

SCOMM

114:19

Alaska State Legislature

Chairman,
Judiciary Committee
Administrative Regulations
Revenue Committee

Vice Chairman,
Resources Committee



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Senator Robin L. Taylor

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SCR 2

Relating to Alaska's wildlife and fish resources.

Over the past few years, we have seen a decline in our wildlife and fish populations in several areas. This decline has continued to the point where serious shortages currently exist and are continuing unabated. For example, moose populations in the Kuskokwim Delta and caribou in the Forty Mile area have declined to the point where there are not enough moose or caribou to meet the subsistence demand. Residents of the areas testified to this last year before the House Resources Committee when a similar resolution was before the Legislature. To date, our Department of Fish and Game has not implemented a management plan to adequately rectify this situation. On the fish side, Bristol Bay has been shut down early for the past two years because of poor sockeye runs in that area. Just last year, Cook Inlet was closed down early because of poor sockeye runs there and on the Kenai River in 1997, there were almost no coho salmon and both commercial and sport fishing were closed early. The MatSu streams have had ongoing shortages in coho, sockeye, chum, and chinook stocks for several years now. It would appear that the department has not managed for proper escapement levels to meet sustained yield needs.

The elected leaders of Alaska have the responsibility of protecting our resources by ensuring that the constitutional mandate for sustained yield management of Alaska's wildlife and fish resources is followed for the benefit of all Alaskans.

It is in the best interest of all Alaskans that the replenishable resources of our state be biologically managed for abundance. An abundance of wildlife and fish will benefit all user groups and will greatly reduce competition among Alaskans for wildlife and fish resources. Continued passive monitoring of declining wildlife and fish populations is no longer acceptable. Active aggressive management is mandatory, including predator control, if we are to achieve and maintain healthy wildlife and fish populations in the future.

Management of Alaska's wildlife and fish resources was delegated to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, the Alaska Board of Game, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game by the Legislature. Therefore, the Legislature needs to make it crystal clear that it expects this type of active aggressive management. SCR 2 sends this message. It requests the Governor, the Board of Fisheries, the Board of Game, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to do everything within the scope of their powers, duties, and responsibilities to manage Alaska's wildlife and fish resources on a biological basis for abundance, and to develop and implement regulations, policies, and programs to restore an abundance of wildlife and fish in Alaska using all methods and means available to accomplish this goal as quickly as possible.

District A:

Hyder • Ketchikan • Kupreanof • Meyers Chuck • Petersburg • Saxman • Sitka • Wrangell

FISCAL NOTE

No. 1
 Bill Version: SCR 2
 (S) Publish Date: 2/10/99

**STATE OF ALASKA
 1999 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Revision Date 1/22/99 Dept. Affected _____
 Title Management of Fish and Wildlife BRU _____
 Component _____
 Sponsor Taylor _____
 Requester _____ Component Serial No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05
Personal Services						0.0
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES []						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1091 Designated Program Receipts						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY99) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This resolution is anticipated to have no fiscal impact on state agencies.

Prepared by Senate Resources Committee Phone 465-4907
 Division _____ Date 1/29/99
 Approved by Senator Rick Halford, Chairman *Rick Halford* Date _____
 Agency _____

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life.⁵

Elsewhere, the Framers of the Alaska Constitution provided a hint that they were not satisfied with the way the U.S. Forest Service had interpreted "sustained yield" on National Forest lands.

We have in mind no narrow definition of "sustained yield" as is used, for example, in forestry, but the broad premise that insofar as possible a principle of sustained yield shall be used with respect to administration of those resources which are susceptible of sustained yield, and where it is desirable. For example, predators would not be maintained on a sustained yield basis.

Sadly, this statement teaches nothing positive regarding what "sustained yield" does mean; it merely appears that the Framers did not want "sustained yield" to be applied as interpreted by the U.S. Forest Service.⁷

Did the Framers realize how much leeway they were bequeathing to the Legislature and the courts for defining the sustained yield principle? I believe they did.

The Committee (on Natural Resources) realizes full well that it would be impossible to determine the exact sustained yield in the fisheries...⁸

Although they did not expressly state the same conclusion for wildlife, it seems clear that it may be very difficult for biologists to specify the precise number of organisms that can be

⁵ Alaska Constitutional Convention Proceedings, Vol. 7, p. 98.

⁶ Alaska Constitutional Convention Proceedings, p. 2451.

⁷ SEE ALSO: Harrison, Alaska's Constitution: A Citizen's Guide, p. 68 (ISER-Univ. Alaska, 1986).

⁸ Alaska Constitutional Convention Proceedings, p. 2457.

Number 1918

ANGIE MORGAN testified via teleconference in Aniak. We are having our moose hunting season right now. She kind of agreed with the resolution in terms of managing people versus managing moose populations. Her 80-year-old father-in-law said the moose started coming back to this area in the 1940s and 1950s. In Units 19C and 19D the moose population is really low so that local people are getting worried about Units 19A and 19B. Last year, there was over 1,300 moose, but there were only 89 successful local people in getting a moose. All the rest were from out of town or the state.

Number 2020

CO-CHAIRMAN OGAN asked Ms. Morgan whether there is a problem with wolf predation.

Number 2028

MS. MORGAN replied there are a lot of wolves in the area. People have been seeing more this year than previous years. The wolves are showing themselves more in the rivers than ever before.

CO-CHAIRMAN OGAN asked Ms. Morgan whether there were locals that went same-day-airborne hunting before it was outlawed last year.

MS. MORGAN replied she does not know.

Number 2095

REPRESENTATIVE NICHOLIA asked Ms. Morgan what were the Unit numbers she mentioned again.

MS. MORGAN replied Units 19A, 19B, 19C and 19D.

Number 2138

CO-CHAIRMAN OGAN asked Ms. Morgan whether she or her father-in-law were aware of an increase in wolf trapping in the 1950s and 1960s that would have helped increase the moose population.

MS. MORGAN replied she does not know.

Number 2366

* { WILLIAM MILLER testified via teleconference in Tok. He is from the Native village of Dot Lake. In reference to the management of game as opposed to hunting, both have to work together. In reference to predator control, every time we have tried in Unit 20D to solve predator control we run across opposition from the conservationist that love wolves. They say that all the wolves eat are the sick and lazy, but we have documented moose kills by wolves of bulls, calves and cows. A few years ago over a 45 day period kills were documented every three to four days.

TAPE 98-9, SIDE A
Number 0000

MR. MILLER continued. When you do talk to organizations in the state the AITC represents the interests of a lot tribes in the state. It would be a very good contact.

Number 0043

CO-CHAIRMAN OGAN asked Mr. Miller who documented the wolf kills.

MR. MILLER replied the residents of the Native village of Dot Lake. At the time, there were approximately 14 to 18 wolves called the Billy Creek pack. The pack migrated back-and-forth between Billy Creek and Sand Lake in Unit 20D. The wolves increased to where they drove the moose down so low that they finally left the area and started preying on a caribou herd. We now have the same pack at the head waters of the Robertson River. Something has to be done with the wolves.

Number 0125

CO-CHAIRMAN OGAN stated wildlife is managed by initiative in this state which is how the same-day-airborne law came into effect.

Number 0163

DON SHERWOOD, Legislative Officer, Alaska Boating Association (ABA), testified via teleconference in Anchorage. The ABA, a group of over 1,000 hunters and fishers, stands behind and supports the resolution. As elected representatives, you have sworn to uphold our constitution, it behooves you to take this resolution and pass it on to the Senate for final passage. Our constitution states that wildlife and fish resources should be managed on a sustained yield basis. Shortages do currently exist and continue to abate in some areas. Wildlife resources must be sustained on a biological basis for abundance. The Board of Game, the Board of Fisheries and the Department of Fish and Game must restore the abundance of the resources with every means available to accomplish this goal. We believe that this resolution can and will give these agencies the power they need. He thanked Senator Taylor for his foresight and for the much needed legislation.

Number 0296

CO-CHAIRMAN OGAN announced it was time to take action on the resolution.

Number 0308

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON made a motion to move CSSCR 2 (RES), version 0-LS0369\E, from the committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, CSSCR 2 (RES) moved from the House Resources Standing Committee.