

## **PROPOSAL 101-**

### **5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations.**

Add sheep to the list of species identified as important for providing high levels of human consumptive use as follows:

5 AAC 92.106. Intensive management of identified big game prey populations.

For purposes of implementing AS 16.05.255(e) - (g), the Board of Game (board) will

(1) consider the following criteria when identifying big game prey populations that are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use:

(A) harvest size: the average annual historic human harvest meets or exceeds values as follows:

- (i) caribou: 100;
- (ii) deer: 500;
- (iii) moose: 100;
- (iv) sheep: XX;**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Board of Game (board) and Department of Fish and Game have received numerous requests to take action to benefit sheep populations that have declined across the state. Currently, sheep are not an intensive management (IM) species.

The Legislature tasked the board in statute (AS 16.05.258(e)-(g)) with adopting regulations to provide for IM programs to restore the abundance or productivity of big game prey populations the board has identified as necessary to achieve the human consumptive use goals established by the board in regulation. While there are other statutes that specify a particular species, AS 16.05.258 only speaks to big game prey populations providing the board with the ability to determine which species qualify under AS 16.05.258. To further clarify the duties of the board, the Legislature tasked the board with identifying prey populations that are important for providing high levels of human consumptive use, and the board has set an average annual historic human harvest size for the three current IM species (caribou, deer, and moose). The board then created regulations, for the purposes of implementing AS 16.05.258(e)-(g), identifying specific big game prey populations or portions of populations as important for providing high levels of harvest for human consumptive use, and to establish the population objectives and harvest objectives for those populations.

AS 16.05.258(e)-(g) allows for both predator and habitat management to restore big game prey population abundance. Regulations adopted by the board under that statute are specific to each population and can include a mix of varying degrees of both predator control and habitat enhancement.

Both the board and department have received significant input on the question of designating Dall's sheep as an IM species. This proposal is an opportunity for the board, advisory committees, the public, and the department to have robust discussions and deliberations on this subject. If adopted, this proposal is the first step in a very long public regulatory process to allow IM of Dall's

sheep populations and does not guarantee sheep will be intensively managed if it is adopted. If adopted, the next steps will be for the board to evaluate populations to determine if there is a positive IM finding for a given population, and if so, to establish population and harvest objectives which is typically done at the regularly scheduled board meetings for the regions where the populations are located.

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

(HQ-F24-083)

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