

FINDING OF EMERGENCY
#97-110-BOG

The Alaska Board of Game finds that an emergency exists and that the attached regulations are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety, or general welfare. The facts constituting the emergency are as follows:

Seven muskoxen have been stranded on Arey Island in Unit 26C since ice-out in May 1997. Arey Island is a barrier island in the Beaufort Sea running parallel to the coastline between Barter Island and the Opilak River estuary. Available forage on the island has been heavily browsed and the remaining forage will senesce in mid-August leaving inadequate food resources to sustain the muskoxen. The island is separated from the mainland on the western end by gap of mostly shallow water containing a narrow channel which the muskoxen would have to swim. If the muskoxen do not leave the island or cannot be driven from the island through the water, they may not survive until adequate ice forms in October for them to walk to the mainland. If they survive on the island until October, they will not have adequate body reserves to survive the winter and will die. Either way, these muskoxen would not survive and would be lost to the Unit 26C muskoxen population. No provision exists in current regulations authorizing the Commissioner of Fish and Game to issue permits for taking muskoxen which are stranded on ice floes or islands with insufficient food and water to ensure survival and continued productivity. The Board of Game has the authority to pass a regulation authorizing the Commissioner to issue these permits so that stranded animals can be taken and the meat distributed for human use.

The Board of Game is not scheduled to meet until fall, and is unable to meet requirements for public notice and implementation of this regulation change prior to the muskoxen being subjected to starvation conditions. Unless the board takes emergency action the potential beneficial use of these muskoxen will be lost. Therefore, this emergency regulation is necessary to provide public benefits consistent with conservation principles.

DATE: August 1, 1997
Juneau, Alaska

Vote: 6-0


Larry Holmes, Chair
Alaska Board of Game

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