

Kodiak Fish & Game Advisory Committee
February 5th 2013—KNWRVC

Paul Chervenak Chairman

Ahki Nissa/Kristy
SC Region BOG 2013
AC Comments

(Minutes represent a paraphrased summary of the KAC, department staff and public comments and are not a verbatim transcript of the meeting. Tapes of the meeting are available for public review by contacting the committee secretary)

Call to order: 6:00pm February 5th 2013 at the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center.

Roll call: Quorum achieved with 12 members present. Oliver Holm, Paul Chervenak, Don Fox, Pat Holmes(for Rick Berns), Curt Waters, Davey Jones (for Rolan Ruoss) Wallace Fields (for Kip Thomet) Sam Rohrer (for Pete Hannah) Dick Rohrer (for Harvey Goodell) Herman Squartsoff, Andy Finke and Jason Bunch .

Members Absent Excused: Rolan Ruoss, Ron Kavanaugh, Harvey Goodell, Peter Hannah, Tuck Bonney, Kip Thomet & Rick Berns.

Members Absent: Julie kavanaugh, Lou Dochtermann, Alicia Reft & Dale Reft.

Agency Staff: Paul Fussey(trooper), Larry Van Daele & Sherry Wright(ADF&G), Kurt Rees & Kent Sundseth(USFWS).

Approve agenda: Approve unanimously.

Approve minutes of our previous meeting of February 27th & 28th 2012: Approved unanimously.

Correspondence: Letter from the USFWS containing their comments on proposals 140-141 & 142.

Chair Announcements:

Old Business:

New Business:

- 1) **Elections:** Results were Rolan Ruoss-Transporter/Sportfish Charter, Julie Kavanaugh-Concerned Citizen, Ron Kavanaugh-Small Boat Crab/Herring/Salmon Seiner, Peter Hannah-South End Gillnet, Andre Finke-Kodiak Subsistence, Ronnie Lind-Karluk/Larsen Bay, Dale Reft-Karluk/Larsen Bay alt, Rick Berns-Old Harbor/Ahkiok alt, Don Fox and Jason Bunch alternates.
- 2) **Officers Elected:** Chair Paul Chervenak, vice chair Julie Kavanaugh and secretary Don Fox.
- 3) **Pat Holmes:** Pat brought information on the Kodiak/Aleutian RAC and discussed some proposals: depletion of Harlequin Ducks around Larsen Bay, allowance for elders to take a few Emperor Geese and discussion of the need to submit proposals for the upcoming BOF cycle especially one regarding crab subsistence pots.
- 4) **Game proposals:** Larry Van Daele provided committee members with handouts with information on the departments positions on the South Central Region BOG proposals and also provided the power point that he would be providing the BOG.

RECEIVED

FEB 25 2013

BOARDS
ANCHORAGE

Emailed to Nissa/Kristy
2-25-13 @ 10:05 am

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Larry also announced that the ADF&G personnel would be moving to the new building starting February 15th.

Proposal #140

Action: 2-10 Oppose

Description: Reduce the bag limit for deer and modify season dates.

USFWS comments: The proposal would not substantially influence recovery of the Sitka black-tail deer population and unnecessarily reduce hunter harvest opportunity. While this proposal could facilitate modest herd recovery in areas that receive relatively high hunting pressure, the effect would be negligible over most of the unit 8 area. In the area surrounding the city of Kodiak, current harvest regulations, which limit harvest to bucks during rifle season, provide sufficient protection to promote herd recovery. With few exceptions, winter weather is the primary factor regulating deer populations of the Kodiak Archipelago.

Staff comments: No recommendation.

There was a unit wide die off of 50% in the deer population after the winter of 2011/2012. The current regulations were put into effect to address a similar die off in 1998/99 when coupled with a series of mild winters the result was a rebound of deer populations within 4-5 years. Weather is the primary regulating factor behind decreases and increases in deer populations. In the fall of 2012 members of the advisory committee voted 14-0 to oppose any in-season-Emergency Order to reduce deer season or bag limits.

Committee comments: KAC agrees with and would like to reference USFWS and staff comments. The advisory committee has consistently recommended that the primary goal be to manage for meat production (subsistence) and the secondary goal trophy production. Any lowering of the bag limit would seriously affect the subsistence needs of Kodiak residents. Many residents hunt in December and the federal season in January when the deer have started shedding their antlers differentiating between bucks and does when the deer have no antlers is virtually impossible if a bucks only regulation is implemented. Committee members felt that its better to have meat in the freezer then dead deer on the beach. KAC members also agreed with committee chair Mr. Chervenak that non-resident and off island resident hunting pressure is self regulating when populations are down there is less effort so that fewer hunters come to Kodiak. Non Kodiak hunters usually target bucks. The winter this year has been mild and the deer population is doing well as observed by several committee members. If it continues to be mild and we have another mild winter next year the population should rebound dramatically. One added benefit of lower deer populations is that overgrazed vegetation has a chance to recover before the dramatic die offs in the late 1990's there was notable habitat degradation.

Minority opinion: Mr. Holmes and Mr. Squartsoff both felt that something should be done to increase the deer population now.

Proposal #141

Action: 12-0 Support

Description: Extend the season and increase the bag limit in Unit 8 for goats.

USFWS comments: The Refuge supports proposal #141. As written, the proposal could increase

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Proposal # 141(continued)

hunting opportunity for introduced mountain goats on Kodiak Refuge lands where additional harvest would be beneficial. Increased harvest would prevent the population from exceeding habitat capacity and damaging alpine habitat. Without increased harvest, the population would likely exceed habitat capacity and decline substantially. Such a decline would curtail hunting opportunity. In cooperation with ADF&G, the Refuge has monitored the population and documented its exponential increase. Additional harvest is needed to check and maintain the population within ADF&G prescribed management goals.

Staff comments: Department recommends adoption of season extension but no recommendation on bag limit increase. The department is concerned about the increase in population in this area as the population cannot be sustained at these higher levels. Current harvest has flat lined while the goat population continues to grow. Lengthening the season would increase both sport hunter and subsistence opportunity.

Committee comments: This proposal was developed with joint representation of the Kodiak Advisory Committee, the Kodiak/Aleutian Federal Regional Advisory Committee, USFWS, the ADF&G and other local residents. The KAC agrees and supports the USFWS and department comments and would like to reference them. The committee had concerns about bear hunter conflicts if a hunter killed two goats or left a goat down in camp while pursuing another animal. Since a hunter would have to remove the 1st goat taken from the field presumably by plane or marine vessel our fears were alleviated. Committee members also felt that the extended season would benefit both sport and subsistence hunters. It would provide a source of food for villagers when nothing else is available in late winter. The goats would be pushed down lower where they could be accessed by boat or skiff. The proposal also would encourage more hunter activity since it separates the RG480 bag limit from goats taken elsewhere in the state thus providing incentive for hunters to participate in the hunt. KAC members also felt that if any problems arose the department has EO authority or it could be addressed in the next BOG cycle.

Proposal #142

Action: 12-0 Support

Description: In Unit 8 a wounded goat counts as the bag limit.

USFWS comments: The proposal would promote ethical hunting practices of mountain goats in Game Management Unit 8. While the Refuge promotes increased harvest of mountain goats on Refuge lands, it is important this take occurs without significant wounding and loss of animals that are not recovered. Sport hunting is an important priority public use of Kodiak Refuge, and we support reasonable regulations that promote ethical hunting practices.

Staff comments: If you wound and don't retrieve it its counted in your bag limit.

Implementation of the regulation would encourage a widely accepted ethical practice and be consistent with the regulations passed for Unit 8 brown bears(2007) and elk (2011). Each year an undetermined number of goats are shot and wounded and not recovered but are not reported in the harvest.

Committee comments: Agree with and support USFWS and department comments and would like to reference them. Wounding means that if the animal is touched by a projectile(bullet or

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arrow). Committee members felt this proposal pursues a commonly held ethical practice and relies on the hunters ethics but also would be difficult to enforce. KAC members hoped it would rein in sniper hunters and shooting goats in marginal conditions. Several big game guides who served on the KAC were recently in Anchorage and discussed this proposal with several hunters who stated that they could support the proposal if the words “**mortally wounded**” were inserted. The proposal as written uses the word “**wounded**” meaning touched by a projectile. After discussion committee members decided that at times it was difficult to determine if a animal was mortally wounded so decided to support proposal #142 as written.

Proposals #162-163-164-165-168-169-170

Action: 0-12 Oppose

Description: These proposals all seek in a variety of ways to allocate between residents and non-residents. They have primarily been written for ungulate populations. According to statistics provided by the department non-resident sheep tag purchases have declined 26.3%, for moose 50.9%, 70% for caribou and a 14% increase for goats. Blanket proposals (162-170) are not deemed appropriate by the KAC in regard to quotas, starting times, allocation of hunts with non-resident and resident seasons. There is no conservation basis in any of the proposals. The makers of the proposals do not take into account the importance of the funds the department receives from non-resident hunting opportunity to the departments operating budget. The advisory committee feels strongly that all proposals should be **species and are specific** using a management area approach. Using proposal #168 as an example which limits non-residents to 10% of permits. This proposal would affect elk, bear and goat hunts. Non-resident goat and bear hunters are required to have a guide. There are many areas on the island with just a few permits this would preclude non-residents from these hunts thus severely affecting our local guide industry. These guided hunts are important to Kodiaks economy especially to some of the village guides. The advisory committee rejected similar statewide proposals that the BOG considered at their January 2012 meeting in Anchorage. The members of the advisory committee also discussed at length starting residents ahead of non –resident hunters and KAC members felt it would greatly increase the number of resident hunters by freeing guides up to hunt when they can’t take clients. The committee had 4 guides sitting in on the committee and one transporter who acknowledged this would probably happen..

5)KAC member to BOG meeting: Don Fox was selected to represent the advisory committee at the BOG meeting March 15th-19th in Kenai/Soldotna.

ADJOURN
9:05pm