

Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes of 12/04/2024
VFW Post #9365, 301 E Lake View Avenue, Wasilla and Zoom

I. Call to Order: 7:00pm by Herb Mansavage, Chairman

II. Roll Call

Members Present:

Herb Mansavage, Chairman

Andy Couch (Zoom)

Austin Manelick (Zoom)

Dom Nickles (Zoom)

Hunter Hongslo

Danny Lewis

Ed Soto

Neil DeWitt (Zoom)

Pete Imhof

Birch Yuknis (Zoom)

Bruce Privett

Michelle Heun, Secretary

Members Absent (Excused): 2

Robert Cassell

Steve Bartelli

Members Absent (Unexcused): 1

Casey Dinkel

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 8 members

List of User Groups Present: Hunting guide, sport hunter, subsistence hunter, fishing guide, commercial fishing, sport fishing, subsistence fishing, trapping, wildlife photographer, wildlife viewing, conservationist

III. Fish and Game Staff Present:

John Landsiedel, Wildlife Biologist (Dillingham)

Amy VandeVoort, Wildlife Biologist (King Salmon)

Gerrit Van Diest, Wildlife Biologist (Palmer)

Trooper Sam Humphreys (AWT-Public Safety-Palmer)

Trooper Juan Olson (AWT-Public Safety-Palmer)

Leila Williams, Board Support (Zoom)

IV. Guests Present:

Glenn Hielmuth

Tony Kavalok (ADF&G Retired)

Rod Arno, Alaska Outdoor Council (Zoom)

- V. Motion to approve the agenda made by Ed Soto and seconded.
- VI. Motion approved without objection at previous meeting allowed for committee reviewed and approved meeting minutes of November 20, 2024, be sent electronic via email to members and Board Support. (Copy of meeting minutes can be viewed in secretary's book upon request.)
- VII. Reports
 - a. Chair's report
 - Chair Mansavage stated the Palmer proposals on the agenda would be moved to next meeting to accommodate department staff present to answer questions on proposals in Game Management Units (GMU) 9, 10, and 17.
 - b. ADF&G
 - No report
- VIII. Public Comment
 - Mr. Kavalok is a former area game management biologist out of the Palmer office who submitted and supports Proposal 73 (Change the bag limit for sheep in Unit 14A draw hunts to any ram.) He stated that providing a few opportunities to harvest any ram by drawing hunt reduced the stigma / difficulty in determining legality of sheep under the full curl regulation used in many parts of the state. He mentioned that previously when Game Management Unit (GMU) 14A had a sheep drawing hunt for any ram – that had been the second most popular sheep drawing hunt in the State of Alaska. It was pointed out that if drawing permits were provided in too large of numbers, as had been done in the past in GMU 14A, then competition amongst the drawing winners could be quite intense and the number of mature rams living to reach full curl size could be nearly eliminated from the population. Mr. Kavalok agreed that a successful drawing hunt managed under an any ram regulation would require setting drawing permit levels based on up-to-date population data including the number of full curl rams in the population, in order to maintain a reasonable full curl component within the hunt area.
- IX. Old Business
 - a. None
- X. New Business
 - a. Current Review of BOG Proposals 1-84 (Reminder: Proposal 64 has already been voted on and the results are listed in the table.)
 - Standing Motions and second on proposals will be done by Chair Mansavage and second by a committee member preceding discussion and vote.

Alaska Board of Game Central & Southwest Region Meeting Proposals

January 10-17, 2024 | Wasilla, AK | Comment Deadline December 27, 2024

Proposal Number	Proposal Description		
Support, Support as Amended, Oppose, No Action	Number Support	Number Oppose	Comments, Discussion (list Pros and Cons), Amendments to Proposal, Voting Notes
<p><i>Note: Effective September 2019, when abstentions occur, the action or decision of a majority of the remaining members at a meeting at which a quorum is present is an act of the committee. For example, a vote tally of 7-6-2 means the motion carries. Members abstaining from voting must provide an explanation that is included in the committee record.</i></p>			
1	Reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemptions for the Central and Southwest Region Units		
SUPPORT	13	0	<p>PRO: It's good to use this</p> <p>PRO: Harvest rates are low and sustainable limits</p>
2	Open two bear baiting seasons in Units 9, 11, 13, 14B, 14C, 16, and 17 where bear baiting is legal		
SUPPORT	13	0	<p>NOTE: All applicable units not in this region will be considered separately</p> <p>CON: 14C not in our area; should be considered at statewide</p> <p>CON: 14C needs to be dealt with separately</p> <p>CON: Cannot support spring and fall brown season; no bait season in 9</p> <p>PRO: Will consider if only black bears</p> <p>PRO: In fall in brown bear country very few black bears come to bait. Need to start taking care of sows and cubs</p> <p>PRO: To effectively reduce bear population numbers hunters need to harvest more small bears including sows, and not just large boars</p>
3	Allow the use of cellular cameras for the taking black bear and brown bear over bait in Unit 9, 11, 13, 14B, 16, and 17		
SUPPORT, as Amended	7	6	<p>CON: How to enforce? Same day airborne rules; does camera have to be off?</p> <p>PRO: Elevate management</p> <p>CON: Been baiting 20 plus years, with cell cameras we're selectively harvesting boars, if we want population reduction we need to harvest all, we're going in the wrong direction with cell cameras</p> <p>PRO: Will support can fly and hunt same day as long as bait isn't touched</p> <p>CON: Enforcement issues; will not support</p> <p>CON: It's hunting, should not be same day airborne</p> <p>CON: Dept should make a decision on how they are going to handle cell phone issues; dept doesn't seem to have a firm way to do this consistently across the board; there is a gray area and depends on the trooper in the field at the time</p> <p>PRO: Will not affect the harvest numbers; boars follow the sows; will support don't think it will make much of a difference</p>

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			<p>PRO: Dept said no population concern baiting is not hunting; population reduction measure</p> <p>CON: Send this one to the statewide meeting</p> <p>Motion made by Chair Mansavage to Amend to not allow for commercial use. Second by Mr. Montgomery.</p> <p>PRO: As Amended: Sees both sides of traditional hunting without technology, but also understands the time and money potentially saved for a non-commercial hunter</p> <p>PRO: As Amended: Should be an available tool for those hunting bears. Aren't we trying to manage for better population; better for guide service and do it yourself (DIY) hunters</p> <p>SUPPORT, as Amended, to not allow for commercial use passes with a vote of 7 to 6</p>
4	Establish general season, archery only sheep hunts in Units 9, 11, 13, 14A, and 14B		
OPPOSE	0	13	<p>CON: Cannot support; should not get an early opportunity to harvest</p> <p>CON: Later end would be more appropriate; there was an archery only passed on the Hall Road not many took advantage; cannot support</p> <p>CON: Does this conflict with the youth? Before general</p>
5	Reduce the nonresident bag limit for caribou in Unit 9D from two bull caribou to one		
SUPPORT	10	3	<p>PRO: These are mostly trophy for nonresident</p> <p>CON: There are harvestable surplus caribou available, and no need to restrict nonresident hunters to just one caribou</p>
6	Shorten the nonresident hunting season for caribou in Unit 9D		
OPPOSE	1	12	
7	Extend the fall Southern Alaska Peninsula caribou season for residents and nonresidents		
OPPOSE	0	13	<p>CON: Don't support non-residents taking two bulls; after Oct 1 bulls are so strong not edible</p> <p>CON: Number of people would be limited; unique herd with unique access</p> <p>CON: Would like to see 2003-2013 numbers from dept</p> <p>CON: Somewhat concerned with overpopulation and crash; considerable amount of non-residents hunting</p> <p>CON: Stopped on Sept 30; cannot eat caribou after that date</p>
8	Clarify that hunting feral reindeer in Unit 10, Umnak Island, is allowed under the current caribou hunting regulations		

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9			Lengthen the spring and fall brown bear hunting seasons in Unit 9
10			Close Unit 9A to nonresident brown bear hunting
OPPOSE	0	13	
11			Shorten the spring and fall brown bear hunting seasons in Unit 9C by one week for residents and nonresidents
12			Lengthen the fall brown bear hunting seasons in Units 9D and 9E for both residents and nonresidents
SUPPORT	12	1	PRO: Take proposal 12-17 together PRO: Good bear quality now CON: Refuse to support residents only getting six days PRO: Smoke em' when you have em'; lots of bears PRO: Data population is showing increase
13			Lengthen the fall brown bear hunting seasons in Units 9D and 9E for residents and nonresidents, and lengthen the nonresident spring hunting season
SUPPORT	12	1	See comments #12
14			Lengthen the fall brown bear hunting seasons in Units 9D and 9E for residents and nonresidents
SUPPORT	12	1	See comments #12
15			Lengthen the nonresident, spring brown bear hunting season in Units 9D and 9E
SUPPORT	12	1	See comments #12
16			Lengthen the fall brown bear hunting seasons in Units 9D and 9E for residents and nonresidents
SUPPORT	12	1	See comments #12
17			Lengthen the spring and fall brown bear hunting seasons in Unit 9E for residents and nonresidents
SUPPORT	12	1	See comments #12
18			Shorten the spring and fall brown bear hunting seasons in Unit 9C for residents and nonresidents, and convert to drawing permit hunts
19			Establish a hunting season and nonresident bag limit for Arctic fox on the Pribilof Islands in Unit 10
20			Establish a nonresident bag limit on Arctic fox trapping on the Pribilof Islands in Unit 10

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21	Remove the two per day bag limit for beaver when taken by firearm during April 15–May 31 in Unit 9		
22	Shorten the season for hunting wolverine in Unit 9 for both residents and nonresidents		
23	Lengthen the nonresident hunting season for Emperor geese in Units 9 and 10, and increase the number of permits allocated to nonresident hunters		
24	Close the season for Alaska hares in Units 9 and 17		
25	Increase the number of moose drawing permits issued to nonresidents for Unit 17A		
SUPPORT	8	5	CON: Surprised the two moose limit for residents, the moose population seems to be doing okay PRO: Already in department authority to issue up to permit numbers CON: Will be crowding be an issue PRO: Department can already do this
26	Lengthen the nonresident, fall moose hunt in Unit 17A		
SUPPORT	13	0	PRO: Spread clients out a bit PRO: Doubling the length of the season CON: Current resident hunting season okay with it
27	Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in Unit 17A		
28	Reduce population and harvest objectives for moose in Unit 17B		
SUPPORT	13	0	PRO: Objectives not achievable
29	Review the population and harvest objectives for the Mulchatna caribou herd		
OPPOSE	2	11	PRO: Any way to quantitative put this into data after killing so many brown bears CON: Will this make it more complicated CON: Don't support; premature CON: What will board adopt? Give the dept direction to do this, or not? PRO: I see this as primarily an advisory vote - - since there appears to be no specific regulation change identified to be made in the proposal. From what the biologist explained there appears to be two mostly separate portions of the herd it makes sense that perhaps they should be

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			managed separately with different objectives for each of the two mostly separate population segments CON: We will know more in several years PRO: After year of mitigation, reevaluate
30	Implement a three-year moratorium on caribou hunting in Units 9, 17 and 19		
OPPOSE	0	13	CON: Eliminates years 2025,2026, 2027; closes, but does not change it; department has authority to open CON: Against it; spoke to folks in 19 and they don't feel they got what they thought CON: Leave it the way it is it will not open
31	Close the resident caribou season in Units 9B, 17 and 19		
OPPOSE	0	13	CON: see comments #30
32	Allow the year-round take of brown bear in Unit 17		
SUPPORT	13	0	PRO: Takes some of the sigma away; hoping to see an increase in reporting PRO: Good idea; if you have a bear that comes into your yard or setnet site don't have to work about troopers to defense of life or property (DLP) PRO: Pretty liberal right now. This would allow salvage of hide. Lots of bears in the area; aware they are doing bear control PRO: More people present during this time and more bears will be around
33	Allow same day airborne take of brown bear and wolves in Unit 17		
SUPPORT	13	0	*NOTE: Understood wolf cannot be added without legislation PRO: High number of bears with no biological concern PRO: I believe there was a weather concern that supported being able to land and shoot
34	Allow same day airborne take of brown bear in Unit 17		
SUPPORT	13	0	

XI. Select representative(s) for board meeting

XII. Set next meeting date

- December 11, 2024 (Review Glenallen area BOG proposals for GMUs 11 and 13)

Due to Chair Mansavage and Ms. Williams attending BOF meetings in Cordova this meeting will be Zoom only. It would be helpful to have the Glenallen area biologist available.

- December 18, 2024 (Review Palmer area BOG proposals for GMUs 14A, 14B, and 16)

XIII. Other

- Mr. Couch reminded members the season MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting is Thursday, December 5, 2024, at the Borough building in Palmer and is also available via Zoom. (NOTE: Rescheduled to Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 4:00pm)
- Mr. DeWitt told members the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group will meet December 11-12, 2024, at the Marriott Anchorage Downtown.
- Ms. Heun told members the Big Game Commercial Services Board will meet December 10-11, 2024, at the Robert Atwood Building, 550 West 7th Avenue in Anchorage.

XIV. Adjourn at 9:16pm

Minutes Recorded By: Michelle Heun, Secretary
Minutes Approved By: Herb Mansavage, Chairman
Date: December 9, 2024