

SB

144

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON



ALASKA
STATE CAPITOL
ROOM 514
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1182

(907) 465-3707
FAX (907) 465-4821

CSSB 144 (FIN) – Musk Oxen Permits & Tags

Version 26-LS0666/E, March 22, 2010

STAFF: Tim Benintendi, 465-4989

SPONSOR STATEMENT and SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

SPONSOR STATEMENT:

There are four Game Management Units in which musk oxen are found in Alaska; Unit 18 (Nunivak and Nelson Islands), Units 22 and 23 (Seward Peninsula and Northwest), and Unit 26 (Northeast). The musk oxen population in Alaska is currently estimated to be 4,400 animals, and annually, between 325 and 350 animals are available for harvest.

The primary objective of SB 144 is to allow issuance of a second permit for a musk ox hunt in a second Game Management Unit or another hunt area within a unit, for resident hunters and subsistence hunters only; no out-of-state hunters qualify. If a harvester does not take an animal under the first permit, this would double the chance a hunter has to harvest the bag limit of one animal, either a bull or a cow. It would not allow for the taking of two animals.

Current statute provides for a limit of one musk ox permit for each hunter per calendar year. Musk oxen are the only game animals in the Arctic to which the one-permit restriction still applies. Under SB 144, the department could issue subsistence permits beyond a calendar year basis, to accommodate a season which straddles two calendar years (Example: a season which runs from August 1st to March 15th), because a "year" under this bill, is changed from a calendar year to a regulatory year, which is July 1st to June 30th.

Wildlife biologists and regulators within the Department of Fish and Game have determined that the health and size of the state's herd is well past the threshold for expanding opportunities for Alaskan hunters. State biologists

estimate that a minimal number of additional permits would be issued under the provisions of this bill, and perhaps 25 more animals would be harvested. If passed this legislative session, these new provisions would be in place for seasons beginning in August of this year.

SB 144 would authorize the Board of Game to reduce or eliminate subsistence tag and fee requirements at its discretion.

SB 144 carries a ZERO fiscal note, and has the support of the department. Support from the hunting community in Northwest Alaska includes the Northern and Southern Norton Sound Advisory Committees, and the Seward Peninsula Musk Ox Cooperators' Group. We have discovered no opposition to this bill.

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS:

SECTION 1: Amends AS 16.05.340(a)(16) to allow the Board of Game to reduce or eliminate the fee, as well as the tag requirements, for a musk oxen hunt, and makes it applicable to all or a portion of a game management unit. Applying this to an open season has been eliminated. The objective is to have the statute for musk oxen read the same as for other game.

SECTION 2: Amends AS 16.05.346(a) by providing that the department shall issue permits to take musk oxen once the Board of Game has reduced or eliminated requirements for a resident tag and fee. This statute is further amended by providing that a resident may not be charged a fee for an application for a musk oxen permit under these circumstances.

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

The Senate Finance Committee Substitute addresses a drafting error. It inserts the word "**and**" between the words "tag" and "fee" in two places, one on page 1, line 15, and the second on page 2, line 8.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB144
 () Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): SB144-DFG-DAS-03-05-10
 Title An Act relating to hunting permits and tag fees for musk oxen
 Sponsor Senator Olson
 Requester Senate Resources

Dept. Affected: ADF&G
 RDU Administration and Support
 Component Administrative Services

Component Number 479

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Land & Structures	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grants & Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CHANGE IN REVENUES ()	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2010) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Part-time	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Temporary	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact to Department of Fish and Game

Prepared by: Jeff Hoover, Deputy Director
 Division Administrative Services

Approved by: Tom Lawson, Director of Administrative Services
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Phone 907-465-6077
 Date/Time 3/5/10 12:00 PM
 Date 3/5/2010

CONTACTS For Senate Bill 144 – Musk Oxen Permits

STAFF FOR SN. OLSON: Tim Benintendi (office – 465-4989)

DRAFTER: BRIAN KANE (wk-465-6660 / fax-465-2029)
(Lori Weed, Secretary / Legal Staff)

F&G LIAISON: Jen Yuhas (wk-465-6137/cell-(907) 388-7951)
jennifer.yuhas@alaska.gov

SUPPORTERS:

PETER BENTE (office – 443-8188 / fax – 443-5893)
(F&G biologist in Nome)
peter.bente@alaska.gov

JACK OMELAK (office – 443-4275 / fax – 443-4461)
(Kawerak Subsistence Program)
jomelak@kawerak.org

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS:

GMU 18	Area Biologist Phil Perry	(907) 543-2979
GMU 22	Area Biologist Tony Gorn	(907) 443-2271
GMU 23	Asst. Area Charlotte Westing	(907) 442-1712

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 29, 2010

TO: ~~Representative Graig Johnson, Co-Chairman~~ →
Representative Mark Neuman, Co-Chairman
House Resources Committee

FROM: Senator Donald Olson
Senate District T D.O.

SUBJ: Request for Hearing – CSSB 144 (FIN)

I would like to request your consideration for scheduling a committee hearing for this bill, which would allow a second hunting permit for residents and subsistence hunters to take musk oxen. It would not apply to non-resident hunters.

Attached are: Both bill versions, a sponsor statement / sectional analysis, a ZERO fiscal note, and a poster on the status of musk oxen in Alaska. We have discovered no opposition to this bill.

The Committee Substitute made two single-word insertions, to address a drafting error.

If there are any questions, contact Tim Benintendi of my office at 465-4989. Thank you.



Current Status of Muskoxen in Alaska 1970-2009



Letty Hughes^{1*}, Patricia Reynolds^{2*}, Kimberlee Beckmen^{1*}, Phillip Perry¹, Geoff Carroll¹, Steve Arthur¹

¹Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, ²US Fish & Wildlife Service, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Introduction

Muskoxen (*Ovibos moschatus*) were reintroduced to Alaska after disappearing in the late 1800s. The first establishment of muskoxen from Greenland to rural Alaska was Nunivak Island in 1936. The Nunivak population acted as a source of animals for future relocations on historic range between 1967-1981. The relocation of 300 animals created five populations throughout Alaska: Nunivak, Nelson Island, Northeastern, Northwestern, and Seward Peninsula (Figure 1). The successful establishment of muskoxen populations and current cooperative management efforts have resulted in range expansion, population growth and stability, along with hunting and viewing opportunities.



Harvest

Hunting of reintroduced muskoxen first occurred on Nunivak Island in 1975. Four of the five populations are open to harvest on an annual quota and permit basis (Table 1). In 2008, the Board of Game adopted regulations that allow Alaskans to harvest muskoxen on the Seward Peninsula with a registration permit (Gom 2009). The new hunts were created from recommendations from local advisory committees and Seward Peninsula Muskox Cooperators, a stakeholder group established in 1994.

Table 1. Harvest of Muskoxen in Alaska

Population	Hunting Began	Average Annual Harvest Pre-1995	Average Annual Harvest 1995-2008	Available Harvest 2009	Hunt Structure 2009	Sex of Harvest	Available Harvest as % of population 2009
Nunivak Island	1975	66	81	85	•Drawing •Registration	•Bulls 1975-1978 •Cows & Bulls 1979-present	15
Nelson Island	1981	23	23	42	•Registration	•Cows & Bulls	8
Northeastern	1990	9	6	0	No Open Season	•Closed to harvest in 2008	0
Northwestern	1999	No Hunt	<3	6	•Tier II drawing	•Bulls 1999-present	1
Seward Peninsula	1995	13	76	167	•Tier I Registration •Drawing •Federal Permit	•Bulls 1995-2000 •Cows & Bulls 2000-present	7*

Recent Range Expansion

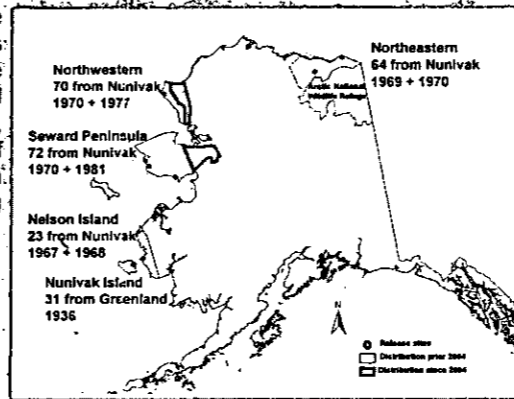


Figure 1. Reintroduction sites and group distribution of muskoxen populations

Population Growth

During the 74 years since 31 muskoxen were first established on Nunivak Island, populations have increased to over 4,400 animals in Alaska (Table 2). The Seward Peninsula population is the state's largest, and continues to expand eastward (Figure 1) as the population increases (Figure 2).

Table 2. Current size of Alaska muskoxen populations

Population	Population Size	Date of Estimate	Status
Nunivak Island	567	Oct. 2009	•16% from 1947-1968 •Stable since 1970
Nelson Island	657	Jun. 2009	•22% from 1968-1981 •6% from 2004
Northeast	200-250*	Apr. 2008	•650 muskoxen by 1995 •Declined 60% 1996-2006 •Stable from 2006-2009
Northwest	324-424*	Jan. 2008	•8% from 1970-1998 •Stable from 1999-2008
Seward Peninsula	2688*	Mar. 2007	•14% from 1970-2000 •6% from 2000-2007
Total minimum Alaska population estimate	4486		• Winter 2009 • June 2009 • Includes Canada animals available

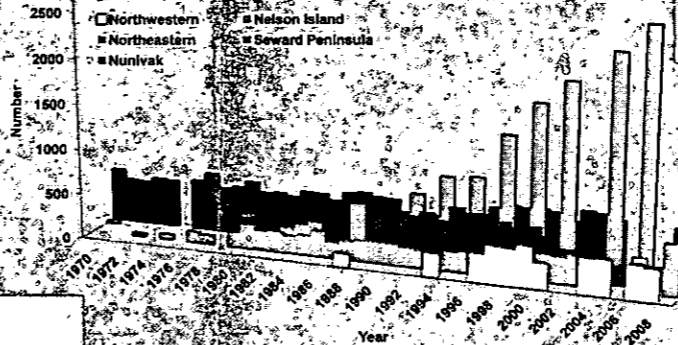


Figure 2. Historic counts of Alaska muskoxen populations 1970-2009

Table 3. Mortality type in Northeastern population 2007-2009

Mortality Type	Adults	Calves	Total
Bear Predation	16	36	52
Disease	2	2	4
Vehicle collision	3	0	3
Other non-predation	4	10	14
Total	25	48	73

Mortality and Disease Surveillance

Seward Peninsula

- Predation relatively low compared to Northeastern
- Chlamydia present (Gom 2009)
- Low in copper
- Negative for iron, zinc, selenium (Gom 2009)
- Composition surveys show 30 yearlings: 100 cows since 2002 (Gom 2009)

Northeastern

- Predation a significant mortality factor (Table 3)
- Mortalities from drowning and stranding on sea ice
- Chlamydia present (Lenart 2009)
- Copper deficient (Lenart 2009)
- Low calf recruitment and low calf:cow ratios (Lenart 2007)

Future Management

The reintroduction of muskoxen to Alaska continues to be successful. Population growth and range expansion provides opportunities for consumptive and non-consumptive uses of muskoxen. Continued investigation of population parameters and health assessments along with public input will enhance future management of Alaska muskoxen.



References

Gom, L.R. 2009. In Prep. 04022 Muskox. Alaska management report of survey and inventory activities. 1 July 2008-30 June 2009. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau, AK, USA.
Lenart, E.A. 2009. 042700 and 0502000 Muskox. Alaska management report of survey and inventory activities. 1 July 2008-30 June 2009. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau, AK, USA.
Lenart, E.A. 2008. 042700 and 0502000 Muskox. Alaska management report of survey and inventory activities. 1 July 2007-30 June 2008. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau, AK, USA.
Wolcott, C. In Prep. 04022 Muskox. Alaska management report of survey and inventory activities. 1 July 2008-30 June 2009. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau, AK, USA.