

## **PROPOSAL 205**

### **5 AAC 92.112 Intensive Management Plan I.**

Reauthorize the Southern Alaska Peninsula Herd Intensive Management Plan as follows:

**5 AAC 92.112 Intensive Management Plan I.** (b) is entirely deleted and replaced by the following:

**(b) Southern Alaska Peninsula Predation Management Area. Notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, and based on the following information contained in this subsection, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee may conduct a wolf population reduction or wolf population regulation program on the Alaska Peninsula in Unit 9(D); the control area includes all drainages of the Alaska Peninsula west of a line from the southernmost head of Port Moller Bay to the head of American Bay, encompassing approximately 3,819 square miles;**

**(1) this is a continuing control program that was first established by the Board of Game (board) in 2008 for wolf control; it is designed to increase the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd (SAPCH) on the mainland portion of Unit 9(D) to aid in achieving intensive management (IM) objectives;**

**(2) Caribou and wolf objectives are as follows:**

**(A) the IM population objective for the SAPCH as established in 5 AAC 92.108 is 1,500–4,000 caribou;**

**(B) the caribou harvest objective for the SAPCH as established in 5 AAC 92.108 is 150–200 caribou in combination with harvest from the Unimak caribou herd (UCH);**

**(C) the management objective for Unit 9 wolves is to maintain a wolf population that will sustain a 3-year average annual harvest of at least 50 wolves; and**

**(D) the brown bear population objective for Unit 9 is to maintain a high-density bear population with a sex and age structure that can sustain a harvest composed of 60 percent males, with 50 males eight years of age or older during combined fall and spring seasons.**

**(3) Board findings concerning populations and human use are as follows:**

**(A) the board has designated the SAPCH as important for providing high levels of human consumptive use;**

**(B) the board established objectives for population size and annual sustained harvest of caribou in Units 9(D) consistent with multiple use**

**and principles of sound conservation and management of habitat and all wildlife species in the area;**

- (C) the population and harvest is currently below IM objectives for the SAPCH, however harvest is below objectives because of low hunter participation;**
- (D) wolves are a major predator of caribou in the range of the SAPCH and were an important factor in population and harvest levels falling below IM objectives during the mid 2000's;**
- (E) a reduction of predation was successful in achieving IM objectives in the late 2000's, setting a precedent for future actions;**
- (F) nutrition is not considered to be the primary factor limiting caribou population growth;**
- (G) future reduction in predation is likely to be effective and feasible using recognized and prudent active management techniques and based on scientific information;**
- (H) future reduction in predation is likely to be effective given land ownership patterns; and**
- (I) future reduction in predation is in the best interests of subsistence users. and is recognized under the state's intensive management law as an area where caribou are to be managed for high levels of human consumptive use.**

**(4) Authorized methods and means are as follows:**

- (A) hunting and trapping of wolves by the public in treatment areas during the term of the management 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 5 AAC 92.080;**
- (B) the commissioner may issue public aerial shooting permits, public land and shoot permits, or ground-based shooting permits, allow agents of the state, or department employees to conduct aerial, land and shoot, or ground-based shooting as a method of wolf removal under AS 16.05.783, including the use of any type of aircraft;**
- (C) the commissioner may authorize the use of state employees or agents or state owned, privately owned, or chartered equipment, including helicopters, as a method of wolf removal under AS 16.05.783; and**

**(5) Time frame is as follows:**

- (A) through June 30, 2031, the commissioner may authorize the removal of wolves in the SAPCH Predation Management Area to aid in population growth or improve harvest of SAPCH caribou; and
  - (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 SAPCH are achieved;
  - (B) if, after three years, the harvest of wolves is not sufficient to make progress towards the IM 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, bull-to-cow ratios show no appreciable increase;
  - (E) if, after three years, fall calf-to-cow ratios show no appreciable increase;
  - (F) if, after three years, any measure consistent with significant levels of nutritional stress in the caribou population are identified; or
  - (G) when the caribou population and harvest objectives within the SAPCH Predation Management Area have been met.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd (SAPCH) Intensive Management Plan was suspended during July 2010 and expired on June 30, 2017. IM population objectives for the SAPCH have been achieved since Regulatory Year (RY) 2012–13. Since RY08, the SAPCH has been increasing by an average of about 11% per year and was near 3,100 caribou (based on survey data and modeling) by RY20. However, harvest objectives have not been met because of low hunter participation.

During the three years that the IM program was active, a total of 38 (64%) wolves were removed by ADF&G staff on the calving grounds versus 21 (36%) taken from the wolf assessment area by hunters and trappers. Since suspension of the IM program in RY10, a total of 35 wolves (57%) were harvested by nonresident hunters and 26 wolves (43%) were taken by residents through RY19. Nonresident hunters harvest most of the wolves in Unit 9D and maintaining a tag fee

exemption for nonresidents is expected to keep harvest at such a level where the department does not expect to implement active predation control in the near future.

To comply with the protocol for intensive management plans, ADF&G is removing unnecessary and outdated information from regulation and introducing specific language for the intensive management plan for the SAPCH predation management area. There have been no significant changes to the plan. This reauthorization proposal allows the board to modify the programs objectives and give further guidance to ADF&G if warranted.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F21-041)  
\*\*\*\*\*