decades. The additional benefit to wildlife management from receiving Pittman-Robertson matching funds, which come primarily from nationwide weapon purchases, cannot be overstated. The level of funding that nonresident license sales have provided for department survey and inventory programs, among other programs, has allowed the board to have increased confidence in providing for higher levels of harvest opportunities under sustained yield principles. Alaskan hunters have benefited most from these management programs through generally avoiding harvest quotas, draw permits, antler restrictions, and shortened seasons for the majority of hunt opportunities in Alaska. This enhances our ability to satisfy our legal mandate to manage, preserve and promote hunting and trapping throughout the state, while

providing the maximum benefit for all the people as Alaskans take home an estimated 90% of the big game animals harvested for their meat value in the state each year.

8. Nonresident hunters contribute substantially directly to the Alaskan economy through contracting with service providers, equipment rentals, supply purchases from local vendors, hotel and tourism related expenses, and meat processing and trophy expediting services. Visiting nonresident hunters are typically comprised of 80% of unguided hunters, 20% guided nonresident hunters, or hunters accompanied by second degree of kindred relatives.

- Unguided nonresident hunters often contract with air-taxis or transporters for transportation services to remote hunting locations and primarily focus their efforts on moose, caribou, deer, and black bear. Nonresident hunter dispersal through transportation services provides benefit to both resident hunters who find the more accessible hunting areas less crowded, and nonresident hunters who often have access to more remote areas that provide unique hunting settings or access to migratory resources. Unguided nonresident hunters often donate meat through their service providers to remote villages, especially portions of their moose and caribou, due to prohibitive transportation costs. There have been numerous complaints over the years related to donated meat quality, hunter crowding, overbooked services, and competition with local hunters related to air-taxi and transporter operations – resulting in the creation of controlled use areas to limit hunting-related aircraft use in several areas of the state and most recently both modified state and new federal controlled use areas in northwest Alaska. The board recognizes that these issues are not typically driven by lack of resource availability, but at times due to variance in wildlife migrations or weather and at other times unchecked competition for limited access points by multiple service providers. The board believes that these conflicts can be best addressed through greater oversight of transportation related services in our state rather than strictly limiting general hunting opportunity where resources are in many cases stable or abundant.
- Approximately 86% of registered or master guides in Alaska are Alaskan residents and upwards of 66% of assistant guides are Alaskan residents. Guided hunt opportunity is generally disbursed across the state on both state and federal lands, and to a lesser degree on private lands. A recent economic analysis of the economic impact of the guide industry notes that 3,242 guided nonresident hunters contributed approximately 87.2 million dollars to Alaska's economy in 2015, and supported 2,120 Alaskan jobs. A significant amount of game meat was donated by guided hunters in communities across the state during this same period, providing both economic relief and direct dietary benefit to mostly rural Alaskans. The benefit this brings to Alaskan communities is supported by testimony from across Alaska. There has been complaint regarding hunter crowding or competition for Dall sheep resources on state owned lands in several regions for a number of years and the board

has recently taken a very detailed look at these and other issues with the aid of a resident-comprised Dall sheep working group, as noted above. The board has advocated for the restoration of guide-concessions on state lands to both provide a comprehensive program to address quality of hunt issues such as these, and to assure that stewardship-based guided-hunt opportunities are provided in these areas.

- Recent data and testimony indicate that the trend of nonresident hunters accompanied by second degree kindred resident relatives for Dall sheep, brown bear, and mountain goat appear to be increasing. The board recognizes the high value of continued opportunity for Alaskans to share unique hunting opportunities with nonresident family members. The board has heard complaints that, in portions of the state, strictly limited permit opportunities for nonresident guide-required hunts have at times been taken to a large degree by second degree kindred hunters accompanied by resident relatives, an effect unanticipated when allocations were established. The board desires to address these issues in a manner that both protects the careful allocation frameworks that the board has already anticipated and determined as appropriate, and provide continued or expanded opportunity for Alaskans to maintain family centered hunting traditions with nonresident relatives where possible.

The primary goals and efforts of the Alaska Board of Game are directed toward the management of stable and healthy wildlife populations capable of producing harvestable surpluses to provide for a variety of uses and, at times, differing values of the public. While many uses of wildlife do not directly conflict with one another, such as wildlife viewing and hunting, with some notable exceptions, some consumptive uses do require thoughtful allocation decisions. Historically, the board has viewed meeting the subsistence needs of the Alaskan populace as its primary goal, as directed by state law.

Preferences have been granted by the state in the following order:

- 1) Alaskan Resident subsistence hunting - for all species with a customary or traditional use classification
- 2) Alaskan Resident general season hunting – for moose, deer, caribou, elk
  - Residents have longer seasons, more liberal bag limit and antler restrictions, and lower license and tag fees
- 3) Resident and Nonresident general season hunting – for Dall sheep, brown/grizzly bear, and mountain goat. Typically managed for trophy-related values.
  - Guide-required species for nonresidents can be a limiting (financial) factor for many nonresident hunters, in addition to license and tag fees
- 4) Nonresident Alien hunting – same as nonresident hunting
  - Guide-required for all big game species and with higher license and tag fees




The Alaska Board of Game has recognized the above inherent preferences and general practices that benefit Alaskan hunters and will continue to do so. In addition, the board will address allocation issues in the following circumstances, if season and/or method and means adjustments are deemed insufficient:

- 1) When there is suitable harvestable surplus - it is the board's policy to allow maximum opportunity for all hunters, within the bounds of sustained yield management practices, regardless of residency.
- 2) In times of non-hunting-related population decline - it will be the board's policy to restrict all non-subsistence hunting if it is predicted to contribute to the decline or have the potential to slow the recovery of these populations appreciably. Nonresident hunters will be restricted first in these circumstances, unless their portion of the overall harvest is deemed insignificant.
- 3) In times of hunting-related population decline – it will be the board's policy to identify the potential causes and address each case individually. Nonresident hunters will be restricted first in these circumstances, unless their portion of the overall harvest is deemed insignificant or the restriction of nonresident hunters does not address the primary cause of decline.
- 4) Nonresident hunting will not be authorized for any moose, caribou or deer population under a current intensive management predator control program until the minimum intensive management population or harvest objectives are met unless the board determines that such hunting will not adversely impact resident opportunity, will not adversely impact the recovery of the target population, and is determined to provide for the maximum benefit of the people of Alaska.
- 5) The board may choose to address areas of conservation, hunter overcrowding, or conflict issues by placing limitations on or between commercial service-dependent hunts, or request that the appropriate regulatory body address the service provider issue if it is beyond the board's authority. This may be accomplished by guided-only or non-guided-only permit stipulations for any species, as the board has done in several places in the past. Sustained yield will be the first test in these circumstances, then subsistence obligations, historical use patterns, and quality of hunt experience will be considered.
- 6) When a draw hunt is deemed necessary, allocation will be determined on a case by case basis and will be based upon the historical data of nonresident and resident permit, harvest or participation allocation over the past ten or more years. When a guided nonresident hunter applies for a drawing permit, proof of having a signed guide-client contract is required and contracting guides shall be registered in the area prior to the drawing. When a guide signs a guide-client contract, the guide is providing guiding services and therefore must be registered for the use area at that time.

- 7) The board has supported the reestablishment of state-managed guide concessions to address user conflicts and hunt quality issues for more than a decade. The board continues to support this avenue to address known conflict areas. It will be the board's policy to address nonresident allocations under state or federal concessions that have overlaying draw requirements in a manner that cooperates with land management efforts and goals, as deemed appropriate by the board.

Vote: 5-1-1  
Adopted: November 17, 2017  
Anchorage, Alaska

  
Ted Spraker, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game

**Alaska Board of Game  
2016-213-BOG  
Findings Related to Proposal 207: Restrictions on the  
Use of Aircraft Associated with Sheep Hunting**

To address complaints concerning misuse of aircraft, particularly during sheep hunting season, the Board of Game drafted a proposal to limit aircraft use associated with sheep hunting, later identified as proposal 207. This proposal was deliberated on during the January 8, 2015 Work Session Meeting held in Juneau, where the Board agreed to schedule the proposal to be addressed at the February 2015, Central/SW Regional meeting in Wasilla. The Board also held an evening “town hall” style meeting in February where approximately 165 people participated in a discussion concerning the use of aircraft during sheep season.

Recognizing there was opposition from those using aircraft and support from hunters that did not use aircraft, the Board deferred the proposal to the March 2015, Southcentral Region Meeting held in Anchorage to facilitate additional public comment. Proposal 207 was approved at this meeting with six members in support and one opposed, following a lengthy public testimony process.

A special meeting was then held on April 24, 2015 for the purpose of scheduling a future meeting to rescind the action taken by the Board on proposal 207, at the request of two Board members. A special meeting was held on May 28, 2015 to discuss the merits of retaining proposal 207. The request to rescind failed; with a vote of two supporting rescinding and five supporting the proposal.

The adopted language now reads: 5 AAC 92.085. **Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions....(8) a person who has been airborne may not take or assist in taking a big game animal until after 3:00 a.m. following the day in which the flying occurred, and from August 10 through September 20 aircraft may not be used by or for any person to locate Dall sheep for hunting or direct hunters to Dall sheep during the open sheep hunting season, however, aircraft other than helicopters may be used by and for sheep hunters to place and remove hunters and camps, maintain existing camps, and salvage harvested sheep.**

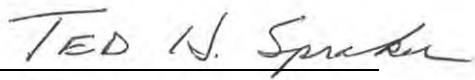
The purpose of this finding is to clarify the Board’s intent when adopting this restriction and address some of the commonly heard misinterpretations brought to Board members’ attention since the regulation became effective July 1, 2015.

Passage of proposal 207 is intended to:

1. Specifically address public complaint that the Board of Game has heard for many decades regarding the controversial practice of hunting for wildlife from aircraft.
  - Since at least the 1970’s the Board of game has heard testimony regarding how hunting from an aircraft has both disrupted the efforts of other hunters through displacement of animals and also lowered the quality of experience for other hunters who do not use aircraft as a hunting tool.

- The Board recognizes that there has been increased complaint especially during the last decade regarding perceived crowding issues and increased competition among Dall sheep hunters in their efforts, despite less hunter participation than in previous decades, and that the practice of aircraft hunting may be contributing to these problems by disturbing both hunters and sheep populations themselves.
  - Technological advances in small aircraft capability and the increasing popularity of short field performance educational videos have combined in recent decades, resulting both in increased aircraft dependent hunting methods and decreased number of areas where foot based hunters are able to go without competition from those who primarily hunt from the air and then land nearby in marginal conditions to pursue the sheep.
2. Prohibit the deliberate use of an aircraft for locating any Dall sheep for hunting purposes between August 10 and September 20. This precludes flying with the intention to generally locate Dall sheep and also making single or repeated passes to evaluate the location, type, or quality of specific animals. This prohibition is intended to apply to both the pilot and anyone that this information is communicated to during the open season, who has the intent to harvest a Dall sheep anywhere in the state.
- The prohibition is not meant to prevent the hunting of animals that were incidentally spotted while under the allowed provisions of this regulation (... **“to place and remove hunters and camps, maintain existing camps, and salvage harvested sheep”**.) so long as the aircraft is not being used for the purpose of locating Dall sheep for hunting purposes. **“From August 10 through September 20 aircraft may not be used by or for any person to locate Dall sheep for hunting or direct hunters to Dall sheep during the open sheep hunting season.**
  - This prohibition was not intended to prohibit the hunting of Dall sheep in the present season, or following seasons, if the sheep were incidentally spotted by a pilot or passenger who are directly in route to or from a proposed camp or hunter drop-off or pick-up location, an existing camp or cache, or Dall sheep harvest location between the August 10 and September 20 hunting season.
  - This prohibition does not preclude someone from legally harvesting any Dall sheep if it were incidentally spotted while directly in route to or from a proposed landing location.
  - This prohibition does not intend to prevent any flight maneuvers that are necessary to make an informed and safe landing in the field.

Adopted: March 17, 2016  
 Vote: 4-2-1  
 Fairbanks, Alaska

  
 Ted Spraker, Chairman  
 Alaska Board of Game

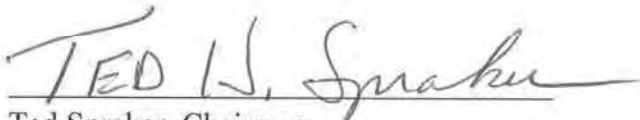
ALASKA JOINT BOARDS OF FISHERIES AND GAME

## CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BOARD-GENERATED PROPOSAL

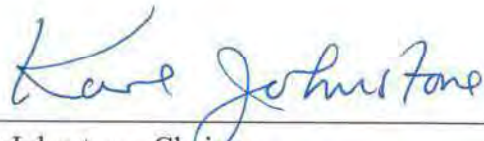
It has been suggested that criteria need to be established to guide the Alaska Joint Boards of Fisheries and Game, Board of Fisheries, and Board of Game (boards) members when deliberating on whether or not to develop a board-generated proposal. The boards will consider the following criteria when deliberating the proposed development and scheduling of a board-generated proposal:

1. Is it in the public's best interest (e.g., access to resource, consistent intent, public process)?
2. Is there urgency in considering the issue (e.g., potential for fish and wildlife objectives not being met or sustainability in question)?
3. Are current processes insufficient to bring the subject to the board's attention (e.g., reconsideration policy, normal cycle proposal submittal, ACRs, petitions)?
4. Will there be reasonable and adequate opportunity for public comment (e.g., how far do affected users have to travel to participate, amount of time for affected users to respond)?

Findings adopted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 2013.



Ted Spraker, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game  
Vote: 6-0



Karl Johnstone, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Fisheries  
Vote: 7-0

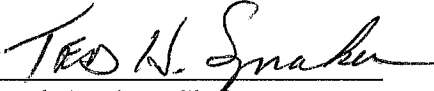
**Findings for the Alaska Board of Game  
2014-203-BOG  
Board Direction to the Department of Fish and Game  
provided during the Arctic/Western Region Meeting  
January 13, 2014**

The Board of Game finds as follows, based on information provided by Department staff, Alaska residents and other wildlife users:

The Board directed the department to take the following actions:

1. Use discretionary authority to issue the Unit 23 nonresident registration brown bear permits in Kotzebue only.

Vote: 7-0  
January 13, 2013  
Kotzebue

  
Ted Spraker, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game

**Findings for the Alaska Board of Game  
2014-205-BOG  
Board Direction to the Department of Fish and Game  
Provided during the Statewide Regulations, Cycle A Meeting  
March 18, 2014**

The Board of Game finds as follows, based on information provided by Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) staff, Alaska residents and other wildlife users:

The Board directed ADF&G to take the following actions:

1. For Nunivak Island muskox hunt administration, to follow the instructions laid out in RC73 as it relates to RC67. Specifically, the registration hunt takes cows and bulls, and the drawing hunt is bulls only. The registration hunt takes the entire harvestable surplus of cows. The drawing hunt takes the entire harvestable surplus of bulls except when the surplus of cows is less than 20. Each hunt gets the same number of permits when the total number of permits is 40 or less. If the surplus of cows is less than 20, the registration hunt is supplemented with bulls to so that each hunt gets an equal number of permits. The registration hunt is also supplemented with bulls to provide for 20 total registration permits when the harvestable surplus of cows is less than 20 and the harvestable surplus of bulls is greater than 20 and the total number of permits available is greater than 40.

Participation and success is assumed to be 100% for both hunts. Up to 20 registration permits will be issued in Mekoryuk. If there are more than 20 permits, they will be issued in Mekoryuk and Bethel.

Vote: 7-0  
March 18, 2014  
Anchorage, Alaska

  
Ted Spraker, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game

**Findings of the Alaska Board of Game  
Regarding Customary and Traditional Uses of the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd  
2014-204-BOG**

At its January 2014 meeting in Kotzebue, the Alaska Board of Game (board) took up Proposal 23, sponsored by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, to determine whether the Teshekpuk caribou herd (TCH) in game management units (GMUs) 22, 23, 24, 26A, and 26B were customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence under AS 16.05.258(a) and 5 AAC 99.010(b).

The board was first presented a customary and traditional use worksheet for consideration of the TCH in 1990. From the administrative record, it is not clear whether a customary and traditional use determination was made by the board at that time.

In 1992, when the board completed a review of subsistence regulations after passage of the 1992 subsistence statute, the board did not consider the TCH. However, the board did review the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) and established an amount reasonably necessary of 8,000–12,000 caribou. The WAH proposal prepared by the department included some caribou harvest information from Wainwright and Barrow, which now are known to be among the primary users of the TCH. Harvest information from other North Slope communities that are primary users of the TCH were not included (e.g., Atkasuk, Nuiqsut, Anaktuvuk Pass). The administrative record remains unclear if the 1992 board specifically included the TCH in the amount reasonably necessary (ANS) for subsistence of the WAH.

To ensure compliance with the requirements of AS 16.05.258, in January 2014 the department presented the board with a customary and traditional use worksheet for the TCH, in the form of a written report and an oral report, at its meeting in Kotzebue. Board deliberations on the findings of customary and traditional uses lead to a positive determination for the TCH, and that there was a harvestable surplus of the caribou population.

Caribou are present on the North Slope year-round. Four caribou herds intermingle at various times of the year: the WAH, the Central Arctic caribou herd (CAH), the TCH, and the Porcupine caribou herd (PCH). Although the TCH has demonstrated high fidelity to calving areas surrounding Teshekpuk Lake, extensive use of coastal habitat for insect relief, and broad use of the coastal plain west of the Colville River drainage in late summer, its use of winter ranges is highly variable and the overlap between the TCH with WAH and CAH animals can be extensive during fall and summer.

Following the board's findings, the department then presented options for ANS to the board. The options were included in both a written report and an oral report. One of the options was to forego establishment of a separate ANS for the TCH because caribou harvest data from some communities considered the primary users of the Teshekpuk caribou herd (Barrow, Wainwright) were included in the information reviewed by the board in 1992 when the ANS for the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) was determined to be 8,000–12,000 caribou. The 2014 department reports stated: "While the administrative record of that meeting is limited at best, it may be that



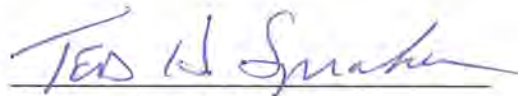
the [1992] board set the WAH ANS with TCH animals in mind, in effect, creating a combined ANS for the two herds.”

After deliberation, the board determined that the ANS for the TCH was already included in the 8,000–12,000 caribou it had determined for the WAH, given the 1992 board’s consideration of some North Slope community harvests in establishing the WAH ANS.

At its February 2014 meeting in Fairbanks, during deliberations on Proposal 50, the board re-affirmed the positive finding for Teshekpuk caribou, and re-affirmed that the ANS for Teshekpuk caribou was considered to be part of the ANS for the Western Arctic herd. The board also communicated its intent that the positive finding for Teshekpuk caribou carried into ADF&G Region III units.

Nothing in this finding prevents the board from changing either herd’s amount reasonably necessary for subsistence.

Vote: 7-0  
February 21, 2014  
Fairbanks, Alaska



Ted Spraker, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game

## FINDINGS OF THE BOARD OF GAME

## Noatak Controlled Use Area in Game Management Unit 23

During the publicly convened Board of Game (BOG) meeting in November 1994, the BOG voted to reconsider previous action taken in March 1994 when the Noatak Controlled Use Area (CUA) was enlarged. Reconsideration occurred during the public BOG meeting in March 1995. The BOG heard public and advisory committee testimony, and staff reports. Based on testimony and reports, and after due consideration, the BOG finds that:

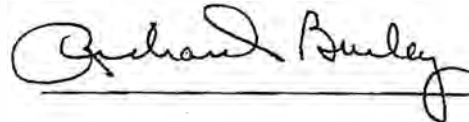
1. The Noatak CUA was enlarged primarily to resolve a significant conflict between hunters who use aircraft for access and local hunters who use boats during late August and early September along the Noatak River. Conflict occurs when low altitude flights by aircraft-borne hunters disturb wildlife and disrupt hunting activities of those using boats. Conflict also occurs when hunters transported by aircraft occupy the best camping and hunting locations along the River, thereby preventing local residents from using traditional hunting sites;
2. Along with recent restrictions in moose seasons and bag limits, the Noatak CUA was originally proposed to help reduce harvests on a declining moose population. Moose densities in the area have significantly declined in recent years, and the number of non local resident and non resident moose hunters have significantly increased. However, as amended and passed by the BOG in March 1994, the effect of the CUA on the harvest of moose in the Noatak River drainage is unclear;
3. The Noatak CUA was enlarged to maintain a reasonable opportunity for subsistence hunters using boats within the River corridor without unduly restricting hunters using aircraft. Access by aircraft-borne moose and caribou hunters in the Noatak River drainage remains available throughout the hunting season on tributary rivers adjacent to the CUA, on the Noatak River above the CUA, and in the CUA before 25 August and after 15 September. In addition, hunters who traditionally have relied on aircraft to access the CUA area can continue to do so while it is in effect by using a registered guide who operates throughout the fall with boats and ATV's in the CUA, by accompanying local residents who access the CUA by boat, or by floating into the CUA and arranging to be picked up by aircraft after 15 September. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd is also available to aircraft-borne hunters throughout the year in numerous areas outside of the CUA in Game Management Unit 23 and elsewhere in Northwest Alaska;

4. The enlarged Noatak CUA has existed for only 1 year, which is inadequate time to evaluate its effectiveness in reducing user conflicts and moose harvests. In addition, extremely high water levels during fall 1994 confounded the effects of the CUA on hunter access and harvest levels both in and outside of the CUA in Game Management Unit 23;

5. No compelling reason to rescind the regulation has been presented;

6. Accordingly, the BOG voted to not rescind the existing regulation establishing the Noatak CUA.

Adopted March 21, 1995



Richard Burley, Chair  
Alaska Board of Game