

PROPOSAL 75

5 AAC 92.122. Intensive Management Plan VI.

Add Department removal of wolves, brown bears, and black bears to Unit 16 Intensive Management Plan as follows:

5 AAC 92.122

...

(b)

(4)

...

(B) notwithstanding any other provisions in this title, the commissioner may issue public aerial shooting permits or public land-and-shoot permits as a method of wolf removal **and may allow department employees to conduct aerial, land and shoot, or ground-based lethal removal of wolves and black bears and brown bears using state-owned, privately-owned, or chartered equipment, including helicopters, under AS 16.05.783.**

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

The wolf control objective in the Intensive Management Plan for Moose in Unit 16 is to reduce the population to 35–55 wolves in Unit 16B. In March of 2023 the minimum count of wolves in Unit 16 indicated at least 120 wolves with several packs being reported in the unit that were not included in the minimum count. Six of the packs were located again in the fall of 2023, and all had increased in number by 2–6 per pack, indicating that the population was over 120 with the addition of the 2023 recruitment. A take of at least 70% annually is needed to achieve the population reduction objective. Given the high recruitment rate of wolves, population reduction is unlikely unless there is substantial harvest over a short period of time.

100 wolves need to be taken annually to reach the wolf population objective of 35-55 wolves. Based on participation the last time the program was active, it is unlikely this level of harvest will be achieved in this first year of the reactivated program due to potentially low participation in the program. There are two primary reasons that participation is low. First, a high proportion of wolves sealed from Unit 16 have lice (~60% in RY23) resulting in poor pelt quality; and second, control pilots have many options to participate in same day airborne programs such as in Units 9, 17, 19, and all of Unit 13 except 13C. If pelt quality remains an issue and pilots and public participation remains low in the future it may be necessary for the department to actively remove wolves from this area to achieve the wolf reduction objectives.

When the Unit 16 Predation Control Area was created the regulations did not allow for the department to do the removal. Adding the ability for the department to conduct control efforts of wolves and bears ensures the department has the ability to actively manage predators in the area to aid in achieving the population and harvest objectives set by the board. The department has no plans to activate bear control at this time.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

[HQ-F24-073]
