

## **Proposal 143**

### **5 AAC 92.1XX. New Regulation.**

Implement an intensive management predator control plan within the Tok Management Area to benefit Dall Sheep as follows:

**What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?**

Implement an intensive management predator control plan within the Tok Management Area to benefit Dall Sheep as follows:

Implement an intensive management predator control plan within the Tok Management Area (TMA) via aerial coyote and wolf control. Aerial coyote and wolf shooting would be allowed via private fixed wing aircraft and retrieval of coyotes and wolves would be allowed via private rotorcraft or fixed wing aircraft. In addition, the Department could remove coyotes and wolves using helicopters if necessary to supplement private efforts to meet removal objectives.

Our goal for predator control is to help the sheep population recover to historic averages more quickly than if intervention did not occur. We propose predator control be conducted until the sheep population recovers to the long-term (2006-2019) averages. Alternatively, we propose the predator control cease following five years if there are no signs that the control is positively impacting population growth.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?**

The Tok Management Area (TMA) Sheep population, like many sheep populations throughout Alaska, is currently at a historic low. The total number of sheep observed by the department during their 2025 survey with the TMA survey area was 261, which is 77% fewer than the 2006-2019 (pre-crash) average of 1145 sheep. Furthermore, the number of sheep observed in 2025 was 69% fewer than the previous low number of sheep observed in 2024 (n=835), which followed the very late spring in 2013. The current population decline has resulted in a historic low number of draw sheep permits awarded during fall 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. Prior to these years, the lowest number of permits awarded was 60, while only ten permits have been issued annually since 2022.

Although we recognize that weather is likely the primary contributing factor to the current decline, predation is likely an additional contributing factor. According to the department sheep research conducted in Unit 20A during the early 2000s, coyotes are one of the primary predators of lambs, while wolf predation also occurs at a lower level. We believe managing predation could help the TMA sheep population recover.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?**

Yes, this proposal was developed by the Upper Tanana Fortymile Fish & Game Advisory Committee

**PROPOSED BY:** Upper Tanana/Fortymile Fish & Game Advisory Committee (OI-F26-196)

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