



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Public Safety

DIVISION OF ALASKA WILDLIFE TROOPERS
Office of the Director

5700 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-1225
Main: 907.269.5509
Fax: 907.269.5616

Chairman Ted Spraker
Alaska Board of Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau Ak, 99811-5526

Dear Chairman Spraker:

The following comments give a brief description of the positions that the Department of Public Safety, Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers have on the proposals that are up for consideration at the March 2014 meeting in Anchorage.

In general, when the board considers seasons and or bag limit changes, the Alaska Wildlife Troopers request that every effort possible be made to align the season dates and bag limits with adjacent game management units and/or sub units. This is mainly due to enforceability of multiple seasons in multiple locations as well as consistency of the regulations for the public. When the board considers proposals having to do with allocation or biological concerns, AWT is generally neutral in position.

AWT recognizes that regulations are developed by the Alaska Boards of Fish and Game through the public process to support management plans. Further, all management plans rely upon public compliance with regulations to achieve success. Enforcement is a crucial element needed to ensure long-term compliance with regulations by the public. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers request the board recognize that the division has limited resources and man power and any new regulation scheme or area restrictions may place an additional burden on AWT.

Comments on specific proposals are included in this letter.

Thank you for your time.

Bernard Chastain

Captain, Alaska Wildlife Troopers
Anchorage Headquarters

Proposal 133

This proposal asks the board to create a requirement for IBEP certification for all big game bow hunters statewide. If the board chooses to make this a requirement, the board will also need to make a requirement that hunters must carry and present the IBEP card upon request from a peace officer. If the requirement to present upon request is not implemented, Wildlife Troopers will need to spend additional time and effort researching if the person has a valid IBEP card.

Proposal 135

This proposal asks that the board restrict that game taken for religious ceremonies must be used within the state. AWT supports this change due to our lack of ability to enforce regulations outside of the State of Alaska utilizing state law.

Proposal 139

This proposal asks that the board remove the harvest ticket requirements on all game and require harvest reports instead. The proposer suggests that in the place of harvest tickets, hunters will voluntarily report to the department of fish and game that they took an animal. Alaska Wildlife Troopers use harvest tickets to enforce the many regulations that the board enacts. Harvest tickets are used to identify that a hunter has taken his or her “bag limit” of game and are one of the only legal requirements that keep hunters honest about the number of animals taken. A hunter who is required to “notch” their harvest ticket is constantly thinking about what will happen if they are checked by enforcement. This forces hunters to stay within bag and possession limits, ultimately supporting management plans.

Nearly every hunting regulation scheme nationwide relies on some form of harvest ticket and the recording immediately of the harvest. Removal of this requirement in Alaska will result in the systematic breakdown of the ability to enforce bag and possession limits as well as management of the resource. Additionally, a validated harvest ticket allows a hunter to lawfully possess game in Alaska. A hunter is required to keep the validated harvest ticket in possession until the animal is transported to the place where it will be processed for human consumption. This requirement allows a hunter to legally possess the animal that they killed. Enforcement has a reasonable expectation that when they come in contact with a hunter transporting game, that a harvest ticket which has been properly validated indicates that the hunter has likely not taken more than their bag limit for that animal.

Harvest tickets for deer must be validated in sequential order and the unused tickets must be in the possession of the hunter. This requirement was put into regulation due to hunters taking deer and using their harvest tickets out of order, keeping tickets one and two unused. In areas where the bag limit for deer was only two deer and the hunter was issued six harvest tickets this was an enforcement and management issue.

If the board decides to remove the requirement for harvest tickets, the effect will be that AWT will not be able to effectively enforce “bag” or “possession” limits for big game. In some states,

a hunter is required to affix the harvest tag to the antlers of the animal to make it legal. A hunter taking game will be required to report to the department, but there will be no accountability in the field. The long term effect may be that hunters stop reporting harvest all together. AWT requests that the board examine this proposal carefully before making the decision to eliminate harvest tickets.

Proposal 141

This proposal was submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Troopers. The proposal asks that the board specify where the locking tag needs to be placed when a locking tag is required to be affixed by regulation.

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers ask that the board specify that when required, the locking tag must be affixed to the “portion of the animal required to be salvaged from the field”. This will prevent hunters from attaching the locking tag to a portion of the animal that is left in the field and claiming that they have satisfied their requirement to attach their locking tag. Additionally, game animals may have different salvage requirements. This will clarify in regulation where the locking tag must be affixed. If the board chooses to pass this proposal, it will make the regulation easier to understand for both the public and enforcement.

Proposal 142

This proposal asks that the board remove the requirement to show licenses and permits to peace officers.

The use of Alaska’s resources are highly regulated activities. Many statutes and regulations govern the legal take of resources. Regulations are made through the board process within the respective hunting or fishing regimes. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers are mandated to enforce the regulations enacted by the boards and do so with a finite amount of resources.

The Alaska Wildlife Troopers currently do not have any problems enforcing 5 AAC 92.012(b) as written. If the board chooses to amend this regulation and adopt the language that the proposer suggests, we will have significant problems with enforcement of the regulations that the board creates. Wildlife Troopers must have the authority to inspect guns, permits, licenses, game or any other items used in taking game in order to effectively enforce the regulations that the board enacts.

The proposer suggests that hunters and fisherman should be treated the same with inspection. AWT agrees with this statement and will be seeking support from the Board of Fish to change the fisheries regulation to match the Board of Game regulation for inspection of items.

Proposal 150

This proposal was submitted by Alaska Wildlife Troopers and asks the board to clarify the regulation prohibiting possession of a wolf or a wolf hybrid.

AWT asks that the board adds to 92.030(a) that it would be unlawful to possess a “wolf” as well as a wolf hybrid. In situations where a person possesses, buys, sells or advertises for sale a wolf or wolf hybrid it will give AWT additional support to deal with these cases.

Possession of wolfs and wolf hybrids have been a problem for AWT enforcement in the last few years.

Proposal 151

This proposal asks the board to require guides to keep migratory bird log books and submit paperwork to the department. As this proposal is written, it will be very difficult for AWT to enforce. If the board chose to pass this proposal, substantial change would need to be made to the language to make it enforceable.

Proposal 152, 153, 154

These proposals ask the board to change the requirements for salvage of wild fowl. If the board chooses to amend the language surrounding the salvage of wild fowl, AWT will work with the board to develop language that is enforceable. As written, these proposals present situations that may not be enforceable for Alaska Wildlife Troopers.

Proposal 155

The wording of this proposal is not enforceable. If the board wishes to change the definitions of possession limit, AWT will work with the board to craft language that is enforceable.

Proposal 156 and 157

These proposals ask the board to modify the definitions for processed for human consumption and salvage. The current wording of these proposals have language that will be problematic for AWT and may present issues with enforceability. If the board chooses to pass these proposals, AWT will work with the board to develop enforceable language that fits within the intent of the board.

Proposal 166, 167

These proposals ask that the board create a definition under 5 AAC 92 for the term transporter and guide. Transporters and guides are currently licensed through AS 08 and the statutes and regulations governing transporter activities are developed through the commercial services board and the legislature. A definition for “transporter” or “guide” under 5 AAC 92 will likely be in conflict with other regulatory and statutory language.

Proposal 168

This proposal was submitted by Alaska Wildlife Troopers and asks that the board create a definition for the term “brow palm”.

Alaska Wildlife Troopers are the primary enforcement agency for moose antler restricted hunts. The “handy dandy” regulation book references “brow palm” on page 34 of the regulation booklet. This regulation book identifies that a “brow tine means a tine emerging from the first branch or brow palm on the main beam of the moose antler”.

Other terms are defined in regulation such as; “tine”, “point”, “brow tine”, “50 inch antlers”, “spike-fork antlers”, “36-inch antlers” and “spike”. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers request that the board create a definition for “brow palm” so it will be clear to the public and enforcement when a “brow tine” can be counted and may make an animal legal.

Proposal 169

This proposal was submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Troopers and asks the board to create a definition for the term “broken” as it pertains to the taking of a legal Dall sheep.

One of the ways a male (ram) Dall sheep can be taken legally is if both tips of the horns are broken. There has been considerable difficulty identifying what a legal animal is if it is taken under the “broken” exemption. There are differing opinions within enforcement, ADF&G and the public as to what qualifies as broken. By creating a definition for “broken”, the board will provide clarity to the regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these proposals. Additional concerns will be addressed on the record at the board meeting.