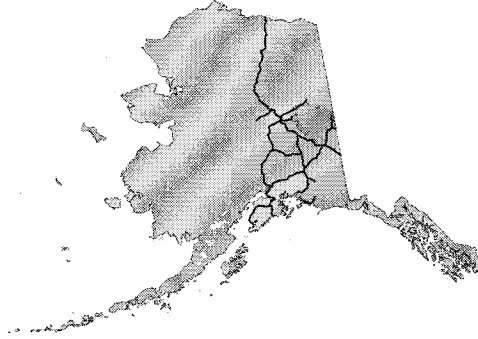


# Upper Yukon/Tanana Predation Control Program BOG Report 2004-2008



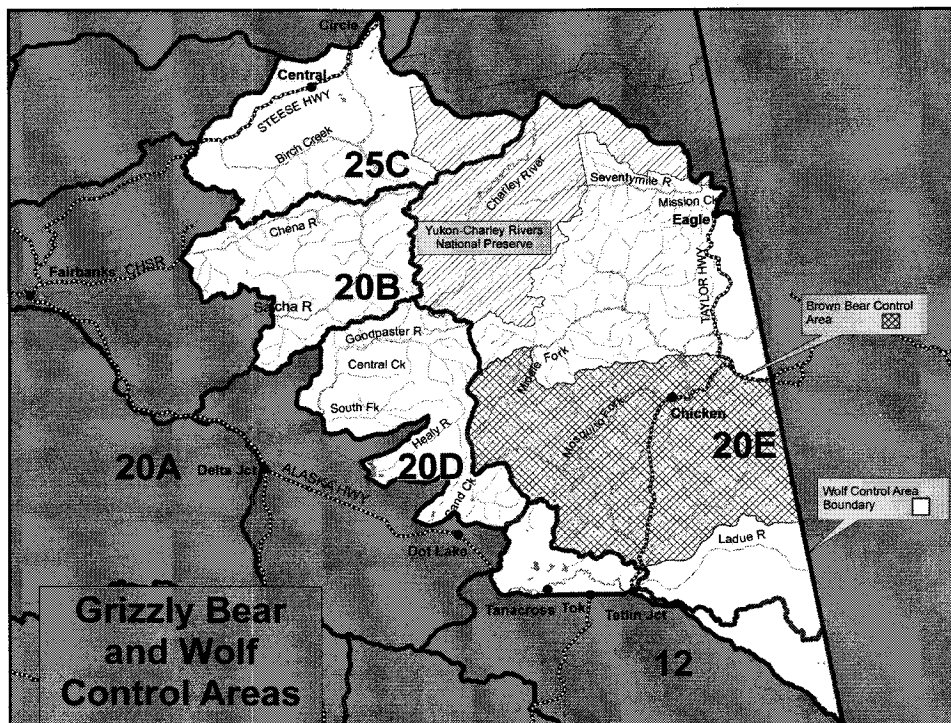
(Unit 20E and portions of 12, 20B, 20D & 25C)

## Background

- **Adopted November 2004**
  - Reduce Predation - wolves and brown bears
  - Increase moose –portions of Units 12 and 20E
  
- **Implemented January 2005**
  - Up to 5-Years
  
- **Expanded May 2006**
  - **Wolf Control Area**
    - Fortymile Caribou Range
    - Larger portion of Units 12 and 20E – Moose
  - **Bear Control Area**
    - Larger Portion of southern Unit 20E

## Program Objectives

- **Increase the Fortymile Caribou Herd** to aid in achieving the intensive management population objective of 50,000–100,000 and harvest objective of 1,000–15,000.
- **Increase the moose population in Unit 12 north of the Alaska Highway and in Unit 20E** to aid in achieving the geographically proportional intensive management moose population objective of 8,744–11,116 and harvest objective of 547–1,084.



## Wolf Control Objective

- 75% reduction in the pre-control population (350-410 wolves)
- Minimum population objective = 88 wolves

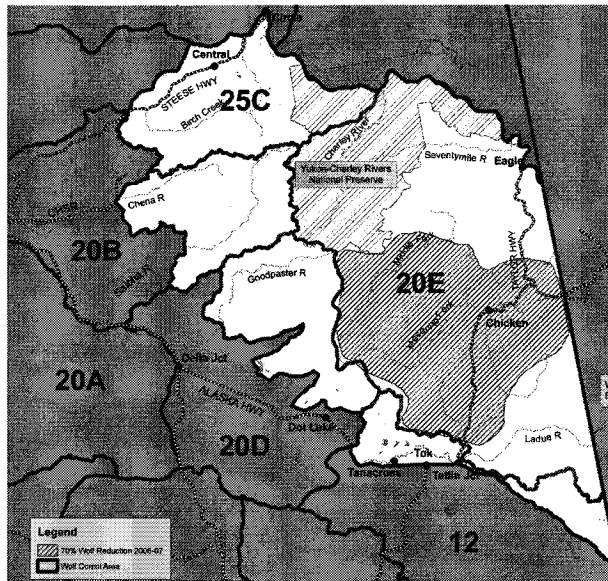
## Brown Bear Control Objective

- 60% reduction in the pre-control brown bear population
- Minimum population = 68 brown bears

## Wolf Control

### 2006-2007

- Oct. 2 - April 30
- 50 Permits Issued
  - 21 pilots
  - 30 gunners
- 103 wolves taken
  - 23 control
  - 80 hunters and trappers
- Control Objective not met



## **Wolf Control**

### **2007 - 2008**

- **Oct. 10, 2006 – April 30, 2007**
  
- **44 Permits Issued**
  - 24 pilots
  - 20 gunners
  
- **34 wolves taken (to date)**
  - 4 control
  - 30 hunters and trappers
  
- **Permits valid until April 30, to early to draw conclusions**

## **Wolf Population Estimates**

### **Fall 2006 Population Estimate (early fall)**

- 300–425 wolves or approximately 16–23 wolves/1000 mi<sup>2</sup>

### **Fall 2007 Population Estimate (early fall)**

- 366–398 wolves or approximately 20–22 wolves/1000 mi<sup>2</sup>

## **Brown Bear Control**

### **2006 - 2007**

- **September 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007**
  
- **40 Permits Issued**
  
- **22 Bait Sites Registered**
  
- **3 bears taken in Brown Bear Control Area**
  - **1 by control**
  - **2 by hunters (under general hunting regulations)**
  
- **Control Objective not met**

## **Brown Bear Control**

### **2007 - 2008**

- **August 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008**
  
- **18 Permits Issued (to date)**
  
- **No Bait Sites Registered (to date)**
  
- **4 bears taken in Brown Bear Control Area (to date)**
  - **1 by control**
  - **3 by hunters (under general hunting regulations)**
  
- **Permits valid until June 30, too early to draw conclusions**

## **Brown Bear Population Estimates**

### **Summer 2006 Population Estimate**

- 150 bears (range 111–189) or approximately 27 brown bears/1000 mi<sup>2</sup>

### **Summer 2007 Population Estimate**

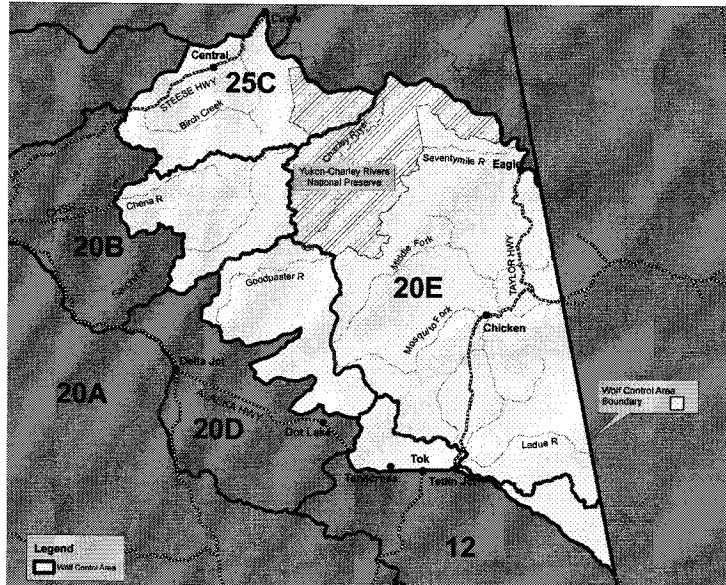
- 150 bears (range 111–189) or approximately 27 brown bears/1000 mi<sup>2</sup>

## **Effects of 2004 Fires**

- 31% of Brown Bear Control Area burned
- Redistribution of bears following burn
- Likely effected success of bear control program
- Likely resulted in a decline in moose calf predation within the burned area.



## Caribou Benefit Area



## Fortymile Caribou Population Status

**Population Estimate = 38,364 (June 2007)**

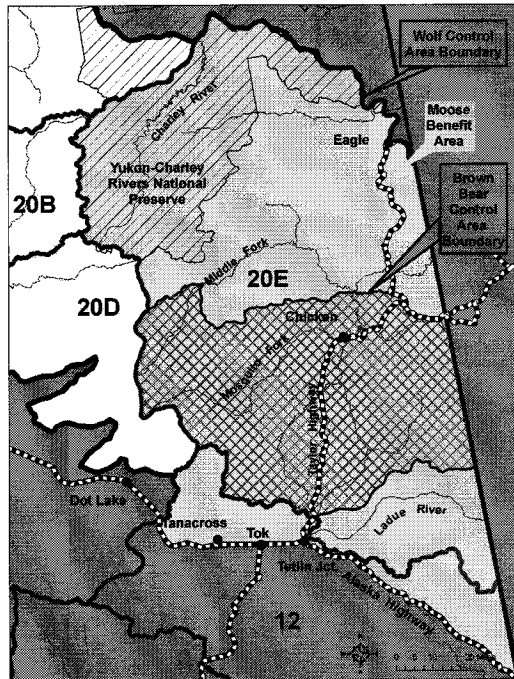
**Population Composition (Oct. 2007)**

**> 37 calves:100 cows**

**Population Trend increase expected in 2008.**

**After first year of Wolf Control – to early to draw conclusions**

## Moose Benefit Area



## Moose Population Status

**2006 Fall Population Estimate (Moose Benefit Area)**

➤ 4,000 – 5,900

**2007 (Fall) Population Estimate (Moose Benefit Area)**

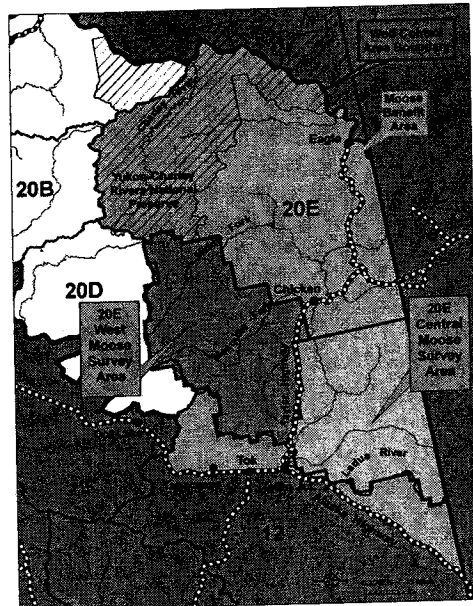
➤ 4,000 – 6,100



# Unit 20E Moose Survey Areas (4,630 mi<sup>2</sup>)

## Fall Moose Surveys

> 2004-2007



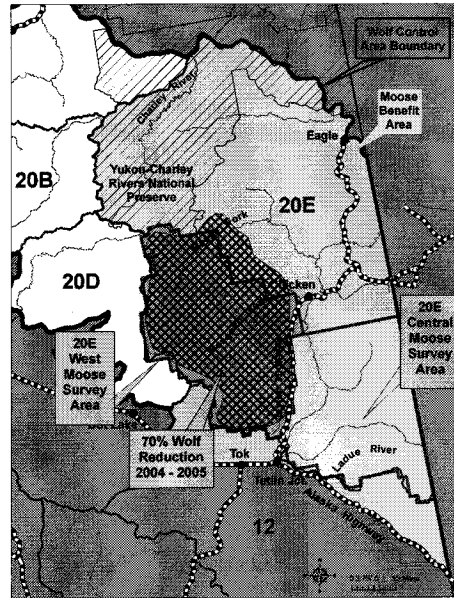
## Unit 20E Moose Survey Areas (4,630 mi<sup>2</sup>)

### Fall Moose Surveys

➤ 2004-2007

### 70% Wolf Reduction

➤ RY 2004



## Unit 20E Moose Survey Areas (4,630 mi<sup>2</sup>)

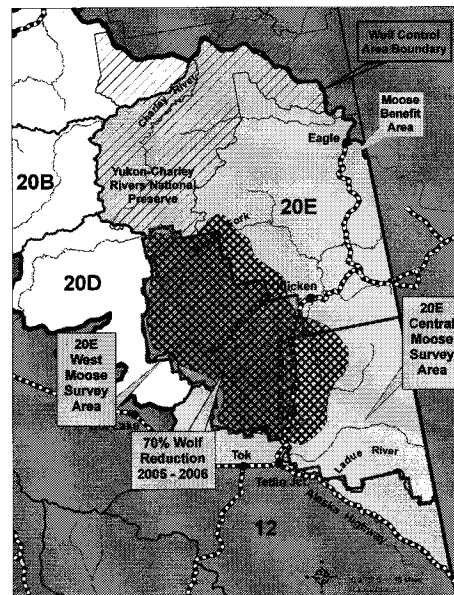
### Fall Moose Surveys

➤ 2004-2007

### 70% Wolf Reduction

➤ RY 2004

➤ RY 2005



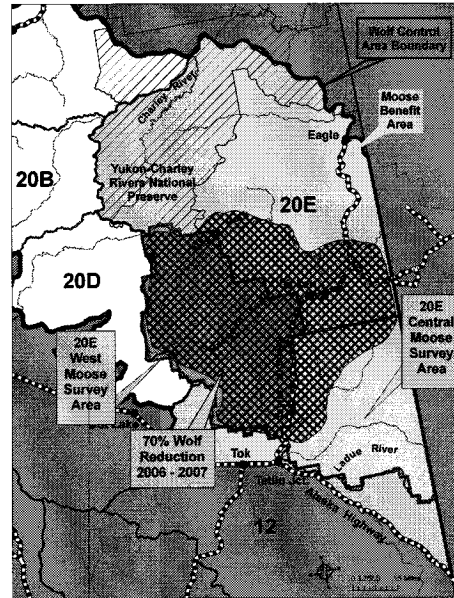
## Unit 20E Moose Survey Areas (4,630 mi<sup>2</sup>)

### Fall Moose Surveys

➤ 2004-2007

### 70% Wolf Reduction

- RY 2004
- RY 2005
- RY 2006



## Moose Population Status

### Calf: Cow Ratio (2005-2007)

21 calves:100 cows (<30% wolf removal)

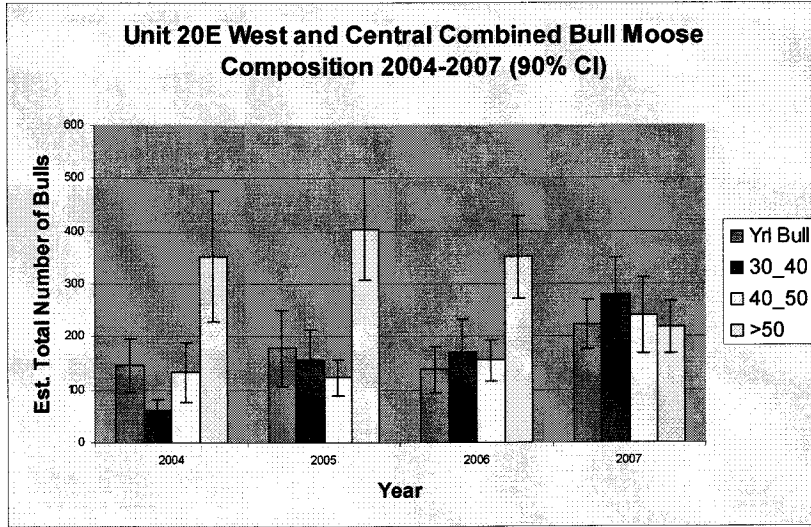
32 calves:100 cows (>70% wolf removal)

### Yearling Bull: Cow Ratio (2005-2007)

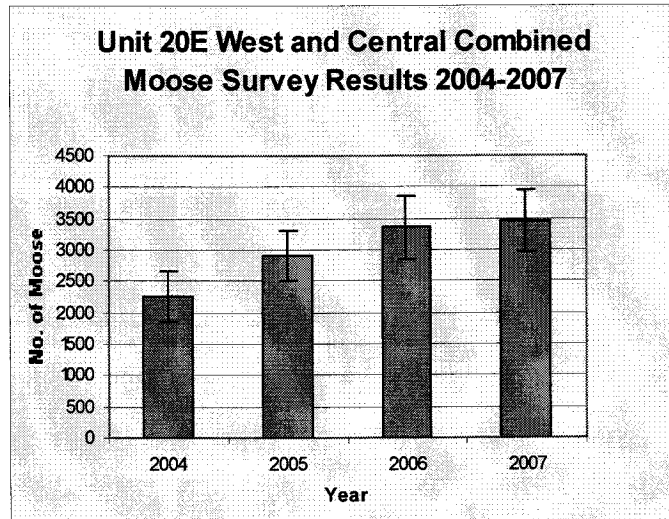
8 Yrl Bulls:100 Cows (<30% wolf removal)

11 Yrl Bulls:100 Cows (>70% wolf removal)

# Moose Population Status



# Moose Population Status



## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

- **Continue wolf and brown bear control activities as approved by the Board**
- **Wolf Control - progress being made**
- **Bear Control - bear population likely lower in calving areas than initially thought**

## **Final Thoughts**

**Bear Control methods not adequately tested**

**Methods should be applied case-by-case**

**Continued evaluation needed**

72C 150

**Wolf Predation Control Plan Implementation Summary  
Winter 2006-2007**

**Unit 16 Same Day Airborne (SDA Summary) 2006-07**

**25 February 2008**

<u>Unit 16B:</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Unk</u>	<u>Total</u>
Wolves taken by SDA permittees (within PCA):	14	8	0	22
Wolves taken by trapping/hunting:	1	8	0	9
<i>Total take (trapping, hunting, and SDA):</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>31</i>
<u>Unit 16A :</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Unk</u>	<u>Total</u>
Wolves taken by SDA permittees (within PCA):	4	6	0	10
Wolves taken by trapping/hunting (unit wide):	3	3	0	6
<i>Total take (trapping, hunting, and SDA):</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>16</i>
<u>Unit 16B (unit-wide; incl. Fed. land):</u>	<u>2006 Fall Estimate</u>	<u>2007 Spring Estimate</u>		
	59 – 92	31 – 62 minimum		

Initial potential take objective: The preliminary take objective for 16B was a minimum of 42 wolves, based on a preliminary estimate of the 2006 fall population. As wolf observations and reports came in over the winter, the population estimate was refined.

Estimated effect of trapping and hunting: The final reported take from trapping and hunting unit-wide was 9 wolves in 16B and 6 in all of Unit 16A. None of the wolves taken by hunting or trapping in 16A were taken inside the predator control area (PCA). The 2006-07 total take of wolves for Unit 16 (hunt, trap, SDA) was 47, with 41 of those occurring within the PCA.

Effectiveness of combined take: The spring population objective of 22 - 45 wolves in Unit 16B may have been achieved as we estimated between 31 and 62 wolves for the unit.

Summary of permittee interest & participation: Similar to the first two years of the program, there was more interest in the control program in Unit 16 than the number of pilots needed. For 2006-07, 31 pilots participated in the program. Of the 35 pilots permitted for the Unit 16 SDA program, 28 flew 255 days (unconfirmed). Four pilots flew over 20 days, and 2 additional pilots flew over 12 days.

Program challenges: Weather and poor snow conditions on the ground were challenges for the SDA program in Unit 16 this year. The area was easily accessible from Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula, and the Mat-Su Valley, although changing weather patterns and the resulting tracking conditions often had an impact on effort and the effectiveness of even the most experienced pilots. Parts of the unit have thick spruce forests making tracking and taking wolves difficult. Two years of aerial control has resulted in more “educated” wolves and this has presented a challenge to pilots when they are often flying over forested areas while attempting to locate and take wolves.

**Wolf Predation Control Plan Implementation Summary**  
**Winter 2006-2007**

Remarks: The SDA program in Unit 16 has continued to be successful in reducing the wolf population. In order to maintain the effectiveness, aerial control should continue as the preferred option. Given a reasonable estimate of the number of wolf pups born each spring, SDA control in combination with hunting and trapping is needed to maintain a low population of wolves until prey populations have shown significant increases.

Given a reasonable estimate of the number of wolf pups born and observed numbers of animals in packs reported by pilots and others during and prior to the season this year, the preliminary estimate for the fall 2007 Unit 16B population is 92 - 106 wolves. This estimate has been updated using current winter observations and track reports. It has been refined over the course of the winter and the fall 2007 estimate will not be finalized until all sealing certificates from the 2007-08 winter are received. The preliminary take objective is 30 to 60 wolves minimum (total trapping, hunting and SDA take).

As of this writing, 37 pilots have been permitted to participate in the Unit 16 SDA wolf predation control program for 2007-08. Of these, 26 pilots have flown 123 days and taken 14 wolves. An additional 4 have been reported taken by hunting and trapping for a total of 18.

~~Wolf~~ <sup>Bear</sup> Predation Control Plan Implementation Summary  
Winter 2006-2007

RC151

Unit 16 Bear Control Program (ML202) Fall 2007

25 February 2008

ML202

Number of permits issued	275
Number of reports received	198
Reports outstanding	77
Number of reporting permittees that participated	124
Number of reporting permittees that killed a bear	22
Number of permittees that took more than 1 bear	4
Number of permittees that took 3 or more bears	2
Number of permits to sell hides and/or skulls	18
Number of permittees with a registered bait site	34

<u>Unit 16B:</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Unk</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Total take ( hunting, and control):</i>	44	17	0	61

<u>Unit 16A:</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Unk</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Total take ( hunting, and control):</i>	9	7	0	16

<u>Unit 16B (unit-wide):</u>	<u>2007 Estimate</u>
	1900

Initial potential take objective: The preliminary take objective for 16B was for a 60% reduction in the number of black bears in the unit. Based upon a minimum population estimate of 1500 bears, 900 bears would need to be taken from the unit. Surveys completed in the spring of 2007 have revised the estimate upward to 1900 black bears in 16B. A 60% reduction in this estimate would require that 1140 bears be taken. This is in addition to the amount replaced through annual production.

Estimated effect of control activities and hunting: The final reported take from control and hunting unit-wide was 61 black bears in 16B and 16 in all of Unit 16A including areas outside of the predator control area (PCA). This includes 53 males, and 24 females between the 2 units. These numbers will most likely increase once all sealing reports are entered into the data base. We expect this number is low because in fall of 2006, 96 black bears were taken in Unit 16 and we believe that the control program has resulted in an increase in black bear harvest.

Summary of permittee interest & participation: There seemed to be a high amount of initial interest in this first season of bear control as we issued 275 permits for ML 202, however this did not result in a large number of bears being taken. **Preliminary** results show that 63% of those that got a permit participated in control activities and about 18% were successful in taking a black bear. Thirty four permittees registered a bait station and 8 of those killed a bear.

Program challenges: Many of those receiving permits may not have realized the remoteness of the control area. The area can only be accessed by boat or airplane.



*Bear*

**~~Wolf~~ Predation Control Plan Implementation Summary  
Winter 2006-2007**

Remarks: It is expected that the accuracy of the data gathered will increase once the system becomes standardized and reports are finalized. Questions remain about who is eligible to participate in the control program and who may hunt in the area using standard sport hunting methods.