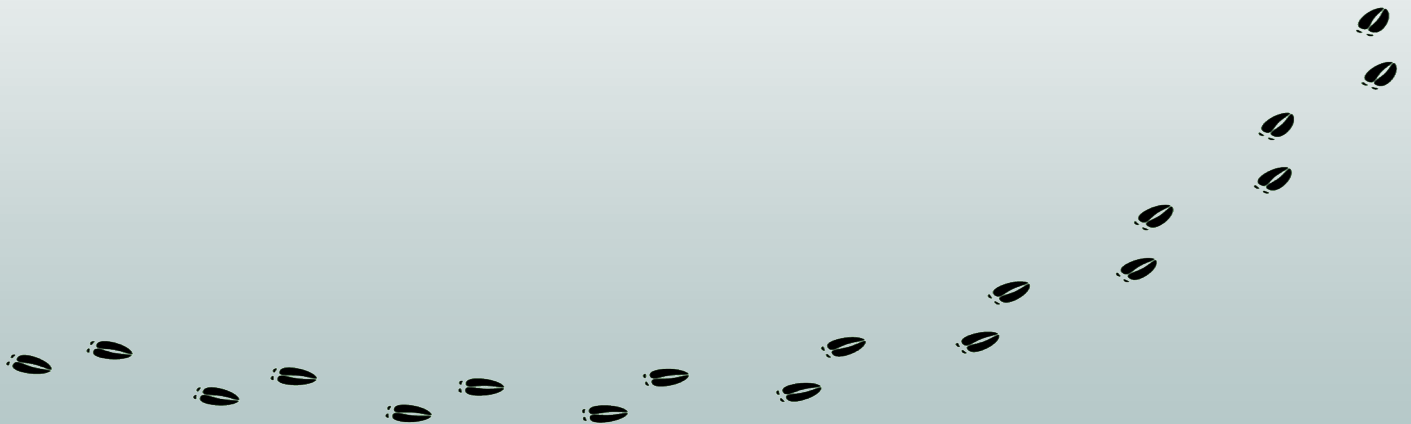


ALASKA BOARD OF GAME

RC 1 Meeting Workbook

Special Meeting: Intensive Management for the Mulchatna
Caribou Herd

Anchorage, AK | July 14-15, 2025



ALASKA BOARD OF GAME

Special Meeting: Intensive Management for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd

Anchorage, AK | July 14-15, 2025

Table of Contents

	Pg. No.
Agenda.....	1
Notice of Proposed Regulations & Supplemental Notice	2-7
Board Membership Roster.....	8
2025/2026 Meeting Schedule	9
Proposal 1: Intensive Management for Mulchatna Caribou by ADF&G	10
Proposed Regulatory Changes to 5 AAC 92.111 by ADF&G	11
 Board Findings and Policies (www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.findings):	
Joint Board Petition Policy	13
Joint Board Criteria for Development of Board-Generated Proposals	14
 Board of Game Policies and Resolutions:	
• 2023-228-BOG – Wolf Management Policy	15
• 2023-227-BOG – Bear Conservation, Harvest, and Management Policy	18
• 2012-197-BOG – Units 9B, 17, 18, 19A and 19B (Mulchatna Caribou Herd)- Intensive Management Supplemental Findings.....	24
• 2011-188-BOG – Units 9B, 17, 18, and 19B (Mulchatna Caribou Herd)- Intensive Management Supplemental Findings	26

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME
Special Meeting: Intensive Management
for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd
Coast Inn at Lake Hood | Anchorage, Alaska
July 14-15, 2025

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Monday, July 14, 8:30 a.m.

OPENING BUSINESS

- Call to Order / Purpose of Meeting
- Introductions of Board Members and Staff
- Board Member Ethics Disclosures

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME REPORTS (if the oral hearing concludes)

The deadline to sign up to testify will be 12:00 p.m. July 14. The length of testimony will be three minutes for individuals and ten minutes for advisory committee and regional advisory council representatives.

Tuesday, July 15, 8:30 a.m.

PUBLIC & ADVISORY COMMITTEE TESTIMONY (if not concluded on July 14)

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME REPORTS

- Mulchatna Caribou Herd Management
- Mulchatna Caribou Herd Research
- Sustained Yield of Predators Under IM: Overview for the Board of Game, July 2025

DELIBERATIONS

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Agenda Notes

1. Meeting materials are available online at:
<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=07-14-2025&meeting=anchorage> or by contacting ADF&G Boards Support Section in Juneau at (907) 465-4110.
2. A live audio stream for the meeting is intended to be available at: <https://boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov>
3. The State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special modifications to participate in this hearing and public meeting should contact 465-4110 no later than two weeks prior to start of the meeting to make any necessary arrangements.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE REGULATIONS OF THE ALASKA BOARD OF GAME

The Alaska Board of Game proposes to adopt regulation changes in Title 5 of the Alaska Administrative Code, dealing with the use and taking of game in Game Management Units 9B, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A, and 19B, including the following:

- 5 AAC 92.111(c) concerning the Mulchatna Caribou Predation Management Area is proposed to be changed to include predator control of brown and black bears in addition to wolves to aid in the recovery of the Mulchatna caribou herd.

You may comment on the proposed regulation changes, including the potential costs to private persons of complying with the proposed changes, by submitting written comments online to the Alaska Board of Game at <https://boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov>. Written comments may also be submitted to the ADF&G Boards Support Section at P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526. Additionally, the Board of Game will accept comments by facsimile at (907) 465-6094. The comments must be received not later than 11:59 p.m. on Monday, July 7, 2025.

Oral or written comments also may be submitted at a hearing to be held on July 14, 2025, at the Coast Inn at Lake Hood, 3450 Aviation Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska. The hearing will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and might be extended to July 15, from 8:30 am to 5:30 p. m. at the same location to accommodate those present before 1:00 p.m. on July 14, who did not have an opportunity to comment.

If you are a person with a disability who needs a special accommodation in order to participate in this process, please contact ADF&G, Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4110 not later than July 7, 2025 to ensure that any necessary accommodation can be provided.

For a copy of the proposed regulation changes, go to <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=07-14-2025&meeting=anchorage> or contact the ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4110.

After the public comment period ends, the Board of Game will either adopt the proposed regulation changes or other provisions dealing with the same subject, without further notice, or decide to take no action. The language of the final regulation may be different from that of the proposed regulation. You should comment during the time allowed if your interests could be affected.

Written comments are public records and are subject to public inspection.

Statutory authority: AS 16.05.255

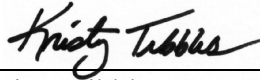
Statutes being implemented, interpreted, or made specific: AS 16.05.255; AS 16.05.270; AS 16.05.783

Fiscal information: The proposed regulation changes are not expected to require an increased appropriation.

The ADF&G Boards Support Section keeps a list of individuals and organizations interested in its regulations. Those on the list will automatically be sent a copy of all of the boards' notices of proposed regulation changes. To be added to or removed from the list, send a request to Kristy Tibbles at Kristy.tibbles@alaska.gov, giving your name, and either your e-mail address or mailing address, as you prefer for receiving notices. Alternatively, visit the website at <https://boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov> or contact ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4110.

Individuals can also signup to receive automated notifications of all State of Alaska notices, including public notice for regulation changes, by subscribing to the Alaska Online Public Notices System: <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Default.aspx>.

Date: June 6, 2025



Kristy Tibbles
Executive Director
Alaska Board of Game

ADDITIONAL REGULATION NOTICE INFORMATION
(AS 44.62.190(g))

1. Adopting agency: Alaska Board of Game
2. General subject of regulation: Intensive Management for Mulchatna Caribou Herd
3. Citation of regulation (may be grouped): 5 AAC 92.111(c)
4. Department of Law file number, if any: 2025200331
5. Reason for the proposed action:

☐ Compliance with federal law
☐ Compliance with new or changed state statute
☒ Compliance with court orders
☒ Development of program standards
☐ Other (identify): _____
6. Appropriation/Allocation: Natural Resources and all RDUs; OMB Component Number 2048
7. Cost of implementation to the state agency and available funding (in thousands of dollars):

	Initial Year	Subsequent Years	
	FY <u>23</u>	FY 24	FY25
Operating Cost	\$ <u>392.0</u>	\$ <u>572.0</u>	TBD*
Capital Cost	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	
1002 Federal receipts	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	
1003 General fund match	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	
1004 General fund	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	
1005 General fund/ program	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	
Other (identify)	\$ <u>392.0</u>	\$ <u>572.0</u>	100% Fish and Game Fund all years.

*Invoices are not available for FY 25 at this time. An estimated \$500.0 will be allocated for all future years of the program. Actual expenses will not be known until work is complete each year. Future costs are difficult to estimate due to unknown weather, unknown caribou location, staffing, and aircraft availability.

8. The name of the contact person for the regulation:

Name: Kristy Tibbles
Title: Executive Director, Board of Game
Address: Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
Telephone: (907) 465-6098
E-mail address: kristy.tibbles@alaska.gov

9. The origin of the proposed action:

 X Staff of state agency
 Federal government
 X General public
 Petition for regulation change
 Other (identify) _____

10. Date: June 6, 2025 Prepared by: *Kristy Tibbles*

Name (printed) Kristy Tibbles
Title (printed): Executive Director
Telephone: 907-465-6098

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE REGULATIONS OF THE ALASKA BOARD OF GAME

This is a SUPPLEMENTAL NOTICE adding to the NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGES issued on June 6, 2025 to correct a typographical error in the citation to the proposed regulation change, extend the written comment period, and adjust the time allocated for the oral hearing as a component of the Alaska Board of Game's Special Board Meeting. The Alaska Board of Game proposes to adopt regulation changes in Title 5 of the Alaska Administrative Code, dealing with the use and taking of game in Game Management Units 9B, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A, and 19B, including the following:

- 5 AAC 92.111(c) concerning the Mulchatna Caribou Predation Management Area is proposed to be changed to include predator control of brown and black bears in addition to wolves to aid in the recovery of the Mulchatna caribou herd.

You may comment on the proposed regulation changes, including the potential costs to private persons of complying with the proposed changes, by submitting written comments online to the Alaska Board of Game at <https://boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov>. Written comments may also be submitted to the ADF&G Boards Support Section at P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526. Additionally, the Board of Game will accept comments by facsimile at (907) 465-6094. The comments must be received not later than 5:30 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2025.

Oral or written comments also may be submitted in-person at an oral hearing to be held on July 14, 2025, at the Coast Inn, 3450 Aviation Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska. The oral hearing will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with a break for lunch from approximately 12 to 1 p.m. The hearing might be extended through 5:30 p.m. and/or reconvened on July 15, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. to accommodate those present before 12:00 p.m. on July 14 who did not have an opportunity to comment before 3:00 p.m.

If you are a person with a disability who needs a special accommodation in order to participate in this process, please contact ADF&G, Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4110 not later than July 7, 2025 to ensure that any necessary accommodation can be provided.

For a copy of the proposed regulation changes, go to <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo> or contact the ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4110.

After the public comment period ends, the Board of Game will either adopt the proposed regulation changes or other provisions dealing with the same subject, without further notice, or decide to take no action. The language of the final regulation may be different from that of the proposed regulation. You should comment during the time allowed if your interests could be affected.

Written comments are public records and are subject to public inspection.

Statutory authority: AS 16.05.255

Statutes being implemented, interpreted, or made specific: AS 16.05.255; AS 16.05.270;

AS 16.05.783

Fiscal information: The proposed regulation changes are not expected to require an increased appropriation.

The ADF&G Boards Support Section keeps a list of individuals and organizations interested in its regulations. Those on the list will automatically be sent a copy of all of the boards' notices of proposed regulation changes. To be added to or removed from the list, send a request to the Boards Support Section at Kristy.tibbles@alaska.gov, giving your name, and either your e-mail address or mailing address, as you prefer for receiving notices. Alternatively, visit the website at <https://boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov> or contact ADF&G Boards Support Section at (907) 465-4110.

Individuals can also signup to receive automated notifications of all State of Alaska notices, including public notice for regulation changes, by subscribing to the Alaska Online Public Notices System: <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Default.aspx>.

Date: June 11, 2025

/s/
Kristy Tibbles
Executive Director
Alaska Board of Game



Alaska Board of Game

P.O. Box 115526

Juneau, AK 99811-5526

(907) 465-4110

<https://www.boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov>

Alaska Board of Game Members

NAME AND ADDRESS	TERM EXPIRES
Jake Fletcher, Talkeetna, Chair Jacob.fletcher@alaska.gov	6/30/2026
Stosh (Stanley) Hoffman, Bethel, Vice Chair Stosh.hoffman@alaska.gov	6/30/2026
Allen (Al) Barrette, Fairbanks Allen.barrette@alaska.gov	6/30/2028
David Lorrington, Fairbanks David.lorrington@alaska.gov	6/30/2026
James Baichtal, Thorne Bay Jim.baichtal@alaska.gov	6/30/2027
Jake Garner, Anchorage Jake.garner@alaska.gov	6/30/2027
Carri Ann Mueller, Palmer Carriann.mueller@alaska.gov	6/30/2028

Alaska Board of Game members may also be reached by contacting

Kristy Tibbles, Executive Director, Alaska Board of Game

Email: kristy.tibbles@alaska.gov | Phone: (907) 465-6098

<https://www.boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov>

**Alaska Board of Game**

P.O. Box 115526

Juneau, AK 99811-5526

(907) 465-4110

<https://boardofgame.adfg.alaska.gov>**ALASKA BOARD OF GAME****2025/2026 Cycle****Tentative Meeting Dates**

Meeting Dates	Topic	Location	Comment Deadline
January 22, 2026 (1 day)	Work Session	Wrangell Nolan Center	January 16, 2026
January 23-27, 2026 (5 days)	Southeast Region Game Management Units 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5	Wrangell Nolan Center	January 9, 2026
March 20-25, 2026 (6 days)	Southcentral Region Game Management Units 6, 7, 8, 14C, and 15	Kodiak TBD	March 6, 2026

The Board of Game will meet via web conference to consider Agenda Change Requests following the November 1 deadline.

Total Meeting Days: 13

Proposal Deadline: Thursday, May 1, 2025

Agenda Change Request Deadline: Saturday, November 1, 2025

PROPOSAL 1

5 AAC 92.111. Intensive Management Plans, Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area.

Modify the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area to allow for the take of brown and black bears by department staff to benefit the herd as follows:

Allow black and brown bears to be removed by department staff as part of the intensive management plan for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH).

WHAT IS THE ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

The previously adopted black and brown bear portion of the intensive management (IM) program for the MCH was vacated by the Alaska Superior Court in March 2025. The department will provide the board information to address the Court's rulings, specifically with data and information to understand the status of the program and the critical need to continue the program. This information will provide the board with the necessary information to assess the sustainability of the area's brown bear population.

The MCH has been identified by the Board of Game (board) under Alaska's Intensive Management Statute as important for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use and established a population objective of 30,000–80,000 caribou and a harvest objective of 2,400–8,000 for the herd. There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for the MCH, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence use of 2,100–2,400 caribou.

Due to low caribou abundance, all MCH hunts (state and federal) have been closed since 2021. To increase the overall abundance of the MCH, the department has issued permits to the public to take wolves same-day-airborne and shoot wolves from the air since 2011. Bear predation has been identified as a significant factor in MCH calf survival. In 2022 the board added black and brown bear control by the department as an available tool to grow the herd. In the spring of 2023, following further declines in the MCH and in addition to the public wolf control program, the department-initiated bear and wolf removal efforts on the western MCH calving grounds, which is a small portion (1.8%) of the herd's range.

The MCH IM program aims to reduce large predator populations in a small defined area for a short period, enhancing caribou calf survival, and increasing herd abundance. Bear control is conducted in the spring when the caribou herd has congregated to calve, and wolf control occurs pre-calving. Department-led efforts since 2023 have significantly improved calf:cow ratios. Continuing predator control is essential for herd recovery, and halting these efforts would undermine gains made since 2023.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

[HQ-F25-048]

5 AAC 92.111. Intensive Management Plans I.

(c) **Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area.** The Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area is established to increase the Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) within Units 9(B), 17(A), 17(B), 17(C), 18, 19(A), and 19(B) to aid in achieving intensive management (IM) objectives; the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area encompasses approximately 39,683 square miles; and multiple predator control areas may be utilized within the management area;

(1) this is a continuing control program that was first established by the Board of Game (board) in 2011 for wolf control **and has been expanded to include black and brown bear control**; it is designed to increase the caribou herd's population size and human harvest by reducing wolf predation on caribou and is expected to make a contribution to achieving the IM objectives for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.

(2) caribou, **bear (brown and black bear)** and wolf objectives are as follows:

(A) the IM objective for the MCH as established in 5 AAC 92.108 is 30,000 - 80,000 caribou; these objectives were based on historic information regarding population numbers, habitat limitations, human use, and sustainable harvests;

(B) the caribou harvest objective for the MCH as established in 5 AAC 92.108 is 2,400 - 8,000;

(C) the wolf population objective for the MCH Predation Management Area is to annually reduce the number of wolves in predator control areas to a level that results in increased calf survival and recruitment;

(D) the bear population objective for the MCH Predation Management Area is to annually reduce the number of bears in the predator control areas to a level that results in increased calf survival and recruitment.

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

(A) the population and harvest objectives for the MCH are below the IM objectives throughout the herd's range;

(B) wolves are a major predator of caribou in the range of the MCH and are an important factor in failing to achieve these objectives;

(C) a reduction of wolf predation can reasonably be expected to aid in achieving the objectives;

(D) reducing wolf predation is likely to be effective and feasible using recognized and prudent active management techniques and based on scientific information;

(E) reducing wolf predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns; and

(F) reducing wolf predation is in the best interests of subsistence users;

(G) bears are a major predator of caribou in the range of the MCH and are an important factor in failing to achieve caribou population and harvest objectives;

(H) a reduction of bear predation in certain areas like calving areas can reasonably be expected to aid in achieving the objectives;

(I) reducing bear predation is likely to be effective and feasible using recognized and prudent active management techniques and based on scientific information;

(J) reducing bear predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns; and
(K) reducing bear predation is in the best interests of subsistence users.

(4) authorized methods and means are as follows:

(A) hunting and trapping of wolves **and bears** by the public in the MCH Predation Management Area during the term of the program will occur as provided in the hunting and trapping regulations set out elsewhere in this title, including the use of motorized vehicles as provided in 5 AAC 92.080;

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

(C) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may allow department employees to conduct aerial, land and shoot, or ground-based lethal removal of wolves, black bears and brown bears using state-owned, privately-owned, or chartered equipment, including helicopters, under AS 16.05.783.

(5) time frame is as follows:

(A) through **June 30** [JULY 1], 2028, the commissioner may authorize the removal of **bears and** wolves in the MCH Predation Management Area;

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

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

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

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

(C) if, after three years, there is no detectable increase in the total number of caribou in the control area;

(D) if, after three years, fall calf-to-cow ratios show no appreciable increase;

(E) if, after three years, any measure consistent with significant levels of nutritional stress in the caribou population are identified; or

(F) when the caribou population and harvest objectives within the MCH Predation Management Area have been met;

(G) if, after three years, the harvest of bears is not sufficient to make progress towards the IM population objectives for bears.

5 AAC 96.625. JOINT BOARD PETITION POLICY

(effective September 19, 2019)

(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. Annually, the boards solicit regulation changes through regulatory proposals described in 5 AAC 96.610(a). 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, and to other interested individuals.

(c) Copies of all proposals are available at local Department of Fish and Game offices and on the boards support section's website. When the proposal books are available, the advisory committees and 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 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 received under (a) of this section 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. It is the policy of the boards that a petition will be denied and not scheduled for hearing unless the problem outlined in the petition justifies a finding of emergency under AS 44.62.250(a). In accordance with state policy expressed in AS 44.62.270, emergencies will be held to a minimum and are rarely found to exist. Except for petitions dealing with subsistence hunting or subsistence fishing, 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. Petitions dealing with subsistence hunting or subsistence fishing will be evaluated under these criteria:

- (1) the petition must address a fish or game population that has not previously been considered by the board for identification as a population customarily and traditionally used for subsistence under AS 16.05.258; or
- (2) the circumstances of the petition otherwise must require expedited consideration by the board, such as where the proposal is the result of a court decision or is the subject of federal administrative action that might impact state game management authority.

(Eff. 9/22/85, Register 95; am 8/17/91, Register 119; readopt 5/15/93, Register 126; am 2/23/2014, Register 209; am 9/19/2019, Register 231)

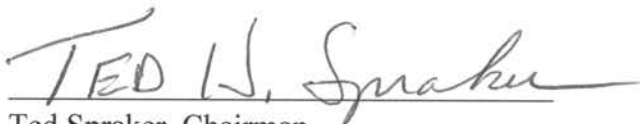
Authority: AS 16.05.251, AS 16.05.255, AS 16.05.258

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 16th 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.

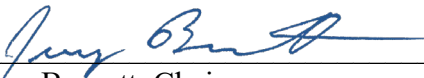
Terminating Wolf Control

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



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 62nd 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 km² (450 bears/1,000 mi²). A population in Katmai National Park on the Alaska Peninsula was measured at 550 bears/1,000 km² (1,420 bears/1,000 mi²). In most interior and northern coastal areas, densities do not exceed 40 bears/1,000 km² (100 bears/1,000 mi²). Mean densities as low as 4 grizzly bears/1,000 km² (12 bears/1,000 mi²) 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 km² (175 bears/1,000 mi²) on the Yukon Flats to 289 bears/1,000 km² (750 bears/1,000 mi²) 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 km² (4,000 black bears/1,000 mi²).

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



Jerry Burnett, Chairman
Board of Game

**Findings for the Alaska Board of Game
2012-197-BOG
Units 9B, 17, 18, 19A, and 19B (Mulchatna Caribou Herd)
Intensive Management Supplemental Findings
March 9, 2012**

The Board of Game finds as follows: based on information provided by Department staff, Alaska residents, and users of caribou in Subunits 9B, 17B, 17C, 19A, and 19B. These findings are supplemental to the findings set forth in 5AAC 92.108 and 92.125.

1. The Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) in Units 9B, 17, 18, 19A, and 19B has been identified by the Board as a herd that is important for providing high levels of human consumptive use. The Board established an intensive management population objective of 30,000 - 80,000 caribou and an intensive management harvest objective of 2,400 – 8,000 caribou annually for the MCH.
2. The most recent minimum population size estimate for the MCH indicates that the herd contained between 30,000 and 40,000 caribou in 2008, which is at the lower limit of the intensive management population objective of 30,000 - 80,000 caribou.
3. The harvestable surplus of MCH caribou in Units 9B, 17, 18, 19A, and 19B, as described in 5 AAC 92.106(3)(A), is currently estimated to be 1,050 caribou annually, which is less than intensive management harvest objective established by the Board of 2,400 – 8,000 caribou annually.
4. The cause of the decline of the MCH caribou population in Units 9B, 17, 18, 19A, and 19B is not known with certainty but was likely due to weather-related and/or density-dependent factors that resulted in range limitations and disease that caused low pregnancy, low calf production and low calf survival. The poor recruitment also affected a shift in the population's age structure toward older-aged individuals that was not conducive for population growth. The density-dependent factors affecting population growth have become less important in limiting population growth as the number of MCH has declined to 15% of peak numbers. Nutritional indices (pregnancy rates, calf weights, and the prevalence of disease) have improved, and the population's age should no longer be skewed to older animals.
5. The importance of predation in affecting population growth harvest has increased the current low population size. The poor survival of calves and calf recruitment currently observed can be reasonably attributed to the influence of predation on caribou calves. A caribou calf mortality study conducted in May and June 2011 found that predation by bears and wolves accounted for 89% of the of calves that died between birth and 1 month of age. Fall calf:cow ratios in the MCH have averaged 22 calves:100 cows since 2005.
6. The low MCH caribou calf recruitment in Units 9B, 17, 18, 19A, and 19B has prevented recovery of the bull:cow ratio to objectives (3-year average bull:cow ratio = 19 bulls:100 cows between 2009 and 2011), a decrease in the number of harvestable caribou, a

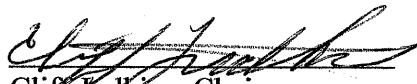
complete closure of the nonresident season (closed in 2009), and season and bag-limit restrictions for resident hunters. The reduced recruitment and low bull numbers have resulted in a failure to provide for human needs.

7. The intensive management harvest objectives for the MCH in Units 9B, 17, 18, 19A, and 19B will not be achieved in the near future unless action is taken to improve calf survival and recruitment.
8. Increases in caribou recruitment and abundance in the MCH are achievable utilizing the recognized and prudent active management technique of predator control.
9. The harvest objectives have not been achieved, at least in part, because wolf and brown bear predation have been important causes of mortality in the population. Objectives are unlikely to be achieved in the foreseeable future unless predator control is conducted. Population objectives are currently being met, however, low recruitment precludes this population from meeting harvest objectives.
10. Reducing predation can reasonably be expected to achieve a sex and age structure that will sustain the population, provide for harvest, and allow growth toward objectives.

Vote: 7-0

March 9, 2012

Fairbanks, Alaska



Cliff Jenkins, Chairman
Alaska Board of Game

**Findings for the Alaska Board of Game
2011-188-BOG
Units 9B, 17, 18, and 19B (Mulchatna Caribou Herd)
Intensive Management Supplemental Findings
March 30, 2011**

The Board of Game finds as follows, based on information provided by Department staff; Alaska residents and users of caribou in Subunits 9B, 17B, and 17C. These findings are supplemental to the findings set forth in 5AAC 92.108.

1. The Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) in Units 9B, 17, 18, and 19B has been identified by the Board as a herd that is important for providing high levels of human consumptive use. The Board established an intensive management population objective of 30,000 - 80,000 caribou and an intensive management harvest objective of 2,400 – 8,000 caribou annually for the MCH.
2. The most recent minimum population size estimate for the MCH indicates that the herd contained between 30,000 and 40,000 caribou in 2008, which is at the lower limit of the intensive management population objective of 30,000 - 80,000 caribou.
3. The harvestable surplus of MCH caribou in Units 9B, 17, 18, and 19B, as described in 5 AAC 92.106(3)(A), is currently estimated to be 1,050 caribou annually, which is less than intensive management harvest objective established by the Board of 2,400 – 8,000 caribou annually.
4. The cause of the decline of the MCH caribou population in Units 9B, 17, 18, and 19B is not known with certainty but was likely due to weather-related and/or density-dependant factors that resulted in range limitations and disease that caused low pregnancy, low calf production and low calf survival. The poor recruitment also affected a shift in the population's age structure toward older-aged individuals that was not conducive for population growth. The density-dependant factors affecting population growth has become a less important in limiting population growth as the number of MCH caribou declined as evidenced by improved nutritional indices. Nutritional indices (pregnancy rates, calf weights, and the prevalence of disease) have improved as the number of caribou in the MCH declined, and the population's age structure has progressively improved.
5. The importance of predation in affecting population growth and recovery has increased as population size decreased. The poor survival of calves and calf recruitment currently observed can be reasonably attributed to the influence of predation on caribou calves. Fall calf:cow ratios in the MCH have averaged 22 calves:100 cows since 2005.
6. The low MCH caribou calf recruitment in Units 9B, 17, 18, and 19B has resulted in a low bull:cow ratio (17 bulls per hundred cows in 2010), a decrease in the number of harvestable caribou, a complete closure of the nonresident season in 2009, and season and bag-limit restrictions for resident hunters. The reduced bull recruitment and bull numbers have resulted in a failure to provide for human needs.

7. The intensive management harvest objectives for the MCH in Units 9B, 17, 18, and 19B will not be achieved in the near future unless action is taken to improve calf survival and recruitment.
8. Increases in caribou recruitment and abundance in the MCH are achievable utilizing the recognized and prudent active management technique of predator control.
9. The population and harvest objectives have not been achieved, at least in part, because wolf and brown bear predation have been important causes of mortality in the population. Objectives are unlikely to be achieved in the foreseeable future unless predator control is conducted.
10. Reducing predation can reasonably be expected to achieve a sex and age structure that will sustain the population, provide for harvest, and allow growth toward objectives.

Vote: 6-0-1
March 30, 2011
Anchorage, Alaska

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cliff Judkins", with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Cliff Judkins, Chairman
Alaska Board of Game