

Alaska Hunting Bulletin

A publication of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game

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More federal hunting restrictions on the way in Alaska?

by Bruce Bartley

THE LATEST legal developments in the subsistence controversy have sparked speculation on the impact on sport and commercial fisheries throughout the state, but the potentially devastating impact on hunting has been lost in the shuffle.

On May 13, the US Su-

preme Court declined to listen to a dispute over the federal government's authority to provide for a rural subsistence priority in navigable waters on federal public lands.

The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled the federal government has such authority. The Alaska Supreme

Court has ruled it does not. Usually when there is a conflict between a state Supreme Court and a federal court, the US Supreme Court settles the issue. In this case, the US Supreme Court apparently agreed with federal lawyers who insisted such review was premature as there are admin-

istrative and legislative channels left to pursue.

During the month of May, the federal government held a series of meetings around the state to listen to public comment. The discussion centered on the fisheries issue, and almost ignored the federal government's attempt to expand its

wildlife management to state and private land. If adopted as proposed, the federal regulations could supersede the state's hunting regulations and may effectively eliminate hunting by nonlocal residents across most of Alaska.

Alaska Attorney General see "Restrictions," page 2

A quick look...

Changes in Alaska's hunting regulations

By Bruce Bartley

HERE IS A SUMMARY of some of the most significant regulation changes adopted by the Alaska Board of Game during the past year. By comparing this to your "Alaska State Hunting Regulations No. 36" you will have a good idea of what to expect in the upcoming season. Unless otherwise noted, none of these changes goes into effect until July 1.

This summary is not a substitute for the 1996-97 regulations book, which will be available about the time the Alaska Hunting Bulletin goes to press. It is important to check the new regulations book before going afield.

Alaska's hunting regulations are passed by the Alaska Board of Game, a seven-member citizen panel. Board members are chosen by the governor for their knowledge of Alaska's wildlife resources. In Alaska, anyone can propose changes in the regulations. These regulation changes are the work of many hours of work by individuals, Fish and Game advisory committees, ADF&G staff, the Department of Law, and the board of Game.

Here is what the board did, by species:

Caribou

- Significantly liberalized Nelchina caribou seasons; Ten thousand Tier II subsistence permits good for one bull to be issued for Aug. 1-Sept. 20 and Oct. 21-March 31 seasons with application period throughout the month of May; unlimited number of Tier I permits good for one cow available to any Alaska resident by mail; hunter selects Aug. 10-31 or Sept. 1-20 hunting period; Tier I permits also valid Oct. 21-March 31; applications available in May but no deadline for applying; archery or muzzleloading rifles for one cow Aug. 1-9.
- Deleted registration permit requirement for Adak caribou.
- Liberalized bag limit and lifted harvest quota on winter caribou hunt in GMU 12.
- Reduced harvest quota for Fortymile caribou to 150 bulls.

see "Regulations," page 11

Just what is this publication?

WHAT YOU HAVE in your hands is the first issue of the *Alaska Hunting Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* is a new publication of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Division of Wildlife Conservation.

What you will find here are the nuts and bolts of practical wildlife conservation as that relates to hunting. You'll find in this and — should we continue — future issues, information about changes in the hunting regulations, habitat management work, hunter education, wildlife research, see "Bulletin," page 12



Chris Batin

Women are the fastest growing segment of the hunting population in many parts of America. Please turn to pages 6-7 for a photo-story from the 1995 Alaska "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" program.

The Alaska Hunting Bulletin is a publication of the State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation.

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From the Director... The Way I See It

by Dr. Wayne Regelin,
Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation

WE'RE DELIGHTED to produce this first pilot issue of the *Alaska Hunting Bulletin*. It is my hope it will be just the first of many.

Our plan with the *Bulletin* is to provide a new hunting information channel from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to you, the hunter. While management of wildlife as it relates to hunting is not our only responsibility, it consumes most of our energy as an agency. Most of our biologists and many of our other staff are hunters. Many of us entered this profession because of an appreciation of wildlife that developed over years of hunting.

There are some difficult issues facing Alaskan hunters. The recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to not hear the state's appeal on the federal takeover of fish and wildlife management is one. This is going to have a far-reaching and long-lasting impact on how Alaska's fish and wildlife

are managed. We'll try to provide you with additional information as the impacts of this court action become better understood.

Budget cuts in the legislature this year are another significant issue. We are still assessing the impacts of a \$1.4 million reduction from current year spending in our operating budget. We did receive funding for several capital improvement projects that will help reduce the impacts of the cuts to our operating budget.

The cuts will be felt primarily in three areas: conservation of endangered species, wildlife education and big game management. No state funds were provided for endangered species projects and funding for wildlife education programs was significantly reduced. The bulk of the cuts, however, will be in our management programs. We will be collecting less information on caribou populations and conducting fewer moose, wolf and bear

censuses. We will do our best to continue to provide services to hunters and minimize reductions in hunting opportunities.

With less information, the division and the Board of Game must become more conservative in setting hunting regulations to insure that wildlife populations are not harmed.

Happily, there is some good news as well. Ruffed grouse are now booming in more ways than one in Southcentral Alaska. A recent transplant of birds to the Kenai has been completed. This was a joint project with several hunter/conservation groups and the division. It's too early to tell whether this transplant will be as successful as the Mat/Su transplant, but it is starting out well. One of the new capital projects provides funds for additional transplants and more work on habitat improvement for grouse.

Nelchina caribou are also doing well. At our request, the Alaska Board of Game sub-

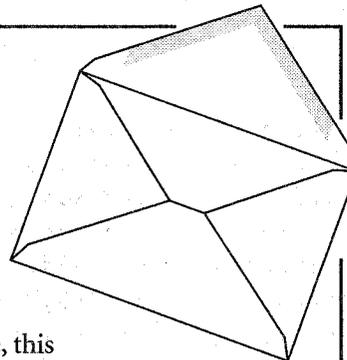
stantially increased caribou hunting opportunities in GMU 13. Another herd that is providing a lot of hunting opportunity is the Mulchatna, west of Anchorage. They aren't always easily accessible, but for hunters who can fly in, the opportunities are substantial.

Many of you have attended our Alaska Hunting Clinic Series programs. We're pleased to help provide these clinics along with our other public and private partners. While I'm on the subject, I want to express my thanks for the dozens of expert Alaskan hunters who volunteered as presenters at these programs. The clinics have been very successful, in large part because of the expertise and willingness of these volunteers to share what they know with other hunters.

There are many more positive stories to tell, and we hope to print more of them in the months ahead.

Finally, we're here to serve. If we can be of assistance in your hunting endeavors this year, please contact us.

Letters to the Alaska Hunting Bulletin MAILBAG



Dear Hunter:

As you have probably already read elsewhere here, this issue of the *Alaska Hunting Bulletin* could be the first and last, or the first of many. It's in large measure up to you.

If you would like to see this on a regular basis, we need to hear from you. We would like to produce this publication several times each year. Subscriptions are free. If you would like to be on the permanent mailing list, just contact us and we'll be sure to add you to the list.

One of the features we would like to include is this one: a place where you can let us and other Alaska hunters know your thoughts. We are obviously limited by space, but we'll do our best to put your thoughts in front of readers.

David Johnson, Editor
ADF&G Hunter Services Program

Restrictions...from page 1

Bruce Botelho or his staff testified at every hearing of the federal subsistence board so that Alaskans would understand the serious impacts of these proposed regulations. Botelho's testimony focused on how the federal agencies are step-by-step giving themselves authority to take over allocating fish and wildlife on any and all lands within the entire state of Alaska.

US Sen. Frank Murkowski agreed the proposed changes would eliminate or severely restrict almost all of the state's powers over its own lands.

"Alaskans would have never voted for Statehood if they had known 39 years ago that the Federal government was going to assert even more authority than the federal government had during territorial days," Murkowski said.

Federal attorneys claimed in court this will not affect very many fisheries or other activities and claimed the state and federal managers can cooperate. In contrast, Botelho explained how the Federal Subsistence Board has a poor track record of cooperating with the state in wildlife decisions. The new regulations will impact existing subsistence and commercial fisheries throughout the state and hunting on state land.

The risk to hunting is obvious. The federal system is concerned only with meeting the needs of federally qualified subsistence hunters, and few Alaskans qualify under their rules. They have no responsibility to meet the needs of other hunters, and if this dual management system persists, we can expect escalating restrictions on state, federal and private lands by the federal government as to where and when most Alaskans can hunt, fish or trap.

Ruffed grouse now drumming on the Kenai Peninsula

by Nick Steen

MENTION THE NAME "ruffed grouse" to a dedicated upland bird hunter, and many will immediately dream of the East Coast and cool, crisp mornings, fall colors, gun dogs and explosive flushes. Mention "ruffed grouse" to Alaskan hunters and they will talk of Tok, Delta, or Fairbanks; that is, until recently. Today, there are rapidly increasing numbers of birds in the Matanuska and Susitna river drainages and a brand new transplanted population on the Kenai Peninsula.

The ruffed grouse is a bird of the hardwood forest, depending almost exclusively on quaking aspen and cottonwood trees for their existence. These trees provide most of the needs of the birds from brood habitat to winter food source. In the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys north of Anchorage, there are approximately 1.5 million acres of suitable habitat. There are an additional 163,000 acres of prime habitat on the Kenai Peninsula. If the habitat is so good, you may be asking, why weren't ruffed grouse there before?

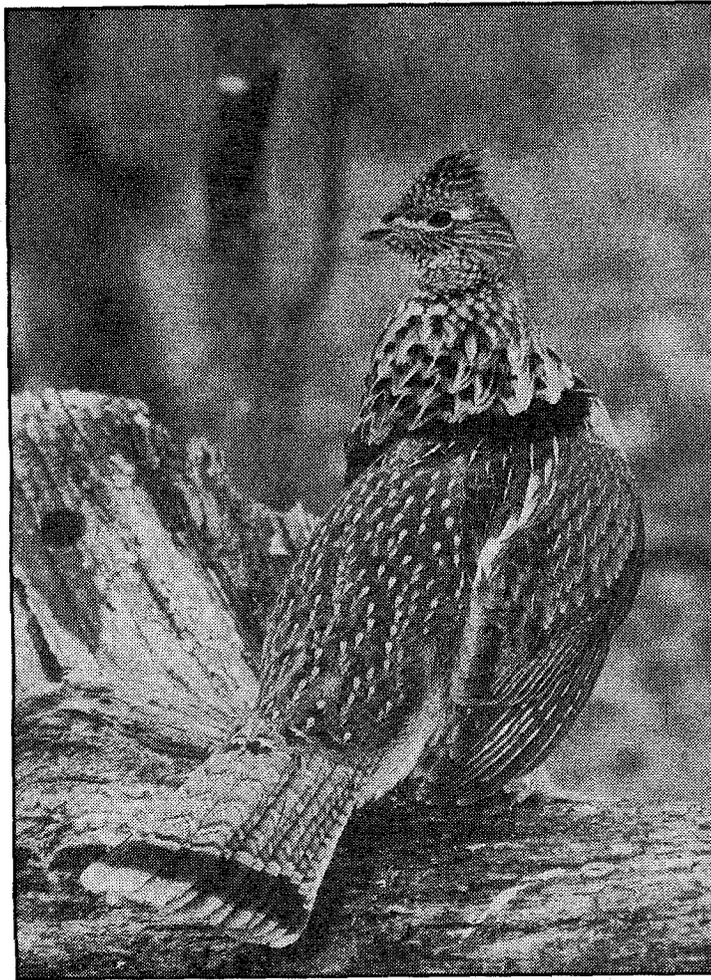
Ruffed grouse are native only to Alaska's Yukon and Kuskokwim river drainages. We also have reports of a small population in the Stikine River drainage near Wrangell. A bit of ruffed grouse biology tells the tale.

These are short-flighted birds. A flight of a mile is a long trip. A glance at a map of Alaska suggests the Alaska Range is a formidable barrier to grouse movements. There are no low passes containing suitable habitat which would permit the birds to expand their range from the Interior valleys to the south central region of the State. So, in the Interior they stayed.

That all changed in 1988. Working with the belief that only a physical barrier precluded ruffed grouse from colonizing South-central Alaska, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1988 initiated a three-year program to introduce Interior birds to the Matanuska/Susitna valleys. A Kenai Peninsula transplant followed in 1996...more about that later.

Back in 1988, we began trapping in mid-September when grouse broods begin to break up. Young birds are searching for their place in the world and are easily captured. We used a totally passive trapping system with no bait, scents or attractors. It consisted of a holding pen with a one-way entrance located on each end of a 50-foot lead fence. Two of these were installed end-to-end forming about 115 feet of interception to a wandering grouse.

Grouse prefer not to fly over obstacles, so when they encounter a lead fence they follow it until they locate an opening. If properly installed, the only opening is the one-way door into the holding pen. Using



Leonard Lee Rue III

Ruffed grouse are a favorite of many small game hunters. Ruffed grouse are now found in good numbers in the Matanuska and Susitna valleys as a result of transplants in the late 1980s.

this trapping method, we captured 144 grouse during the three-year project. We moved and released these at three pre-selected sites in the Matanuska/Susitna valley.

When we took the birds out of the holding pen, we weighed them. We also determined their sex (males have two or more white spots on their rump feathers, females one or less) and estimated their age (the tip of the last primary wing feather, number ten, is rounded on adults, pointed on birds of the year). We also fitted them with a colored leg band. Males got blue bands; females pink (of course!).

We also put radio transmitters on selected adults, mainly females. We wanted to monitor their reproductive success, movement and survival. The radios are the size of a quarter, and weigh a little more than three pennies. They have a 14" antenna and a battery life of about ten months. They are attached by a loop of elastic which slips over the head. Once attached to the bird, the elastic slides under the feathers making it very difficult to dislodge. It also positions the transmitter over the crop. Because of its small size and location it is very difficult to see the radio on the bird.

After all that, we put the birds in a carpet-floored cardboard cat carrier, which we had divided into two 9"x 9" compartments. The grouse could survive in these boxes for up to about six days; however, we trans-

ported and released most birds every three days. While in the boxes, we provided unlimited quantities of that true Alaska grouse food – honeydew melon! This provided both a source of moisture and a high sugar content, which kept the birds in good condition.

The transplant to the Matanuska/Susitna valleys was a low budget, truly volunteer project. Birds were transported from the capture site near Nenana to Palmer by a variety of means. Birds were moved via private vehicles, contract mail carrier, Alaska State troopers, Fish and Wildlife enforcement officers, maintenance vehicles from both Matanuska Electric and Telephone companies. On at least two occasions trains from the Alaska Railroad carried birds. Because of all the volunteer effort, we spent less than \$12,000 on the project.

Was it worth the effort? Read on. We picked three release sites for the 1988-90 transplants: Sutton, Big Lake, and Willow. As a result of these transplants, today you can find birds from Hurricane Gulch on the Parks Highway to Sheep Mountain on the Glenn Highway and west to the Yentna river. During this past year we had seven

sightings of ruffed grouse in the city of Anchorage! Suitable habitat exists to the southwest as far as Tyonek. At the present rate of expansion, we believe birds should make it to Tyonek in the next 3-5 years.

The radio transmitters provided some very interesting information. Ruffed grouse stay close to where they were born — typically within about three miles. At least, that is the information available from studies done within their normal range. Our Alaska transplants either have not read the reports or are a bit unusual. One of the radio-equipped females we released in Willow moved 23 miles before being shot by a hunter. Another bird, a male, moved 12 miles from the Willow release site, and then returned. A car hit and killed it within 200 yards of the release site.

We located three nests using the radio transmitters on females. These contained 12, 15 and 16 eggs respectively. This compares to a mean of only 11 eggs per nest located in other ruffed grouse studies nationwide. All nests were located at the base of aspen trees, with some form of overhead vegetation providing protection from birds of prey and inclement weather. When we approached the nest, the females remained so motionless it was possible to stroke their tails and back before they left to do their "broken wing" dance. We relocated the hen brooding the clutch of 16 eggs six weeks after the chicks hatched. She still had 14 chicks with her. This potential rate of reproduction helps explain how birds that normally sustain over 50% winter mortality can still expand their numbers and range.

see "Grouse," page 12

Today you can find birds from Hurricane Gulch on the Parks Highway to Sheep Mountain on the Glenn Highway and west to the Yentna river.

The transplant to the Mat/Su valleys was a low budget, truly volunteer project.

Handling & preparation critical...

Black Bear Meat: How edible is it REALLY?

by Christopher Batin

Editor's note: a new regulation that takes effect in the spring of 1997 will require black bear hunters throughout Alaska to salvage spring black bear meat. To give you a feeling for what this will mean, we asked well-known Alaska hunting author Chris Batin to give us his perspective on black bear meat.

A SUCCESSFUL black bear hunt can provide a fabulous bear hide for the den, a skull mount for the trophy room, and a freezer filled with tasty roasts, steaks and burger. Unfortunately, many hunters are influenced by the stereotype that black bear meat is inedible.

There are many reasons for this; perhaps most common, black bear meat can be fishy when a bear has been feeding on salmon. During this brief time of year when the bears are feeding on fish, yes, black bear meat may be a bit strong for many hunters. But spring black bears are a different story.

I've eaten spring and fall black bear meat for over two decades now, and find it to be one of the tastiest meats for the dinner table. Wild game connoisseurs will agree that black bear has its own texture and flavor; much like caribou meat tastes different than moose or mountain goat. But this difference doesn't make it any less desirable.

When black bear meat is prepared in a stew, or as a roast simmered slowly with a complement of potatoes, bacon and carrots, I've had non-hunting guests ask for second and third helpings. Inevitably, they ask for a few packages to take home to share with family and friends, and I'm most happy to oblige.

Perhaps the biggest aversion hunters have toward black bear meat is the misconception that bear meat is "wormy." Yet these hunters would be surprised if they compared black bear meat to the fish and game they eat every week.



Alaska black bear hunters will be required to salvage the meat from spring bears beginning in 1997. Properly cared-for black bear meat has a distinctive and well-appreciated flavor.

Moose and caribou also have their share of parasites and diseases.

"One of the most common is a tapeworm called *Taenia krabbei*," says Randy Zarnke, a disease and parasite specialist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. "The intermediate stage is about the size of a BB and present in the meat of herbivores at various levels. You can cut up an entire moose and find as few as one or as many as hundreds. The adult stage is found primarily in canids, particularly wolves. Moose and caribou serve as intermediate hosts. Infection can be passed on when a carnivore eats the infected animal. Humans are not susceptible, and the parasite does not affect the edibility of the meat. However, do not feed uncooked moose or caribou meat to dogs."

Other parasites include *Taenia pisiformis*, which occurs as fluid-filled cysts on the liver or gut cavity of snowshoe hares. *Taenia hydatigena* occurs as tear-drop shaped cysts on the liver in moose or caribou.

Simply put, nearly all species of Alaska big game or fish

can be a host to some form of parasite. Realistically, however, you stand a greater chance of becoming ill from Salmonella or food poisoning from improperly stored or handled foods like chicken than you will from properly handled and prepared wild game.

"Wildlife is generally healthier here in Alaska than in the Lower 48," Zarnke says. "We do, however, have our problems and sportsmen should become familiar with wildlife diseases and parasites and their impact on animals as well as human beings. But this shouldn't stop people from eating properly prepared wild game and fish."

So what about bears? A bear can be a host to a variety of endoparasites, the most common being roundworms. In Alaska, trichinosis has been reported from throughout the state. The frequency of infection is unknown; however, in a 1960 study, Rausch found 5 of 23 black bears from southcentral Alaska to be infected. More recent studies in the Interior revealed slightly lower levels.

"In Alaska, trichinosis should be a concern to sports-

men," Zarnke said. "Some of the symptoms include swelling or inflammation of the muscle tissue, and, after the parasite has entered the intestines, diarrhea."

Although trichinosis is a rare disease, it is serious. According to Zarnke, domestic swine were the primary source of trichinosis for humans in the first half of this century.

"Disease control regulations have essentially eliminated that problem," he said. "Today, bears represent the primary source of infection for humans in Alaska."

The solution is simple. He suggests cooking bear meat at a minimum of 180 degrees until it's well done. Freezing is no longer considered effective in killing encysted trichinosis larvae. It's that easy.

The first step to ensure your bear meat will be the tastiest it can be starts after the shot has been made, and photos taken. Process the entire animal as you would a moose or sheep. Bag the meat and hang it in a tree where the air can circulate around the meat. Never place

it in a plastic bag, or lay it on the ground. In rainy weather, place a tarp over the meat to keep it dry. Take the meat to your local meat processor upon your return home, and have it marked "bear" to distinguish it from the other cuts of game in your freezer. This is especially important if throughout the year you make wild game jerky from moose or deer, where the meat is dried rather than cooked.

In a recent questionnaire mailed out by ADF&G to black bear hunters, 23 percent of the respondents indicated that they hunt black bear strictly for the meat, while others hunted for the hide, a trophy and the meat. And as hunters, we show utmost respect to the black bear by properly utilizing this valuable resource to its fullest potential, which includes salvaging the hide, skull and meat.

Hunters who follow these basic guidelines of thoroughly cooking bear—as they would pork or chicken—will discover some of the finest eating available in early spring: fresh black bear steaks or loin chops, possibly served with young-of-the-year carrots from the garden. And I'm betting that once you've tried spring bear, your supply of bear meat will disappear faster than the other roasts or burger you have in your freezer. Try it for yourself and see.

Chris Batin is editor of the bi-monthly journal, *The Alaska Hunter*, and author of the 416-page book, *Hunting in Alaska: A Comprehensive Guide*. Autographed copies can be obtained from Alaska Hunter Publications, POB 83550, Fairbanks, Alaska 99708 (907) 455-8000. An Alaska Angler/Hunter catalog and subscription information is available on request. Copyright 1996, Christopher Batin.

Intensively Managing Game Habitat

By Dave Kelleyhouse

Intensive management? Predator control, right? Well, predator control may be useful – even necessary at times – but it is not the only tool in the game manager's tool box. Read on to find out how the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is intensively managing wildlife habitat.

IN 1994 the Alaska Legislature appropriated \$350,000 for access and habitat enhancement in Game Management Units 20A and 20B (the northern Alaska Range, foothills, Tanana Flats and Fairbanks areas). They allowed five years to accomplish the work. To begin the project, we asked a committee of local hunters to identify projects that would benefit both wildlife and hunters.

Our first project in spring 1995 was in cooperation with the Alaska Division of Forestry, Safari Club International, Fort Wainwright and the Ruffed Grouse Society. Together we gathered and planted over 3,000 felt-leaf willow cuttings in a recent clearcut off the Cache Creek Road. We cut three truckloads of willows in March and buried them under a small mountain of snow to keep them fresh. When the ground thawed in early June we dug them up and planted them. By August, nearly half had taken root and sprouted branches and leaves.

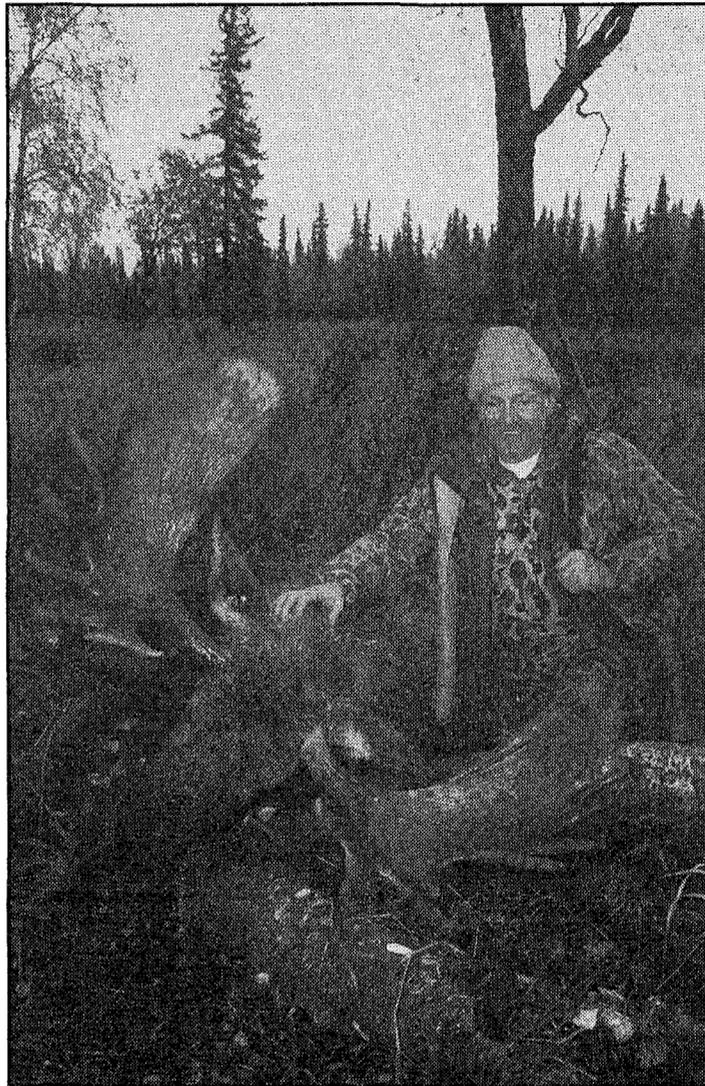
The purpose of the willow planting project is to provide nutritious winter browse for moose and other wildlife. This artificial willow planting has the potential for dramatically improving the habitat value of these areas. The willows will serve for about 20 years until second growth white spruce trees overtop and shade them.

Another round of willow planting was done in other clearcuts in the Standard Creek area this spring. If willow planting proves effective and compatible with commercial logging and reforestation, the technique could become a routine practice of forest management for the future benefit of moose and moose hunters.

Our next project was an aspen regeneration project for ruffed grouse and moose, again in cooperation with state foresters and the Ruffed Grouse Society. The 90 acre project is located along the Nenana Ridge Road, a popular local hunting area off the Parks Highway. The area is heavily timbered with a mature 75-year-old aspen. This kind of forest provides ample winter food for ruffed grouse, but offers little in the way of thick sapling cover needed to protect ruffed grouse hens and broods of chicks from predation by goshawks and great-horned owls.

We laid out 12 close-together cutting units of about five-to-eight acres each last summer. Then, this past winter, we hired a local logger to cut and bunch the aspen trees. He cleared a total of about 35 acres. By late fall, we expect to clear an additional 100 acres or so.

Aspens regenerate rapidly after logging with upwards of 200,000 root sprouts per acre. Within 8 years, the little aspens will thin out to about 10 to 15,000 saplings per acre. This



Chris Babin

Intensively managing habitat can lead to larger population of wildlife that can be enjoyed by all.

is perfect cover for ruffed grouse broods. With good brood cover interspersed with the excellent winter food supplied by the buds of mature, male aspen trees, the grouse should prosper.

Over the 40-year life of this 800-acre project we expect to produce an extra 20,000 grouse for hunters! Moose will also benefit from the browse produced following logging of the mature forest. And, area hunters will benefit from improved hunting conditions with two miles of new forest road built in conjunction with the project.

Last March, the Department of Fish and Game took on a larger project in the Goldstream Public Use Area. Hunting is a legislatively protected use here. After nearly 50 years of aggressive forest fire suppression, hundreds of acres of willows important as moose winter range had become old, decadent and largely out of reach of moose. Willows live about 70 years without disturbance. Then they die.

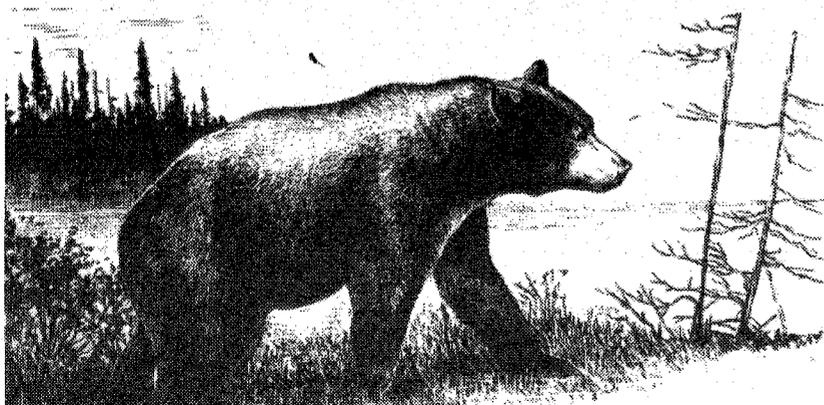
Using a big D-8 Caterpillar dozer, an ADF&G contractor bladed down over 200 acres of the greying, old felt-leaf, red-stem and diamond willow plants. Similar projects in the Tok area in the 1980's resulted in vigorous young regrowth from the still

living root crowns of the sheared old plants. Browse production increased several fold, with all of the new growth short enough to be reached by wintering moose. Moose and moose hunters will benefit from the Goldstream Valley project for the next 20 to 30 years.

The most aggressive habitat projects we have planned involve the use of prescribed fire. Four different fires are planned for summer and fall 1996, including a 20,000 acre burn in the northwestern Tanana Flats. These will improve habitat conditions for moose and other early- to mid-successional stage wildlife. This area is used heavily by Fairbanks and Nenana hunters using riverboats for access. Three other fires totaling about 70 acres will be conducted in the Standard Creek drainage. This area is accessible to moose and grouse hunters via a well developed forest road system. These fires will create better seedbeds for willows, birch and aspen in areas which have been logged. Willows will be planted after the areas are burned.

As time goes on, the need for these kinds of habitat improvement projects will increase. Forests near Alaska's cities are already old because of a half century of forest fire suppression. Very little habitat is in younger, more productive stages of development. Without intensive management of habitat or catastrophic wildfires, wildlife values and hunting opportunities will deteriorate.

Hopefully, future game and land managers will look back on these first habitat projects, determine which ones worked the best, and apply that knowledge to future projects.



Becoming an Outdoors-Woman...Alaska style!

by Cathie Harms, Alaska BOW Coordinator

THEY CAME FROM ALL OVER ALASKA - one hundred and six women in all, ranging in age from 19 to over 60. They were college students, moms, executives, soldiers, and grandmothers. They all converged on Chena Hot Springs 60 miles east of Fairbanks for the first ever Alaska Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshop August 4-6 1995.

In spite of our extensive plans, I wasn't sure what to expect. We had designed our workshop much like those held in other states. We had included some general introductory classes and some distinctly Alaskan classes.

In the field dressing class participants cut up a caribou. The cooking class featured silver salmon. The map and compass class taught people to deal with 27 degrees of declination. The big game hunting class concentrated on moose. And our evening programs included a moose calling contest (with winners in accuracy and creativity/entertainment value), a talk on bear safety, and a women's outdoor fashion show (alternating practical and funny).

The weather was promising - brilliant sunshine for the previous two weeks - but it turned out *awful*. Nevertheless, in spite of rain, rain and more rain, classes began, enthusiasm swelled, camaraderie developed, and an amazing weekend unfolded.

We hoped for a successful program, and what we got was somewhere between outstanding and incredible. Participants and instructors were positive, eager, smiling and laughing. The enthusiastic atmosphere was powerful and contagious - I don't think anyone left disappointed.



Making friends who share similar interests is another of the program's benefits.

Charles Mason



The thrill of accomplishment!

Dutch oven cooking is enjoyed by cooks and tasters.

BOW Program



Charles Mason



Charles Mason

Excellent instructors help you learn quickly. Above, Doris Ward helped teach field dressing, moose hunting, and camping skills. At right, participants get experience in field dressing a caribou.



Charles Mason



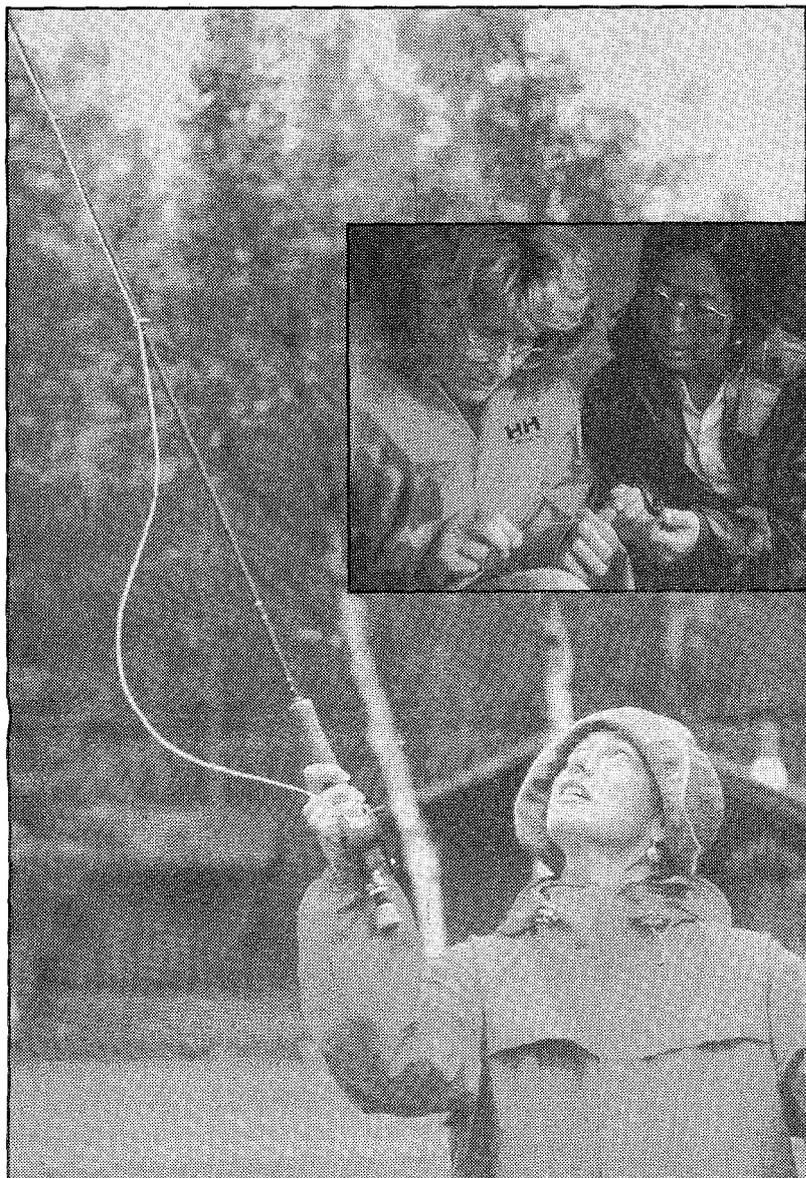
The kayaking class is among the most popular.

BOW Program



BOW Program

Hands-on experience is offered in archery and bow hunting.



Charles Mason

Charles Mason

Fly fishing is an art you can enjoy, as is tying knots to attach lures and flies (inset above).

Since the workshop, one participant has purchased a shotgun and a rifle, has cooked ptarmigan and grouse she hunted and made plans to hunt caribou and black bear with her husband. Another stopped by the ADF&G office to get fishing information - she was taking her son fishing for the first time! Another purchased a bow and shot with an archery league. Four participants expanded on their kayaking experience and took a weekend class in a local whitewater river.

We are now planning our second workshop (August 23-25, 1996 in South-central Alaska). Let us know if you're interested — we'd love to see you there. Call me at 459-7231 or Barry Stratton in Anchorage (267-2398) and leave your name and address. We'll send you a flier. For even faster service call 267-2892 from a FAX machine. You will receive the complete registration package from our "FAX on Demand" system. But don't delay...Alaska's second Becoming An Outdoors-Woman program is going to be a sell out!



BOW Program

Waterfowl hunting class teaches about shotguns and retrievers.

Nelchina caribou management and hunting opportunity for 1996-97

HISTORY

THE NELCHINA caribou herd, which spends most of its time roaming the high basin surrounded by the Talkeetna, Chugach, Wrangell and Alaska mountains, long has been an important wildlife resource.

By the mid-1960s, the herd had grown to more than 70,000 animals and then went into a steep decline. By 1972, the population had fallen as low as 10,000 and hunting was restricted to a small number of drawing permits.

Researchers and managers working to restore the herd developed a plan intended to hold the population stable at 40,000 animals rather than allow it to cycle through booms and busts.

It now numbers at least 50,000 with another 10,000-12,000 calves expected this spring. The population objective was raised twice as the herd recovered from its crash in the early 1970s, but the consensus among researchers and managers is that 40,000 caribou is the optimum number for the available habitat in Game Management Unit 13. There is some evidence that it might be better to have even fewer.

Several indicators of nutritional stress have been seen, although it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from them. The bulk of the herd has left GMU 13 entirely in each of

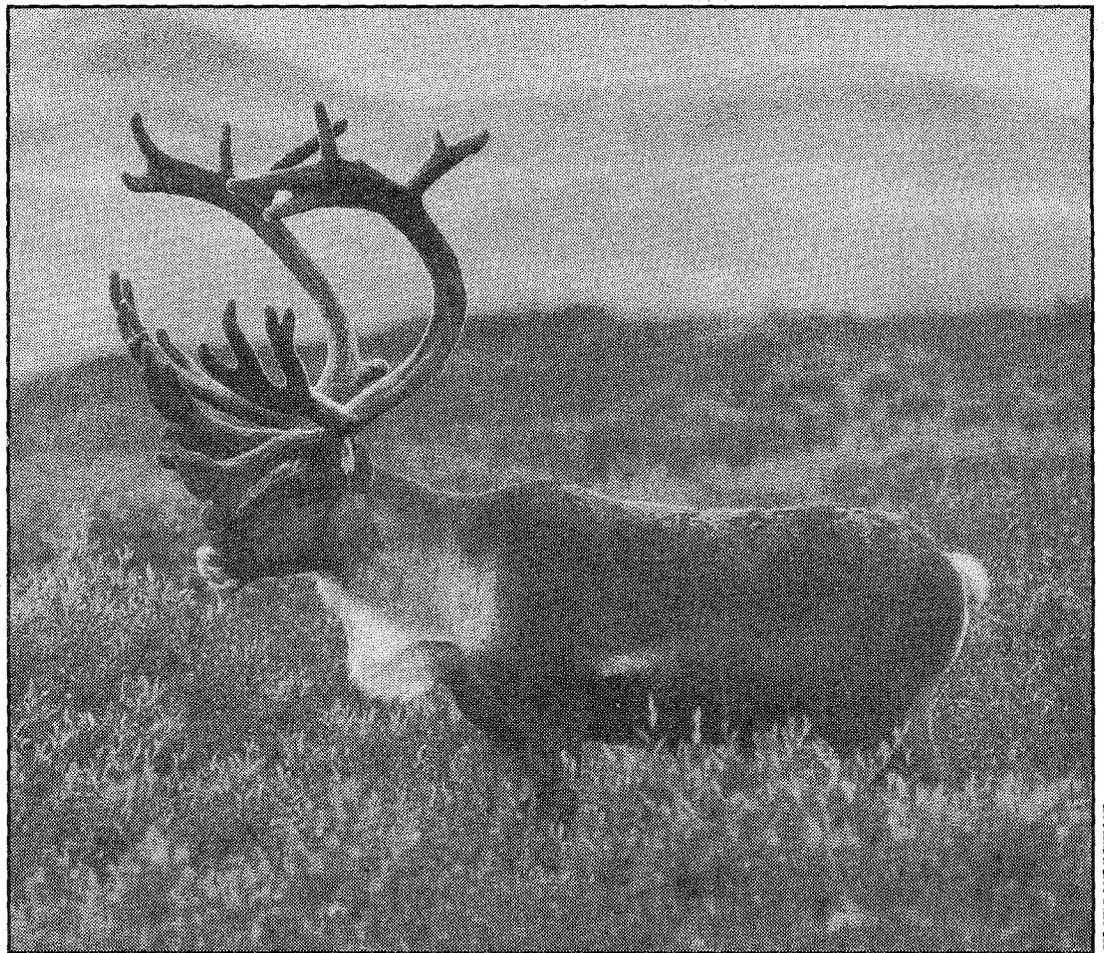
the last two winters, and three of the last four. Long-distance movements off traditional winter ranges typically are seen in caribou herds that have become very large and are under nutritional stress.

Calf weights, thought to be another indicator of herd health, have dropped substantially lower in the Nelchina herd than in a number of other growing caribou herds across the state. With the wet summer and good plant growth, calf weights increased somewhat by last autumn, but it is unclear whether the change is a trend or a one-year quirk attributable to good summer range conditions. Overall, Nelchina calves are the second smallest. Only Western Arctic herd calves are smaller.

The date of peak calving is another indicator of the nutritional status of cow caribou. Cows in poor shape tend to calve later. The peak calving date last year was a week later than during the 1980s and early 1990s when the herd was growing rapidly. Late calving has a ripple effect throughout the population. Late calves are more vulnerable to predation and enter the following winter less equipped to handle the rigors of severe weather.

MANAGEMENT

BECAUSE OF A 1990 court decision, Nelchina caribou



Leonard Lee Rue III

The Nelchina caribou herd is larger today than it has been in many years. Hunting opportunity has been enlarged so that any Alaska resident who applies will obtain a permit.

hunting went from drawing permits to Tier II subsistence permits. Since then, the annual harvest objective for the herd has been met only once. Hunter success, which averaged nearly 70 percent when Nelchina caribou were hunted under drawing permits, has been about 50 percent under Tier II subsistence permits. As a result, each year the number of permits has been increased

to try to compensate for the lower success rate and increasing caribou population. Still, harvest objectives have not been met.

If 40,000 caribou is the maximum desirable number, it is essential to reduce the herd to that level and stabilize it there as quickly as possible. Failing to do so runs the risk of a precipitous decline similar to the one which occurred in the early 1970s. Once such a crash begins, there is virtually no management strategy which will slow or reverse the trend. Recovery is likely to take another decade or two. By acting aggressively now, the Nelchina herd may continue to provide significant hunting opportunity over the long term.

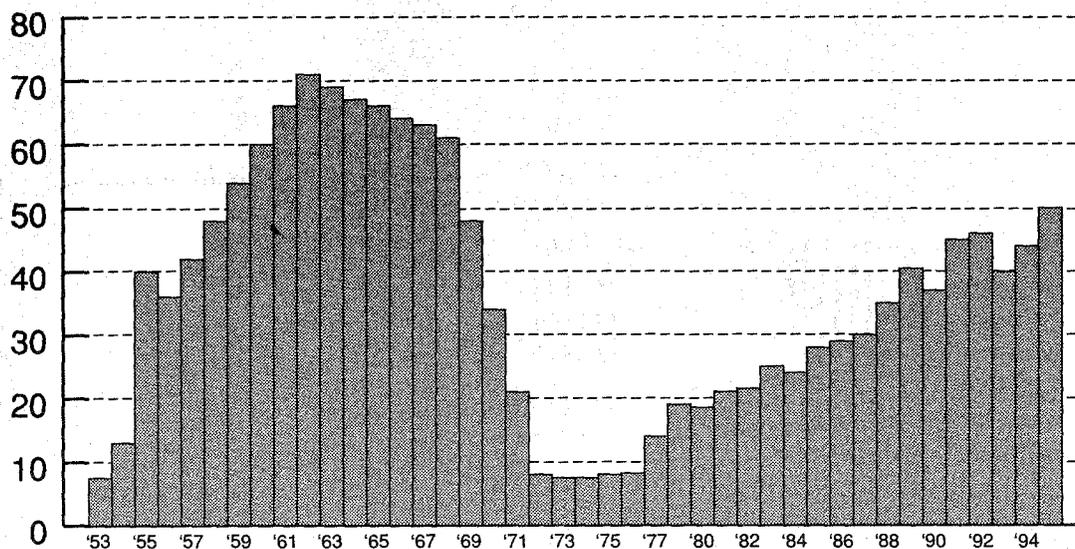
The continued growth of the Nelchina herd has occurred in part because the harvest of females has been extremely low for many years. The fall harvest typically is 75-80 percent males. The antlered-only winter seasons attempt to focus the harvest on females, but with the herd departing GMU 13 in

each of the last two winters, very few females were killed. It is unclear what the optimal bull:cow ratio is for caribou to ensure adequate breeding. But the continued heavy harvest of bulls is driving down the bull:cow ratio at the same time the herd is growing. Clearly, in order to reduce the herd's size and stabilize it, there must be a substantial increase in the cow harvest.

Based on the current population and anticipated production this spring, researchers and managers believe a harvest of 15,000 caribou in the 1996-97 season would reduce and stabilize the herd at desired levels. Whether that level of harvest can be achieved in a single year remains to be seen. The reduction and stabilization may take two years or more. Regardless of the time frame, the harvest must be carefully structured to obtain an adequate cow harvest while protecting a portion of the male segment of the population.

The Nelchina herd cannot see "Nelchina Herd," next page

Nelchina Caribou Herd Estimates
(in thousands)



Nelchina herd ...from previous page

withstand the harvest likely in a general season with a bag limit of either a bull or a cow. Based on historic harvests, most of the animals taken in such a hunt would be bulls and the ratio of bulls to cows already is declining.

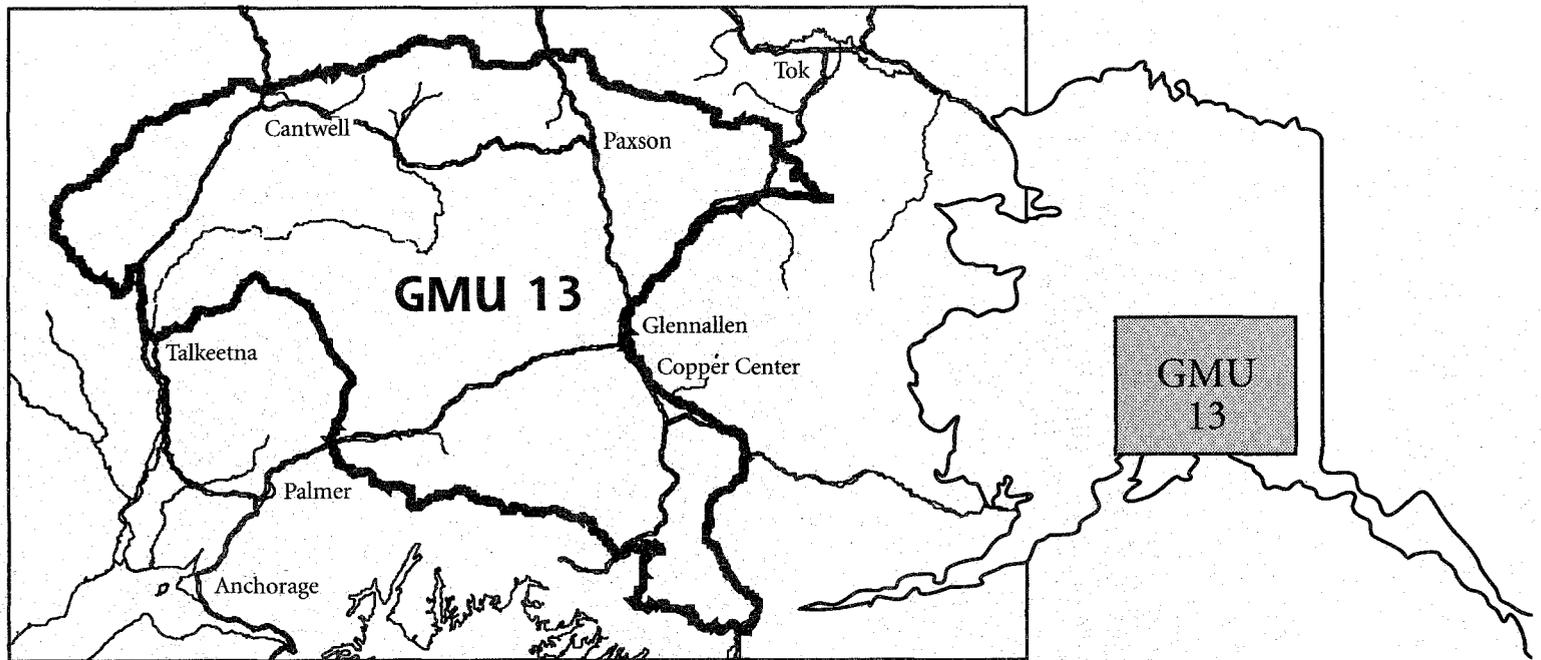
TIER II

TIER II PERMITS provide a means to limit the harvest of bulls by restricting the number of permits. The Alaska Board of Game has authorized issuance of 10,000 Tier II permits for bull caribou. A resulting harvest of 5,000 bulls is anticipated. Tier II permits will be awarded as they have in the past, based on scoring of an application designed to measure the hunter's historic use of Nelchina caribou and the availability of alternative food resources.

Recipients of Tier II permits also will be eligible to take cows, although the bag limit will remain at one, either a bull or a cow. Tier II applicants automatically will be sent a cow permit unless they indicate on their applications they don't want one.

TIER I

GIVEN THE NEED to harvest a large number of cows to reduce and stabilize the population, all other Alaska residents will be able to hunt for cow caribou under what is known as a Tier I subsistence hunt. Permits can be obtained by mail by filling out an appli-



cation based only on residency. It is unclear how many hunters might apply, but given historic harvest rates it would take 20,000 hunters to take the 10,000 cows needed to reduce and stabilize the herd. Herd distribution during the hunting seasons could result in a lesser harvest. Even if the harvest is somewhat higher, it would not substantially harm the herd's productivity and could result in a herd size more in line with available habitat.

The two-tiered approach provides reasonable subsistence opportunity and maximum participation on separate segments of the population.

While the intent of the Tier I season is to harvest a substantial number of cows, some hunters will have difficulty distinguishing between cows and young bulls. To minimize en-

forcement problems, hunters will be allowed to harvest a cow or young bull, based on antler configuration. Any caribou with six or less points (tines) on one antler will be legal. A point is defined as an antler projection longer than it is wide when measured one inch from the tip.

While this potentially could push the bull harvest over 5,000, it is expected that the number of young bulls taken will be small. The young bulls would not be expected to be much of a factor in breeding so the impact on herd productivity will be minimal.

SEASONS

THE FALL SEASON for Tier II permittees will begin Aug. 1, along with a cow season for archery or muzzleloading rifles. The primitive weapons

season will run through Aug. 9. The any-weapon cow hunt will begin Aug. 10. When applying for a Tier I cow permit, hunters will be asked whether they want to hunt Aug. 10-Aug. 31 or Sept. 1-20. Their permits will be good for only one of those fall periods in an effort to avoid crowding. The Tier II bull season will continue uninterrupted through Sept. 20.

The season for all hunters will be closed Sept. 21-Oct. 20 to avoid the rut. The meat from bull caribou often is considered less palatable during the rut. Allowing the hunting of cows during the rut could interfere with normal mating activity.

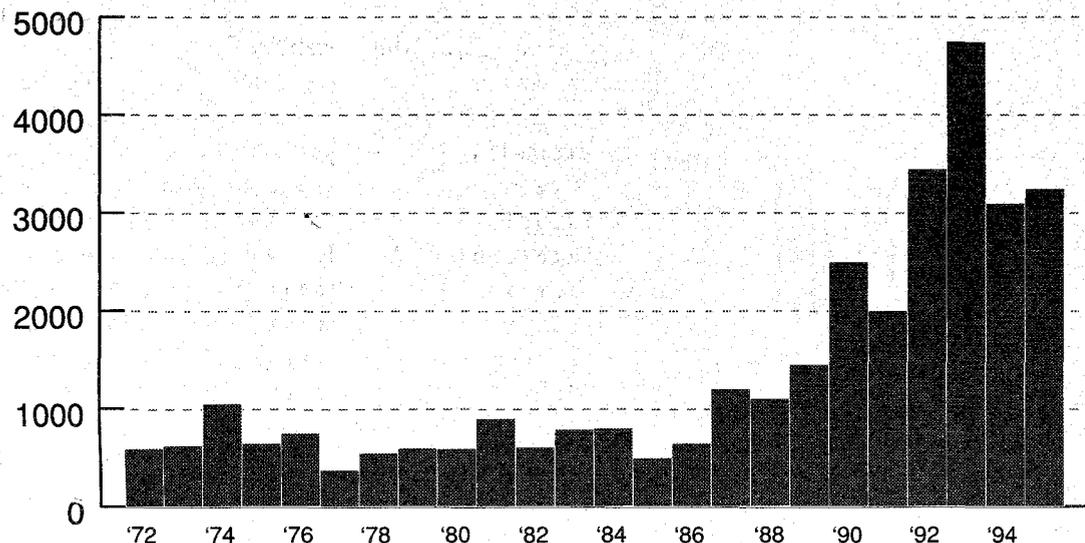
The season will reopen for all hunters Oct. 21 to provide more opportunity to harvest caribou in GMU 13, even if the herd departs eastward as it has the past several years. The Tier II season will run without further interruption through the

end of March. Depending on the fall harvest, the Tier I season could be closed at some point by emergency order, but would be scheduled to run through March.

Because the Nelchina caribou herd occasionally moves in mass and crosses major highways, it may be necessary to briefly close highway corridors to hunting to prevent things from getting out of control. Such road closures will be clearly marked and strictly enforced. Hunting will be prohibited only along the road, not farther out in the woods.

For most of the Alaska public, this will provide for at least a year or two of caribou hunting opportunity unmatched in GMU 13 since the early 1970s. Once the herd has been reduced and stabilized, hunting opportunity again will be restricted to 7,000-8,000 Tier II permits issued annually.

Nelchina Caribou Harvest, 1972-'95
(in thousands)



Alaska Hunter Education

Hunter Education: it's not just for kids. Adults can learn valuable skills as well. For more information, call your local ADF&G Wildlife Conservation office or:

(907) 459-7206 in Fairbanks
 (907) 267-2347 in Anchorage
 (907) 465-4265 in Juneau

Most classes are taught winter and spring. Training includes firearms and outdoor safety, wildlife conservation, and hunting ethics and responsibility. Graduates receive an Alaska Hunter Education card which is accepted in other states and provinces that require hunter education training.

Alaska Board of Game enacts new education requirement for most bear bait hunters

by David M. Johnson

IF YOU LIKE hunting black bear over bait, you may need to know about a new hunting regulation recently passed by the Alaska Board of Game. What it says is that beginning next spring you will need to meet some educational requirements in order to obtain a black bear bait permit in certain parts of the state.

The areas of the state affected are GMU 15, which is the western Kenai Peninsula; GMUs 14A and 14B, the Matanuska and Susitna valleys; and GMU 20B, the Fairbanks area. If you intend to register a bait station in these areas, you will be asked to show that you meet the educational requirements before your permit will be issued. Hunters using bait for black bears in other areas of the state where this method is permitted are not affected by this new requirement.

Fortunately, about half the hunters in the state already qualify. A recent ADF&G survey showed that about half of Alaska's hunters have graduated from a hunter education class. A hunter or bowhunter education card, either from Alaska or another state or province will satisfy the educational requirement.

The other route is for hunters to attend a 1996 or later ADF&G bear hunting clinic. Hunters at the spring, 1996 Anchorage and Fairbanks Alaska Hunting Clinic Series programs on bear hunting and black bear baiting were issued cards indicating they had attended. These cards show that the educational requirement has been met.

There are several future options open to the hunter who has no hunter education or bear clinic card. First, there are hunter education classes in most communities within the areas affected by the new regulations. These 15-20 hour classes are not just for young people, and are well worth the time investment because of the training. The classes cover fire-arms safety, wildlife conservation and management, and

hunter ethics and responsibility. Most of the classes are taught in the winter months.

A second option is to attend one of the bear hunting clinics that will be offered next spring. The clinics last for an entire day and thoroughly cover bear hunting. Presenters include biologists, game wardens, guides, hunting authors, taxidermists, and other experienced Alaska hunters. We have tentatively scheduled the next all-day bear hunting clinics for March, 1997.

Finally, the Department will be offering a series of black

bear bait clinics in April, 1997. We will hold clinics in Soldotna, Anchorage, the Mat/Su, and Fairbanks. These are week-night clinics and will focus specifically on bear baiting. If you would like to be on the mailing list for any of the hunting clinics, call 267-2580 in Anchorage or 459-7333 in Fairbanks and leave your name and address.

Many hunters have asked why the board added what seems like just another layer of red tape. The board's main concern was that without some change in the bear bait regula-

tions, this hunting method would be lost. Bear baiting is under fire by animal rights groups in other parts of the US. Some citizens here in Alaska have expressed similar concerns. Some of the common complaints about bear baiting are that it is unethical to bait animals, that it fills the woods with garbage, that it habituates bears to human foods, and that it is dangerous to nearby humans.

While ethical standards are an individual matter, some of the other concerns are not groundless. Recent regulatory

changes—including bait composition, bait station registration, and minimum distances from people—have reduced the potential for most real problems. Board members felt that by making bear baiters aware of these concerns that these hunters would be better equipped to avoid situations that might make the situation worse.

The new regulation becomes effective on July 1, 1996. Because bear baiting is allowed only during the spring, the regulation will not affect hunters until the spring of 1997.

An Alaska hunting bibliography...

by David M. Johnson and Celia Rozen

Editor's note: This bibliography covers most of the better-known publications about hunting in Alaska, and some less well-known. It is not complete. Suggestions for additions to this list are welcome. To obtain copies of the books or periodicals in this list, please contact the publisher or your local bookseller.

BOOKS

- Hunting in Alaska: A Comprehensive Guide*, by Christopher Batin. Alaska Hunter. 1995. 431 pp.
- Sheep Hunting in Alaska: The Dall Sheep Hunter's Guide*, by Tony Russ. Northern Publications. 1994. 160 pp.
- Kelley's Hunting/Fishing Directory of Alaska* written and published by J.J. Kelley. 1993. 52 pp.
- Longbows in the Far North: An Archer's Adventures in Alaska and Siberia*, by E. Donnall Thomas. Stackpole Books. 1993. 131 pp.
- Hunting and Fishing Alaska*, by Lynn Castle and Jimmie Rosenbruch. Safari Press. 1991. 128 pp.
- Walk Softly With Me: Adventures of a Woman Big-Game Guide in Alaska*, by Sharon E. McLeod-Everette. Univ. of Alaska, Fairbanks Master's Thesis. 1992. 207 pp.
- Shadows on the Tundra: Alaskan Tales of Predator, Prey and Man*, by Tom Walker. Stackpole Books. 1990. 177 pp.
- More Alaska Bear Tales*, by Larry Kaniut. Alaska Northwest Books. 1990. 285 pp.
- Alaska Safari*, by Harold Schetzle. Great Northwest Pub. and Dist. Co. 1989. 366 pp.
- Big Game Trails In the Far North*, by Phillip F. Neuweiler. Great Northwest Pub. and Dist. Co. 1989. 316 pp.
- Sourdough and Swahili: A Professional Hunter on Two Continents*, by Bud Branham. Amwell Press. 1989. 224 pp.
- Becoming a Great Moose Hunter*, by Richard Hackenberg. Frank Amato publications. 1988. 111 pp.
- Mountain Man: the Story of Belmore Browne, Hunter, Explorer, Artist, Naturalist and Preserver of our Northern Wilderness*, by Robert H. Bates. Amwell Press. 1988. 424 pp.
- Hunting the Alaska Brown Bear: the Story of a Sportsman's Adventure in an Unknown Valley After the Largest Carnivorous Animal in the World*, by John Whittemore Eddy. Wolfe Publishing Co. 1988 (1930). 253 pp.
- Alaska Wilderness Hunter*, by Harold Schetzle. Great Northwest Pub. and Dist. Co. 1987. 213 pp.
- Big Game, Big Country*, by Chauncey Suits. Great Northwest Pub. and Dist. Co. 1987. 224 pp.
- Of Bench and Bears: Alaska's Bear Hunting Judge*, by Richard C. Folta. Great Northwest Pub. and Dist. Co. 1986. 206 pp.
- Alaskan-Yukon Trophies Won and Lost*, by George Orville Young. Wolfe Publishing Co. 1985 (1928). 273 pp.
- A Thousand Campfires*, by Jay Massey. Bear Paw Publications. 1985. 127 pp.
- Wolf Trail Lodge*, by Edward M Boyd. Alaska Northwest Publishing Co. 1984. 108 pp.
- Track of the Kodiak*, by Marvin H. Clark. Great Northwest Pub. and Dist. Co. 1984. 224 pp.
- Trophy Rams of the Brooks Range, Plus Secrets of A Sheep and Mountain Goat Guide*, by Duncan Gilchrist. Pictorial Histories Publishing Co. 1984. 176 pp.
- Bowhunting Alaska's Wild Rivers* by Jay Massey. Bear Paw Publications. 1983.

see "Bibliography," on next page

Regulations ... from page 1

- Reinstated drawing permit hunt for Delta caribou; up to 100 permits may be issued.
- Lengthened season and increased bag limit for caribou in GMU 19A.
- Eliminated same-day airborne hunting of caribou in GMUs 23 and 26A.

Moose

- Established registration permit hunts for moose within the Nowitna River drainage in GMU 21B; hunters may take any bull under a subsistence permit or a spike-fork/50-inch bull under a general permit; trophy value of an animal taken under a subsistence permit will be destroyed.
- Established registration permit hunts for the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area in GMUs 21D and 24; hunters may take any moose under a subsistence permit or one bull with 50-inch or four-brow-tine antlers or a cow under a general permit; trophy value of an animal taken under a subsistence permit will be destroyed.
- Closed moose in all of GMU 26 on the North Slope except the Colville River drainage downstream from the mouth of the Anaktuvuk River.
- Amended the legal bull definition in the Ferry Trail Management Area and the Yanert Controlled Use area to three brow tines.
- Established a Nov. 1-30 muzzleloading rifle season by drawing permit in that portion of GMU 20A within the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area in GMU 20.

- Created the Nenana Controlled Use Area in southwestern 20A and southeastern 20C and prohibited the use of airboats for moose hunting.
- Changed Delta Closed Area to Delta Management Area; established drawing permit hunt.

Brown Bear

- Expanded the Northwest Brown Bear Management Area to include GMUs 21D and 24.
- Removed drawing permit requirement for non-resident hunters on the North Slope and extended the season to open Aug. 20.
- Closed McNeil River State Game Refuge to brown bear hunting.

Black Bear

- Required salvage of edible meat from black bears taken Jan. 1-May 31; edible meat defined as front quarters, hindquarters and backstrap.
- Required completion of a hunter education course or ADF&G bear clinic prior to receiving a bear baiting permit in GMUs 14A, 14B, 15 and 20B.

Sheep

- Changed bag limit in Chugach State Park (GMU14C) to one full curl ram or one ewe, authorized drawing permits for ewes only.

Miscellaneous

- Prohibited use of proxy permits for drawing permit hunts.

- Made it legal to shoot pheasants, quail and chukars that have escaped from captivity; no season, no bag limit.
- Established a beaver hunting season in GMUs 19 and 21E.
- Extended the beaver trapping season in GMUs 19, 21 and 24.
- Extended the coyote trapping season in GMUs 12 and 20E.
- Prohibited use of electronically enhanced scopes for taking game; scopes that electronically gather or project light are illegal; illuminated reticles are legal.
- Closed a portion of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge to waterfowl hunting with firearms, required annual registration permits to hunt in remainder.
- Created the Palmer-Wasilla Management Area and restricted hunting to archery, muzzleloading rifles and shotguns.
- Required applicants to have a hunting license and submit tag fees at the time of applying for a drawing permit; tag fees refunded in applicant is unsuccessful; effective spring 1997.
- Reduced the bag limit for grouse within the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area in GMU 20 to eight birds per day and 24 in possession.
- Revised falconry standards.
- Revised questions and scoring system on Tier II subsistence permit applications.



Bibliography ... from previous page

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- The Wilderness of the North Pacific Coast Islands: A Hunter's Experiences While Searching for Wapiti, Bears, and Caribou on the Larger Coast Islands of British Columbia and Alaska*, by Charles Sheldon. Amwell Press. 1983 (1912). 246 pp.
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- The Kodiak Bear*, by Jim Woodworth. Stackpole. 1958. 204 pp.
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- Alaska Magazine*. Alaska Publishing Properties. Anchorage, AK. Published monthly.
- The Alaska Hunter*. Alaska Angler Publications. Fairbanks, AK. Monthly June-August and bi-monthly September-May.
- Alaska Outdoors*. Alaska Outdoors Development Corporation. Anchorage, AK. Published monthly.



HUNT SMART!

The Alaskan Hunting Clinic Series is designed to assist new *and* experienced hunters with reliable information about hunting Alaska. Clinic presenters include biologists, guides, game wardens, taxidermists, hunting authors, and others with substantial Alaska hunting experience. Most clinics last all day on a Saturday, and feature multiple presentations.



1996 Clinic Schedule

July	Topic	Community	Tickets available
13	Sheep & goat hunting	Anchorage	June 22
13	Sheep & goat hunting	Fairbanks	June 22
20	Caribou & moose hunting	Anchorage	June 29
26	Caribou hunting - women	Anchorage	July 6
27	Caribou & moose hunting	Palmer	July 6
August			
2	Caribou hunting - women	Fairbanks	July 13
3	Caribou & moose hunting	Fairbanks	July 13

Tickets cost \$10.⁰⁰ Seniors over 59 and youth under 16 are free. Tickets will be available on the dates shown in Anchorage at *Barney's Sports Chalet* and *Mountain View Sports Center*, at *Chimo Guns* in Wasilla, and in Fairbanks at *Down Under Guns*.

For Clinic information, call the following 24-hour recordings:

267-2531 (Anchorage)

459-7333 (Fairbanks)

You can obtain a copy of the complete clinic calendar by calling 267-2883 from a FAX machine.



The Alaska Hunting Clinic series is a cooperative project of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Department of Public Safety, the Hunter Heritage Foundation of Alaska, the Alaska Outdoor Council, the Matanuska Valley Sportsmen's association, the National Rifle Association, the Tanana Valley Sportsmen's Association, Territorial Sportsmen, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, and the United States Forest Service.

Bulletin...from page 1

results of game surveys, and so forth. You will not find "how to" and "where to" articles. These are being covered by private publishers (see the list on pages 10-11).

We believe the business of wildlife conservation is more than a government responsibility. The task belongs not only to state and federal agencies, but to private organizations and individuals as well. We view it as a partnership.

Any partnership relies on communication between its members. That's what the *Alaska Hunting Bulletin* is about - communication. Our hope is to use this to develop better communications with one of our largest partners - Alaska hunter/conservationists.

Today, most of the funding for the Division of Wildlife Conservation is derived from the sale of hunting licenses and tags and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration dollars. Federal Aid funds come from the sale of firearms and ammunition. As hunters, these are an important part of your contribution to conservation.

Responsible use of the money you have provided requires that our operations be effective. For that reason, we are publishing the *Alaska Hunting Bulletin* on a trial basis. If this first issue is well received, we'll print future editions. After a year, we'll step back and look to see if this is truly fostering our conservation partnership.

One of the measures of success will be how many of you decide to subscribe. The subscription is free. Many of you will have received this in the mail. Our first issue is going out to a large number of Alaskans. Assuming adequate interest in the concept, in the future we may be mailing this only to people who specifically ask for it.

So...if you like the *Bulletin* and would like to receive it regularly, please let us know. Here's how to contact us:

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 Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
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Or you can call 267-2580 (this is a recording - just leave your name and address). You can also reach us by FAX at (907) 895-4833 or e-mail at davejo@fishgame.state.as.us

Please feel free to write to us to suggest ideas for future articles or other ways we can make this publication more useful. Please also note that we will be running letters to the editor in future issues, and we welcome your letters for that.



Grouse...from page 3

One unique aspect of this transplant is that the hunting season was not closed nor the bag limit altered. From the day in September 1988 when we released the first birds, the season remained August 10 to March 31, with a bag limit of 15 per day, 30 in possession. Not until 1994, after it was certain ruffed grouse were established and expanding, did the Board reduce the bag limit to two per day, four in possession. We did this to insure no family groups were eliminated. At the same time we informed hunters

there were adequate numbers of birds to sustain a harvest.

In response to the success of the Matanuska/Susitna release, Anchorage and Kenai sportsmen urged ADF&G to move ruffed grouse to the Kenai Peninsula. Following public hearings in Kenai and Anchorage, drafting of a transplant plan, and review of the proposal by a transplant committee, the Commissioner of Fish and Game approved the second transplant in June, 1995.

We initiated the Kenai transplant the following September. This transplant was funded by donations from the Alaska Waterfowl Association, the Anchorage chapter of the Safari Club International and The Ruffed Grouse Society. We moved 63 ruffed grouse from Clear Air Force Station and the Fairbanks area to pre-selected sites on the Kenai Peninsula. Twelve of these birds were equipped with radio transmitters. As of March first, a little over five months after re-

lease, the birds have shown random dispersal of three to five miles and a 50 percent survival rate. This is a better survival rate than the Matanuska/Susitna transplant.

We are using a public relations program on the Kenai Peninsula similar to that used so successfully in the Matanuska Valley. The "grouse" hunting season and bag limit has not been modified to reflect the release of ruffed grouse, however, we are asking hunters not to

shoot them. To date we know of only one bird killed by a hunter.

If this transplant is as successful as the Matanuska Valley transplant, in five to seven years the Kenai Peninsula should see some of the finest upland hunting in the state, if not the nation. Perhaps in a few decades a new generation of dedicated Alaska upland bird hunters will dream of cool, crisp mornings in the Mat/Su or on the Kenai Peninsula!



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