



THE ALASKA WILDLIFE ALLIANCE

"LETTING NATURE RUN WILD"

AC125

March 11, 2011

ATTN: Board of Game Comments
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board Support Section
P. O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
FAX 907-465-6094

Re: Spring Meeting, Southcentral Region: 2011.

Dear Board Members:

The Alaska Wildlife Alliance is an Alaska based membership organization interested in Alaska's wildlife. All members of our Board of Directors are residents of Alaska. We were first organized approximately thirty years ago. We are focused on the intrinsic values of Alaska's wildlife, and routinely submit comments to the Board of Game. Please consider the following at your Spring, 2011 Southcentral Region meeting.

First, we want to say that we support and agree with the comments submitted by Defenders for Wildlife. Having said that, we want to provide comments of our own.

Proposal 128. Support. Close Wolverine Trapping in Units 6 & 14C.
The wolverine survey conducted in 2008-09, and testimony provided by area biologists at the 2009 Spring Meeting, made clear that continued wolverine



Board of Game

March 26-30-2011 Meeting

Page 2 of 8

trapping in the Twenty-mile drainage, and in that portion of Unit 6 lying west of College Fiords posed a threat to viability of the wolverine populations in this part of the State. Notwithstanding the undisputed evidence, the Board of Game allowed wolverine trapping to continue in the Twenty-mile drainage as part of politically motivated, face-saving, compromise. It is time to put the wildlife first. Face-saving and politics should not be paramount.

Proposal 130-132. Oppose. Increased Bag Limits for Black and Brown Bear hunting. These proposals would increase the bag limits for black and brown bear in Unit 14C. Anchorage is a large city with most of its citizens in favor of "watchable wildlife". Of course, problem bears should be removed, but these proposals are aimed only at the interests of a handful of hunters, and ignore the wishes of the vast majority of Anchorage residents.

Proposal 133. Oppose Partially. Dall Sheep in 14C. We do not support full curl only restrictions because they undoubtedly have a negative impact on the gene pool of populations, and because the taking of only the largest animals has negative impacts on population dynamics. Dall sheep should be managed for the health of the population. It seems obvious that if only full curl sheep are taken by hunters, that Darwinian natural selection will favor small animals. Furthermore, dynamics within sheep populations will be disrupted. The first priority of management should not be income for the department, favors to residents, or favors to guides by crafting regulations that allow lots of people to go hunting but minimize the chances of success by allowing hunters to take only a few full curl animals.

Proposal 135. Oppose. Registration Hunt for Goat in 14C. This proposal would open the door to a free-for-all hunt for goat in Chugach State Park, and nearby areas, that might have drastic results. Hunting in Chugach State Park for goat is reputedly very favored because it is carefully managed. The floodgates should not be opened.

Proposal 136. Oppose. More goat hunting in Unit 14C. This proposal is unclear, but we support careful, micro-management of hunting in Chugach State Park and throughout Unit 14C, and this proposal seems aimed at loosening



Board of Game
March 26-30-2011 Meeting
Page 3 of 8

controls.

Proposal 137. Oppose. Increase Moose Hunting Harvest Objectives.

This proposal would increase the harvest objective for moose for the Anchorage Bowl from 110 to more than 210 annually. Our members and the majority of Anchorage residents like our moose, and oppose increased moose hunting in Anchorage and surrounding areas.

Proposal 140. Oppose. Wolf hunting throughout Unit 14C. This proposal would authorize wolf hunting and trapping throughout Unit 14C, including in Chugach State Park where wolf trapping has been banned since the early 1970's. The justification is one or two incidents with wolves acting too friendly toward people at Fort Richardson. We support reasonable measures aimed at public safety, but opening up all of Unit 14C to wolf hunting and trapping is unreasonable, and will effectively eliminate wolves in this part of the state. We find it hypocritical that wolves are eliminated in some parts of Alaska because there are allegedly too few moose, while here in Anchorage where there allegedly too many moose, the same people advocate killing all the wolves.

Proposal 150. Oppose. Increased seasons and bag limits for black and brown bear. This proposal, if adopted, would allow a hunter to take five black bears every year in Units 7 and 15. The listed justification for this proposal is that black bears are preying excessively on moose on the Kenai Peninsula.

There is no evidence justifying adoption of this proposal.

Proposal 151. Oppose. Increased seasons and bag limits for black bear. This proposal if adopted would allow a hunter to take three black bears every year in Units 7 and 15.

The listed justification for this proposal is that there is an increasing number of bears in Units 7 and 15 and bears are preying excessively on moose. Increasing the bag limit is projected to increase the bear harvest, decrease predation on moose and increase the harvest of moose by hunters. There is no evidence or data presented to substantiate these claims.



Board of Game
March 26-30-2011 Meeting
Page 4 of 8

Until field studies confirm that predation is limiting moose on the Kenai Peninsula, the BOG should not attempt to further reduce predator numbers.

We join with Defenders of Wildlife in asking that before adopting proposals such as this, the Department determine if there is a basis, and that the Department pay attention to things such as poaching, weather, and road kill.

Proposal 152. Oppose. This proposal, if adopted, would increase the number of hunting tags for brown bears in Unit 15.

The justification for this proposal is that there are too many brown bears in Unit 15C and that increasing the number of tags issued would result in more bears being taken and a reduced risk of human injuries due to bears.

We support the continued application of bear harvest quotas as provided by the cooperative joint state-federal Kenai Peninsula Brown Bear Management Plan, and oppose measures to change the plan's harvest guidelines which have been applied successfully in recent years.

Proposal 153. Oppose. This proposal, if adopted, would provide for an annual harvest objective of 100 brown bears in Unit 15C.

The listed justification for this proposal is that there is a high number of brown bears in Unit 15C and bears are preying excessively on moose. There is no evidence or data presented to substantiate any of these claims.

Proposal 154. Oppose. This proposal, if adopted, would increase the brown bear harvest quota in Unit 15.

Proposal 155. Oppose. Unlimited coyote hunting and trapping. See our comments regarding Proposals 188, 189, and 198.

Proposal 163. Support. Lower moose harvest objectives Unit 15A. We are pleased to see the Department supporting more realistic harvest goals, and



Board of Game
March 26-30-2011 Meeting
Page 5 of 8

hope the Department will review these statewide on a repeated basis.

Proposal 169. Oppose. More pressure on largest bull moose. Among other problems, this proposal would put more pressure on the largest and oldest bull moose. That pressure undoubtedly has a negative impact on the gene pool and population dynamics. Conservation of our wildlife should come first, and not hunter opportunity, which is increased by allowing more people to hunt for fewer "rare" animals.

Proposal 172. Oppose. Aerial wolf hunting. This proposal if adopted would authorize aerial hunting by anyone with the resources to own or hire a small plane to fly around shooting at wolves. That practice is already prohibited by Federal law.

We note that we at the AWA think that aerial hunting is beneath the dignity of Alaska and its hunters.

Proposal 173. Oppose. Predation control implementation. We join with Defenders of Wildlife in noting that much of the land covered by the proposal is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and that Alaska's predator control programs are in conflict with the Federal management objectives. We support the Federal management goals, and hope that the State will cease its attempts to expand its ill-conceived predator control programs into federally managed lands.

Proposal 174. Oppose. Habitat based intensive management. We support natural wildlife populations and think that radical modification of habitat with large scale burning of forests is environmentally damaging, as well as wasteful. We wonder if there is any responsible information regarding the impact of such programs on song birds, etc.

Proposal 175 and 176. Oppose. Hunting with night lights. The AWA opposes radical, unethical, proposals such as these which would allow the use of artificial light in hunting black bears, wolves and coyotes. We like wildlife.

Proposal 177. Support. Close Portage Creek Valley to Trapping. This



Board of Game

March 26-30-2011 Meeting

Page 6 of 8

proposal would close the Portage Creek Valley to trapping. This area is visited throughout the year by people who hike, ice skate, skijor and enjoy themselves outdoors. Many take their dogs. By allowing trapping, the area is effectively closed to those who hike, ski, and skate with their dogs; resulting in a gross misallocation of publicly owned resources. The Board of Game should show respect for those of us who do not trap, and recognize that it is unreasonable to have trapping on the outskirts of a large city, especially in areas heavily used by walkers, hikers, skiers, etc.

Proposal 186 and 197. Oppose. Same day airborne hunting at bear baiting stations. We have supported three initiatives opposed to same day airborne hunting. As a practical matter hunters hunt from their airplanes.

Proposal 187. Oppose. Trapping Black Bear in Region II. This proposal would allow black bear trapping throughout Southcentral Alaska. We oppose it and so do most Alaskans because trapping bears is cruel, unethical and beneath the standards of most Alaskans.

Proposals 188-189. Oppose. Coyote Hunting and Trapping. These proposals would apparently authorize unlimited coyote hunting and trapping throughout Southcentral Alaska with no restrictions. We strongly oppose this.

The existing bag limit of 10 coyotes per day is already too high. Coyotes are not vermin. They are a naturally occurring species and we like Alaska's wildlife.

Proposal 191. Oppose. Discretionary Conditions for Permit Hunts. This proposal by the Board of Game would remove the Department's discretion to attach conditions to permits. We support the Department's discretion to attach conditions, and encourage hands-on management of hunting and trapping, especially in areas near large population centers, areas heavily used by non-consumptive users, and conservation areas.

Proposal 192. Support. No Traps on Roads and Trails. This proposal would prohibit traps within 50 feet of trails and roads. The trapping of pet dogs on trails, or within one or two yards of trails, should be banned. It is appalling,



Board of Game
March 26-30-2011 Meeting
Page 7 of 8

and a sign of a broken system, that the Board of Game has rejected almost all efforts to responsibly manage trapping on trails for more than a decade.

Proposal 193. No Position, but want proper attention focused.

Proposal 193 by Sea Ducks Unlimited is lengthy and covers several species. We at the Alaska Wildlife Alliance profess no expertise. But we have heard horror stories of halibut charter boats wiping out large numbers of sea ducks for no good reason in areas near Homer, where these waterfowl are treasured by local residents. We support greater focus on these issues, with less attention to the desires of a few trophy-seekers and commercial operators, and more attention to those of us who appreciate wildlife for reasons other than meat and trophies.

Proposal 194. Support. Sea Ducks and Waterfowl. See above.

Proposal 198. Oppose. See Proposals 188-189 above.

Proposals 216-220. Support. Increased power to wildlife troopers.

These proposals by the Alaska Wildlife Troopers would give them tools to enforce our laws, and we support their efforts to enforce the laws and regulations that give some protection to our wildlife from the misconduct of people who think that conservation is for the other guy.

Proposal 224. Oppose. Increased bag limit for black bears in Units 7 & 15. See our comments above.

Proposal 226. Oppose. Hunting wolves with snow machines. The AWA opposes slob hunting practices such as chasing animals with snow machines.

The wolf and bear management policy statements. The AWA has previously submitted comments. We repeat our objections to policy statements that appear to circumvent the regulatory process, and applicable law. We also repeat our view that Alaskans value wildlife for many reasons in addition to hunting and trapping opportunity. The policies of the ADF&G, including those contained in the proposal book, are aimed at satisfying only one segment of Alaska's population, and lead to management that many Alaskans find



Board of Game
March 26-30-2011 Meeting
Page 8 of 8

objectionable. We also note that the environmental impact of radical manipulation of wildlife populations is poorly understood, and has been given insufficient attention by the Department for a long time.

Very truly yours,



The Alaska Wildlife Alliance
By Kneeland Taylor, Board Member



RC 126

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February 18, 2011

ATTN: Board of Game Comments
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Dear Members of the Board of Game,

Thank you for your time in reviewing my comments. After reviewing several proposals and the statewide policies at the end of the proposal book I have two suggestions, not on specific proposals, but on the regulatory process used. I respectfully request you consider these recommendations.

1. I respectfully suggest that the Board of Game carefully consider revising the format used for submitting proposals. It is designed to be inviting, but fails to request any evidence for assertions. It also fails to consider benefits and suffering for any but the hunter. I hunted as a young woman and suffer now from reading some of these proposals. I do not object to hunting for food. But no consideration is given to concerns about sustainability for all wildlife, including predators, for watching, for tourism, and for future generations to enjoy. The questions also fail to consider the broader environmental impact of a proposal. Please consider updating the format.
2. The Management Policies at the end of the proposal book were included in the public notice for the first of two hearings to be held on this proposal book, but not in the public notice for the second hearing. I found it confusing as I am sure others did as well, especially when only the first of the findings is noted in the Table of Contents. Further the policies meet the definition of a regulation and should be reviewed by the Department of Law to avoid due process issues.

Sincerely,



Patricia O'Brien



MAR 16 2011

March 14th, 2011

Wayne Kubat's additional written comments on tabled proposal 94 from region 4 BOG meeting.

Proposal 94 asks for an August 20th – Sept. 20th non resident open season for moose in GMU 16B mainland. At the region 4 meetings, the Board aligned all moose season's in 14A & B and 16 A & B from August 20th to Sept. 25th. I would ask that the non resident season be the same or at the very least, it should run at least until Sept. 20th. Starting dates for the NR season of Sept. 1st were considered, but I don't think the non resident harvest in August would amount to much. I am not in favor of drawing permits. With the large surplus there now, I just don't think allowing a non resident general season that aligns with the resident season, would be a biological concern at all. A non resident season could provide additional bear harvest by guided hunters and probably wouldn't amount to more than 30 – 40 bulls.

Regulation 5 AAC 85.045 provides for a non resident moose harvest when the harvestable surplus is over 240. We are currently way over that! As of November 2010, there were 800+ surplus bulls in mainland 16B, and in addition to that, 250 to 300 new bulls get added into the population each year. A reasonable total harvest for the next year or two, would be between 250 and 300.

In their presentation to the board, the department said there were only 250 surplus bulls, but in talking with various staff later, that is the sustainable number. In other words, that is the anticipated recruitment each year and the number of bulls that can be taken each year with out effecting the population at all. However, mention was not made of the roughly 800 surplus bulls (those over and above 25 bulls per 100 cow ratio) as of November 2010. Yes there will be some winter mortality on those bulls, but hunting season is already over. If you add the 250 recruitment, you'll have close to 1000 surplus bulls prior to hunting season 2011 – way above the 240 number mentioned in 5 AAC 85.045.

November 2010 16B Mainland population estimate = 5860 moose
from department's presentation on proposal 93. Also the second page of proposal 103A (RC35) shows a range of 4788 – 6932

Current estimated number of cows in the population = 3611 (includes 10 % yearlings.

Current estimated number of bulls = 1750

Current bull/cow ratio = 48 bulls/100 cows. (range of 39 – 60 from RC 35)

November 2010 estimated number of stock piled bulls in 16B population = 850

[36 (# of units of 100 cows) X 25 (# of bulls required per 100 cows) = 900, Subtract 900 from 1750 = **850**]

Current recruitment (*sustainable surplus*) estimates = 250 to 300 per year.

Peak total harvest during the 90's of "314" occurred in 1997/1998 when we had a 42 day season from August 20th to Sept. 30th. See yellow highlight below.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total Harvest</u> | <u>General Season</u> | <u>Subsistence</u> | <u>Last 5 days</u> (9/26 – 9/30) | <u>Non Residents</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 93/94 | 155 | 132 | 23 | -- | -- |
| 94/95 | 230 | 126 | 104 | -- | -- |
| 95/96 | 187 | 161 | 26 | 40 | 38 |
| 96/97 | 293 | 196 | 97 | 51 | 39 |
| 97/98 | 314 | 229 | 85 | 56 | 48 |
| 98/99 | 288 | 196 | 92 | 59 | 37 |
| 99/00 | 266 | 164 | 102 | 51 | 40 |
| 00/01 | 264 | 174 | 90 | 40 | 32 |

Section(B) (iii) on page 3 of proposal 103A (RC35) shows:

- 388 average general season harvest from 1983 – 1989
- 168 average general season harvest from 1990 – 1999

I obtained the above information from various Department documents and talking to department staff.

Sincerely,
Wayne Kubat
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RC 128

Alaska Department of Fish & Game
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RECEIVED
MAR 11 2018
BOARDS

Re: Comments on Proposed Changes to State Bear and Wolf Conservation,
Harvest and Management Policies

Although I was unable to attend the March 4 Board of Game meeting at the Lake Lucille Inn in Wasilla, I would like to make some comments. Aerial gunning to kill ("manage") wolves and bears is illegal in all states except Alaska, where a loophole was found to allow it. It is a practice that is cruel, brutal, unethical, and immoral and it is not based on sound science. Instead, it is based on people's (sport hunters and their supporters) perception of wolves and bears as competitors for the same animals that they want to kill. This despicable practice needs to be stopped now. More species do not need to be added to the hit list.

The proposed changes in state policy that would allow other means of wildlife slaughter, such as bear baiting, trapping with foot snares, incidental take of brown bears, sales of hides and skulls to provide an incentive to kill bears, the taking of sows with cubs, the taking of cubs, the use of bear parts for handicrafts for sale, and same-day airborne taking, etc., are equally reprehensible. Furthermore, this kind of "management" of Alaska's wildlife is not what most Alaskans (including hunters) and visitors to our state want.

There is no scientific justification for these changes to the state Bear and Wolf Conservation, Harvest and Management Policies, just the agenda of a few local and Outside sport/trophy hunters. Most Alaskans simply want the privilege of viewing these magnificent animals, which are such a large part of what makes Alaska unique.

Sincerely,

Sherry Kimmons

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ALASKA CENTER *for the* ENVIRONMENT

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AC129
1 of 2

Dear Chairman Judkins,

March 20, 2011

I testified at the Wasilla Board of Game meeting on March 4th. I was there on behalf of Alaska Center for the Environment and our 6,000 Alaskan members. My testimony focused on the new Wolf and Bear Conservation, Harvest and Management Policies. Our objections to these new policies included a plea to postpone this decision to the 2012 statewide meeting as these policies would have significant statewide implications. We also believe that given the magnitude and controversial nature of the new policies that we, the people should have some say over whether or not new policies are in order at this point in time, and if so, what should be contained in the new policies. In short, we believe changes of this proportion deserve a public notice and comment period.

When my allotted five minutes was up, Mr. Spraker addressed me and told me that I was confusing policies and regulations and proceeded to invoke the opinion of Mr. Saxby, the attorney representing board actions and matters. Mr. Saxby went into great detail about how the board was not required to follow the Administrative Procedures Act for policies, and how policies differed from regulations which do require public notice and comment. He told us that he had been doing this work for years and that we were lucky that the board was willing to allow public input as they had never before allowed the public to have input into developing "policies."

It is not appropriate to have an Assistant Attorney General "correct" the testimony of a member of the public. The public has little opportunity to address the Board, and I did not feel that my testimony, the comments we sent in, or the proposal we submitted were respectfully received and considered. Furthermore, this kind of treatment from the Board is not conducive to an open dialog with the public and the hostile environment deters people from participating in the public process.

I continue to disagree with the substance of Mr. Saxby's legal theory, that the wolf and bear policies are not regulations. See Alaska Statute 44.62.640(a)(3).¹ He also was factually

¹ Under Alaska law, a "regulation" is every rule, regulation, order, or standard of general application. The legislature specifically provided that "regulation" includes "manuals," "policies," "instructions," "guides to enforcement," "interpretative bulletins," "interpretations," and the like, that have the effect of rules, orders, regulations, or standards of general application, and this and similar phraseology may not be used to avoid or circumvent this chapter; whether a regulation, regardless of name, is covered by this chapter depends in part on whether it affects the public or is used by the agency in dealing with the public.



incorrect about past public participation in the development of predator policies. There has been widespread public participation by the public in the past, including the Wolf Planning Team appointed by Governor Hickel in 1990, which advised ADF&G and the Board of Game on the adoption of a wolf management policy.² And despite the errors in Mr. Saxby's statements to me, or the past practices used in the formulation of wildlife policies, I certainly hope that the Board doesn't share Mr. Saxby's sentiment that the public which the board serves is "lucky" the Board is providing opportunities for public comment on an important topic like predator control policies.

Regardless of my disagreement with what Mr. Saxby said, the public comment period is intended to provide you, the Board of Game, with input about the public's opinions and interests. Mr. Saxby has more than ample opportunity to present his views to you throughout the course of the meeting. The only possible reason for the Board Chairman to allow Mr. Saxby to address the public is to try and negate contrary views, or to intimidate those who seek to provide comment counter the Board's current course of action.

Though the Board continually touts the importance of the public process, your actions speak louder than words. As the Chairman of the Board, you have a responsibility to see to it that all procedures are adhered to. Members of the board should not have to shout out that the rules are being breached. Members of the public should not be made to feel intimidated. The chair should set the tone and encourage people to speak their mind without getting grilled, mocked or dismissed.

I have tried, time and again, to get conservation-minded people to come and testify at the Board of Game meetings and the answer is always the same: Why bother putting myself through the agony? No one listens anyway. Why waste my time? If that is the sentiment of the public, then I would venture to say that the Board of Game is failing on that count.

Sincerely,
Valerie Connor
Conservation Director
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² See Generally Buist, Pete, History of the Alaska Trappers Association, Part V.