

# American Society of Mammalogists

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The Honorable Sarah Palin  
State of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Palin:

The American Society of Mammalogists is a non-profit, professional, scientific and educational Society consisting of nearly 4,000 members from all 50 of the United States and 60 other countries worldwide. The American Society of Mammalogists was founded in 1919 and is the world's oldest and largest organization devoted to the study of mammals. We strongly support the conservation and responsible use of wild mammals based on current, sound, and accurate scientific knowledge. We have a long history of thoroughly reviewing issues related to mammalian conservation, and where appropriate, adopting positions on issues concerning the responsible management of mammals and their habitats based on our scientific expertise.

The American Society of Mammalogists remains concerned with the potential mismanagement of large mammalian carnivores and their ungulate prey in Alaska. The letters from Mr. Ron Somerville (5 September 2005; a member of the Board of Game), Mr. Matt Robus (3 January 2006; Director of the Alaska Division of Wildlife Conservation), and Mr. McKie Campbell (6 September 2006; Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game) have not adequately addressed our concerns. Management of large mammals, especially predator control, cannot be considered sound or wise in the absence of adequate data. Alaska's current harvest guidelines are based on historical population estimates that almost certainly are inaccurate. Harvest goals should be based on reliable current data on populations and the carrying capacities of their habitats and not on potentially inaccurate historical estimates of populations. Where predator control is proposed or implemented, adequate resources will need to be allocated to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to assess conditions to determine if predator control is based on sound science. That assessment should include analyses of habitat quality, ungulate physical condition and reproduction, and the potential impact of high ungulate densities on forage plants and other wildlife species. Further, sound management requires that abundant

ungulate populations be kept below carrying capacity to avoid over browsing and damage to their range. Hunters are often reluctant to kill females and young, which is necessary if hunting is to mimic natural predation and keep ungulate populations within the constraints of carrying capacity in the absence of predators. Therefore, it is important for management plans that invoke predator control to include adequate measures designed to insure that public hunting can control those populations.

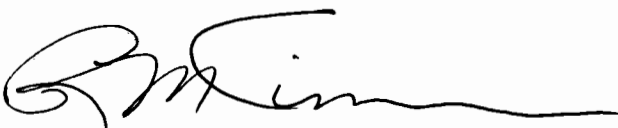
At our 86th annual meeting, held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, from 16 to 21 June 2006, the membership, with >500 members in attendance, approved a resolution (enclosed) on the Harvest of Wolves in Alaska with no dissenting votes. That resolution was published in the December 2006 issue of the *Journal of Mammalogy*.

We believe that your interests in wildlife and the start of your new administration offer opportunities to improve regulations related to the harvest of these unique large mammals. The American Society of Mammalogists strongly encourages the State of Alaska to actively gather data necessary to engage in management practices that will result in sustained populations of large mammals, including both predators and their prey, and protect healthy functioning ecological systems.

Respectfully yours,



Dr. R. Terry Bowyer  
American Society of Mammalogists Resolutions Committee, Chair



Dr. Robert M. Timm, President  
American Society of Mammalogists

Enclosure: