

SB

155

# ALASKA STATE SENATE



Session:  
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**Senator Ralph Seekins**  
District D

## **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.

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Testimony On SB-155  
Alaska Outdoor Council  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
March 31, 2003  
By: Carl L. Rosier

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. For the record my name is Carl Rosier and I am here today to testify on behalf of the Alaska Outdoor Council. For those who may not know me I was employed with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for almost 30 years and finished my career as Commissioner under the Hickel Administration. The Outdoor Council is a statewide association of 40 plus outdoor recreation groups with a membership that exceeds ten thousand Alaskans. The organization promotes good conservation of our fish and wildlife resources, sustainability of wildlife habitat, protection of public access and fair allocation of fish and game resources for all Alaskans.

The Council supports the provisions of SB-155 and its companion bill HB-208. These bills deal with clarification of airborne or same day airborne as a tool for predator control in areas identified by the Board of Game that require control measures for recovery of low or declining prey populations of game species. You as legislators have the benefit of supporting one of the finest Boards of Game I have personally observed in many years. The newly appointed members are solid long term Alaskans that have been managers of the resource, carried on businesses dependent on those resources and know and appreciate the benefits to all Alaskans from well managed game herds

It is unfortunate that this new Board has been somewhat hamstrung by direction from the third floor that control with the use of helicopters will not be approved. Helicopters are by far the most efficient, humane and economic method for conduct of a control program. Keep in mind also that we are focusing here on a control program, not a hunting action in which "fair chase" becomes a consideration. Be aware also that AOC is not advocating the extermination of all predator as we have been accused of in the past.

The current Board of Game has identified three game management units 13, 16-B and 19-D that require immediate control action. All three areas have experienced tremendous drops of over 70% in moose densities during the last ten years. Units 13 and 19-D have had previous Board control plans gathering dust on the shelf for several years. Implementation of these plans was never permitted under the previous administration with the resultant continued decline in the moose populations. Action at this time is critical in order to just stop the decline and begin a long re-building process of the moose herds in these areas.

We have three minor suggestions that will in our reading of the bill, strengthen it and better protect aircraft owners that may choose to participate in a Board approved control program. The first is insertion of the words "in identified game management units" following the word "shooting" on page 1 line 8. A second suggestion is insertion of the words "harvest management objectives adopted" following the words "based on" page 1 line 10. A third suggestion is the addition of a new section (a) (3) that reads "Prior to taking a wolf, wolverine, fox or lynx either airborne or same day airborne a person must obtain a permit issued by the Commissioner", page 2 last line.

Game management over a broad area of the state is in need of returning to a policy of intensive management. The natural cycle policys endorsed by the last administration have created hardships for all Alaskans and permitted many populations to decline into the catch term "Predator Pit". A long term commitment to intensive management is necessary to bring these populations back and to protect herds that are healthy. Passage and hopefully the action to follow will start us back on that path. It is only a small step but the bill is a step in the right direction and will benefit all user groups as well the wildlife resources.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



# Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee

on SB155, dated \_\_\_\_\_  
(bill # / subject)

I am very much in favor of land and shoot hunting/trapping as a means of reducing predation. I have an extensive background in wildlife conservation and have been an avid hunter and trapper all my life, having participated in land and shoot trapping for over 20 years. I am concerned that the inclusion of wolverine, fox, and lynx in your proposals may result in limited support from people who would otherwise be very supportive of the idea. Being primarily scavengers or predators of small animals and birds, these species pose little threat to moose or caribou populations.

My biggest concern is that wolverine populations may be over exploited in some areas as an unintended consequence of otherwise sound predator reduction efforts. I know from personal experience that wolverines can be extremely vulnerable to land and shoot hunting/trapping. They travel extensively across open terrain during late winter and many times are much easier to locate than wolves. Wolverine fur prices are currently higher than for wolves. There's absolutely no doubt that every wolf hunter out there would stop to pick up a \$300-350 wolverine incidental to his wolf hunting activities. It's purely a matter of economics. Simply put, wolverines are potentially more profitable than wolves to the average hunter/trapper. A 30 pound wolverine takes up less room in the airplane than a 100 pound wolf. He's often easier to locate than a wolf, usually being encountered in open, treeless terrain where he can easily be harvested without expenditure of additional fuel. Often wolverines are encountered incidentally, in a vulnerable situation, while the pilot is tracking wolves across the country. It's a no brainer to conclude that such a wolverine will end up in the back of the supercub as it continues to look for wolves.

It's also my fear that, given the opportunity, many hunters/trappers would target wolverines rather than wolves for purely economic reasons in those areas where wolverine populations are the most vulnerable if it were legal to do so. Wolverine populations are not as prolific as wolves and can be over exploited much more easily, especially if you have a whole "air force" of aerial wolf hunters out there paying \$3.00 or more for a gallon of aviation fuel. I think it may be difficult to sell land and shoot fox and lynx hunting to the public in the name of predator reduction as well, but at least those populations would not be put in jeopardy by the practice. I think there's a lot of support for your ideas, especially if we can focus our attention on the reduction of predation on moose and caribou. Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Charles R. Rodgers P.O. Box 293 Aniak, AK. 99557 Currently in Soldotna at 262-5547



# Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the 5 JUD  
 committee on SB 155, dated 03/31/03  
 committee name  
 bill/subject

My name is Aloia Stikwan, and I am representing Ahtna, Inc. The Ahtna People support land and street some day, airborne hunting in Unit 11 and Unit 13.

The caribou herds in Unit 11 and Unit 13 are at a low population, which is due to wolves, and bears preying upon the calves.

The Moose population is low in Unit 11 and Unit 13, too. The calves of the moose population are preyed upon by the high number of wolves and bears in these two units.

The Ungulate population will continue to decline, if nothing is done to protect their calves.

Brown Bears and Black bears should be added to the list of predators for Unit 11 and Unit 13. The Black and Brown Bears are numerous, and are killing the calves of caribou and moose.

Unit 13 is a popular and impacted place, during the hunting seasons for caribou and moose. This will help to reduce the ungulate populations, even more so.

Please read and take into consideration, when you vote on this - my statement.

The Copper Basin is and will become more impacted, the moose and caribou calves need to be protected from predators in Unit 11 and Unit 13.

Signed: Aloia Stikwan

Testifier

Ahtna, Inc.

Representing (Optional)

P.O. Box 649 Glennallen, AK 99588

Address

(907) 822-3476

Phone No.

*Chairman and members  
Senate Judiciary Committee*

**From:** Byron Haley <bwhaley4@gci.net>

**Date:** Mon Mar 31, 2003 7:16:31 AM America/Anchorage

**Subject:**

Testimony at the LIO Office Monday 3-31-03 By BYRON W. HALEY.

I AM BYRON HALEY A 54 YEAR RESIDENT OF FAIRBANKS, AK.

I STRONGLY SUPPORT H.B. 208 AND ALSO S.B. 155. THESE ARE THE KIND OF TOOLS NEEDED TO HELP TO GET A.D.F.&G. BACK IN THE GAME TO CONTROL THE PREDATOR POPULATION AND RESTORING ARE BIG GAME POPULATION. WE ARE IN A LOT OF TROUBLE IN UNIT 13 AND SUB. UNIT 19D ALONG WITH OTHER AREAS OF THE STATE OF ALASKA DUE TO THE LACK OF PREDATOR CONTROL. WHY DO WE HAVE TO WAIT TILL WE ARE IN A PREDATOR/PREY PIT SITUATION BEFORE WE TAKE ANY ACTION TO REDUCE THE PREDATOR POPULATION. WHEN YOU HAVE VERY LITTLE MOOSE CALF RECRUITMENT ALONG WITH THE LOSS OF SOME ADULT MOOSE YOU CAN NOT SCIENTIFICALLY MANAGE BIG GAME POPULATION WITH OUT EARLY PREDATOR CONTROL.

THANK YOU

BYRON W. HALEY

*Byron W. Haley*

1002 PIONEER ROAD

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701-2818



MARC LESTER / Anchorage Daily News

rough trees while browsing near Middle Rock Road and Midden Way in the Stuckagain Heights neighborhood Friday. A calf also wandered

## Used cuts in education into House opposition

Schools priority, the alternative?

ERHAM  
SWS

Gov. Frank Murkowski's funding for schools is double in the state House. Speaker Pete Kott, R-Eagle, Monday that he expects strong support in the Legislature to keep the \$20 million grants and student bus-  
governor wants cut.

"I think there is enough importance put on K-12 education that most of the members I am talking to are going to be supportive of keeping it" in the budget, Kott said.

The House education budget subcommittee, a mix of Democrats and Republicans, recommends that lawmakers reject the proposed cuts, which would hit Learning Opportunity Grants and pupil transportation by about \$10 million each.

The cuts would be devastating to

See Page B-3, CUTS



■ FOR MORE on the Alaska Legislature, including easy ways to contact legislators, visit [www.adn.com/legislature](http://www.adn.com/legislature)

## Bill 'a tool' to manage wolves

By JOEL GAY  
Anchorage Daily News

Sen. Ralph Seekins has introduced a bill to make it easier for the state to use aircraft while conducting wolf-kill programs.

The move comes amid renewed proposals to reduce predator numbers in the upper Susitna Valley, in the Nelchina Basin and around McGrath.

Critics called Senate Bill 155 an attempt to override science and popular opinion.

"It's terrible," said Paul Joslin, conservation biologist with the Alaska Wildlife Alliance.

See Page B-2, WOLVES

## Voters to underwrite a spending spree



maintaining streets are paid means they tax bill. Total bond is more costly. Proposition 3, the \$7.27 million cost \$4.40 per mile \$1 million cost \$1. But million emergency bond, will because it will a year to op-

age Service Area bond, Proposition 4, will cost \$25.60 per \$100,000 almost entirely because of its size: \$39.95 million. Proposition 7, the \$4.99 million parks and recreation bond, will cost only \$3.38.

The same cost differential occurs in the school bonds. Proposition 9, \$41.79 million worth of mainly school repairs, will cost \$9.97 per \$100,000. Proposition 10, \$42 million for a new administration building, will cost \$10.48, the difference being operations and maintenance charges. Proposition 11, \$125.54 million to build and renovate schools, will cost \$33.16. That's because Proposition 11 is larger, and it carries and operations and maintenance price tag of \$2.4 million a year.

Okay, that was a blizzard of numbers. What do they all mean?

Simply that city and School District officials are asking us to underwrite a spending spree. Should we?

That depends in part on what you think of the specifics of each bond. Do you think Girdwood needs a new li-

brary? Proposition 3 would build it. The bonds would also buy the land and pay for the of a new library in Eagle River, and remodel the Loussac.

But voters don't often make up their minds like that. We rarely know the specifics of these bond packages. Instead, some of us cast our votes based on how we feel about the type of spending involved. If you are for libraries, you'll vote for Proposition 3.

There's some sense to this. The fact is, the specifics aren't sure things; money from bonds doesn't have to be spent on the promised projects. It usually is, but it doesn't have to be.

And the city isn't exactly overwhelming voters with information. Take Proposition 4. The information offered is a list of more than 50 projects with a typical entry reading, "Bayshore Drive surface rehab - 100<sup>th</sup> to Marathon Circle - design." How necessary is this project? Unless you drive that section of Bayshore, you'll never know. How much of the \$39.95 million does it cost? No way to tell.

So you're left to vote on whether you think street and drainage improvements are important, or whether you think the public works staff knows what it is doing.

Or you can vote based on your general sense of whether enough public money is being spent on road and drainage projects. My sense is that it is. Trying to build and maintain enough paved streets to handle the traffic in a northern city that relies entirely on the automobile and rests substantially on wetlands is a losing proposition. We'll never have a complete set of nicely paved roads. The question is, what level of cracks and potholes are you willing to live with?

Or you can vote on your reaction to how much money the city already takes out of your pocket, and how much more it wants this time. You've got the numbers. You can do the math.

■ Mike Doogan's opinion column appears each Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. Reach him at 257-4350 or [mndoogan@adn.com](mailto:mndoogan@adn.com).

## WOLVES: Bill aims to empower wildlife managers

Continued from B-1

"The voters of Alaska passed bailout measures twice that said they didn't want to use aircraft for same-day airborne hunting of wolves. What Ralph Seekins has done is tried to reverse that."

Other people praised Seekins, a Fairbanks Republican, for giving wildlife managers another way to boost moose and caribou stocks. Regardless of how wolf control occurs and who does it, said McGrath resident and Board of Game member Mike Fleagle, "we'd like to see it done."

Many hunters and rural Alaskans blame wolves for reducing moose and caribou populations in some areas, which has limited subsistence and sport harvests. But attempts to establish wolf control programs have met strong resistance.

A successful tourism boycott in the early 1990s killed one. In 1996, voters banned land-and-shoot hunting. After the Alaska Legislature tinkered with the law in early 2000, voters approved another ballot measure that fall that reiterated their opposition to same-day airborne hunting.

Seekins' bill would not allow airborne sport hunting but would make it easier for the Fish and Game Department to pursue wolf control in approved areas.

The Legislature approve a predator control program in the mid-1990s. But the hurdles written into the law, and former-Gov. Tony Knowles' reluctance to approve wolf control, kept the regulations out of public view, said David James, the Department of Fish and Game's regional game supervisor in Fairbanks.

"It's not like somebody's trying to cook up something that's not already on the books," James said. The department has had authority to conduct airborne and land-and-shoot hunting, but only if certain criteria were met.

"If it all fits that template, bingo, the commis-

“

*Game Board member Fleagle and the Alaska Outdoor Council would prefer the hunting be left to the public.*

”

sioner can approve it."

Seekins said his measure would make it easier for game managers to put "intensive management" into practice by clarifying what he said are gray areas in the law. For example, the new language specifically permits "airborne or same-day airborne shooting." The existing bill authorizes "shooting from the air."

More important, Seekins said, SB 155 allows managers to make a pre-emptive strike against predators.

Under the existing law, the Board of Game can seek predator control only when the prey population — generally moose or caribou — has dropped below previously specified levels. His bill would allow predator control regardless of the prey population.

"It gives you a chance to manage without focusing on just one objective," such as the number of moose around McGrath or caribou around Nelchina, he said.

If the board approves a predator control plan for an area — it already has for all or parts of hunting units 13, 16 and 19 — and can convince the commissioner of Fish and Game that wolf numbers should be trimmed, the commissioner could authorize airborne shooting.

"It's not a philosophical game," Seekins said.

"It's the constitutional responsibility to manage for sustained yield. All we're saying is give managers a tool to let them manage. Don't tie their hands."

Who would do the shooting is still a question. Though the existing legislation requires the shooting be done by a state employee, "it might be smart to make it employee, agent or permittee," Seekins said.

The intent is to kill the predators "efficiently, effectively and professionally," he said. "My intent is not to turn loose a bunch of wild-eyed guys in a Super Cub."

Game Board member Fleagle and the Alaska Outdoor Council would prefer the hunting be left to the public, Fleagle said.

"If private citizens are given authority under the state, that's just fine," he said. "In reality, there's probably a lot of people who would pay to participate."

Opponents of wolf control say there must be better ways to put more moose into Alaskans' freezers than by shooting wolves from the air, Joslin said.

"What's really needed are better solutions than going after high-controversy stuff — like working to improve habitat."

He said he doubts state biologists have accurate population estimates in most areas, which makes any decision to kill wolves premature.

And a recent poll by Dittman Research Corp. of Alaska suggests that state residents still don't approve of airborne or land-and-shoot hunting, Joslin said.

"The Legislature ought to be aware their constituents will be very opposed to what they're doing," he said.

■ Daily News reporter Joel Gay can be reached at jgay@adn.com or at 257-4310.

## STATE IN BRIEF

### SELDOVIA

#### Kit plane crashes; pilot h

Dennis Pollard, 44, was serious 1 p.m. Sunday when the home-b was flying crashed on takeoff u Federal Aviation Administration s

The engine suddenly lost po craft, about the size of a Super ( 150 feet in the air, according t Transportation Safety Board. The land back on the runway in front investigator Clint Johnson said. T runway hard and the pilot suffere Johnson said.

He said Monday he spoke to P been admitted to Providence A Center.

—Anchor

### JUNEAU

#### Ship passengers might p

A bill calling for a \$100 head tax passengers was introduced Mond House. Freshman Rep. Carl Ga said he is sponsoring the bill bec to raise funds so the state does spending on education.

The Department of Revenue es could raise more than \$70 million a a projected 720,000 cruise ship visi

Gatto said the state constitution ka to be reimbursed for use of its said it's reasonable that tourists p joyment of the state's resources si hunters and loggers pay to use sl and timber.

House Bill 207 was assigned to ic Development, Trade and Touris tion and Finance committees.

—The A

## MYSTROM: The former mayor wants to return to the good old days

Continued from B-1

The Wuerch administration has been too cozy with unions and too careless with taxpayers' money, Mystrom said. Under Wuerch's watch, the city

### RICK MYSTROM

Birth date: January 2, 1944

Q. What political figure (current or his-

members in that district."

Mystrom said he thinks he usually tried to consult Assembly members.

"Maybe we didn't always go to the

time in clashing with t est and most powerful resenting Anchorage's and firefighters.

# wounded civilians overload hospitals

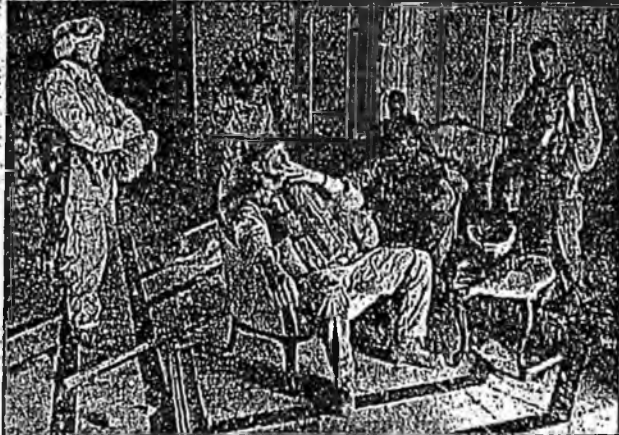
**CASUALTIES:** Weary, ill-equipped staffs tend to countless victims.

By ANTHONY SHADID  
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — Its sirens wailing, the cream-colored ambulance barreled into the compound of Baghdad's Kindi Hospital. Doctors in blue scrubs — some of them working night and day — rushed forward, swinging open its doors.

Hussein on a stretcher, its leather still soaked in blood. They moved toward another stretcher, driving away hordes of flies, and rolled Abdel-Karim Youssef into an emergency room suffused with the stench of blood, dirt and disinfectant.

Both were swathed in cream to conceal their burns, over both of Hussein's arms, and along the face and hands of Youssef. The staff said nothing. The only sounds came from the slight



JOHN MOORE / The Associated Press

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Chad Touchett, center, relaxes with comrades from A Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, following a search in one of Saddam Hussein's palaces damaged after a bombing Monday in Baghdad.

See Back Page, CIVILIANS

## Key developments

- U.S. Army tanks rumbled through downtown Baghdad, seizing one of Saddam Hussein's palaces.
- A U.S. bomber struck a Baghdad building where Saddam and other regime officials were believed to be. It was not clear whether anyone was killed or wounded.
- U.S. Marines surged across a shattered bridge into Baghdad, opening the way for thousands more from the southeast.
- The U.S. military is testing samples from a site in Iraq where soldiers found metal drums containing possible chemical weapons.
- Coalition warplanes struck Iraqi positions in the fight to advance on the two northern cities still in Iraqi control.
- To read another in a series of profiles of Alaskans in the war, see Page A-4. More profiles are online at [www.adn.com/iraq/alaskans](http://www.adn.com/iraq/alaskans)

# Governor takes heat from hunters expecting aerial wolf control

**MCGRATH:** Backers of state sharpshooters in copters feel betrayed.

By JOEL GAY  
Anchorage Daily News

Gov. Frank Murkowski is under fire from hunters who feel betrayed by his reluctance to authorize aerial wolf control near McGrath.

"It's 180 degrees from what he was saying during the campaign," said Chuck Gray, a long-time pilot and guide and former publisher of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Last week Murkowski said he would not allow state employees to shoot wolves from helicopters, instead leaving the wolf control to hunters and trappers on the ground around McGrath.

That's tantamount to doing nothing, Gray said. He and others fear Murkowski has caved in to political pressure or fears of a tourism boycott like the one launched after Alaska's last wolf-kill program in the early 1990s.

"I think he's adopted a policy predicated on and subservient to threats from animal welfare and environmental interests," said Greg Roczicka, a former

Board of Game member from Bethel.

Advocates of killing wolves to boost moose and caribou populations had hoped for a quick-start to wolf control this spring, taking advantage of snow cover to track the animals. If nothing gets off the ground now, it'll be at least next winter before any wolf control can realistically occur, they say.

Murkowski denies that his position on wolf control has changed. He still supports "active wildlife management," he said Friday in Anchorage. But there are other methods of achieving the same ends short of using helicopters and state sharpshooters, he said.

"We've maintained predator control in other areas of Alaska without gunning 'em down

by helicopter," he said. "I'm not convinced it can't be done with the involvement of local people."

Though Murkowski didn't elaborate on his reasons for leaving state employees out of the McGrath wolf kill, he did note that wolf control "has a volatility that goes nationwide. We have to recognize that."

See Back Page, WOLVES

## GAME SHOW HIJINKS

# 'Millionaire' contestant found guilty of cheating way to top prize

*Coughs from friend in audience gave clues, aroused suspicion*

By JILL LAWLESS  
The Associated Press

LONDON — An army major, his wife and a college teacher, were convicted Monday of using "coded coughs" to win the top prize on Britain's "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"

Charles Ingram maintained that luck, military training and strategy had helped him answer the \$1.55 million question — "A number 1 followed by 100 zeros is known

contest. Judge Geoffrey Rivlin upbraided the defendants for a "shabby schoolboy trick." But he spared them jail terms, giving them suspended sentences of a year to 18 months because they had been "shamed in the most public way and your reputations ruined." They were also ordered to pay thousands of dollars in fines and court costs.

"I am not at all sure that it was sheer greed that motivated this offense," he said. "I am sure all three of you



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4/8/03 ADN

May 4, 2003

NKS

SUNDAY

# News-Miner



Mostly sunny with cool breezes continuing.  
High 52, Low 31  
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Sam Harrel/News-Miner  
Friend Ralph Perdue during a Celebration at Tribal Hall.

## remembered

# Predator debate resumes

By TOM MORAN  
News-Miner Juneau Bureau

JUNEAU—Land-and-shoot predator control got a step closer to reality Saturday afternoon as the state Senate passed a bill introduced by Sen. Ralph Seekins, R-Fairbanks, that would make the practice clearly legal. The bill faces a reconsideration vote today; if it passes, it can proceed to the state House.

"This bill allows the people who are responsible for managing game populations to actually manage, and to do it effectively, efficiently and humanely," Seekins said during a Saturday floor session.



Seekins' bill would allow Fish and Game employees or private hunters authorized by the Board of Game to engage in land-and-shoot killing of wolves and other predators as part of a predator control program, such as the one proposed for the McGrath area. It also would allow the board to consider more factors, including both predator and prey numbers; when deciding whether a predator control program is merited.

The bill would also lessen the role of the commissioner of Fish and Game in authorizing and controlling the scope of predator control. Seekins had introduced a bill substitute that would have theoretically allowed the board to implement some

## PREDATOR: Land-and-shoot bill

Continued from Page A1

forms of predator control without even needing permission from the administration and the governor.

However, according to Matt Robus of the Department of Fish and Game, it appears such an idea won't fly: He said earlier this week that the administration would still have to issue specific permits, or such a program would violate federal law.

Seekins' bill and a companion bill in the House are the latest chapter in the years of controversy surrounding predator control, which has been a thorn in the side of Alaska's governors for a decade. Opponents argue land-and-shoot wolf control has been condemned by the public in popular votes in both 1996 and 2000, and also contend that state-sponsored wolf killing would spark a tourist boycott of Alaska.

There has also been dispute over whether land-and-shoot hunting is legal already, despite the public votes; Seekins argues that it is, and says his bill would just clarify language to reflect that.

Seekins spoke in broad terms in favor of predator control Saturday, arguing that state moose

populations have dropped over time as predator numbers have risen.

"Something is killing these animals, and they are not being taken home to feed Alaskan families," he said.

He argued that the statute changes would increase the ability to manage game based on science. "They provide the Game Board and the department with the necessary tools to manage game populations throughout the state," he said.

Sen. Scott Ogan, R-Palmer, also spoke in favor of the bill. "We've got to do this for the sake of Alaskans, and for the sake of the Alaska lifestyle and those that depend on it, and for a myriad of other reasons," he said.

Sen. Kim Elton, D-Juneau opposes the bill. While Elton said he supports predator control, he noted that the land-and-shoot method had been roundly condemned by voters twice.

"We all understand that twice the public has voted on this one method of predator control," he said. "The voters spoke. They not only spoke, they shouted very loudly of what their desire was on this one method of predator con-

trol."

Seekins argued that the bill still fit within the bounds of those votes.

"We did not change the will of the people, we changed the way it's implemented," he said.

Elton also argued that it was a dangerous idea to limit the say of the Fish and Game commissioner. "It limits the latitude of one of the governor's cabinet members," he said. "I think we ought not to do that to this governor or for any future governor."

Seekins argued that the bill would just bring the commissioner's rights regarding predator control in line with his other rights. "No place else in any of our regulations or laws is a commissioner given veto power over the Board of Game or the Board of Fish," he said.

Elton's was the lone voice of dissent Saturday, though several other Democrats who may have opposed the bill were absent from the session. The bill passed 14-1.

Elton filed notice of reconsideration, meaning the bill is subject to a revote today.

Reporter Tom Moran can be reached at [tmoran@newsminer.com](mailto:tmoran@newsminer.com) or (907)463-4893.

## PROJECTS: Millions slated for Interior

Continued from Page A1

Wilken said the TCC had requested \$5 million total from the state and he hopes to continue funding in future budgets.

"It wasn't in the governor's budget, so we had to do a little nip-and-tuck to get that money," he said. "I've tried to ... gather up as much as I could, to show some state support."

Wilken also included \$300,000 for "electronic improvements" to the Carlson Center. Wilken said that money will go toward installing a new scoreboard at the center, a project expected to cost

close to \$1 million. Wilken said with the \$300,000, and \$175,000 from the state last year, the center can now turn to advertisers for additional funding.

"Now that they have the seed money, they're going to go out and get advertisers to sponsor the scoreboard, so it enables them to generate more dollars," he said. "It's a revenue generator, is what it is. Plus, it makes the place a lot more fun and a lot more marketable."

Other increases to the Interior were small but significant. Among them:

- The capital budget would give \$250,000 to the operation of the Nenana Student Living Center.
- It would fund \$275,000 for

around, with \$20 million dropped from runway reconstruction and \$17.5 million placed in taxiway reconstruction. The committee added another \$800,000 to the \$3.46 million included in the governor's budget to begin a study of renovating or replacing the airport's main terminal, while dropping \$500,100 of other planning money.

Besides the airport, the Senate proposal also retains millions of dollars proposed for Interior projects in Murkowski's budget, much of it earmarked for road funding. That includes:

- \$4.1 million to begin building a 25-mile road from the Elliott Highway to the community of Rampart.
- \$4 million to fund

Mother's Day  
May 11th

Day  
LS!

Tulips

System.  
Elegant Spring  
bloom!  
SAVE up to \$2.00

3<sup>99</sup>

PRICE WITH CARD

May's

# ALASKA STATE SENATE



Session:  
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 6, 2003

To: Office of Representative Hugh Fate

From: Senator Ralph Seekins

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ralph 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.



# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
 Bill Version: SB 155  
 (S) Publish Date: 4/17/03

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Fish and Game  
 Title: Relating to hunting on the same day BRU: Wildlife Conservation  
airborne Component: Wildlife Conservation  
 Sponsor: Senator Seekins  
 Requester: Senate Judiciary Component No.: 473

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Matthew H. Robus, Acting Director Phone 465-4190  
 Division: Wildlife Conservation Date/Time 3/30/03 1:23 PM  
 Approved by: Kevin C. Duffy, Commissioner Date 3/30/2003  
 Agency: Department of Fish and Game

# Public Testimony at March 6 Board of Game Meeting

(TC-19)

Alaska Board of Game  
 19 D East Testimony  
 March 6, 2003  
 Donne Fleagle, Box 33, McGrath, Alaska 99627  
 General Manager, MTNT, Limited

My name is Donne Fleagle and I am the General Manager of MTNT, Limited, a for profit village corporation consolidated in 1976 from the villages of McGrath, Takotna, Nikolai and Telida. Our village corporation has 356 shareholders. All four of these communities rely heavily on harvested game and have since this area was populated in undocumented time.

I would like to congratulate those of you who were recently appointed to the Board and thank you for your willingness to serve our state. I would also like to express our area's thanks to the Board of Game for this opportunity to express our position on the moose concerns in GMU19D(e) once again.

I am a life long resident of GMU 19De raised in the area and chose this area to reside in when I became an adult. It has been a healthy place to grow up in and an excellent place to raise a family.

I once again have the pleasure of reiterating our areas position based on sound management techniques for the betterment of all wildlife populations. We believe that if measures are taken to reduce predation on our moose herd there would be many positive benefits. A few benefits would be an abundance of wildlife viewing, subsistence needs met, traditional and cultural uses continued, a healthy environment/habitat and it would definitely free up more Board of Game time and Fish and Game resources to concentrate on other issues needing attention.

Wolves have never been and will never be in any danger of being totally (and I use the word I've seen lately in the Alaska Daily News - "massacred" - from the face of 19D(e) despite the outlandish claims we read in the newspapers from those who are so easily led as to believe in such nonsense or are of themselves perpetuating these lies for their own financial and/or public relations purposes.

Rather than it being "disastrous," it would be very "beneficial" if the State did implement a predator control program.

The three main species that concern us are moose, wolves and bears. Out of the three species, wolves reproductivity rates are the highest. Bears being relocated is based on science and reproductivity rates. A bear does not deliver her first cub until she is 7. Normally bears will have two cubs and they will not be ready to breed on the average for 3 years afterwards if their cubs are weaned. Wolves have litter sizes on the average of 6 and a maximum of 11 annually. Moose on the other hand have 1 to 2 calves per year.

The calf mortality for 2001 was 75% due to bears and wolves. For 2002 with 2.5 months remaining, 55 out of 81 calves are dead and their demise can be attributed to 24 killed by wolves, 19 killed by black bears, 12 by grizzly bears and 1 unknown cause.

This is no surprise to us who live in the interior. We have lost our pet dogs to wolf predation for a few years now. Our yards are no longer a guaranteed safe place for our animals. The health and safety issues that we have raised in the past were only confirmed by the incident that happened in southeast to a little boy who was drug off by a wolf but was saved by his friend in the spring of 2000.

For almost 20 years we have seen our wildlife resources dwindle to the point of no return and for almost 10 years, we have been involved in the political system meant to address concerns such as ours. Neither has received the credibility or the action they are so deserving of. We are people who are not inclined to get involved in politics beyond our village boundaries.

Our way of life demands our full attention. We have jobs, families, we heat with wood which means we have to harvest that renewable resource and we live off the land which also means a fall harvest. Fish and caribou are not options for our geographical area. Idle time is a luxury and not a commodity. Generally we are not impacted by any population base outside our area however, when we witnessed our moose populations crashing, we began our study in National and State Politics and we have been rapid learners. We had to carve time out of our lives to appear at various board of game meetings and other functions. We had fund raisers to send our participants forward to deliver our message and our testimony. Our community has scraped together the funds to continue to travel, to speak out and proceed down this road and we intend to weigh in every chance there is when it has a direct impact on our wildlife and our area residents.

In 1995 the BOG addressed our concerns when we waved a red flag signaling to the outside world that an unhealthy predator to prey ratio existed. A Predator Control Program was passed. In 1996 our area petitioned the Board of Game to move up implementation of a Predator Control Program which was to be implemented in 1997. The Board of Game again responded after considering "sound science." Governor Knowles then asked a National Academy of Sciences to study predator management in Alaska and he even traveled to McGrath to meet with us in September of 1996. It was a great meeting. The end result? One of our locals was appointed to the Board of Game. Then the Governor wanted us to demonstrate public support so our area set out to get that. We succeeded. Our resolutions from various statewide organizations such as AFN are part of the record. When we jumped through that hoop all of sudden the ante went up and we were told we needed to get broad public support and it obviously had to come from organizations such as the Defenders of Wildlife, the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, etc. none of whose resolutions we had. Unbelievable. So the McGrath Area decided to host a Rural Summit on Intensive Management and that was held in the spring of 2000. The Governor and the Wildlife Organizations previously mentioned as well as other such organizations were invited to participate. They chose not to. The end result of that very successful summit was the passage of SB 74 (and over ride of the Governor's veto I proudly might add) which was within 12 months taken away by ballot initiative.

The public residing west of the Alaska Range had again spoken about their spiritual and ethical opposition to wildlife management which they purport to own such as Mr. Doogan. As an owner, he has never come out to see his "farm" - to view the site of the "McGrath Ranch" or to view the Experimental Micro-management Area that was proposed or to see the "big game hunters" or to interface with those most affected who he refers to "Chief Complainer," "hunters," "the test bed" and cleverly uses words like "faminc." He doesn't like words like "wives, mothers, children, brothers, Aunts, Uncles, Grandmothers, Grandfathers, etc." because that would somehow I believe make us part of the human race and make us a very integral part of humanity. Instead he bunches us (all of us in our area) as McGrath Residents (when in fact it is our area) and truly believes that every person in McGrath wants all the moose meat they can get. He hasn't a clue.

And then there are others who speak about the need for diversity except when the cards are stacked in their favor. Now they pursue the tact of loss of tourism dollars to this state. That might impact one wildlife photographer who was on the adaptive wildlife management team who had the superiority to calculate what he and his household ate and then use that formula to suggest that is what our residents would be "entitled" to. What he didn't take into account by his own choice was our lifestyle where sharing is part of our community behavior, where large families often eat together and large community gatherings centered around a dinner are normal.

Then the water is further muddied by those on the opposite side of the persuasion than ours who bring in the rural-urban divide now that it suits their purposes.

It is always so incredible to me to watch these "sharp" minds and watch the double edged sword at work.

Our area has learned so much from these civilized, ethical, spiritual, educated, morally inclined individuals that just "howls" with a total disconnection to those of us who live west of those Alaska Range Mountains.

Do they love us? Sometimes if it suits their purpose. Do they despise us? Sometimes. It seems we are either categorized romantically as the most wise because we are indigenous people(s) or barbaric and ignorant.

The only response I have to any of the rhetoric is we would never allow any massacre of anything to take place, neither are we farmers, we all don't want all the moose meat we can eat, and we are not, contrary to popular published beliefs, more than the ordinary State Citizen who has been blessed to be brought up close to the land that has sustained our peoples for ever. Our land has been kind to us because of our thoughtfulness and our management of it!!

A large well funded effort seems to care a less for the health and welfare of our people that need proper food on the table untarnished and absolutely made in Alaska.

Outside impacts are not an issue. That's another myth. The area is closed to non residents and has been for some time. Non resident hunters passing through McGrath fly into areas where there are more moose.

Sidney Huntington told our area in 2000 and is still quite true today and I quote "Yes, you all know you have been in need of predator wolf control program for years. You have to harvest the resource to balance the moose, in this case, with the wolf ratio. It doesn't take that much to keep both segments on a healthy balance. To stand by and do nothing is crazy. This is what we depend on for food that most of us here in rural Alaska have used for so long. You all know right now, your species are having a shameful decrease because of pressure from some people outside the area. Public emotions are in control. Who is supposed to be taking care of our subsistence wildlife food resource? Or is that just a joke? Are we wards of the government? Who makes all the promises politically to their advantage? Where do we come in, only to see the very food we live on being eliminated senselessly? In this case, who will make us starve or make us go on to the shameful welfare? Probably all you'll get is false promises."

That is exactly what we have gotten from the Defenders of Wildlife, the Alaska Wildlife Alliance and the last Governor and his administration just to mention a few.

We have, and I proudly say this, continued to operate in our independent self sufficient way and because of our own local efforts have managed to impact our moose populations positively but it is not enough. It never will be but we are not ones to stand idly by and watch this public debate cost us our way of life.

Let me also say that we have been cooperative and willing to compromise. We have ourselves supported reduction(s) in our hunting seasons, supported non resident hunting in our area, were willing to close a 520 square mile area to all hunting called the Experimental Micro-Management area, etc.

In closing: there is nothing more important to our local residents than the availability of a healthy moose population for subsistence harvest. We have seen politicians meddle in this area now for too long, allowing political considerations to interfere in what should be professional biological decisions made by the Board of Game. We also strongly uphold that in order to satisfy the Sustained Yield Clause of the Alaska Constitution, action must be taken.

**Fax**

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To: MARK STOPHADate: 4/9Pages:           

(following this page)

From: Jim Marcotte

Acting Executive Director - Board of Game  
Boards Support Section  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
1300 College Road  
Fairbanks, AK 99701-1599

Phone: 907-459-7215

Fax: 907-474-8558

jim\_marcotte@fishgame.state.ak.us



Mark,

Below is a list of the documents from the March 6, 2003 Board of Game hearing and March 7-17 meeting that I'm sending by fax today.

Included are the two items describing the Dittman Research poll as submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance (RC 10 and RC 21) along with some other items of interest.

I'll send by mail the additional materials addressing Unit 19D predator control received by the board during the meeting.

Please let me know if I can assist with anything else.

Thanks,  
Jim Marcotte

- List of documents submitted during the BOG meeting (RC 163)
- AWA public opinion survey report (RC 10)
- Summary of comments submitted to Wildlife Conservation Division (RC 14)
- Comments from Donne Fleagle (RC 19)
- Methodology used in AWA public opinion survey (RC 21)
- Copy of slides from ADF&G presentation (RC 22)
- Comments from City of McGrath (RC 34)
- Comments from Lewis Egrass (RC 35)
- Comments from Michelle John (RC 36)
- List of individuals who signed up to testify at March 6, 2003 hearing (RC 37)
- Comments from Vernita Herdman (RC 38)
- Copy of slides from ADF&G presentation (RC 140)
- Copy of slide from ADF&G presentation (RC 145)



## CITY OF MCGRATH

P. O. BOX 30 MCGRATH, ALASKA 99627  
PHONE (907) 524-3825  
FAX (907) 524-3536

RC 34

March 4, 2003

Department. Of Fish and Game  
Unit 19D East Information  
1300 College Road  
Fairbanks, AK 99701


To Whom It May Concern:

A long-time McGrath resident Lewis "Lucky" Egrass, has been asked to testify on behalf of residents in the McGrath area regarding predator control. Lucky has been an aerial wolf hunter in the past, has trapped and as a local pilot has an opportunity to talk with people in the communities in this area. He also keeps track of where the wolf packs are as he is flying and knows pretty much the devastation of the wolf kills in the McGrath area. We support him as a representative voice for the City of McGrath.

The City of McGrath has been involved in various meetings dealing with the predator control issue and I think it is fair to say that the majority of the community is in favor of an aerial predator control program. The consensus in one meeting, which involved residents from Nikolai also, was the State should handle the program with helicopters because of the poor snow conditions we are experiencing this winter. The bottom line is that residents want the program to be effective. If the next best choice is to use local pilots to implement the program, then the community would be in favor of that.

Most of the residents of McGrath depend on the fall moose harvest for subsistence and see a real need for an aggressive predator control program. Many local residents are trying to trap wolves and some are successful, but this is not easily done and is not an effective way to reduce the number of wolves in the area.

Sincerely,

  
Edgar Cruise, Vice-Mayor

RC 35  
Page 1/3

Lewis F. Egrass  
PO Box 132  
McGrath, Alaska 99627  
(907) 524-3864

March 6, 2003

Alaska Fish & Game Board

RE: Wolf Predation Control

Who am I

I have been a resident of McGrath of 45 years. My father, Pete Egrass, came to Alaska from Wisconsin in the 1930s and my mother, Ann Jacobs Egrass, is an Athabascan Native American from the Yukon River village of Ruby, Alaska. I am one of five children. My parents owned the trading post in McGrath. My parents instilled a strong work ethic by making all of us kids pitch in with all aspects of the work to run our family from hunting and preparing moose, gathering wood, planting a garden, putting up fish and picking berries. In short, we were always busy, it was and is our way of life to this date. A couple of moose would carry a family of seven over the winter and throughout the year. I went to school in McGrath and I learned to fly in 1974 and became an air taxi pilot in 1979. This flying entailed 6000 hours in a Supercub with the remaining air taxi work in Western Alaska. I based my experience of over 12,000 hours of flight time around the McGrath area to support the current issues regarding predator control.

Hours flown in the Supercub consisted of private hunting and trapping and air taxi work with Alaska Fish and Game to survey the land within the 125 mile radius of McGrath for current surveys of moose, caribou, and other game populations with the biologists based out of McGrath.

What I know

RC 35  
Page 2/3

Through the 1980s the moose and caribou populations were high. I am finding out the Fish and Game did not keep accurate records because there was not a concern of the moose and caribou populations being threatened. At that time the wolf was classified as a fur bearer and was legal to harvest with an aircraft on a land and shoot basis with a trapping license. There was a small group of hunters throughout Alaska that harvested wolves using this method; and, to my knowledge there was approximately 1200 to 1500 wolves taken each year. This method also appeared to keep the moose population stabilized. Since this practice was halted ten years ago, my observations are that the moose population has declined better than 95% within the 125 mile radius of McGrath. I observed hundreds of moose killed by wolves around the McGrath area and the moose are declining. There has not been a cow-moose hunting season in the McGrath area since the mid- 1970s to preserve the moose, but the population still has declined.

The pressure from the wildlife groups throughout Alaska and the lower 48 States has forced the government to seize all predator control in Alaska. This has created problems for the Alaska State government on the subsistence issue that has been ongoing for years between the rural Alaskans depending on subsistence for survival and the urban Alaskans. I recall that 10 years ago there was plenty of game for everyone but now we are faced with rapidly declining game populations and there is not enough moose and caribou for all the rural and urban hunters.

Alaska Wildlife groups are putting out false information throughout Alaska and the lower 48 States about the wolf being threatened in Alaska. Just last night March 5<sup>th</sup> on Alaska State news, Paul Joslin stated that their survey showed that 75% of rural Alaskans opposed predator control. I have contacted all the villages in this area and none of them have any knowledge of this survey.

Page 35  
313

This region has never seen any of Alaska Wildlife Alliance's biologists conduct any surveys or any studies around McGrath or in Western Alaska. Where is the proof?

Why I am here

The McGrath people have been fighting the issue of predator control since 1995 and their moose population is very threatened and moose may become extinct in a short period of time in this area. All areas of Alaska are having the same problems with declining game populations. The problem is only going to get larger for state government and the Game Board and the residents of Alaska. I am here to encourage the Game Board to find a solution towards preserving game populations before it is too late. And too late, is almost here.

We the people of McGrath do not want to wipe out the wolf, we just want to re-build our moose population for subsistence to continue as a way of life.

There are approximately 2200 moose within the city limits of Anchorage. This is more moose than in the 5000 square miles around McGrath. Moose do well in Anchorage because there are no wolves and bears killing them. I read in the Anchorage Daily News that when wolves or bears come into the city they are quickly removed as they are a threat to the population. If I was a moose... I would want to live in Anchorage, too.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this very important matter.

Lewis F. Egrass

RC 36

Michelle John, MA  
Executive Director  
4Rivers Counseling Services  
PO Box 229  
McGrath, AK 99627  
(907) 524-3867/(800) 478-3781  
E-mail: [mojo@mcgrathalaska.net](mailto:mojo@mcgrathalaska.net)

March 6, 2003

Alaska Fish & Game Board

**I BELIEVE THE WOLF THREAT OF SUBSISTENCE FOOD SUPPLIES IN ALASKA IS A MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN.**

I service the mental health needs of nine (9) remote villages in the Iditarod region of Alaska (approximately 48,000 square miles with a population of 2500). I work in a climate that celebrates the inherent wisdom of global peoples and offers a multi-cultural frame with which to explore the commonalities and differences in understanding the human condition. I have experienced the intimacy of life in the Bush and have grown to understand and appreciate the subsistence lifestyle of the communities that I serve as their counselor.

Given my desire to support the preservation of subsistence life in the Bush, I plan to research the importance of native tradition to positive mental health among Alaskan Native Americans. There seems to exist strong correlation between decreases in traditional, subsistence living and intimate struggles to retain a native traditional lifestyle, such as hunting techniques and the traditional preparation of cooking game, passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, the decline of subsistence food supplies, such as moose, directly may lead to the destruction of native culture and traditions.

A case may be established for the therapeutic necessity for the preservation of native traditions when working with Alaskan Native Americans. Future research offers native tradition helps foster positive identity and self-confidence, to decrease alcohol and drug consumption, and to decrease suicide rates. To not respond to Alaska's need for continued subsistence food supplies with a predator control response is to cripple a Native Nation of Alaskans.

To respond to efforts to stabilize the moose population in this region with wolf predator control measures is to:

- Enhance the preservation of Native traditions in the State of Alaska
- Enhance the quality of mental health services to the people of Alaska
- Insure Food to the people of this area and prevent starvation, among other options.

Stay Tuned In.

*Michelle John, MA*  
Michelle John, MA  
Executive Director  
4Rivers Counseling Services  
McGrath, Alaska

Board of Game Public Hearing on Predator Control in GMU 19D East MARCH 6, 2003  
 Public Testimony Sign up

	Representing	Subject / Related RC
1.	Marty Caress Denali AC	McGrath Area
2.	Gordon Haber Self	Predator Control
3.	Bill de Creeft Self	McGrath Predator Control
4.	Priscilla Feral Friends of Animals	McGrath Predator Control
5.	Vernon Logan Mt Yenlo AC	McGrath Area
6.	David McHoes Self	McGrath Predator Control
7.	Donne Fleagle MTNT, Lmtd.	McGrath / RC 19
8.	Kelly Vrem Self	McGrath Wolf Control
9.	John Hillsinger Self	GMU 19D Predator Control
10.	John Abrams Self	Pro-Predator Control
11.	Alan Dick Self	Truth
12.	Stephen Shoults Self	Compare Predator Control in Wisconsin
13.	Dorothy Keeler Self	Oppose Predator Control in McGrath / RC 16
14.	Steffen Strick Self/McGrath Native Village	Wolf Control
15.	Lewis Egrass Tanana Chiefs Conf.	Wolf Control
16.	Mike Tinker Fairbanks AC	Unit 19D East Predator Control
17.	Joel Bennett Defenders of Wildlife	
18.	Andrea Veach Self	Oppose Predator Control
19.	Glenn Fredericks Georgetown Tribal Council	GMU 19D
20.	Blair Wondzell Self	Support predator control
21.	Randy Bozelle AK Wilderness Rec & Tour Assoc.	Effects of Pred Control
22.	James Demientieff Self	Pro- aerial hunting
23.	Paul Joslin Self/AK Wildlife Alliance	Predator Control/ RC 10
24.	Gary Dawkins Self	Predator Control
25.	Mike Smith Tanana Chiefs Conference	Predator Control
26.	John Schandelmeier Paxson AC	Predator Control
27.	Vernita Herdman RuralCap	Predator Control
28.	Heather Erin Gott Self	Predator Control
29.	Debbie M Cardwell Self/AK Wildlife Alliance	Wolf Mgmt/Hybrid / RC 17

RC 37

Board of Game Public Hearing on Predator Control in GMU 19D East  
Public Testimony Sign up

Name	Representing	Subject / Related RC
30. Rod Arno	AK Outdoor Council	GMU 19D East
31. Peter Shephard	Self	GMU 19
32. Harriet Bly	Self	Oppose Predator Control
33. Mike Stephenson	Self	Wolf/bear Predator Control
34. Robert Fithian	AK Prof. Hunters Assoc	GMU 19D
35. William Martin	Self	Predator Control & Board process
36. John Glass	Self	Homestead in McGrath
37. Jeff Hermanns	Self	Predator Control
38. Mary Ann Woodward	Self	Oppose Predator Control
39. Erica Diaz	Self	Against hunting
40. George Siavelis	Self	Predator Mgmt GMU 19
41. Tom Carpenter	Self/Copper Riv/PWS AC	Wolf control
42. Mike Cowan	Self	Predator Control in GMUs
43. Lynn Keogh	Self	Predator Control
44. Kenny Barber	Self	Predator Control
45. Greg Roczicka	Orutsaramiut Native Council	GMU 19D & Predator Control

RC 38

Testimony Before  
the  
Alaska Board of Game  
Anchorage, Alaska  
March 6, 2003

Submitted By Vernita Herdman, Advocacy Coordinator  
Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman; Members of the Board; and those members of the public who, by their presence today, demonstrate their interest in the subject of predator control in Alaska.

My name is Vernita Herdman. I am Inupiaq; and I was born and raised in the Native Village of Unalakleet. I am the advocacy coordinator for the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, a statewide, private non-profit corporation based in Anchorage. I would like to add that I am a tribal advocate; that is my occupation and I look at most subjects within that context.

In my testimony today I would like to begin by taking a somewhat unorthodox approach to the issue of predator control. I hope that you, Mr. Chairman, and members of your Board, will exercise patience and goodwill as I move from philosophy to pragmatism and finally, to politics and reason.

I take the philosophical approach because that is where the public debate about this issue has led us. I also choose this perspective because it ultimately must lead to a discussion that can happen (as we Native people like to say) "in a good way": i.e., a dialogue that takes into account the viewpoints, experience and needs of all Alaskan citizens who may have an interest in what will be the Board's decision.

Let me begin by saying that there is not one person in this room who can state with any certainty when they will die, how they will die, or why. All of these circumstances rest in the hands of our Creator. All of us were born without consent; and though some choose to wrest control of their fate by resorting to suicide, it is my personal feeling that even then, they do not "succeed" in gaining any control over their ultimate destiny.

Why would I begin with such statements? I do so because I want to highlight the fact that "wildlife management" is an oxymoron. By definition, no human being – or group of human beings – can control the instincts and impulses of wild creatures – any more than anyone is able to control the instincts and impulses of man. While I applaud your efforts to manage wildlife, I also doubt your claims to success.

A little over two years ago, on February 8, 2001 this Board reviewed a document entitled, an "Experimental Program to Rebuild the Moose Population in GMU 19D." It is my understanding that the recommendations made in that document were never entirely carried out.

That report carries a brief history of attempts by the territory and State of Alaska to control and manage the ratio of predator populations to those of the species used by those predators for food. I noted with interest that just five decades ago, widespread wolf control was carried out by federal agents as a matter of policy. The report goes on to say that even after statehood, aerial shooting of wolves continued "throughout interior Alaska" until 1971. The cessation of aerial hunting was mandated by passage of a federal law abolishing airborne predator control.

Even then, land and shoot hunting was allowed until 1996, when it was banned as a result of "a statute...passed by ballot initiative to prohibit this method of hunting." *Enter the factor of public opinion as a force within this debate.*

I began my testimony by saying that I am Inupiaq. As such, my three brothers and three sisters and I were raised by my parents in a place and at a time when public policy ran in our favor; no one in the territorial, State or federal governments questioned the fact that Alaska Native communities had an absolute need to rely on wildlife resources for not only cultural survival, but as a matter of physical health and economic need.

My father and mother supported us almost exclusively with food derived from the land, air and waters surrounding Unalakleet. My father had a contract with the Coast Guard, to set out the buoys guiding mariners from the Unalakleet River into and out of Norton Sound. The contract paid approximately \$400 annually. Aside from a few hundred dollars from commercial fishing, a family of nine persons survived on fish, migratory birds, seal, the odd gift or barter of beluga *maktak*, reindeer, *oogruk* (bearded seal), a variety of greens, roots and berries. Each fall my mother hand-sewed a pair of sealskin *maktaks* for each of her children. As often, she re-tailored hand-me-down or gifted coats into new parkas for us all, using a Singer treadle sewing machine -- I clearly recall that machine sounding into the early morning hours while the rest of her family slept.

My father used and maintained a team of sled-dogs, even after others began using snow-machines. The number of sled dogs my father kept remained at a pretty consistent level of fourteen. I assume that my father arrived at this number as the result of a personal cost-benefit decision, based on how much dog food he and my brothers could consistently gather to keep the dogs healthy throughout the year; and how many dogs were needed to ensure efficient and timely travel on their various winter hunts.

I mention this aspect of my growing up because, in a microcosm, it illustrates the factors that you as a Board need to weigh before making your decisions about 'wildlife management'. I also want to say that this is an area of my life in which I learned earliest about the concept of idealism vs. pragmatism.

I told you that my father maintained his team at fourteen dogs, year after year. This begs the question, how did he do that, given the nature of all animals to procreate? He had neither the scientific means, nor the financial resources to practice any form of birth control. Given his social, economic and cultural circumstances, even if he had the money, my father would have scoffed at the idea of practicing artificial means to

"control" the population of a team of dogs viewed by him as not only his property, but as essential to the survival of his family. In any case, the average efficient life of a sled dog is not that long -- even a dog that is a pet and not a working animal, has a relatively short average life.

When I was twelve or thirteen years old, my oldest brother went off to boarding school in Mt. Edgecumbe. Some time during the following spring, my mother sent me to find the next oldest boy in our family, who was three years younger than me. Mom said she needed Fuddy (his nickname) to chop some wood for the kitchen stove. I saw Fuddy coming up the path from the ocean side of our house. I called to him, saying he needed to chop some wood; he went directly to that task and I remember that he seemed to be swinging the ax with unusual vigor, and that the expression on his face was rather grim for a nine- or ten-year-old's. I found out years later, why.

When he was in his twenties, Fuddy and I were talking about the 'good old days' in the village; by then our family had lived for some years in Anchorage. That was when he told me that after our oldest brother left, Fuddy became responsible for the unwelcome and gruesome task of culling dogs to keep Dad's team at fourteen dogs. The day we both remembered was the first time he had been handed a gunnysack of squirming puppies and an ax, and been told to take them "down the beach" to kill.

Over a decade after the fact, I saw that my brother, an adult, fought extreme emotions still battling within him; and we wept together. Even as we wept, however, we did not revile this practice. As products of a family and a community that remains reliant on subsistence to this day, we cannot afford to idealize a way of life that, as a tribal advocate, I consider to be one of the nation's and this State's treasures.

Yesterday morning, I stood on my back porch, smoking. The back of our house faces upon an alleyway. As I smoked, a woman came into view, walking through the alley; she appeared to be alone -- but very shortly, there appeared in her wake an older white dog, walking in a straight line, obviously hers. I turned to share the moment with my husband, who stood with a cup of coffee behind me, inside the patio doors. We exchanged grins of bemusement.

No wolf in the wild would behave as that dog did, trailing a master or mistress in docile fashion; that is the difference between domestic animals, and "wildlife".

With regard to the force of public opinion that has played into this debate, I mentioned that back in the '40's and '50's, aerial wolf hunts took place as a matter of public policy. Now I ask you if you see, as I do, any coincidence in the fact that the popular media, which now imposes itself into our every waking moment, was in its seminal stages during those years?

Since then, Walt Disney and other filmmakers have changed the public's perspective of wildlife. Rather than the cruel face of the wolf in the old story of Little Red Riding

Hood, Disney, for example, portrayed thinking, feeling, *speaking* animals in movies such as *Bambi*, *101 Dalmatians*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *The Jungle Book*.

Today wildlife documentaries on the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel and the Outdoor Channel have convinced a large sector of the public in American and in Alaska, that viewing animals in (for the most part in artificially "wild" settings) is a more acceptable activity than to kill and eat them for survival. As a result, the public view is that it is tantamount to a sin to kill wildlife for any reason. Yet a majority of the 200-plus tribal communities in this State continue to rely on healthy fish and migratory bird stocks, and pristine habitat <sup>which support</sup> for caribou and moose populations, <sup>populations that we believe exist</sup> for our people to kill and to eat.

I personally love the face of a wolf; our Inupiaq word for the wolf is the same used by the Canadian Inuit in the movie, *Never Cry Wolf*. we, too, call this animal 'amaguq'. But even as I admired the acting, the cinematography and even the plot contained in that movie, I never lost my head. The movie showed wolves as fierce hunters only in the dream state of Farley Mowat, who wrote the book. In all of the waking scenes, wolves were portrayed as loving, playful, loyal creatures. That is the ideal portrait of a wolf.

Participants of the Alaska Native Wolf Summit, which took place in McGrath February 1-2, 2000, related a more realistic view of the nature of wolves. These village people came to McGrath from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region, the Seward Peninsula, far north Interior communities, and the Bristol Bay area, as well as from the Copper River region. During the Summit they talked about the habits of wolves as a matter of outrage. They talked about wolves preying on sled-dogs and pet dogs; about their worry about small children walking to school in the dark morning of winter, in places where wolves could be heard howling from hill to hill above the villages.

They also talked about wolves running in packs, not preying upon the weakest or the sickest of the moose population, but of giving chase to healthy bulls, running them in an almost strategic fashion toward fields of deep snow, where the bulls were then over-powered and killed. The villagers told of cases where they had come upon such animals slain as if for sport; where only the 'choicest' parts of the moose were eaten, and then abandoned. The people talked about how the sizes of individual wolf packs have grown since the issue of predator control forced the Knowles administration to abandon a State role in predator 'management'.

As a tribal advocate, I want to say that too often our people are portrayed as being primitive societies, without capability to plan and to organize, much less to take strategic action. The planning, implementation and follow-up for the McGrath Summit belies that public image. Villagers set about addressing an agenda more or less set by Governor Tony Knowles in a letter dated February 24, 2000, to the people of the McGrath. He asked them to present him with a "consensus recommendation" for "an adaptive management program".

Following the Summit, Gov. Knowles sent this Board a policy directive on how to manage wildlife. According to this directive, "A successful Alaska wildlife management policy...must be based on three basic principles:

1. That any plan should "[ensure] the long-term conservation of all wildlife species and habitats;
2. [Provide] for the broadest range of human uses and values; and
3. [Be] based on sound science and an accessible and responsive public process."

At that time, Gov. Knowles added, "Alaskans use wildlife in many ways, and I believe those uses have differing priorities." He then prioritized such uses as follows:

1. Resource protection;
2. Subsistence needs;
3. Lifestyle and recreational hunting demands, and wildlife viewing needs; and
4. Tourism.

In the same document, Gov. Knowles then gave this Board further direction that, to my way of thinking, turned his own priorities upside down. This was his list for how the Board "should proceed":

1. Establish... areas of complete protection for wolves;
2. [Establish and maintain] additional areas where bear populations are protected and where bear viewing is the priority;
3. Ban lethal bear predator control;
4. [Establish] "an adaptive management work group...to recommend ... appropriate ...researched based management action for wolf control for GMU 19D;
5. [Establish] a similar work group for GMU 13;
6. ...Appoint a 'blue ribbon committee to review current legislation and recommend reforms";
7. Told the Board that "...intensive management...is unbalanced and takes Alaska in the wrong direction...; ...places undue emphasis on the consumptive use of moose, caribou and other ungulates and *does not reflect the broad range of values most Alaskans have for wildlife*"; and
8. Said the Board composition "reflects and is responsive to the broad *legitimate needs and values of our population*..."

Members of this Board participated in the process that responded to the fourth directive. Less than a year later, the 'adaptive wildlife management team' issued the report I referenced previously. The report said the existing moose population was so low that it "[could] not sustain a harvest sufficient to meet the needs of local residents."

The team's recommendation for aerial hunting met with a storm of protest in the media and in Juneau. Individual members of the team were vilified and the make-up and motives of this Board were questioned. Despite the full force of public opinion that was brought to bear on this Board, the recommendations made by the wildlife management team were accepted. Changes were made to population and harvest objectives. In spite of that action, a policy decision *not* to implement those changes was made by Fish & Game Commissioner Frank Rue and Gov. Knowles.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board -- there have been times in the past where we have differed -- let's be frank, there have been times when our views on natural resource issues and especially subsistence, have been about 180 degrees apart. Today, I say to you that if there is any topic on which we may ever meet agreement as to the direction you need and want to take, it will be on this issue of predator control.

I began by talking about philosophy; and that nobody knows when they are fated to meet with death. The same is true for the wildlife on this earth. Mankind has succeeded in controlling some sectors of animal life -- albeit using methods that some view as unspeakable. Anyone who has ever visited a Tyson chicken-growing operation; or a Chicago area stockyard for pigs and cattle, must wonder about the benefits of 'managing' these pale shadows of what used to be 'wildlife'.

I eat chicken and beef and bacon; but my mouth waters immediately at the idea of fresh moose steak -- there's nothing on earth so satisfying to one of my background and origin. I live in the city, however, and if no one brings me a present of moose meat, I have the financial means and recourse to visit Safeway, Fred Meyer or the commissary. I may not be eating the meat of my choice; but I am in no danger of starvation.

My brothers and sisters in the villages, however, choose to live in places where there is not only a physical or economic reliance upon getting their moose in the fall -- but where the activities related to the hunt and harvest of moose and other wildlife resources constitute the essential underpinning of cultural survival.

That is why I am here today. I have been candid in describing myself as a tribal advocate. I want to say with the same amount of candor that predator control, while a loathsome subject for some, remains an unquestioned necessity if our villages are to remain whole. To that end, I beg of this Board to take into consideration the differences between idealism and pragmatism. Please recognize the importance of this issue's outcome to the villages who remain reliant on moose and other wildlife for subsistence. I am here to request this Board to take action that does not rely wholly on a false picture of the nature of wolves and other predators in this great land.

Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to respond if there are any questions.

VH:me

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:

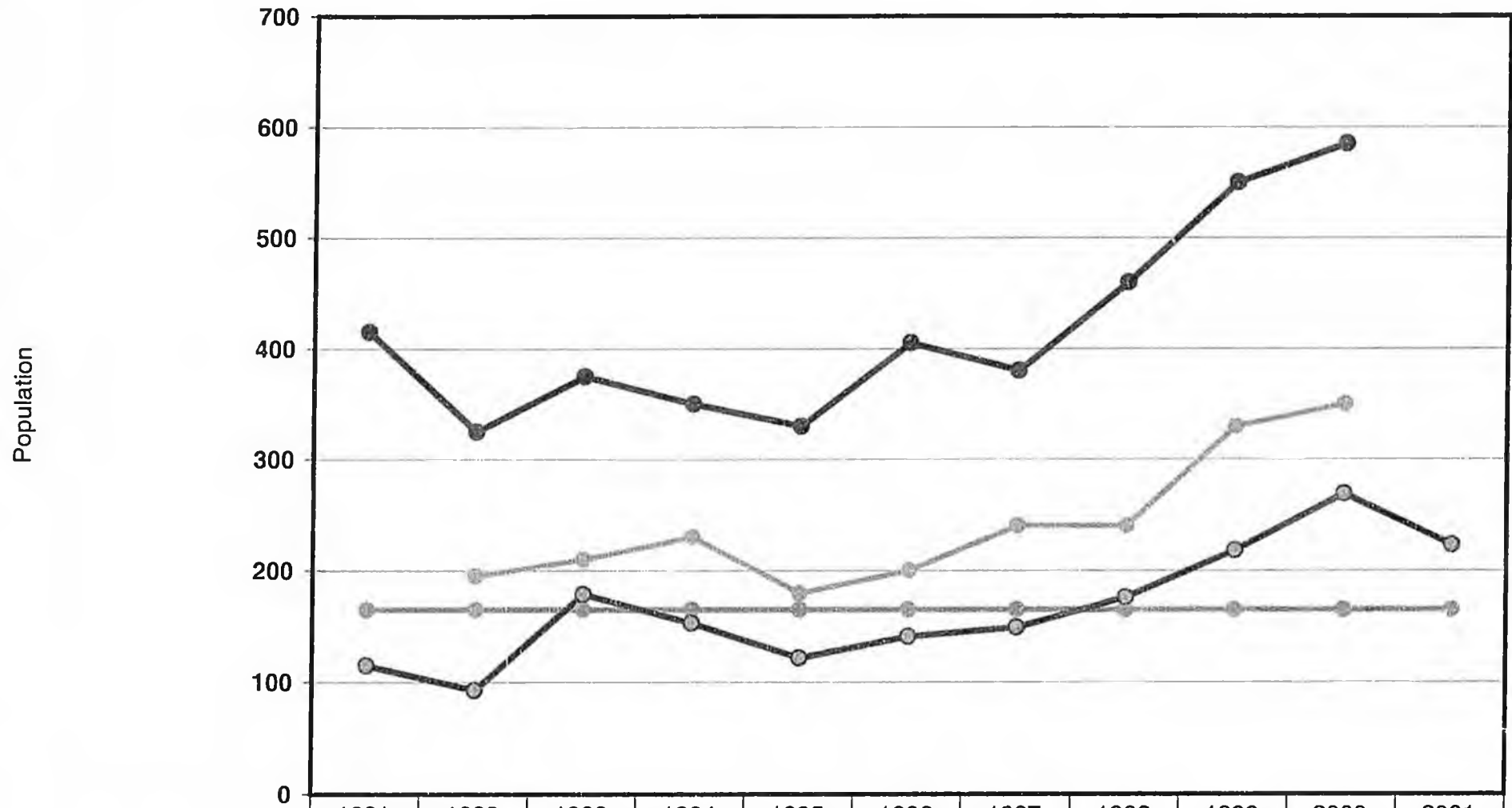
Why doesn't the ADF&G explain to the Alaskan public what the effects of their wildlife and predator management in Unit 13 will be?

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.	165	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 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 16 years of information on moose fall population and human harvest with the population objective set by the BOG (prior to March 2001) shown as a reference.

Analysis: The total moose population in any given year is the fall population minus winter mortality plus the calves (production) born in the spring minus the mortality from calving to fall. The fall population index shows year to year decline because the overall mortality exceeds the production. The fall population is derived by counting moose in the same areas each year and estimating the entire GMU. The ADF&G has not made a fall estimate since 2001. As shown, fall 2002 and fall 2003 are projections from the trend.

This moose herd that has declined by 75% since 1988. The graph is evidence that the mortality in moose has exceeded the annual production by over 1000 animals per year since 1989. The "herd" should be expected to reach its lowest level of only a few thousand moose in a few years.

There is no chance that even stopping all hunting will reverse trend. The number of brown bears in Unit 13 is over five times the "population objective" and the number of wolves is nearing three times the "population objective". The number of moose "allocated" to feeding these high levels of predation insures the continued decline. This graphic information was presented to the ADF&G and the BOG in 1999. Neither the Department nor the Board initiated any effective management to stop the decline of this moose herd.

The ADF&G made no recommendations or proposals to significantly reduce the wolf or bear population. Including the March 2003 Book, the ADF&G has made no recommendations or proposals that will reduce predation by wolves and bears on moose and caribou.

The ADF&G has spent its effort on "managing" hunters, retaining antler restrictions and reducing the length of the season none of which solves the obvious and ADF&G stated problem "the lack of moose calf and adult survival". A reduction in the quality of moose habitat is "targeted" for lowering the population objective but the existing habitat is not a factor in moose survival.

This information is evidence of a game management strategy that protects predators **EVEN WHEN THEY ARE HORRIBLY OUT OF BALANCE** with their prey species. Our wildlife biologists know that it takes a minimum of three years of intensive predator reduction to begin to reverse a rapidly declining prey population.

Questions for Alaskan interested in this "example" of not managing wildlife:

- Why has the Department failed to educate the public on the need to balance various wildlife predator and prey species?
- When will the Department propose management strategies to reverse the population decline?
- Is it fair to ask the Board to "design" a moose hunting strategy expected to "solve" the problem?
- Doesn't it make sense to manage moose to utilize their available and traditional habitat so that significant predator reduction programs are not necessary?

This is not a problem that can be solved by micro-managing hunters! Hopefully, our new administration, F&G commissioner and game board will turn their energies to rebuilding our moose, caribou and sheep herds.



**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.

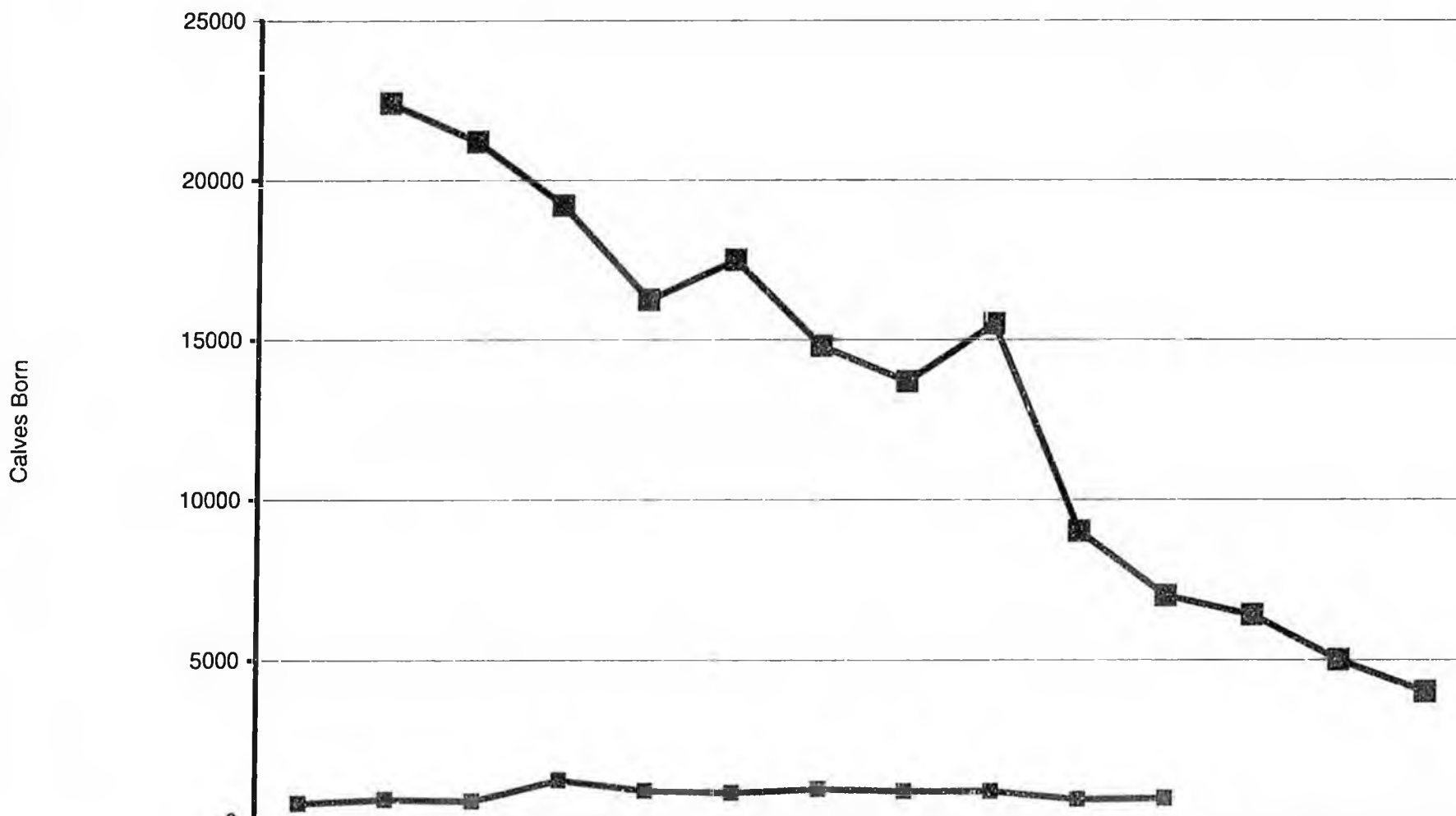
The moose population decline from 1986 through 2003 shows the net decline in population. The gross loss of moose is an even more dramatic indicator of the ecological waste of a valuable resource. The gross loss calculation includes the number of calves born into the herd. Over this time, the net loss 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



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
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 quotas 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.

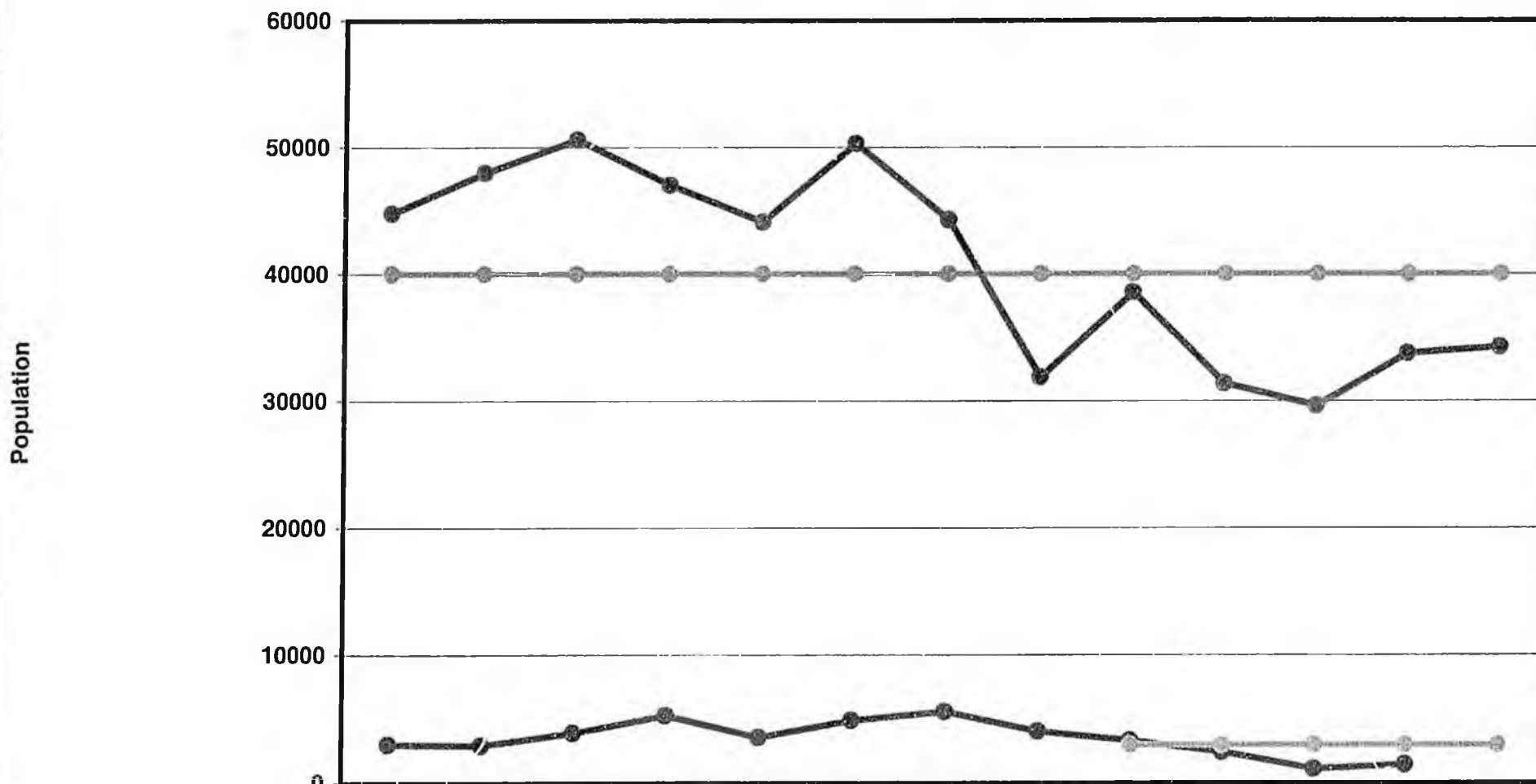
It is not possible for the harvest to have controlled the population of the NCH. The impacts of predation, not hunting, are controlling herd growth. The season was closed by emergency order in 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002. In 2003 we will expect a significantly below 3000 harvest. The breeding population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

### Nelchina 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	29601	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:**

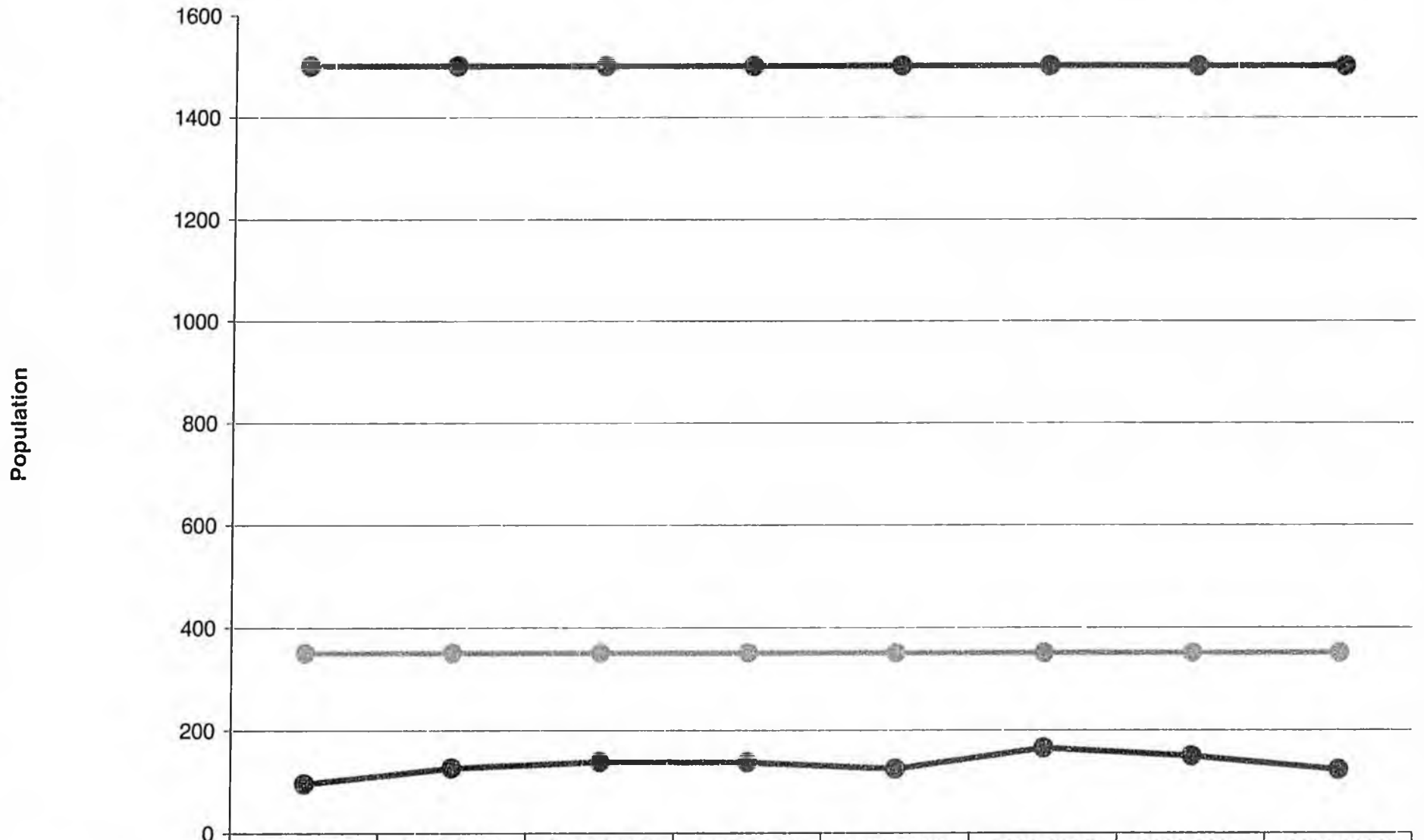
When will the ADF&G explain to the Alaskan public that they "made a mistake" in brown bear census and therefore the long term management strategy in Unit 13?

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



	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
●—● Pop. Est.	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500
●—● Fall Pop. Obj.	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350
●—● Harvest	97	127	139	138	125	166	150	123

**Subject: SB 155****Date:** Thu, 8 May 2003 09:21:10 -0800 (AKDT)**From:** "MAIER JULIE A. K." <ftjak@aurora.uaf.edu>**To:** <Representative\_Hugh\_Fate@legis.state.ak.us>**CC:** <Representative\_Carl\_Gatto@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative\_Cheryll\_Heinze@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative\_Bob\_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative\_Carl\_Moses@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative\_Kelly\_Wolf@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative\_Beth\_Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative\_David\_Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative\_Beverly\_Masek@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Honorable Legislators,

First, let me introduce myself. I am Julie Maier, former Vice Chair of the Alaska Board of Game, Affiliate Professor at UAF with a Ph.D. in wildlife management from UAF. I've conducted research on caribou and moose for more than a decade. I enjoyed my time on the Board, particularly because I enjoyed meeting the people from around the state, hearing their concerns, and helping as much as I could through policy decisions.

There is a perception in many areas of the state that moose numbers are depressed and predator numbers are high. I agree that moose numbers are depressed in some areas but I disagree that there are more wolves now than ever. Because moose are down, wolves are hungry and they are roaming around in search of food. Because of the hungry state they are in they are less cautious and more visible.

Predators such as wolves and bears do not begin declines in the ungulate (moose, caribou) populations on which they depend. These species could not have coexisted for millions of years if wolves were bound to drive them into extinction. Many of the moose populations that are depressed are in areas of marginal moose habitat (McGrath is an example). Others are in areas of excessive overbrowsing by moose (caused by past predator control efforts) and further damage to the habitat by decades of fire suppression. The western interior portion of the state is suffering from more than a decade of a warm cycle which has resulted in a lack of ice scarring so that much of the riparian willow on which the moose depend is now out of reach (McGrath, where 75% of the riparian willow is out of reach, and the Koyukuk are examples). This may also be more widespread than we realize.

Moose numbers were overinflated in many areas of the state (particularly on the road system) because of past predator control efforts. Because of this, many hunters have an overinflated ideal of the number of moose that "should" be in an area. Overinflating an ungulate population is dangerous, particularly caribou but this is true for moose as well, because the caribou/moose then overgraze their habitat rendering it less capable of maintaining a healthy caribou/moose population. The effects of overgrazing have also been exacerbated throughout the road system units by suppressing the natural renewal agent of boreal forest ecosystems (fire) and, apparently, by a decade-long warming trend which has precluded ice scarring and renewal of riparian willows. Overinflating a constituents' expectations is also dangerous because it results in decades of back and forth fighting over predator control.

The public has voted on public land-and-shoot hunting and whether to allow it twice. Twice they have said that it is not acceptable. They have not said that predator control is unacceptable - they are willing to accept

predator control if it is shown through science to be advisable and if it is conducted in a humane way by state wildlife professionals. This is the current law. Predator control can be bad for moose and caribou so whether to engage in it or not must be carefully studied and judiciously implemented, which cannot be attained through public land-and-shoot.

I hope that you will lay SB 155 to rest along with its HB counterpart as it will only lead to another expensive, frustrating initiative which will outlaw land-and-shoot again. You will have overinflated your hunting constituents' expectations once again, to no good end. Please respect and uphold the Alaskan publics' will, as you are sworn to do.

Respectfully,

Julie Maier  
Fairbanks, AK 99709



**TO: MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**TESTIMONY RE CSSB 155 (and companion HB 208)**

**DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
308 G St. #310, Anchorage, AK 99501  
15255 Point Louisa Rd, Juneau, AK 99801**

**Defenders of Wildlife appreciates this opportunity to comment on a very important wildlife issue in Alaska. We are a non-profit national organization with over 450,000 members and supporters. We have two Alaska offices in state and represent over 1,300 members in the state. Our group has a long history of involvement in the Alaska Board of Game and legislative process and we remain dedicated to sound conservation and responsible management of wildlife resources.**

**Defenders of Wildlife strongly opposes SB 155 and the House companion bill HB 208.**

**This legislation has two major defects: involving the public in airborne wolf shooting as part of state wolf control programs and removing the Commissioner of fish and game from the review and final decision making process for predator control programs.**

- (1) To allow members of the public with private aircraft to shoot wolves from the air or same-day airborne in designated control areas is bad public policy because it is grossly inefficient, hard to control and monitor, and inhumane. In past years when the public was involved in this activity, even in the best of circumstances it was rarely possible to remove enough wolves from an area to achieve the objectives of a control program. A fixed wing plane simply cannot maneuver quickly enough to cope with a large pack of rapidly scattering wolves. In addition, significant wounding occurs because often the aircraft cannot position itself appropriately for a clean kill. This is inhumane because animals escape in rough terrain or wooded cover and suffer a slow death. Another problem with this method is the waste of a resource and research information when wolves cannot be retrieved because the plane cannot land.**

**Under current federal law, we understand that state-issued permits are required before the public can engage in any form of aerial shooting. We believe that this should be**

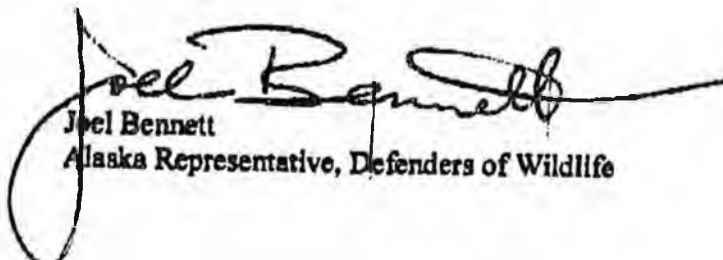
clearly spelled out in the bill, along with the main elements of the permit system itself.

We believe that the only defensible method for conducting a lethal predator control program is to use helicopters with trained professionals who are employees of the Department of Fish and Game.

- (2) To remove the commissioner of Fish and Game from the main review and approval process before a predator control program is implemented is an unreasonable and inappropriate elimination of professional oversight and executive authority. There are factors other than population goals that must be considered by the commissioner such as how a control program interacts with other Department functions, fiscal ramifications and administrative matters relating to how the program is monitored and implemented. Current law provides a proper blend of authorities between the Board of Game and the Department so that reasonable checks and balances are retained. There is no reason to change this.

As a final note, statewide ballot measure votes in 1996 and 2000 clearly demonstrated that Alaskans will support wolf control only under limited controlled circumstances where there is a bona fide biological problem and when the program is conducted by state personnel only. To consider legislation that substantially changes these standards is to invite a state and national outcry, tourist boycotts, and future ballot propositions.

Thank You,



Joel Bennett  
Alaska Representative, Defenders of Wildlife



810 N St, Ste 203, Anchorage Alaska 99501 / Ph. 907.258.6171 / Fax 907.258.6177  
PO Box 22151, Juneau Alaska 99802 / Ph. 907.463.3366 / Fax 907.463.3312 / [www.acvoters.org](http://www.acvoters.org)

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## SB 155 Same Day Aerial Predator Control

Predator management is a complex social and biological issue. There is no question, wolves do have an impact on ungulate populations, and in combination with other factors such as: bear predation, habitat quality, severe winter weather, natural population fluxuations, unrealistic harvest objectives, and over harvests can depress a given population. In essence, population biology and landscape ecology are complex issues with many factors. While there may be isolated incidents where predator control could be justified, it must first pass through three qualifiers, the specific program must be: scientifically sound, publicly acceptable, and economically feasible. For example, foxes were removed from the Aleutian Islands where the endangered Aleutian Canada Goose nests, this total elimination of foxes.

SB 155 attempts to simplify predator control to a level of absurdity. It seeks to remove the administration and commissioner, negates the executive branch from the decision making process, and reduces the department of Fish and Game to merely an administrative role. In essence, SB 155 seeks to remove the experts from the process and elevates the Board of Games above the administration. I question the legality of this. Currently, the board is run by AOC, an extreme fringe hunters organization, with a vigilante agenda against wolves. A single minded board will not necessarily be concerned with the social, political, or economic implications whereas the Governor and department would be. As SB 155 is currently written, the Governor will have no power to stop a same day airborne predator control program.

The 1996 and 2000 initiatives offered a balanced solution to a controversial issue. Not everyone was happy with the initiatives, but it allowed for a middle of the road perspective to conducting predator control. The initiatives assured that only employees within ADF&G would conduct predator control. Alaska Conservation Voters feels that under no circumstance should the public be authorized to conduct aerial predator control. In my opinion, the 1996 and 2000 initiatives that the majority of Alaskans supported offers the most balanced approach towards predator control. The legislature should leave the statutes as they currently stand.

What is going to be gained by passing this bill through this session? As this bill stands now, a lot is at stake. By holding back the rhetoric, encouraging a public process with both moderate hunters as well as wildlife viewers, and working with the administration, a reasonable management program could be attained over the interim. Nothing will be lost in terms of launching a predator control program next March or April, but it will divert a potential boycott, and the extra time will allow for more concerted attention to be applied to this very controversial issue.

Alaskans building a better future.

In conclusion, Alaska Conservation Voters can not support SB155. We contend, it is critical that the Governor and commissioner are not removed from the process. Most importantly, when aerial predator control is conducted, department employees must carry it out. The public, under no circumstances, should be permitted to conduct aerial predator control. The legislature needs to assure the public that predator control is based on sound science and is conducted in a manner that is accountable. SB 155 will only serve to cause controversy and distrust from the public. Please vote against SB 155 as it is currently crafted.

Thank you

Danielle B. Brown  
Alaska Conservation Voters

Alaskans building a better future.

In conclusion, Alaska Conservation Voters can not support SB155. We contend, it is critical that the Governor and commissioner are not removed from the process. Most importantly, when aerial predator control is conducted, department employees must carry it out. The public, under no circumstances, should be permitted to conduct aerial predator control. The legislature needs to assure the public that predator control is based on sound science and is conducted in a manner that is accountable. SB 155 will only serve to cause controversy and distrust from the public. Please vote against SB 155 as it is currently crafted.

Thank you

Danielle B. Brown  
Alaska Conservation Voters

Alaskans building a better future.

May 8, 2003

To: House Resource Committee  
Re: SB155

Dear Representative and Chairman Fate and House Resource Committee Members,

I am writing to you today to ask you to oppose SB155. As an Alaskan resident and registered voter I am in strong opposition to this bill. Following are the reasons for my opposition.

1. In 1996 and in 2000 Alaskans voted on initiatives to ban aerial one day land and shoot predator control. It is incumbent for our legislators to abide by the voting Alaskan citizens.
2. It is extremely likely that the passage of SB155 will promote another tourist boycott as such legislation did in the early 1990s. Alaska cannot afford such economic risk, particularly at this time. This likely repercussion of the bill should, within itself, stop it in its tracks!
3. The practice of such predator control is archaic, brutal, and unethical,( not giving to fair chase). Humane and ethical methods should be used for predator control, some of those methods would include: relocation of the predators, predator sterilization, and the opening of predator hunting and trapping seasons. The above methods are less likely to elicit the heated emotional outcry of the public, media frenzies, and negative public relations.
4. An aspect of SB155 states that aerial predator control can be declared by The Board of Game without the backing of The Department of Fish and Game. It is the Department of Fish and Game that provides biological and scientific research to determine the most effective and appropriate management of wildlife in Alaska. It is crucial that wildlife be managed on a scientific basis. SB155 would allow the Board of Game to sidestep this fundamental criteria.

I believe that it is critical that the House Resource Committee assesses SB155 with the afore mentioned points clearly in mind! If prudent study of this bill is ensued then I am confident that the House Resource Committee will stop SB155 in its tracks!

Sincerely,

Jenny Pursell  
P.O. Box 33578, Juneau, Ak., 99803  
Phone # 789-0226

# Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

## Opinion

Friday, May 09, 2003 - A good move against predators

Alaskans should be pleased with the state Senate's decisive action to move the state closer to implementing sorely needed predator control programs.

While the bill approved by the Senate doesn't specifically mention the urgent problem affecting the moose population of McGrath, its language to remove the state's fish and game commissioner from such decisions will allow the Board of Game's solution to proceed.

Senate Bill 155, by Sen. Ralph Seekins of Fairbanks, would allow Fish and Game employees or private hunters authorized by the Board of Game to conduct land-and-shoot killing of wolves and other predators as part of a predator control program. It also would allow the board to consider additional factors when deciding whether to implement predator control.

The bill does not eliminate the Department of Fish and Game's managers from the process entirely. Its biologists will provide Board of Game members with the science needed to order a predator control program to begin.

Sen. Seekins' bill, which is scheduled for a hearing today in the House Resources Committee, is in response to Gov. Frank Murkowski's decision to not use helicopters or state employees in killing problem wolf populations. Rather, the governor says wolf numbers should be reduced through the efforts of local hunters and trappers, aided by a better effort by state biologists to provide the latest sightings of wolf activity and moose kills.

The governor's plan is not the aggressive, science-based approach he pitched to voters while campaigning for office last year. And it certainly is not in line with the approach called for earlier this year by the game board, which listed the use of state employees shooting from helicopters as its preferred choice for the McGrath problem.

The governor's backtracking was enough to push Sen. Seekins and others in the Legislature to act. Alaskans should be glad they did.

For too many years now the issue of controlling predators—mostly wolves and bears—has been mired in emotion rather than science, which in the case of McGrath says the predator numbers must be reduced to allow for the adequate moose population that people in that part of the state depend on. Then-Gov. Tony Knowles feared a tourism boycott should the state began killing wolves, and now Gov. Murkowski has come up with his own reasons to oppose the most effective means of limiting wolf predation.

The House should pass this bill this session and by sufficient margin, as in the Senate, to override a veto by the governor.



**Contact**

Dr. Paul Joslin, Conservation Biologist  
(907) 277 0897, Paul@akwildlife.org

### **Is Killing More Wolves Really Necessary?**

A poll commissioned by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance and carried out by Dittman Research Corporation in March of this year found that 73-75 percent of Alaskans oppose both state sponsored predator control and shooting wolves with the aid of aircraft. The results were consistent across the state including the rural areas. The majority of hunters were in opposition. Alaskan voters banned same-day airborne hunting of wolves in 1996, and again in 2000 after the state legislature reinstated it.

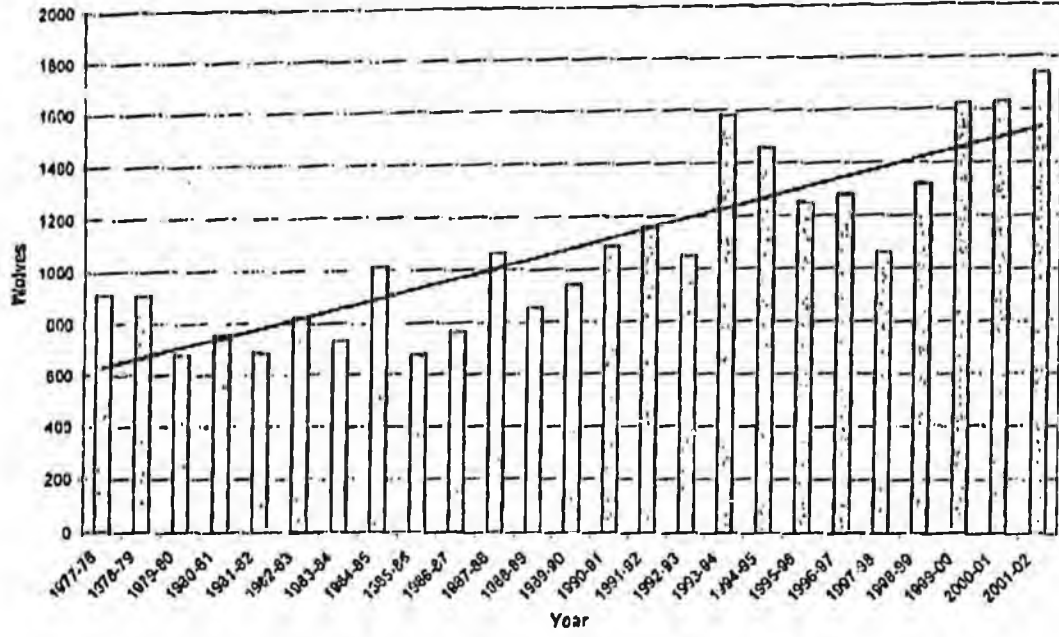
Ever since the use of aircraft was removed as an aid in hunting wolves the message heard at almost every Board of Game meeting has been the same. "Moose numbers are plummeting everywhere. There is a wolf behind every tree. Alaskan voters took away the only tool we had that works--same day airborne hunting of wolves."

The facts are different. In the McGrath area where the outcry over declining moose populations has been the loudest, and calls for aerial wolf control the strongest, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) carried out what it regards as the only two reliable moose counts in the area—one in 1996 and another in 2001—and discovered that the moose population was stable to increasing. Birth rates are up, as are calf birth weights and the number of moose cows giving birth to twins. Two mild winters have made available more browse for moose. A major forest fire burned a significant portion of the area last year, and will almost certainly result in a significant amount of new moose browse in the years ahead.

And what is it all for? Pat Valkenburg, the state biologist overseeing the McGrath experiment, says that if there were just 30 more harvestable moose, the local needs would be met. Original estimates are that the experiment would cost about \$160,000 or more than \$5,000 for each moose added to the hunter's larder. There are better solutions, like local habitat restoration, aiding game dependent hunters to take moose elsewhere during the recovery phase and so on. Several scientists question if predator control is even necessary, given that all the signs are that the moose population is going up on its own.

The problem is not wolves, but ourselves. Despite popular myth, taking away of same day airborne hunting of wolves has not resulted in fewer wolves being killed. ADF&G wolf harvest figures show that *the killing of wolves state wide has more than doubled over the past 25 years.*

Annual Wolf Harvest in Alaska Over the Past 25 years



Source: ADF&G Annual Harvest Summary Records

Numerous reasons account for the rise in wolf harvest. Alaska's population has increased over 50 percent in the past 25 years, meaning that wolves are more at risk by our own presence. Newer and better tools for hunting wolves have exploded on to the scene. Semi-automatic guns such as M-16s and AK 47s have become popular weapons of choice. Snowmobile numbers have jumped at least 500 percent. They are also faster and more maneuverable than they used to be such that no wolf in open country has any hope of escaping from pursuing hunters. Once considered illegal and unsportsmanlike, pursuing wolves on snowmobiles is now permitted over vast areas of Alaska. Wolf trapping seasons and bag limits have been expanded. Private wolf bounties such as the \$100 one being offered in McGrath coupled with a \$45 government sponsored "research" bounty is serving as a further inducement to kill wolves. ADF&G sponsored wolf trapping clinics are adding even more pressure.

It is a myth that Alaska is bursting at the seams with wolves. *Minnesota has 2.5 times as many wolves per square mile as does Alaska.* How is this possible? After nearly eliminating wolves as a species in the lower 48 states more than half a century ago, America granted them near full protection under the Endangered Species Act throughout their former U.S range except Alaska. Federal and state agencies that had formerly treated wolves as vermin began piecing together their sociobiology, deciphering the role they played in the natural environment, and investigating the impact they had on domestic livestock. (Minnesota is a major producer of livestock). What was learned was communicated to an originally skeptical public through town meetings, publications, and educational programs.

### **What was learned**

Wolves are like most other predators—they are designed to run a little slower than their prey, or when dealing with truly large adversaries like moose, are designed to be a little weaker than their prey. This means that for the most part wolves have little choice but to focus their attention on the removal of the sick and the weak. Both predator and prey benefit as a result. It has been like that for hundreds of thousands of years.

A second role that wolves share with other large land predators is that of mollifying the peaks and troughs in ungulate numbers so that they are more in balance with the ability of the habitat to sustain them. During periods of over abundance, or in years when snow depths are so great that ungulates are starving and easy to catch, wolves have a tendency to take more than they need. This accelerates the bringing of prey numbers into line as well as reduces competition for browse among the remaining ungulates. Of that which is killed nothing is wasted. Eagles, ravens, coyotes, foxes, and a host of other species feast on the leftovers.

During lean years, as for example during winters when snow fall is light, prey has more to eat and is better able to get away, wolves vigorously consume just about everything from that which they kill. Left behind are the stomach contents and a few large bones.

The "pack" is a hierarchical based family unit that responds well to these changes. While individuals may die or leave, the pack itself, and the alpha pair or pack leaders in particular, serve as a conduit for passing along knowledge about the environment and what to hunt where and when. Though only one member of the pack usually bears offspring, all members participate in rearing of the young.

Left to their own devices, wolf populations tend to remain relatively stable, adjusting moderately up or down in response to prey numbers, snow depth and other factors. The burden of who lives or dies is focused largely on the young. As with all species, they are the least knowledgeable, most expendable and most easily replaced. While not always perfect at any one moment in time, looked at over the long term wolves are an extraordinary good fit with their environment.

### **More focus on wolf education**

Wolf education among the public has played a major role in helping Minnesotans to accept the presence of wolves at much greater densities than we have in Alaska. Biologists have been able to demonstrate that the presence of wolves has not negatively impacted prey abundance. Hunters in Minnesota are able to harvest hundreds of thousands of ungulates annually just as hunters do in Alaska. Biologists have also been able to demonstrate that wolves are not the perceived menace to domestic livestock that farmers once feared—an issue we Alaskans scarcely have to deal with. And finally their biologists have been able to show that people and wolves can coexist. Minnesota has a human density that is 50 times that of Alaska.

With this as background, wouldn't it be more prudent to focus on resolving the desires to increase the sustainable number of harvestable moose in the McGrath area through other means than wolf control? Given that we are already at a quarter century high, do we really need to be ratcheting up the killing of wolves in McGrath?

It is a failure of a democratic government when representatives of the people vote in favor of regulations that are in opposition to the will of the people that elected them. The public already clearly voted to disallow the practice of aerial and land-and-shoot hunting of wolves by the public. One cannot be an expert on all subjects, the breadth of information in the world today is overwhelming; and thus systems have been devised so that the most qualified individuals make decisions pertinent to their area of expertise. Establishment of regulations that can have tremendous impact on wildlife populations should be administered by biological professionals. Nonetheless, certain legislators and Board of Game members will acquire personal gain by acting as wildlife management professionals. These same individuals are very active members of a group which touts that moose numbers are plummeting by astronomical accounts. For example, it has been claimed that in Unit 13 the moose population has dropped from 27,000 to 7,000 in a decade, and that in Unit 19D the moose density has fallen from 3-4 per square mile to 1 per square mile = a 75% reduction. ~~They further state that this is not a "fair chase" issue, but a scientific management issue- and this is exactly the point they are manipulating to suite their own desires.~~

*it is simply not censured.*

The scientific reality is that true population estimates for moose and many species are not known in most parts of the state because these surveys are expensive and time demanding. Previous high estimates of moose numbers in the 1980's are pure speculation, based on no scientific data, and were the result of long-term state and privately sponsored wolf bounties, extensive aerial and land and shoot killing, and poisoning. For example in the previously mentioned Unit, # 13, where intensive predator control management has been adopted, ADF&G biologists do not know the extent of the moose population because the area is very large and encompasses much topographical variation, but in a <sup>recent</sup> ADF&G Discussion Item concerning the review of predator/prey status in Unit 13 it was stated that quote "There are about 22,000 moose in Unit 13; an overall density of 0.9 moose per square mile or a moose density of 1.4 per square mile of area below 4,000 ft. elevation. This is a relatively high-density moose population for interior habitats." The report goes on to state that "Moose populations now appear comparable to levels observed in the early-1980's". Simultaneously the most recent studies show that the wolf population decreased by 27% in Unit 13, due to extensive trapping. In Unit 19D, also previously mentioned the February 2003 Research Progress Report state that the "previous estimates were likely low due to problems with sampling design, survey techniques, poor weather, and timing" in fact 2x more moose were found to inhabit the McGrath area than previously believed. The real problem is that localized over hunting has reduced bull ratios to as low as 9 bulls per 100 moose, leaving little to increase the resiliency of the herd or available to take, since cow moose are off limits to hunting.

*of hunting. ←  
The pop. is not 900 but is 430.*

*→ This # is certainly not written in stone, but is nowhere near the 7,000 purported by supporters of this bill*

This is a scientific issue that needs to be resolved by professionals who have integrity and are looking out for the welfare of wildlife and the habitats in which they reside; instead of playing politics to whomever waves the biggest stick.

Thankyou,  
*Tenwa White*