

SB

155

Wolf Trend Information
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Association
January 2003

Sources: ADF&G Harvest Surveys, ADF&G Annual Performance Reports, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Reports, BOG minutes, BOG Proposal Booklet(s).

Trends Graph: Over 10 years of information on wolf population and human harvest with the population objective used by the BOG. Since the BOG has set a fall and a spring population objective, both are shown.

Analysis: Recent population estimates are from wolf survey flights during November 1999 and March 2000. Reports from hunters, trappers, guides, incidental sightings by ADF&G personnel and track survey data were also used. The fall 1999 population estimate was 500 – 550 wolves in 55 – 60 packs. The "preliminary spring 2000 estimate was 300 – 350 wolves. The harvest was 269 wolves. Noted by ADF&G was, "The spring 2000 estimate of 300 – 350 wolves in Unit 13 exceeds the spring population objective for Unit 13 set by the BOG by 135 wolves. We expect over 600 wolves for the fall 2003 population."

The sustained harvest level indicates a higher than "estimated" wolf population.

Although the BOG approved a wolf control implementation plan that was to begin in 2000 – 2001, no action has been taken to date. The number of prey animals taken by the wolves in excess of the population objective is critical in the decline of moose and caribou populations. For example, if the 2000 human moose harvest of 721 moose were "re-assigned" to support this population of wolves, it would only result in 5 moose per wolf. Normally wolves eat an average of 12 moose per wolf each year. Since we anticipate that the moose population will decline by another 1000 or more moose each year, the number killed by the number of wolves above the population objective is very significant. The ADF&G notes that the BOG wolf control implementation plan for Unit 13A, B, and E allows snowmachine hunting of wolves in the control area beginning in 2000 – 2001. There is no estimate of additional harvest from snowmachiners.

There is no action or recommendation by the ADF&G to reduce wolves in Unit 13. Without their help, any reduction is going to have to come from additional harvest by hunters and trappers.

Questions:

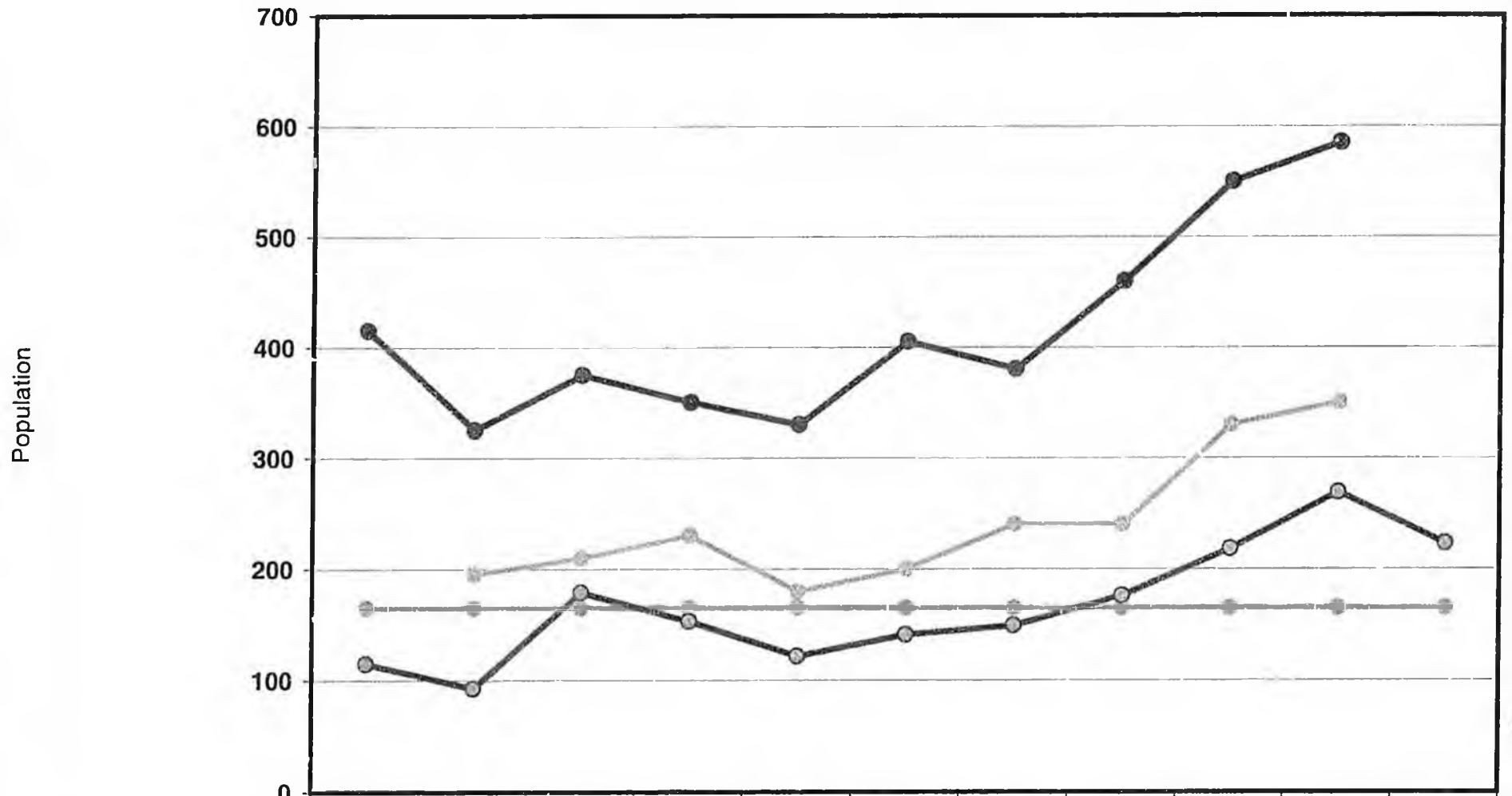
Why doesn't the ADF&G explain to the Alaskan public what the effects of their wildlife and predator management in Unit 13 will be?

How "out of balance" do these populations have to get before action is recommended by the wildlife managers?

How do we get to the wolf population objective?

There has been no special "planning" effort in Unit 13. No options for balancing the predator and prey populations have been identified or presented to the Board or the public. There always seems to be funding for special "planning teams" in rural units with declining moose populations, McGrath, Koyukuk, Kuskokwim, but not for units used primarily by urban Alaskans. Why? The Department has not explained the impact predators are having on moose in GMU 13. It would seem GMU 13 is the perfect opportunity for the Department to "educate" the public on the effects of passive game management. Why don't they?

GMU 13 Wolf Population Trends AWCA 103



	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Spring Pop.		195	210	230	180	200	240	240	330	350	
Sp. Pop. Objective	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165
Fall Pop.	415	325	375	350	330	405	380	460	550	585	
Harvest	115	93	179	153	122	141	149	176	218	269	223

Moose Calf Mortality
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Association
January 2003

Sources: ADF&G Harvest Surveys, ADF&G Annual Performance Reports, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, BOG minutes, BOG Proposal Booklet(s).

Trends Graph: Using 12 years of information on the moose population and human harvest, and calf production formula to show "calves born" each year.

Analysis: In order to understand the issues related to the declining moose population in GMU 13, we have prepared this "example" for moose calf production, survival, mortality over time and the relationship between "production" and human harvest. Most basically said, 96% of all of the moose calves born in GMU 13 since 1990 have been food for the natural predators, wolves, bears, coyotes, etc.

The Alaska Wildlife Conservation Association has been analyzing the ADF&G moose information from GMU 13 since the early 1980's. The GMU 13 declining moose population has been a classic example of mismanagement, or non-management for many years. The "policy" of standing by and observing the moose population crashing has been called "management" for many of our interior game management units.

In cooperation with the Alaska Moose Federation this analysis of calf production has been updated and projected through Fall 2003.

The moose population decline from 1986 through 2003 shows the net decline in population. The gross loss of moose is an even more dramatic indicator of the ecological waste of a valuable resource. The gross loss calculation includes the number of calves born into the herd. Over this time, the net loss in moose Fall population has averaged about 1,500 per year. Over the same period, the gross loss has averaged well over 12,000 moose per year. We estimate that 172,000 moose calves have been born in GMU 13 since 1990. The Fall moose population for the unit has declined to a projected 7,000 in fall 2003. The Fall population has declined by 75%, from 27,500 to 7000.

Although 190,000 moose have died in GMU 13 since 1988 only 12,000 or 4% were harvested by hunters. Hunters don't kill calves because of traditional hunting ethics and antler restrictions. Hunting has had no effect of the overall decline of the GMU 13 moose. Managing only the hunters can not reverse the decline.

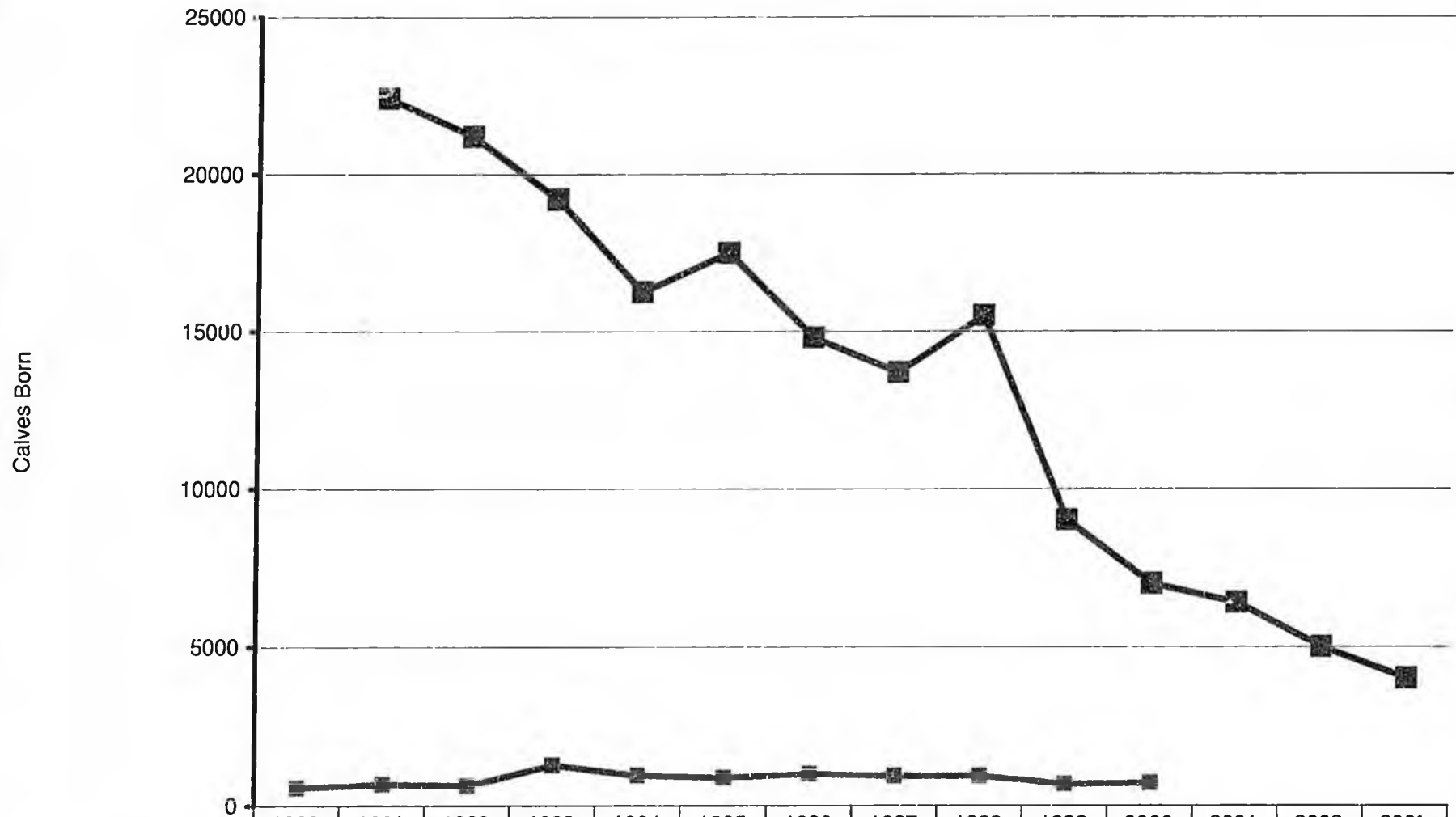
Questions:

What policy guides moose management practices that result in drastically declining populations?

Doesn't it make sense manage for utilization of the habitat?

Doesn't it make sense to balance the population relationships between the natural predators and the prey?

Moose Calves in Unit 13 AWCA 103



■ Calves Born		22400	21200	19200	16250	17500	14800	13700	15500	9000	7000	6400	5000	4000
■ Hunter Harvest	556	689	628	1280	955	893	1006	937	939	689	721			

Caribou Trend Information
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Association
January 2003

Sources: ADF&G Harvest Surveys, ADF&G Annual Performance Reports, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, BOG minutes, BOG Proposal Booklet(s).

Trends Graph: Over 13 years of information on caribou population and human harvest with the population objective used by the BOG and the ADF&G "commitment harvest" shown as reference.

Analysis: The ADF&G should identify a "standard" population for discussing the Nelchina Caribou Herd. They variously refer to the spring, post calving, and fall populations. Comparison over time is difficult because reports jump back and forth between the possible "populations".

The Post Calving population is extrapolated from aerial photos in late spring-early summer. It is not a true indicator of the population and the annual production because many calves are killed prior to the photo census. In November 1992, the ADF&G reported there were 50,000 caribou in the NCH. In 1999 they reported that the 1992 population was 45,484 adults. The peak population, then, was between 65,000 and 67,000 adjusted for calves and sub adults. The ADF&G proposed increasing the annual harvest to 6,000 to reduce the herd to 40,000. Harvest averaged 2,700 per year from 1987 to 1991. From 1996 to 1998 the annual harvest averaged 3,800.

Including "production" (base herd plus calves), only 6% of the peak annual population has been harvested since 1993. In March 1999 the ADF&G stated, "In recent years predation has not limited herd growth. Consequently, this caribou population is controlled primarily by human harvests under intensive management where yearly harvest estimates are based on annual calf production and survival estimates." For the last four years the post calving population has not put the herd in the population objective range, 35,000 to 40,000. Harvests have never reached the level claimed necessary to control the population, but the population declined anyway.

In 1996 the ADF&G said a harvest of 15,000 would reduce the herd to 40,000 by the spring of 1997. The harvest in '96 was 5601 but the spring population was less than 38,500. ADF&G made an objective to "maintain the harvest at 3,000". That goal requires sacrificing population to sustain harvest. They should be concerned about the overall population of the herd.

It is not possible for the harvest to have controlled the population of the NCH. The impacts of predation, not hunting, are controlling herd growth. The season was closed by emergency order in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002. In 2003 we will expect a significantly below 3000 harvest. The breeding population and harvest objectives are not being maintained.

Questions:

- What is proposed to increase production and survival to support the harvest objective?
- How long can a Tier II hunt continue under the present trends?
- Is it time to re-evaluate the "requirements" of harvest for Tier II and design a hunt that is partly Tier II and partly, for example, drawing permits?
- Is anything being done to change the Tier II qualifications so families who have subsisted on this herd since the '50 but don't live in Glennallen can have a chance of qualifying?
- Why are new to Alaska residents who qualify as federal "rural residents" given preference over hunters who have traditionally harvested the Nelchina caribou for generations?

Poor habitat has been used to "explain" why the population ceiling is 40,000 animals. However, when the herd exceeds the objective, as it did in the early 1990's, no evidence of degraded habitat is shown. During those years the Tier II needs have been met and Tier I hunts are possible. Perhaps it is time to consider raising the high population objective (40,000).

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY _____

COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

TO: CSSB 155(RES)

1 Page 1, line 9, through page 2, line 17:

2 Delete all material and insert the following:

3 "(1) the Board of Game has determined based on information
4 provided by the department

5 (A) in regard to an identified big game prey population under
6 AS 16.05.255(g) that [COMMISSIONER OF FISH AND GAME ACTING
7 UNDER A REQUEST FROM THE BOARD OF GAME MAKES WRITTEN
8 FINDINGS BASED ON PREY POPULATION] objectives set by the board for
9 the population have not been achieved, [UNDER AS 16.05.255(g)] that

10 [(A)] predation is an important cause for the failure to achieve
11 the objectives set by the board [FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO A LOW OR
12 DECLINING PREY POPULATION THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH A
13 GAME MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED BY THE BOARD OF
14 GAME], and that a reduction of predation can reasonably be expected to aid in
15 the achievement of the objectives [RESULT IN AIDING AN INCREASE IN
16 THE PREY POPULATION OR IN ARRESTING THE DECLINE OF THE
17 PREY POPULATION]; or

18 (B) that a disease or parasite of a predator population

19 (i) is threatening the normal biological condition of the
20 predator population; or

21 (ii) if left untreated, would spread to other populations;

22 unless [AND]

23 (2) the commissioner, within seven days after adoption of the plan,
24 determines in writing that [AIRBORNE OR] same day airborne shooting is not

1 necessary to achieve the objectives set [ACCOMPLISH A GAME MANAGEMENT
2 PROGRAM AUTHORIZED] by the Board of Game."

Management of Moose Populations in Alaska for Sustained Yield
Issue Paper for Native Summit on Fish, Wildlife, Habitat & Environment
By Greg Roczicka - August, 2002 (edit 5-03)

Introduction:

The subject initially requested for this issue paper was to speak specifically to efforts at resolution of bear and wolf predation on moose in GMU 19D. The heart of the issue involved (effective predator control anywhere in Alaska) is one that simply cannot be adequately addressed in sufficient context at that level. It is an issue that affects user groups across the full spectrum of wildlife interests throughout Alaska; represents a prime example of the major difference in lower 48/urban vs. rural values; and under the lack of active management through the last decade, is a leading contemporary threat to maintaining the subsistence way of life: A threat that should be equal to, if not even exceed, expressed concerns about efforts to diminish subsistence protections sought or afforded through Title VIII of ANILCA.

In GMU 19D East, the dizzying spin and incomplete/misinformation presented to the public has been, for lack of a better term, disgraceful. Media headlines in the summer of 2001 proclaimed that there was "DOUBLE the amount of moose as found the year before" due to an error in survey methodology. They made NO MENTION that this "double amount" is still less than in 1995/96 when the Governor pounded the pulpit with vows and promises to do all in his power to reverse moose declines in this area, and the Board of Game initially authorized a GMU 19D predator control implementation plan. Professional ADF&G staff that tried to clarify or offer more objective information to the public were chastised, had their work censored to the point of obfuscation, or faced further administrative censure and threat to career if they attempted to pursue the matter.

Deflecting media attention on the issue to black bears as the primary cause and culprits for low moose numbers is a red herring of world record proportions. Certainly they are a significant component as the leading cause of calf mortality for 3-6 weeks during the months of June & July, and subsequent recruitment to the population. No discussion was presented (or allowed) however on the primary cause of mortality during the remainder of the year. Especially during the winter when the entire population - including the adult breeding component - becomes hugely more susceptible to predation, primarily from wolves. Habitat is not considered to be a significant limiting factor in this area. With the exception of a one-time snapshot study, physical body condition of moose appears healthy. Twining rates are at respectable levels. Weather conditions have been conducive to good winter survival rates in recent years. Hunting opportunity has been severely restricted. Yet the moose population remains severely depressed.

Background/Problem Statement:

As applied to Article VIII, Section 4 of the state constitution regarding Sustained Yield, the Courts have consistently ruled that the "yield" reference equates directly to "harvest", and the mandate is actually for maximum use.

- 1) The top priority of management purpose for populations customarily and traditionally used for subsistence purposes is to provide for reasonable opportunity;
- 2) The Board of Game is mandated to adopt regulations to this effect through specific subsistence statutes and Intensive Management law.
- 3) Failure of the State of Alaska to implement predator control (through administrative directive) constitutes a de-facto veto of Board of Game decisions, ignores and is in direct violation of existing statutes, and disregards the recommendations of its own professional area managers within the Dept. of Fish & Game made through decades of experience in their respective regions.

Article VIII, Section 3. Common Use. Wherever occurring in their natural state, fish, wildlife, and waters are reserved to the people for common use." Lack of predator control serves only one segment of the public, and does so to the practical exclusion of common use and enjoyment by most all others that have long standing and continuing reliance upon moose as a primary or supplementary food source.

Article VIII, Section 4. Sustained Yield. "Fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands, and all other replenishable resources belonging to the State shall be utilized, developed, and maintained on the sustained yield principle, subject to preferences among beneficial uses." . What is perhaps saddest and most offensive in the current state of affairs is that active predator management provides more animals for the long term benefit of all user groups, be it harvested in memory, by camera, a rifle or any other means. Lack of it accommodates only the abstract, idealistic position that no wolf or bear population should ever be artificially limited to enhance human harvest. As referenced in the National Academy of Sciences report on predator/prey relations in Alaska, this follows directly down the path of a long-term, low-level population equilibrium for both prey and predator species; falling far short, or indeed in direct defiance, of the expressed mandate of utilization, development, or maintenance of the state's replenishable resources. The only statutory definition of sustained yield is contained in 16.05.255(i)(5), and calls for the direct opposite of the existing management vacuum. It has yet to be subjected to judiciary review or interpretation.

Article VIII, Section 17. Uniform Application: "Laws and regulations governing the use or disposal of natural resources shall apply equally to all persons similarly situated with reference to the subject matter and purpose to be served by the law or regulation." Tourism, animal welfare and imposition of existence values on management are not "similarly situated" with the subject matter and purpose of subsistence use priority/preference, intensive management statutes, existing regulations, or the State Board of Game's stated purpose. Yet deferral to those views and their administrative placement as controlling factors to avoid effective predator control has to date, been in direct contradiction to the needs of not only subsistence uses, but practically to the point of exclusion, all other consumptive uses as well.

A.S. 16.05.221 (b) "For purposes of conservation and development of the game resources of the state, there is created a Board of Game." Observing moose populations plummet one after another (especially notable through compounded effects over the years since the 1996 ballot initiative banning same day airborne wolf hunting by the general public was imposed) without doing all in their power to prevent or reverse declines does not fulfill the Board of Game's statutory purpose.

16.05.258 (b)(3)(B) "The appropriate Board shall adopt regulations that eliminate other consumptive uses in order to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses;". The state has consistently maintained that subsistence is accorded the highest priority among beneficial uses. Yet that basic policy and premise is consistently discounted or entirely ignored when management decisions are predicated on deference to tourism terrorism threats and related considerations. Lack of action to date has been in deference to tourism and deification of wolves by primarily lower-48/urban moralistic/value-based interests, false perceptions predicated on misinformation, and self-serving idealism to the prevention and pre-emption of providing reasonable opportunity for subsistence needs and all other consumptive uses. Tourism and animal rights ideology have been termed as non-consumptive uses in the past. Their effective insertion of "no effective (aerial) predator control" into the administrative policy arena over consumptive uses should now equate to a demand that their constituency be treated as a competing consumptive as well. i.e. To enhance someone's perception of increasing chances to "feast their eyes" on a wolf, is substantially limiting opportunity for actual food on the table for basic physical sustenance; substantially disrupting the subsistence way of life; forcing elimination of sport/recreational hunting, the guide industry; and virtually assuring that most every moose hunt in the state will become Tier II only, in the immediate or not too distant future.. Under historical premises and existing law regarding competing consumptive uses, it hence should hold subordinate status to subsistence concerns and other consumptive uses in the decision making process.

Lack of effective, timely, and active predator control puts the state in direct violation of its statutory mandates for conservation and development of game resources, and makes a practical mockery in

practice, of the constitutional requirement for sustained yield. Allowing moose populations to sink and remain at low levels makes a farce of providing reasonable opportunity. We can only continue to hope that future administrations, Boards or other management entities will resist being party to such hypocrisy. Further, lack of active/effective predator control is directly contradictory to the guiding principles and purposes (contained in Sections 8 b through e, and 9 through 12) of the highly touted Millennium Agreement. What indeed is more fundamental than food! Both the Board of Game's position on wolf control and National Academy of Sciences Report on predator/prey relationships in Alaska, fully recognize that low-level equilibrium is the usual (natural) state of affairs, absent any management activities to prevent this occurrence. There is practically no greater threat to the future integrity of the subsistence way of life than an administrative or management policy that manages for low-level equilibrium numbers of game populations; and does so entirely in deference to commercial/recreational (i.e. tourism/non-subsistence) interests. The State of Alaska's stated "subsistence priority" or "human consumptive use" as the highest/best/preferred use of game populations becomes nothing more than another sad and sorry joke providing little more than lip service to its stated intent and purpose under such one sided application. How and where indeed are the concepts of justice and the greatest common good accommodated under such a singular policy purpose and inevitable effects?

This is not meant to deride the uninformed or misinformed general public, who has blown this crater of management vacuum so much wider and deeper through passage of ballot initiatives banning same day airborne hunting of wolves. But the precipitous decline in failing moose populations across the state can be traced directly to the ballot box biology of 1996 and 2000. One would be hard pressed to find a more concrete example of the road to hell (for moose and their consumptive dependents) being paved with good intentions. The urban/rural divide can only grow into an ever-deepening chasm without some equitable resolution of this issue.

On the matter of equity: Those who have dedicated decades of their lives to maintaining long-term integrity of the subsistence way of life for future generations; dealing with the front lines of highly controversial and contentious resource management issues; have traipsed the halls of Congress, streets of Washington D.C. and the United Nations w/ environmental advocates, cadres of celebrities and ilk either across the table or at their side; have served as delegates for their regions or the State of Alaska at local, national & international levels in treaty negotiations, protocol amendments and other matters of broad policy development or implementation (in such areas as salmon, migratory birds or marine mammals); Have Never have we encountered such a lack of willingness to accommodate another's point of view as that exhibited by animal rights proponents. Never has there been a group that already has so much influence for their cause in administrative/decision-making processes scream so loudly for more. As individuals many may be warm-hearted, well-intentioned people; as a group they portray practically the worst imaginable in mob mentality and religious fanaticism. It should be viewed as an utter sham(e) for them to state that their concerns are not heard, accommodated or reflected in management actions or decisions.

The growing successful movements of shoving moral superiority down the throats of rural Alaska (and the state as a whole); that we are somehow misguided, mentally defective individuals, or haven't given due consideration to norms of mainstream American society; if we do not allow ourselves to be converted into the cause (forsaking all others) of protecting wolves and bears at any cost; to accept and submit to such a level of assimilation and loss of subsistence opportunity that is the practical long term result of no effective predator/prey management with an attitude of resignation; all cry loudly for confrontation!

If opposition to predator control is more a matter of over-riding principle, why have we not heard one squawk about the State's full-fledged support and intent to severely reduce or totally eradicate Northern Pike in lakes of Southcentral Alaska to benefit Rainbow Trout populations? The only identifiable difference in practicality here is a matter of who is the majority constituency that benefits. Neither should

people let themselves be led down another false trail entities banner that predator control is a "fair chase" issue. Where predator control plans exist or are needed, the principle is just not applicable. Aerial harvest of wolves is simply the most efficient and humane method of achieving a predator/prey balance and rebuilding/maintaining moose populations for the benefit of all consumptive uses - including viewing.

Regarding our rapidly escalating moose deficit, and taking no action on wolves unless bears can be addressed concurrently: Reasonable people should wonder how that same premise of "all or nothing" would fly in applying the same premise and practice to the state's looming one billion dollar budget shortfall? i.e. We refuse to do anything to address a 25-50% known cause (with no significant harm or even a viable threat to the source or subject - representing wolves), until we can also include the remaining portion that is more difficult to assess, and requires much more complicated and careful consideration (representing bears). There is a serious failure of defensible logic in taking no proactive measures in this arena.

A point of public criticism often made is that management entities have been "too quick" to jump on predator control as the first or only answer. Those who contend such have simply not done their homework, are either unaware of or will not concede acknowledgement of, ongoing restrictions to hunting opportunity enacted by the Board of Game over the past 10 years. Nor the ongoing weeks, months and years of deliberations based on decades of observation, that include intense scrutiny of contemporary sustained habitat carrying capacity, and the overall preponderance of evidence in making these determinations. There are approximately 69 game management units and sub-units with the state. The Board has authorized predator control implementation plans into regulation in approximately 5 of these areas - hardly what any reasonable argument could deem as overly excessive. To put the matter in a more appropriate context that more people are perhaps more focused on and familiar with, we are simply fast approaching (in many places already arrived at) the point where the need for responsive/effective management constitutes a problem directly analogous and proportionate to two other huge issues facing our state. **The Budgetary/Fiscal Gap and Deferred Maintenance!**

Many of us read "Never Cry Wolf" in junior-high school. Its message struck and stuck at deeply emotional levels and may be largely credited with galvanizing the public outcry opposing wolf control as a righteous cause at the national level. (Although the story is reported to be entirely a work of fiction written by a Northeast Canadian barfly. Yes, George, Angeline, Uncle Albert and "family" are only figments of a besotted mind.) However anyone who takes the time to study the matter in-depth and maintain a mature, honest, open and objective view, can only find that the preponderance of evidence, beyond any reasonable doubt, supports such actions achieving their intended purpose.

Looking Ahead/Recommendations/Action:

Where is the issue going? It has become so politicized that the crux is now highly dependent on a firm stance of support and the fortitude to weather national criticism at the highest administrative levels (no more than equal to what has been consistently exhibited in advocating opening of ANWR to oil exploration and development in direct defiance of "environmentalist" concerns") that our moose populations are first and foremost, managed as a valuable and vital food source. Should such a change in administrative policy occur, animal welfare advocates would "lose" only as long as they chose to equate "losing" as seeing any effective predator/prey balance program actively implemented. Should such change not come to pass in the near future, the vast majority of all human user groups and moose populations throughout rural Alaska in the long term, all lose. And lose not just in the moral sense of animal rights protectionists, but crushingly so at the expense of maintaining integrity for future generations of the subsistence way of life!

An intensive public information/education and media campaign by the state and private entities interested in healthy, abundant moose populations for future use by generations of Alaskans should be pursued at local, regional, statewide and national levels. Many avenues are available through National Public Radio and PBS programming. Entities such as NOVA, NATURE, National Geographic, 60 Minutes, Hard Copy, CNN, Politically Incorrect, etc. may be persuaded to tackle the issue. Especially since pre-emption of effective, balanced predator/prey management is primarily a moralistic superiority subject; whose effectiveness is not substantially refutable by objective scientific data. And resulting moose productivity is undeniably supported by decades of direct observation and empirical knowledge. It could also be considered to solicit support from national organizations or known celebrities such as Robert Redford or Kevin Costner who purport to be staunch advocates of Native American Rights. The main question here would be whether such efforts would trigger the conceptual/emotional majority response values of Never Cry Wolf, or Dances With Wolves.

The above efforts could be pursued not only under the aspect of protecting the subsistence way of life, but also strongly asserting the State of Alaska's legal responsibilities referenced earlier. (There will almost certainly be no help from the Feds in this arena.) That predator/prey balance best fits the sustained yield standard of providing for the broadest spectrum of beneficial human use, and existing policy has been and remains a failure in complying with constitutional and statutory mandates.

2 Attachments

Further References:

Board of Game and ADFG management reports and regulatory history, National Academy of Sciences Report on Predator/Prey Management in Alaska, Ongoing resolutions from TCC, AVCP, BBNA, AVCP, and AFN and Millennium Agreement between Sovereign Tribes and State of Alaska.

Attachment 1 – Native Environmental Summit Issue Paper 8/02

Moose population status and trend data in GMU's of concern since predator control programs not actively or effectively implemented (data as of February 2002):

- 1) In GMU 13: Moose numbers have declined by 70+% over the last decade, down from an estimated 25,000 to 6-8000. Post season wolf population objectives by managers established at 165 animals. Current wolf population estimate is 4-600+. Brown bear population objective is set at 350. Current estimate is approximately 1,500. The most knowledgeable area biologists have stated nutritional stress of moose is not a factor, body conditions continue to be relatively good and twinning rates are at respectable levels, so habitat overall should not be considered a limiting factor. But that even total elimination of all human harvest activities will not help rebuild moose numbers unless predator control is a significant part of a management package.
- 2) In GMU 16B: Latest surveys (under good to excellent conditions) produced a total estimate of 3,800 moose – a 60% decline through the 90's. In the same time frame wolf populations have almost tripled (Most notably since 1996-97.) Staff informed the Board of Game that even total elimination of human harvest would have little to no effect in reversing these declines, and wolf numbers would need to be significantly reduced for moose numbers to rebuild.
- 3) In GMU 19D: Moose numbers were estimated at 5-8000 animals into the early 90's. Current estimates are 800-1,600. This area appears to have reached the pit of low-density equilibrium between predators and prey. Moose densities in this area are now among the lowest ever measured throughout the state of Alaska. As in GMU 13, habitat is not deemed to be a substantially limiting factor.
- 4) In GMU 19A: Moose here are managed by trend data since obtaining population estimates has been such a difficult task due to remoteness, weather and/or funding limitations. Habitat is considered to be in excellent condition, yet all data sets in the most recent survey (fall of 2001) found drastic reductions compared to 10 year averages prior to the 1996 ballot initiative (that included some very severe winters and resultant moose mortality)
 - Number of moose observed per hour was 59 – compared to prior 10-year average of 154
 - Calf/cow ratio was 8 per 100 – down from prior 10-year average of 56 per 100
 - Bull/cow ratio was 6 per 100 – compared to prior 10-year average of 24 per 100
 - Total number of moose observed was 196 – down from prior 10-year average of 473.*
 - Area manager conducting survey noted that not one moose was observed in area of former highest density (lower 20 miles of Hoholitna), but wolf tracks were evident on practically every river bend.

*(Note: "High grading" survey conducted in this area in spring of '03 reflects further decline – Total # of moose observed was 116, w/ 7.6% short yearlings. As in other areas, it has been determined that even total elimination of human harvest will not be sufficient to arrest, much less reverse, population decline to low density equilibrium unless effective predator control is significant part of management action.)
- 5) GMU's 21B & D, 22, 23, 24 and 25A & B: Status paper provided by ADFG to Board of Game at their January 02 statewide meeting reported moose populations in all of these areas as decreasing. Local reports/knowledge from all of these areas have stated increasing numbers of wolves being observed in recent years as a matter of significant concern.

Attachment 2 -- Native Environmental Summit Issue Paper 8/02

Food For Thought (and Perhaps - People)

Greg Roczicka - April, 2003 Revise

Under the John vs. Baker decision in 1999, the Alaska Supreme Court held that Alaska Tribes have inherent sovereignty over their members even without "Indian Country" and can decide "other matters to protect tribal self government". "Other matters" identified by the U.S. Supreme Court in Montana vs U.S. in 1981 were limited to 1) Consensual Relations & 2) matters affecting tribal health and welfare, economy or political integrity. Tribes and States also have concurrent jurisdiction (under P.L. 280) outside of Indian Country with the States tied to providing comit; for Tribal laws within their courts and jurisdiction.

It is undeniably true and widely recognized through myriad documentations, regional and statewide forums, that the "health, welfare, cultural & economic security tied to subsistence use is integral to the lives and essential to the survival of Alaska Native peoples and communities". Subsistence use is simply and inextricably tied to long term, consistent levels of harvest. This is especially important with a resource such as moose that provides such large amounts of meat (efficiency-economy of effort, community sharing, etc.) from the harvest of a single animal.

Ballot referendums in recent years sponsored and driven by imported value systems are in direct contradiction to long held management principles that facilitated subsistence needs, along with all other beneficial uses. They have prevented the Alaskan public at large from successfully maintaining established and balanced predator/prey ratios that, for decades, substantially contributed to providing sustained moose harvest levels throughout the state; even taking into account conditions affecting natural population fluctuations and mortality such as weather or habitat limitations. Under existing Alaska law and regulation, there still remains full recognition and authority for the State to appoint or hire agents to conduct airborne predator control activities for the purpose of enhancing or ensuring the viability of game populations. The State has unequivocally failed to do this in any realistic or effective terms under the threat of censure and economic boycotts from (primarily urban and lower 48 spawned) animal rights advocacy groups.

Under the comity provision of P.L. 280, and current Supreme Court (state and federal) premises regarding Tribal Law, it should be entirely consistent for a Tribe to adopt their own formal law or ordinance in accordance with the States' own existing laws and regulations. Through this authority, they could then designate their own agents to act on their behalf to reduce or maintain predator/prey ratios at levels determined and actively pursued prior to the 1996 ballot initiative; and conduct predator control activities at least for the "Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses" (ARNSU) as established in SAAC 99.025.

A condition for application of comity requires that it not be in violation of "public policy". In this case, which "policy" takes precedence? Providing for subsistence use and sustained yield principles - to the long-term practical benefit of both consumptive and non-consumptive uses; or placating only animal welfare concerns - and their imposition on the state at large for significant, long-term, detrimental results to everyone else involved, with little to no biological justification. This question of course should be rhetorical given Alaska's stated subsistence priority and constitutional requirements of Common Use, Sustained Yield, and Uniform Application.

Legislative action via SB155 or HB 208 remains questionable and if passed may still fail in practical application through the inevitable ballot initiative that will occur. The Knowles' administration and now Murkowski's have both stated the intent that "local people" would/should be responsible for conducting any predator control activities in their own areas of (customary & traditional?) use. Conducting predator control activities to achieve ADFG & BOG sanctioned Amounts Necessary for Subsistence Use under tribal auspices does exactly that. Under the Consensual Relations provision, tribal agents would not necessarily even have to be tribal members. Additionally, through tribal immunity stipulations, AWA, PETA or ilk should also be pre-empted from suing to stop such an action. A main challenge here will be getting representative factions of Native and AOC/APHA interests together to carry this out.

Table 1. Holitna/Hoholitna Count Area Unit 19(A) fall aerial moose composition counts. regulatory years 1987-1988 through 2001-2002.

Regulatory year	Bulls:100 cows	Yearling bulls: 100 cows	Calves: 100 cows	Calves	Percent calves	Adults	Moose	Moose/hour
1987-1988	22	4	72	50	36	84	140	85
1988-1989	31	16	56	103	30	240	343	95
1989-1990	24	13	55	160	30	361	528	163
1990-1991	26	10	52	139	29	336	475	162
1991-1992								
1992-1993	31	15	63	172	32	360	542	169
1993-1994								
1994-1995	14	2	42	209	27	568	778	251
1995-1996								
1996-1997	22	10	50	146	29	355	502	152
1997-1998	14	11	34	85	23	286	371	169
1998-1999								
1999-2000								
2001-2002	6	3	8	13	7	183	196	59

March 2003

7.6% 109 116 29-39

line

month old calves in this drainage had a survival rate of <5%, which is very low. A density estimate made from results of the February 2001 survey was 0.70 moose/ml²; this is a low to moderate late winter moose density for areas with similar browse conditions in the western Interior. While it is unlikely the Unit 19(A) moose population is limited by available habitat, additional factors influencing these low numbers include poor calf survival through the fall season, low yearling bull recruitment, and poor over winter adult survival.

all directly indicative of predation as primary cause

Based on the results from the November 2001, Unit 19(A) trend count surveys, there have been further declines with very low numbers including very low bull:cow and calf:cow components. Based on the analysis of the fall 2001 survey results, there were only 6 bulls per 100 cows, a low calf:cow component of 8 calves per 100 cows, and the lowest number of total moose ever recorded for the trend count area (ADF&G in press). One possible explanation for these very low survey results, is the reported shallow snow cover along with relatively temperate late fall weather conditions that caused an atypical population distribution during that survey period. Hopefully, with further surveys these results will prove anomalous. NOT!!

Harvest

The reported annual moose harvest in Unit 19(A) declined from 1996 through 2002 (ADF&G in press). Analysis of reported total harvest for this period revealed a 20% average annual decrease (Table 2). The reported hunter success rate for Unit 19(A) averaged 47% (37-54%) for 1996-2001 (ADF&G 2002). Based on further results, ninety percent or greater of the reported harvests

**COMMITTEE: House
Community and Regional
Affairs Standing Committee**

**SUBJECT:
SB 155-PREDATOR CONTROL PROGRAMS**



DATE: May 13, 2003

PLEASE SIGN IN

PLEASE PRINT: **NAME & TITLE** **ADDRESS** **PHONE** **REPRESENTING** **DO YOU WANT TO TESTIFY ?**
(No acronyms unless for a state agency, please)

Joel Bennett	15255 Point Louisa Rd	907 789-1718	Defenders of Wildlife	Yes
E-mail address:	Sharon Clark		Sen Sullivan	NO
Sharon Somerville	4506 Bobbin Ct. ^{Sum.}	780- 4812	Board of Game	Yes - if Fleagle not available
E-mail address:				
E-mail address:				
E-mail address:				
E-mail address:				
E-mail address:				
E-mail address:				
E-mail address:				
E-mail address:				

438350

SITE: FAIRBANKS LIO

COMMITTEE: House C&RA

DATE: May 13, 2003

SUBJECT OF MEETING:

SB 155

UPDATE #: 1

PLEASE SIGN IN

P R I N T YOUR NAME

ADDRESS (MAILING & ZIP)

REPRESENTING

**DO YOU WANT
TO TESTIFY?
Y or N**

Dick Bishop		AK Outdoor Council	Y - SB155
Email address:			
Tom Scarborough			Y - SB155
Email address:			
Oliver Burris			Y - SB 155
Email address:			
Sharon McLeod-Everette		Board of Game	Y - SB155
Email address:			
Email address:			
Email address:			
Email address:			

SITE: Offnet
COMMITTEE: HCRA
DATE:

SUBJECT OF MEETING:
SB 155
UPDATE #:



PLEASE SIGN IN

P R I N T YOUR NAME **ADDRESS (MAILING & ZIP)** **REPRESENTING** **DO YOU WANT TO TESTIFY? Y or N**

Mike Fleagle			Y
Email address:			
[scribble]			
Email address:			
Fed Speaker			y
Email address:			
Math Robus			y
Email address:			
Donnie Fleagle			y
Email address:			
Email address:			
Email address:			

SITE: FAIRBANKS LIO

COMMITTEE: H C&RA

DATE: May 15, 2003

SUBJECT OF MEETING:

SB 155

UPDATE #: 1

PLEASE SIGN IN

P R I N T YOUR NAME

ADDRESS (MAILING & ZIP)

REPRESENTING

**DO YOU WANT
TO TESTIFY?
Y or N**

Oliver Burris			Y -SB 155
Email address:			
Mike Tinker			Y- SB 155
Email address:			
Sharon McLeod-Everett		Bd Game	Y- SB 155
Email address:			
Tom Scarborough			Y -SB 155
Email address:			
Email address:			
Email address:			
Email address:			

Wilderness Inspirations™

*Featuring the images of
Leo & Dorothy Keeler*



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SB 155 Testimony - Oppose Aerial Predator Control

5/15/2003

The 19D East (McGrath) Adaptive Management Team, of which I was a member, developed a DRAFT predator control plan. Before it was finished, scientific reports showed the moose population was growing, but the bull/cow ratio in popular hunting areas was the true problem. Because of the new science, the team never sent a "TEAM APPROVED" plan to the Governor.

Mike McEagle, now Board of Game Chairman, as a member of the McGrath Team, agreed with the subsistence science that justified reducing the moose population objectives from 6,000 to 3,000-3,500. Now that it is known that hunters keep the bull/cow ratio to as low as 6/100, he wants to re-establish the old 6,000 objective. This old 6,000 figure is a GUESS made from past high harvests during extreme predator control days, not from science. Some legislators hope to return to those extreme predator control days and are introducing legislation to benefit a single wildlife interest group... hunters.

Senate Bill 155B will authorize the Board of Game to continue to ignore public concerns with predator control, as they have done for years. If passed, the Legislature will again be ignoring their responsibility to protect all citizens' interests in Alaska's resources, just like they are ignoring Alaskans' interest in the subsistence issue. If passed, it will lead to lawsuits, initiatives, and ultimately the collapse of the Board of Game system.

Hopefully the Wildlife Board that will replace the BOG will represent all citizens, and all users. I hope it will remove the Legislature from the decision process and place control of Alaska's wildlife resources in the hands of all citizens, not just extremist hunters. If an initiative is needed to get a Wildlife Board, let's start now!

Sincerely,

Leo Keeler

**The Alaska Professional Hunters Association
PO Box 91932, Anchorage Alaska 99509-1932
(907) 522-3221**

May 15, 2003

APHA Senate Bill 155 Testimony for the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee.

Chairman Morgan and Committee members, my name is Robert Fithian, I live in Lower Tonsina, Alaska within GMU 13, and I am a Master Guide and eco-tour operator. In the past, I have worked with the Alaska Miner's Association as their elected statewide president and have served on the McGrath Fish and Game Advisory Committee. I have a substantial, over twenty year history of knowledge of GMU 19 and the game populations near McGrath. I am testifying today on behalf of the Alaska Professional Hunter's Association as their Executive Director, regarding Senate Bill 155.

I was at the Wasilla LIO on Monday and sent my written testimony down to you then. I hope that you received it. That testimony is the same as I have been presenting for the APHA on this bill. I hope you have time to review it, and the attachment that was sent with it.

Tcday I am going to present you with some additional testimony that the APHA feels that you need to hear.

As you well know, the ability to find resolution to any issue is to see what the middle ground is and work to bring both sides to an acceptable point. I would like to point out to you that Alaska has traded a vast treasure of our wildlife resources to the animal rights groups such as The Alaska Wildlife Alliance, Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of Animals etc. Since Alaska lost the ability to manage predators from the air, in many portions of the State the overall female populations of our moose, Dall's sheep, and caribou herds have declined by over 55%. The number of surviving female annual born of these species is under 31/2 percent which will not allow any recruitment to the declining populations. The annual harvest rate of these species by humans is under 4% while predation is accountable for over 36%. Natural mortality of old age, starvation or disease accounts for the remaining 10%. What these facts show is that if we stopped all hunting of these species in these large regions today, a year from now there will still be less of the animals. Human harvest is having no significant effect on the populations.

Nothing could be more pointed to this demise than the Chisana caribou herd on the north eastern end of the Wrangell Mountains, within the WSENP&P. These caribou are the only genetic strain of Woodland caribou indigenous to the United States. Once stable in population, numbering in excess of 4000, they currently number fewer than three hundred with no known survival of annual born for the past several years due to predation

predominantly by wolves during the first four weeks of their lives. Alaskan and Yukon Territory biologists predict that extinction of this treasure will occur within the next few years if nothing is done to remedy the problem. If any of the groups that I previously mentioned really cared about our common trust wildlife resources they would be lined up in droves picketing in front of the Department of Interior establishments and threatening boycotts of their parks. But we don't see any of that do we.

It was stated in Monday's testimony, that our population of ungulates is declining because of low male to female ratios due to hunting, resulting in poor pregnancy achievement. This is absolutely not true. In the Kuskokwim and Nelchina Regions where we have the best scientific data available, the senior biologists are Toby Boudrou in McGrath and Bob Toby in Glennallen. I have contacted both of them and found that there still exists an overall pregnancy rate of well over 90%. In fact, in the McGrath area, every female moose that was tagged during the past several years, and has survived predation where there is no hunting of cow moose, has born calves every year.

It was also stated that the annual wolf harvest has been increasing every year for the past decade and that there is no reason to consider additional management methods. May I point out that wolves have the ability to grow in number annually by over 40%? And that yes, the annual harvest of wolves by trapping and hunting has increased, because there are now well over three times as many wolves out there as there were a decade ago.

I also heard testimony that the snowmachine is now a very efficient tool in the management of our wolf populations and that this tool will provide our harvest requirements. I would like to inform you that I have personally sat in many BOG and public meetings and listened to the same person who gave this statement on Monday publicly state every possible reason that we should not be using snowmachine in any way for managing our wolves and that they are a detriment to our environment.

There has also been allot of testimony on how the last two ballot initiatives to ban land and shoot wolf management techniques clearly showed that Alaskan's plainly said no to this management tool. Please allow me to comment on that statement.

1. The initiative passed by only a 3.65% margin.
2. Alaskan's for predator control were outspent by over a 100 to one margin.
3. A significant portion of this initiatives funding came from outside organizations that thrive on using the sentimental naive of the uniformed to raise substantial funding for themselves.
4. The Knowles administration had a gag order in affect denying written or verbal public testimony regarding the known science or biology of any ADF&G biologists under threat of written reprimand or loss of their jobs if they disobeyed the order.

5. The measure as presented to the voters in the ballot box was written so confusing that many Alaskan's did not understand that a no vote actually meant a yes vote.

Another thing that is important for you to hear today is that I have, on many occasions posed or heard posed to these groups' spokespersons at public meetings "*when will the biological emergency be great enough to allow lethal management of predators?*" The answer has always been "*never*".

Another common theme from these organizations is, "*there is no definite proof of the ungulate decline and in many cases the ungulate numbers appear to be rising.*" If this was really the case, why then have non-resident hunters, over the past decade lost over 50 million acres of opportunity to hunt on lands open to sport hunting in Alaska. The answer is; "*because the state subsistence law mandates that in times of shortage the non-resident is the first to lose opportunity*". And why now, more than any time in the history of Alaska, have the wedges between urban and rural Alaskan's and the non-resident hunters been so deeply driven.

I can answer this by quoting the two-decade theme of the anti-hunter movement. It is simply called, "*divide and conquer*". You, just like all of the rest of us Alaskan's whose sustenance depends in some way on our wildlife resources, we, and our precious and formerly bountiful wildlife populations have been the pawns and the losers in this chess game.

Only two times in the history of Alaska have we seen such detriment dealt to our precious wildlife resources. Those two instances were the demise of the sea otter by the Russians, and the demise of our wild salmon during our territorial years.

In both of these cases the *error of our ways* was seen and measures implemented to overcome these near disasters. Our current demise however is by far the worst in history because we have had the proven science and our constitutional mandates right in front of us but they have been ignored for the sake of these same special interest groups.

SB 155 does not declare war on our wolves.

I do not know one Alaskan who does not care for or appreciate our wolves. We just do not understand the poor stewardship of putting them uncontrolled at the top of the food chain.

Chairman Morgan and committee members, my testimony comes from the heart of Alaska and our precious wildlife populations that depend on your ability to see the common sense truths and mandates of our constitution and our public trust obligations, our moral obligation to God as defined in Genesis if we are so inclined and our civic mandates as requested by our Board of Game which represents the most democratic process of wildlife management of any place in the world today. Regarding what I mentioned earlier about finding common ground to help find resolution to this issue. I am

sorry to state that although Alaska has continued to give, the other side will never give. You are at a crossroads; either Alaska's vast wildlife populations and our way of life that we have presented to the world for generations can become like the Chisana Caribou herd, or you can move and advocate for passage this bill.

The APHA warrants to you, that what Alaska will gain by passage of SB155 and the Administration's mandate of management for abundance will do far more benefit for Alaska's tourism industry and the vision that the world has of Alaska than any boycott can do us harm.

Respectfully,
Robert Fithian

ALASKA STATE SENATE



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State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-2327
(907) 465-5241 Fax

Interim:
119 N. Cushman, Suite 201
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 456-8161
Senator_Ralph_Seekins@legis.state.ak.us

Senator Ralph Seekins
District D

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 10, 2003

To: Office of Representative Carl Morgan

From: Senator Ralph Seekins

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Seekins".

Re: Request for Hearing of SB 155

Attached please find Senate Bill 155 along with the corresponding Sponsor Statement and supporting documentation.

Senate Bill 155 alters language within Section 16.05.783 of the Alaska Statutes relating to the regulation of Fish and Game resources. These alterations provide the Fish and Game Board and Commissioner with necessary tools in the management of game populations throughout the state.

I respectfully request a hearing before your committee on this Bill at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

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*Featuring the images of
Leo & Dorothy Keeler*



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SB 155 Testimony - Oppose Aerial Predator Control

5/14/2003

My name is Dorothy Keeler. Evidently, the potential for predator control to create a tourism boycott is being taken seriously. What this new version of SB 155 tries is a vain attempt to hide who would be responsible for one.

If this bill passes, Governor Murkowski will have created a state-sanctioned predator control program where he can't be directly blamed. If this bill passes, the Legislature has created a smokescreen trying to hide responsibility, and the six Alaska Outdoor Council members now sitting on the Board of Game, who were not elected by the people and were selected based on their eagerness to kill wolves, may have the power to bring the state of Alaska to its financial knees with a tourism boycott... a tourism boycott that they have a vested interest in prolonging. Initiating predator control to meet the harvest objectives set by the Board of Game is initiating a never ending predator control program. The objectives set were based on historic high harvest levels established after years of poisoning and aerial hunting of predators.

If this bill passes, you have asked the bullies of the playground to bankrupt the parents of all the other kids that want to use it.

Nothing would please the extremists in Alaska more! Their goal is to use the Governor, and now the Legislature, to drive out all those pesky non-consumptive users who dare try to share in the use of Alaska's wildlife resources.

Pass this bill, and a tourism boycott, more initiatives, and referendums are certain. Pass this bill, and be prepared to set aside a lot of money for the lawsuits that are just as certain.

Pass this bill, and you deserve the shame of knowing you trashed Alaska's tourism industry to benefit a handful of extremist hunters whose dream is to monopolize the use of Alaska's wildlife, and return to the good old days of massive statewide predator control.

Most sincerely,

Dorothy Keeler

AMENDMENT#___

By: _____

TO: CSSB 155(RES)

Page 2, lines 22 and 23:

*Sec. 2. AS 16.05.783 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(e) When the Board of Game authorizes a predator control program that includes airborne or same day airborne shooting, the board shall establish predator reduction objectives and limits and the methods and means to be employed.

Authorized predator control programs shall be carried out only by Department of Fish and Game employees.

same day airborne

ACTIVATION POINTS FOR AN AIRBORNE PREDATOR CONTROL PLAN

1. There must be a game management plan for the particular Game Management Unit or Sub-unit ("GMU").
2. There must be an "intensive management" program in place for the GMU. AS 16.05.255(e) makes it clear that an intensive management plan is to restore the abundance of productivity of identified big game prey populations as necessary to achieve human consumptive use goals in an area where the board has determined that:
 - a. consumptive use of the big game prey population is the preferred use;
 - b. depletion of the big game prey population has occurred and may result in a significant reduction in allowable human harvest of the population; and
 - c. enhancement of abundance or productivity of the big game prey population is feasibly achievable utilizing recognized and prudent active management techniques.
3. Then, the Board must determine **BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME (DEGREED SCIENTISTS)** in regard to an identified big game population under an intensive management program that:
 - a. the objectives set by the board for the population have not been achieved; and
 - b. predation is an important cause for the failure to achieve the objectives set by the board; and
 - c. a reduction of predation can reasonably be expected to aid in the achievement of the objectives.
4. Also, if the department confirms that a disease or parasite of a predator population is threatening the normal biological condition of the predator population or that the disease or parasite, if left untreated, would spread to other populations, it can authorize an airborne program.

THIS PROGRAM ASSURES THAT ANY DECISION TO ACTIVATE AN AIRBORNE PROGRAM IS BASED ON THE BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE.



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Community Regional Affairs
Committee name

Committee on SB 155, dated 5-13-03
Bill/Subject

6 P
AGSS

Signed: Robert Fithian
Testifier

APHA
Representing (Optional)

HC60 Box 299C Copper Center AK 99523
Address

Phone number

The Alaska Professional Hunters Association Inc.
PO Box 91932, Anchorage Alaska 99509-1932
(907) 522-3221

May 13, 2003

Senate Bill 155 APHA Testimony for the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee.

Chairman Morgan and Committee members. My name is Robert Fithian, I live in Lower Tonsina, Alaska I am a master guide and eco tour operator, I am testifying on behalf of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association as their Executive Director. Regarding Senate Bill 155

The APHA represents Alaska's oldest tourism related industry. The guided sport hunting industry. This industry contributes to Alaska over 120 million new dollars to Alaska each year. A minimum of 75% of the annual ADF&G wildlife conservation budget comes from the non-resident clientele that this industry caters to.

Our contributions to Alaska's wildlife conservation through the efforts of our association, our members or former guides and non-resident hunters include creation of a few unique places like McNeil River and Denali National Park.

Article 1 Section 1 of our State Constitution defines the inherent rights of the States citizens. These include the rights to life, liberty, happiness and the rewards of our own industry. It also states that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights. Then it closes with a statement that all persons have corresponding obligations to the people of the State. How unique this very first section of our constitution is in that it lays out our rights but then closes with a stewardship requirement for us.

Article 8 section 3 of the Alaska constitution states that wherever occurring in their natural state, fish, wildlife and waters are reserved to the people for common use. Article 8 Section 4 mandates that fish forest wildlife grasslands and other replenishable resources belonging to the State shall be utilized, developed and maintained on the sustained yield principle subject to preferences among beneficial users.

During the past 15 years we have seen a continual decline in the cow moose population of at least 55%. The annual calf survival rate is under 7%. Only 3 1/2 percent of the surviving calves are female and fewer of that percentage are living to be of recruitment age to replenish the declining population.

The average annual harvest rate of moose statewide currently is as follows; 86% die by predation, 10% die of natural mortality factors and 4% by human harvest.

What these facts prove is that if we stopped all human harvest of moose today, a year from now we will still have fewer moose. Hunting and human harvest is having no significant effect on the State's moose population.

Let me assure you on another commonly overlooked fact here. If the facts were known regarding our Dall's sheep and caribou populations and they had as important of a role throughout the main river corridor communities of Alaska as meat and subsistence species you would find that their plight is as bad as that of our moose. This is a terrible representation of stewardship of these resources.

It is important for you to note that during the past ten years the non resident sportsman has lost opportunity to hunt on over 50 million acres of public lands that are open to sport hunting due to the continual reducing numbers of Alaska's moose, sheep and caribou populations and the mandates of the state subsistence law.

Only two times in the history of our State have we seen such detriment dealt to our precious wildlife populations as we have in the past 15 years. Those two instances were the near extinction of the sea otter by the Russians and the demise of Alaska's salmon during the territorial years.

In both of these cases the error of our ways was seen and measures implemented to overcome these near disasters. Our current demise is by far the worst in history because we have had the proven science and our constitutional mandates right in front of us and they have been ignored for the sake of special interest groups.

I represented the APHA in Aniak several weeks ago at the Central Kuskokwim Moose management committee meeting where I was fighting to preserve the guiding industry and the non-resident hunters opportunity to harvest 15 moose from GMU 19a. I would like to inform you that I really was not there because I was fighting to preserve the opportunity for non-resident hunters to have a allocation of 15 moose but I was there because I just like you, have been a pawn in the game of chess orchestrated for by the same special interest groups. The winning theme is called divide and conquer.

As an effort to help bolster the economy in rural Alaska and to maybe help keep some young people in the villages I recently completed participating on behalf of the APHA in a statewide series of workshops throughout rural Alaska teaching about private lands wildlife management and business planning for guided sport hunting, fishing and non consumptive tourism opportunities on private lands. Let me assure you Chairman Morgan and committee members that what you have in front of you is not just Senate Bill 155. It is the single most important piece of legislation that this legislature and this administration has to begin to build the bridge that is so vitally needed between urban and rural Alaska.

Senate bill 155 is not about declaring war on Alaska's wolves. Alaska's wolf populations have never been threatened or endangered. Please see the ADF&G wolf facts attachment to this testimony. I do not know one Alaskan who does not care for or appreciate our wolves. We just do not like or understand the poor stewardship of putting them uncontrolled at the top of the food chain.

The APHA warrants you that what Alaska will gain by passage of SB 155 and the Administrations mandate of management of Alaska's wildlife populations for abundance will do far more benefit for Alaska's tourism industries and the vision that the world has of Alaska than any boycott can do us harm.

There has been much testimony in recent months regarding this Bill and how Alaska clearly said no to this effort in the last ballot measure initiative dealing with this issue. Please allow me to comment in those regards.

- a. The initiative passed by a margin of four percent.
- b. Alaskans for predator control were outspent by over a 100 - 1 margin.
- c. A significant portion of this initiatives funding came from outside organizations that thrive on using the sentimental naïve of the unformed to raise substantial funding for themselves.
- d. The Knowles Administration had a gag order in effect denying public comment or testimony on the issue by any ADF&G biologists that were getting paid as state employees to produce the science regarding this issue.
- e. The measure presented to the voters was so confusing in print that many of us did not understand whether a yes or no vote would mean a pro or con vote.

It is past time for us to stand up for Alaska and the vision that the world has of our state. A vision of incomparable wildlands and bountiful populations of wildlife. Our civic, constitutional and moral stewardship requirements need to be adhered to. The APHA urges you for the sake of our precious wildlife resources, Alaska itself and the people of rural Alaska to support this bill

Respectfully, Chairman Morgan and committee members,
Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you have any questions I would be glad to answer them for you if I can.

Robert Fithian
APHA Executive Director

Alaska Wolf Facts

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1300 College Road
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(907) 456-5156



During the fall of 1991, the Alaska Board of Game adopted the Strategic Wolf Management Plan, a plan based upon the final report from a citizen planning team. The resultant plan was designed to help the Alaska Board of Game and Department of Fish and Game work with other agencies, and the public, to conserve Alaska's wolves and their prey. The department would like to offer the following information to individuals who are concerned about the well-being of Alaska's wolf population and the diverse management strategies described in the wolf plan.

- > Wolves never have been threatened or endangered in Alaska. Alaska's wolves are abundant and widely distributed across the state. It is unfortunate that wolves are endangered elsewhere, however, management of game animals in Alaska is not based on their status in other states. The factors that led to the wolf's decline in other states (primarily habitat alteration and protection of a large livestock industry) are not prevalent in Alaska.
- > In 1986, Alaska's wolf population was estimated at 5,000 to 6,500 animals and was comprised of approximately 677 to 886 wolf packs. At that time, the wolf population trend was stable or increasing throughout the state. In 1990-91, the wolf population was estimated at 5,900-7,200 animals (700-900 packs). It is noteworthy that research has shown wolf estimates to be conservative in most cases. Based on our annual wolf surveys, wolf numbers continue to exhibit a stable or increasing trend in all occupied habitat.
- > Wolf distribution in Alaska is as great now as at any time since the turn of the century, and wolf numbers are limited primarily by availability of big game prey rather than by annual harvests.
- > The Alaska State Constitution requires that the state's fish and wildlife resources (including wolves) be managed for the common use of the people and be maintained on a sustained yield principle. To meet these requirements, wolves and their prey have been managed for their intrinsic and ecological value as well as for human use (including hunting and trapping), enjoyment, and edification.
- > Because wolves have a high reproductive rate and young wolves commonly disperse away from their parent packs, wolves can safely sustain a relatively high harvest. Most of Alaska's wolf populations can support harvests of 25-40 percent annually. With lower harvests, most populations can increase, unless food is scarce. Currently, the state's wolf population is harvested at only 17 percent annually.
- > The department generally manages game species according to guidelines established in wildlife management plans. The Strategic Wolf Management Plan (the Plan) was developed to provide these guidelines. The Plan is designed to ensure the long-term conservation of wolves in relation to their prey and habitat and to provide for a broad range of human uses and values of wolves and their prey.
- > The Plan is largely the result of recommendations made by a 12-member citizens' advisory group (planning team) that repre-

(over)

Alaska Wolf Facts

333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518
(907) 267-2180

1300 College Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 456-5156

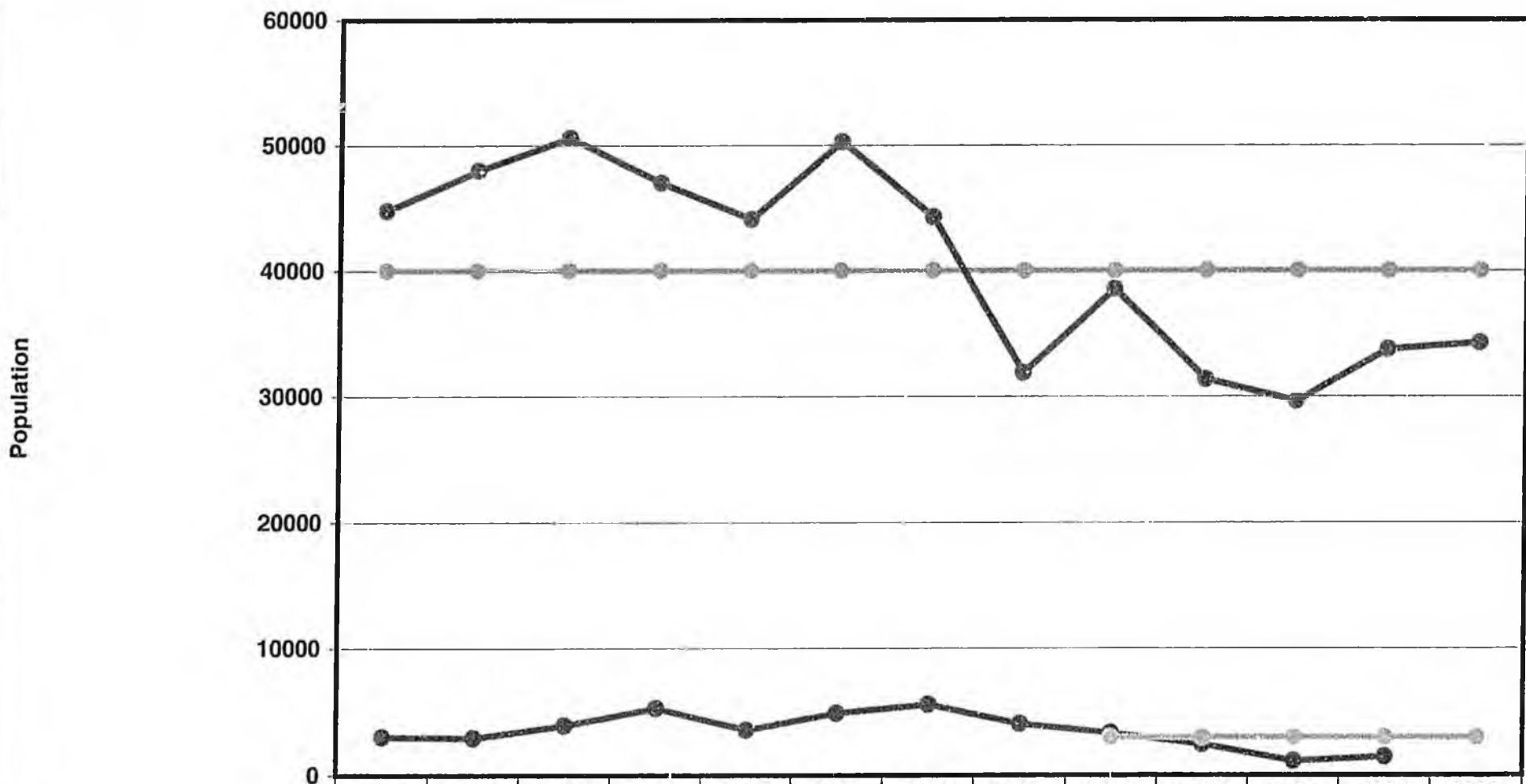


Zoning

Eventually, through the planning process, the entire state will be zoned 1-7. Zones 1 and 2 prohibit the hunting or trapping of wolves. Zones 3 and 4 allow the hunting and trapping of wolves but do not allow wolf control. Zones 5, 6, and 7 allow the hunting and trapping of wolves as well as the possibility of wolf control. In Zone 5 wolf control is not anticipated. In Zones 6 and 7 wolf control is likely.

- > The zones were constructed with careful consideration of the laws and management mandates on federal land, which comprises about 70 percent of Alaska. Most of the federal land, including all national parks, preserves and monuments, will be zoned 1-4 where no wolf control is allowed. That totals more than 112,000 square miles or about 19 percent of the state.
- > Although the planning process to date has focused only on portions of southcentral and interior Alaska (representing about one fifth of the state), already more than 8,000 square miles have been zoned to prohibit wolf hunting and trapping. When the rest of the state is zoned, that figure will at least double.
- > Although a large part of southcentral and interior Alaska have been zoned 5, 6, or 7, where wolf control is allowed, wolf control is unlikely to occur in most of it.
- > Areas in and around major population centers and Denali National Park have been zoned to prohibit wolf hunting and trapping. These zones are designed to accommodate wildlife viewing and protect Alaska's most visible wolves.
- > Particular care was exercised in zoning around Denali National Park to ensure maximum protection of wolves residing in the park if they leave the park. Wolves which live primarily in Denali and other national parks, preserves, monuments and refuges will not be subject to wolf control.

**Neichina Herd Caribou Population Trends
AWCA 103**



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
● Harvest	3020	2920	3927	5270	3573	4916	5601	4027	3306	2450	1090	1428	
○ Projected Harvest									3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
● Population Objective	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000	40000
● Fall Population Est.	44800	48000	50600	47000	44093	50281	44273	31893	38552	31365	29600	33745	34280

Brown Bear Trend Information
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Association
January 2003

Sources: ADF&G Harvest Surveys, ADF&G Annual Performance Reports, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Reports, BOG minutes, BOG Proposal Booklet(s).

Trends Graph: 8 years of information on brown bear population and human harvest. Board of Game population objective and ADF&G population estimate.

Analysis: A brown bear census has not been performed in several years. The estimated 1500 brown bears in the Unit is considered a very low number by many wildlife observers.

The ADF&G testified that a sustaining harvest of brown bears would be 2% to 5% of the population. The harvest has been over 125 bear for each year charted. If 125 brown bears is even 5%, the population would be 2500. If the 125 bear "average" is 2%, there are over 7000.

The Board has liberalized the brown bear harvest regulations by removing the resident tag fee, lengthening the season and changing the "one bear every four years" to one bear every year. The ADF&G stated, "Since regulations were liberalized in 1995, brown bear harvests have been high in Unit 13, yet no noticeable decline in brown bear numbers has been detected in the unit. Prolonged harvest at this level may effect a decrease in brown bear abundance that is dictated by our management objective." In the next paragraph they stated, "Current brown bear (harvest) levels are sustainable. Unless additional liberalization in seasons, bag limits, or methods and means are enacted, it is doubtful the Unit 13 brown bear population will be reduced substantially in the near future." Harvest statistics show that there has been no significant change in the sex or age.

What is missing is the fact that the number of hunters in Unit 13 is decreasing. There are many proposals to design a 2003 - 2004 moose hunt that will discourage hunters from Unit 13. The number of Tier II caribou permits will be further reduced to accommodate a reduced harvest objective. The number of large adult brown bear is only a small part of the population and few hunters are willing to spend the money to take care of a brown bear trophy for a sub-adult bear. The declining number of moose and caribou hunters causes a decline in bear harvest.

Note that nothing is said about black bear populations in Unit 13. This is a missing link that may be as out of balance as the brown bears. Brown bear population reduction will be very difficult under the best of circumstances.

Questions:

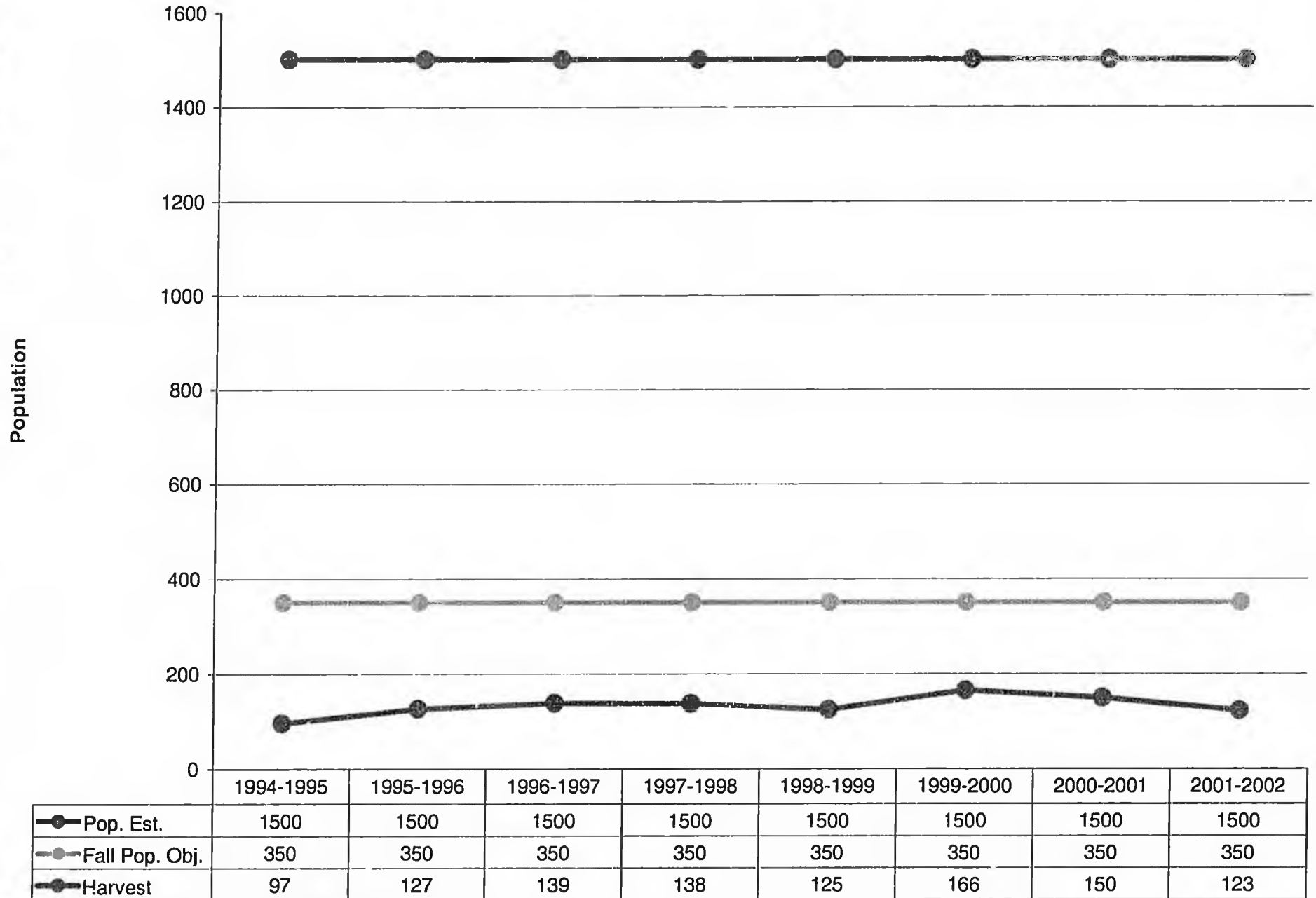
When will the ADF&G explain to the Alaskan public that they "made a mistake" in brown bear census and therefore the long term management strategy in Unit 13?

Why wait until moose and caribou populations bottom out (within the next three to four years) to discover the impact of this huge bear population?

How many years does it take to "recover" the moose and caribou populations under the present brown bear "management" regime?

There is a high population of black bears in GMU 13 in addition to the brown bears. The effects of predation by black bears is not well understood. Because of Tier II for caribou, antler and season restrictions for moose and a prohibition on non-resident hunters, few "first time" bear hunters can be expected in GMU 13. Are there ways to further increase the harvest?

GMU 13 Bear Trends AWCA 103



ALASKA STATE SENATE



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SB 155 Sponsor Statement

An Act Relating to Predator Control Programs

Senate Bill 155 alters language within Section 16.05.783 of the Alaska Statutes relating to the Regulation of Fish and Game. These alterations provide the Fish and Game Board and Commissioner with necessary tools in the management of game populations throughout the state.

The first alteration clarifies Legislative intent with respect to airborne predator control programs. The second alteration provides for game population objectives to be taken into consideration in determining whether or not a predator control program should be implemented.

As an example, if the minimum game population objective is met, but the harvest level is not, a management decision—under current law—cannot be made even if it is determined that predators are limiting the game population. The second alteration allows the Board to use both prey *and* game population objectives when making a determination with respect to the use of a predator control program.

Senate Bill 155 makes changes that will allow the Fish and Game Board as well as the Department of Fish & Game to better manage wildlife by *balancing* predator and game populations based on the best science available.



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Community & Regional Affairs
committee name

Committee on SB 155 Predator Control Programs, dated 5-13-03
bill # / subject public hearing date

PLEASE ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING PAGE AS
WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Signed:

D. S. Haeg

David S. Haeg

Testifier

Alaska's Western Wildlife Alliance

Representing (optional)

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May 13, 2003

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 155.

Chairman Morgan and Committee members. My name is David S. Haeg and I would like to testify for Alaska's Western Wildlife Alliance, of which I am the director.

We feel SB155 to be vitally important to returning wildlife numbers back to the healthy and abundant levels needed for use by people who depend on them to feed their families.

In the past 10 years we have seen such a drastic decline in moose numbers that many of us now have to make due without. How can this be in a state that possesses the best moose habitat in the world? In many areas caribou and sheep are following the same trend and will end up as bad off as moose unless something is done.

SB155 will allow the management of wildlife so desperately needed by virtually all of rural Alaska. It will do so by balancing predator and prey ratios at levels that are healthy and at the same time sustainable.

Again, we feel SB155 to be a huge step in the right direction and urge your strong support of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David S. Haeg".

David S. Haeg, Director
Alaska's Western Wildlife Alliance
