

Dear Board of Game members,

Thank you for your service!

My name is Kurt Whitehead, I serve as Secretary for the Klawock AC and our comments follow:

Proposal 45, raise the wolf population objective.

We unanimously and strongly oppose this proposal.

Proposal 46, lengthen the hunting season for wolves in Unit 2 to align the state and federal seasons.

We unanimously support this proposal. This will simplify the regs, make it easier to enforce, increase the hunting opportunity and won't result in much additional harvest. Trying to shoot a wolf is extremely difficult. They are a very small moving target that kicks it into high gear the second your bullet exits the muzzle and any of the remaining pack gets infinitely smarter the next time.

Proposal 47, require wolf harvest info to be reported within 48 hrs and sealing within 14 days in unit 2.

The current reporting period is 7 days with a 15 day reporting period.

We discussed this proposal at length and **ultimately opposed it unanimously** for the burden it would place on the boat trappers and campers that operate out of cell range and deal with Alaskan Wx during the trapping season.

Proposal 48, change the methodology for setting the population objective for wolves in Unit 2.

We unanimously opposed this proposal for a variety of reasons. ADFG continues to refine its methodology and population estimates and are in the beginning stages of incorporating trail cameras into their study which should further improve their data.

Proposal 49-Utilize the lower confidence interval of the wolf population for estimating the population in Unit 2.

We unanimously opposed this proposal because it unnecessarily limits harvest opportunity. They are trying to make it more conservative and want to use the lower confidence interval of the population estimate. ADFG has been biased low in the past and this prop will not be accurate and it will unnecessarily restrict hunter/trappers.

Prop 50-Establish a population estimate and harvest limit based on PoW wolf population that excludes extrapolation from outer islands in Unit 2.

We unanimously oppose this prop b/c it will change the wolf population estimate by removing the outer islands from the study. This is wrong. The reason AWA proposes this, is because most of the hair board study is not on the outer island due to logistics/Wx. They are saying we shouldn't be able to extrapolate the pop density on those islands. If passed this will lower the pop estimate and limit harvest opportunity. There are definitely wolves on those islands and it is appropriate to estimate the wolves on those islands.

Prop 51-Establish a percentage of the Unit 2 wolf population that can be harvested on a sustainable basis, develop a harvest quota each season, require in-season reporting, provide the harvest in real time and allow 3 days notice before closing the season by emergency order.

We are unanimously opposed to this prop b/c it will change too many things. It seeks to go back to a quota system. ADFG has met or exceeded the wolf pop estimate every year. In short, the current management is working.

Prop 52-Establish a harvest quota for wolves, between 20-35% of the estimated wolf population in Unit 2.

We are unanimously opposed to this prop. If passed this specifies that BOG will have to meet annually to make management decisions which is very burdensome.

Prop 53-Establish an estimated unreported mortality rate for the Unit 2 wolves to be used for establishing the harvest quota.

We are unanimously opposed to this proposal. Our current management strategy is working. Unreported mortality exists but this isn't a major factor on how ADFG manages wolves b/c the system accounts for the animals coming into and out of the area. This won't help manage them.

Prop 54-Identify an area in Unit 2 for protected status for wolves.

We are unanimously and strongly opposed to this proposal.

In all of our discussions, our group agreed on the following:

POW has a deer herd that is suffering and is a shell of what it was prior to 2015. From 2015-2023 our deer herd has plummeted. There were wolves running everywhere prior to 2020. I saw more wolf scat with deer bones/hair in it than all the other years combined. We had wolves inside the city limits of Klawock and Craig eating our local urban deer. Wolves were in our neighborhoods in broad daylight. The wolf numbers exploded b/n 2015-2019 due to the reduced trapping regulations. When we were finally allowed to harvest a decent number of wolves during the trapping season of 2019-2020, there were a bunch of well fed dumb wolves so the trappers made a good dent in the burgeoning population. That harvest combined with the ADFG's low population estimate is why you are sitting here today deliberating on all these wolf proposals. Since that time, ADFG has refined its population numbers, continues to improve its methodologies and the unreported mortality has significantly decreased. The wolf harvest has leveled out. Our current management system is working. All the locals would like to see more wolves harvested and nearly everyone agrees we have a deer population issue. The vast majority of us on POW are all working with ADFG and believes in their current management system. It has improved every year and they are working very hard at it.

Prop 201: Create a sea otter management plan.

We unanimously opposed this proposal b/c it will require an overhaul of the marine mammal protection act but we all agree we have a sea otter infestation on POW. They have overrun the W side and are steadily working their way down the E side.

Prop 1: Require certified hunter safety education to hunt in Units 1-5

We are unanimously opposed to this proposal b/c we didn't want to limit new hunters. It is a good concept but we had issues with implementation in rural areas.

Prop 2: Require hunter orientation for hunting goats in SE AK

We unanimously opposed this proposal b/c because nannies are legal, they taste good, they are difficult to judge and some folks want to take a nanny. The burden to comply with the prop would be significant.

Prop 3: Remove the requirement for residents to seal black bear skulls in Unit 1-4.

We are unanimously opposed to this proposal for many reasons. The current system works well and allows ADFG to collect important data that is valuable to help manage our bears.

Prop 5: Change the waterfowl season in Units 1-4 by creating a split season.

We unanimously opposed this proposal b/c it is difficult to pick a closed time period since SE AK is so large and the timing for migrating waterfowl varies quite a bit from N to S.

Prop 6: Lengthen river otter trapping seasons in Units 1-4 to Nov. 10-March 31.

We unanimously oppose this proposal.

Our most experienced trapper on the AC is a life long trapper that grew up on POW. Otter is one of his specialties. In the past, he has trapped 278 otter in one year. Fur is not prime on Dec. 1 but doesn't start to get really good until the 2nd or 3rd week of Dec. Lengthening the season past the end of Feb is as long as it should go. Pelts in March get singed and aren't prime. He is opposed to starting earlier than Dec. 1 and also opposed to trapping after the end of Feb due to fur quality.

Prop 7: Extend marten trapping season to align with wolverine season in Units 1-4 to Nov. 10-Feb. 28.

We unanimously opposed this proposal b/c marten fur is not prime until Dec. 1 at the earliest. We are in support of trapping them until Feb. 28.

Prop 8: Extend marten trapping season in Units 1 & 2 to Dec. 1-Feb. 28.

We unanimously support this proposal.

Thank you very much!