

Note: Proposal 155 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Arctic/Western Region meeting for January 2017.

**PROPOSAL 155 –5 AAC 92.108 Identified big game prey populations and objectives and 5 AAC 92.118. Intensive Management Plans IV.** Review and modify the Unit 15C Intensive management objectives and plans as follows:

**5AAC 92.108. Identified big game prey populations and objectives.**

Population	Finding	Population Objective	Harvest Objective
...			
Moose			
...			
GMU 15(C)	Positive	2,500–3,500	200–350

**5 AAC 92.118(c). Intensive Management Plans IV** are entirely deleted and replaced by the following:

**(c) Unit 15(C) Predation Control Area: the Unit 15(C) Predation Control Area is established and consists of all lands within Unit 15(C) north of Kachemak Bay including the Fox River Flats (1,171 square miles); state and private lands are approximately 856 square miles;**

- (1) This is a continuing control program that was first established by the board in 2012 for wolf control; it is currently designed to increase moose numbers and harvest by reducing predation on moose by wolves and is expected to make a contribution to achieving the intensive management (IM) objectives in Unit 15(C);**
- (2) Moose and wolf objectives are as follows:**
  - (A) Moose IM population objectives for Unit 15(C) as established in 5 AAC 92.108 are 2,500–3,500 moose. These numbers are within the range of historic population estimates; the bull-to-cow objective is 20–25:100 for Unit 15(C);**
  - (B) The moose harvest objectives for Unit 15(C) is 200–350 moose; which is 8% of the low population objective and 10% of the high population objective ;**
  - (C) The department has determined that all wolves will be removed from public and private lands within the control area as the control area does not make up the entirety of Unit 15(C) and sufficient repopulation sources can be found within adjacent areas once control efforts cease;**
- (3) Department findings concerning populations and human use are as follows:**

- (A) Moose harvest has been consistently below IM harvest objectives since 2011 in Unit 15(C)
  - (B) A reduction in wolf predation in Unit 15(C) may make progress toward achieving the Unit 15(C) IM harvest objectives for moose;
  - (C) Reducing wolf numbers is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns if conducted by department personnel and if the activity is allowed on Native lands;
- (4) Authorized methods and means are as follows:
- (A) Hunting and trapping of wolves by the public in the Unit 15(C) Predation Control Area during the term of the program will occur as provided in the hunting and trapping regulations set out elsewhere in this title, including the use of motorized vehicles;
  - (B) Notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may issue public aerial or public land and shoot permits as a method for wolf removal under AS 16.05.783;
  - (C) Department personnel will be allowed to conduct aerial wolf removal using aircraft under AS 16.05.783
- (5) Time frame is as follows:
- (A) Through July 1, 2022, the commissioner may authorize the removal of wolves in the Unit 15(C) Predation Control Area
  - (B) Annually the department shall, to the extent practicable, provide to the board a report of program activities conducted during the preceding 12 months, including implementation activities, the status of the moose and wolf populations, and recommendations for changes, if necessary to achieve the objectives of the plan;
- (6) The commissioner will review, modify, or suspend program activities as follows:
- (A) When the mid-point of the IM population and harvest objectives for the moose population are achieved;
  - (B) If after 3 years, the harvest of wolves is not sufficient to make progress towards the intensive management population objectives for wolves;
  - (C) Predation control activities may be suspended:

- (i) **If after 3 years, there is no detectable increase in the total harvest of moose in the control area**
- (ii) **If after three years, any measure consistent with significant levels of nutritional stress in the moose population is identified;**
- (iii) **When the moose population and harvest objectives within Unit 15(C) have been met.**
- (iv) **If the population exceeds a density of 3.0 moose per square mile (approximately 3,500 moose).**

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS AND WHY?**

The Intensive Management (IM) program for Unit 15C has not been implemented since it was adopted in 2012; however, the department is reviewing management options to activate the program. Recent population estimates have been within IM objectives, but harvest objectives have not been met in recent years (193 moose harvested in 2015 compared to the 200 moose minimum harvest objective). This proposal will also allow the board to modify the IM objectives and provide guidance to the department if warranted.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game

(HQ-2016-ACR5)

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*Note: Proposal 156 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Arctic/Western Region meeting for January 2017.*

**PROPOSAL 156 - 5AAC 92.111 Intensive Management Plan I.** Reauthorize the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Intensive Management Plan as follows:

(a) **Plans established.** Intensive management plans for the following areas are established in this section:

...

(c) Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area is entirely deleted and replaced by the following.

- (c) **Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area: the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area is established to increase the Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) within Units 9(B), 17(B), 17(C), 19(A), and 19(B) to aid in achieving intensive management objectives; the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area encompasses approximately 39,683 square miles; multiple predator control areas may be utilized within the management area; however the combined active control areas will be limited to a total of 10,000 square miles, which is 25 percent of the management area;**
- (1) **This is a continuing control program that was first authorized by the board in 2011 for wolf control; it is designed to increase the caribou herd's population size and human harvest by reducing wolf predation on caribou and is expected to make a contribution to achieving the intensive management (IM) objectives in Units 9(B), 17(B), 17(C), 19(A), and 19(B)**
- (2) **Caribou and wolf objectives are as follows:**
- (A) **the intensive management objective for the MCH as established in 5 AAC 92.108 is 30,000–80,000 caribou; these objectives were based on historic information regarding population numbers, habitat limitations, human use, and sustainable harvests;**
- (B) **The caribou harvest objective for the MCH as established in 5 AAC 92.108 is 2,400–8,000;**
- (C) **the wolf population objective for the MCH Predation Management Area is to annually reduce the number of wolves in predator control areas to a level that results in increased calf survival and recruitment;**
- (3) **Board findings concerning populations and human use are as follows:**
- (A) **the population and harvest for the MCH are below IM objectives throughout the range;**

- (B) wolves are a major predator of caribou in the range of the MCH and are an important factor in failing to achieve these objectives;
  - (C) a reduction of wolf predation can reasonably be expected to aid in achieving the objectives;
  - (D) reducing wolf predation is likely to be effective and feasible using recognized and prudent active management techniques and based on scientific information;
  - (E) reducing predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns, and;
  - (F) reducing predation is in the best interests of subsistence users.
- (4) Authorized methods and means are as follows:
- (A) hunting and trapping of wolves by the public in the MCH Predation Management Area during the term of the program will occur as provided in the hunting and trapping regulations set out elsewhere in this title, including the use of motorized vehicles as provided in 5AAC 92.080;
  - (B) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may issue public aerial permits or public land and shoot permits as a method for wolf removal under AS 16.05.783;
- (5) Time frame is as follows:
- (A) through July 1, 2024, the commissioner may authorize the removal of wolves in the MCH Predation Management Area;
  - (B) annually, the department shall, to the extent practicable, provide to the board a report of program activities conducted during the preceding 12 months, including implementation activities, the status of caribou and wolf populations, and recommendations for changes, if necessary, to achieve the objectives of the plan;
- 6) The commissioner will review, modify or suspend program activities as follows:
- (A) when the mid-point of the IM population or harvest objectives for the MCH are achieved;
  - (B) if after three years, the harvest of wolves is not sufficient to make progress towards the intensive management population objectives for wolves;

- (C) if after three years, there is no detectable increase in the total number of caribou in the control area;**
- (D) if after three years, fall calf-to-cow ratios show no appreciable increase;**
- (E) if after three years, any measure consistent with significant levels of nutritional stress in the caribou population are identified;**
- (F) when the caribou population and harvest objectives within the MCH Predation Management Area have been met.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) Intensive Management (IM) Plan will expire on June 30, 2017, but the IM objectives for the MCH have not been achieved. To comply with protocol for IM plans, the department is introducing new regulatory language and will present a feasibility assessment of the program during the January 2018 Board of Game meeting. This proposal will also allow the board to modify the IM objectives and provide guidance to the department if warranted.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-2016-6)  
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*Note: Proposal 157 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Arctic/Western Region meeting for January 2017.*

**PROPOSAL 157 - 5 AAC 85.065(a)(4)(G) Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game; and 99.025(12) Customary and traditional uses of small game.** Set a customary and traditional use finding, and establish seasons and bag limits for Emperor geese as follows:

**5 AAC 85.065(a)(4)(G) is repealed and readopted to read:**

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(G) Emperor geese		
Units 1-7, 11-16, 19-21, and 24-26	No open season.	No open season.
Units 9, 10 (Unimak Is. Only), 17, 18, 22, and 23		
1 goose by registration permit only	Sept. 1—Dec. 16	No open season
Units 8, 10 (except Unimak Is.)		
1 goose by registration permit only	Oct. 8—Jan. 22	No open season

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS AND WHY?** The hunting season for emperor geese has been closed since 1986 due to low population estimates. A 2016 population model that integrated 30 years of survey data produced a population estimate of 150,000-170,000 geese; approximately twice the size than was previously known. The new estimate indicates that the population has recovered to a harvestable level. The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC) collaborated with the Pacific Flyway Council to revise the Flyway Management Plan for emperor geese, which includes new harvest guidelines for a fall hunt and specifies a quota of 1,000 birds per year. The revised plan also included a new population objective and population monitoring method, and a harvest strategy that guided regulations for this hunt. In October 2016, a Federal framework change under the new guidelines to open a hunt of emperor geese in 2017 was approved by the federal SRC.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (HQ-2016-ACR 7)  
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*Note: Proposal 158 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Arctic/Western Region meeting scheduled for January 2017.*

**PROPOSAL 158 - 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry.** Remove the West Nile Virus testing requirement for raptors.

Remove the requirements to test birds for West Nile Virus.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Please remove the West Nile Virus testing requirements, as per Alaska Division of Wildlife Conservation Alaska Falconry Manual 9 Addendum dated March 29, 2013. The current regulation requires falconers to give unnecessary vaccinations for raptors, costs hundreds of dollars in veterinary bills and requires unnecessary quarantines for up to 30 days each time a falconer travels outside of Alaska or imports a raptor.

**PROPOSED BY:** Don Hunley

(HQ-2016-ACR 8)

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*Note: Proposal 160 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Arctic/Western Region meeting scheduled for January 2017.*

**PROPOSAL 160 - 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.** Extend the moose season in Unit 18, Kuskokwim Area to September 30 as follows:

Game Management Unit 18 - Kuskokwim Area

Resident Open Season: September 1 – September [10] 30.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Current regulatory hunt period for RM615 is limited to ten days only, resulting in lost opportunity and failure to meet harvestable surplus goals due to mixture of state and federal land management status in portions of Game Management Unit 18 with high bull/cow ratios (80:100 in some areas) that could be targeted to provide and sustain significantly higher harvest levels.

Within certain tributaries of the Kuskokwim in Unit 18 bull/cow ratios are extremely high – over 80:100 in some areas. The federal season window in this area is September 1-30, and in 2016 the dates of September 1 – 15 were implemented. Due to the large amount of state managed lands along and within the riparian corridors however, these moose – comprised of the same subpopulations – are essentially inaccessible in many cases. Additionally, the whole patchwork issue of state or federal lands creates an entirely unnecessary, unjustified, and burdensome situation for subsistence hunters.

In 2016, despite having a 15 day season and very favorable high water conditions, only about half of the minimum federal quota of 90 moose were taken (the federal refuge staff biologist estimated 110 as their 2016 quota sustainable for 30:100 bull/cow ratios). Having concurrent seasons within this lands management patchwork could allow for the combining, and increase, of both state and federal quotas; allowing extension of the season and expansion of the harvest in the targeted tributary areas referenced above. With this 30 day window, managers could then identify recognizable geographical boundaries that would allow certain tributaries to remain open longer for additional harvest, while the mainstem Kuskokwim could be closed when harvest in that section was deemed sufficient within sustained yield conservation standards.

Implementing this regulation would also greatly simplify matters for managers and hunters alike, as they would not have to wonder or worry whether they were on state or federally managed lands.

This effect of this registration hunt regarding reduced hunting and harvest effort on tributary moose populations in Unit 18 was entirely unforeseen when the current regulation was adopted. It remained unanticipated and unforeseen by users and management alike. The informative data reflecting the magnitude of the situation was simply and essentially non-existent or available until late into and following the 2016 fall hunt; 5+ months past the Arctic/Western region's April 2016 proposal decline. With the continued increase in the Unit 18 moose populations most of the Kuskokwim harvest now occurs along the main river corridor, and eastern tributary populations remain comparatively "unhunted" due to that easier access along the main stem, lower and westerly/tundra tributaries.

If the problem is not solved, forty-fifty (or more) surplus moose a year will continue to go unharvested. Integration of state/federal hunt actions for shared/mutual goals will remain as much or more confusing for subsistence users, and highly cumbersome for managers. The situation as it is now “foreseen”, will only amplify, with expectation to persist, until additional opportunity is accommodated and a resulting increase in harvest for these areas is achieved.

**PROPOSED BY:** Orutsararmiut Native Council

(HQ-2016-ACR 12)

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