

AR 95098 - ALBERTA FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION - 2018 RESOLUTIONS

GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER E-2-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) request that the Government of Alberta develop regulations that prohibit transportation of all boats from high risk invasive species jurisdiction being brought across Alberta borders without a certification of disinfection; CARRIED.

BRIEF: The large number of boats being brought into Alberta from waters that have unwanted invasive species (i.e., zebra mussels) pose a high risk that would likely lead to such harmful aquatic life inhabiting Alberta's waters. By prohibiting all boat entry, the risk would be minimized. Persons wanting to use boats in other jurisdictions would need to use local boats and leave their boats at home.

RESPONSE:

The Ministry of Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) has put in place many measures to address threats to Alberta's freshwater resources by aquatic invasive species, through the Aquatic Invasive Species Program. Integral to the program are key partnerships and prevention efforts, including:

- Updates to the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act* to provide for a more robust Aquatic Invasive Species Program, including mandatory watercraft inspections, mandatory reporting of detected aquatic invasive species, and the "Pull the Plug" rule.
- Thirteen mandatory watercraft inspections province-wide.
- Alberta has augmented monitoring and inspection efforts along the southern border, and works closely with the Canadian Border Services Agency.
- Working with the new Inter-Provincial-Territorial Aquatic Invasive Species Agreement and the associated working group.
- Educational campaigns – "Clean Drain Dry" (targeting boaters and anglers) and "Don't Let it Loose" (targeting aquarium and horticulture hobbyists and industry, anglers, and intentional release).
- The monitoring of over 70 water bodies for the presence of invasive mussels (with all results negative to date).

Because many provinces and states do not conduct watercraft inspections or provide watercraft decontaminations (particularly in high risk jurisdictions), it is not feasible to require watercraft from these jurisdictions to arrive in Alberta with a certificate of disinfection. For this reason, Alberta strives to inspect all boats entering the province, and to mitigate the risk of introducing aquatic invasive species by performing inspections of all watercraft, and decontaminations when necessary. As monitoring efforts across jurisdictions vary so much, and because these invasive mussels can be difficult to detect, Alberta is considering all boats that have been used out-of-province to be a high-risk moving forward.

It is currently mandatory for all watercraft to stop at watercraft inspection stations. Inspection stations inspect the watercraft, trailer, and equipment for invasive species, and provide opportunities for face-to-face education. Also, trained "conservation

canines” support the inspection stations.

GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-5-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta develop a control program that would reduce the number of double crested cormorants; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Double crested cormorants have a major impact on fish availability in many Alberta lakes. The large numbers of cormorants reduce the amount of fish available to anglers as they consume up to two pounds of fish daily. Cormorant numbers are significant on many Alberta lakes and could be reduced. A 10-year cormorant control program in Lac La Biche reduced the population from over 16,000 to 2,500. Similar programs should be developed in other areas. As well wildlife damage permits could be issued to reduce the cormorant numbers. Cormorant control efforts are occurring in other provinces and northern states and in so doing allowing more fish for human consumers.

RESPONSE:

No control program for cormorants is being contemplated at this time. Cormorants are an indigenous species that have always been part of the aquatic ecosystem in Alberta. During the post-war era, cormorants nearly disappeared from Alberta until dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) was banned. Cormorant numbers have since recovered, though not likely to historic levels.

In North America, many people correlate cormorant recovery with the collapse of fisheries. As a result, some jurisdictions had instituted cormorant culls in an attempt to recover fisheries. However, the majority of evidence suggests that the collapse of fisheries is human-related and that cormorant culling is generally not an effective tool for recovering fisheries.

GENERAL RESOLUTION NUMBER G-8-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA requests that the Government of Alberta create a waiting period for new residents of Alberta before they are able to apply for their hunting license and tags; CARRIED.

BRIEF: There is currently no waiting period for new residents of Alberta, as there are in other provinces, to apply for hunting licenses and tags. Unlike other provinces, Alberta currently does not have a waiting period for new residents seeking a license. Examples of provincial waiting periods are given as follows:

- In order to obtain an Alberta Health Care card, one must reside in Alberta for a minimum of 183 days within a 12-month period.
- In order to qualify for a license in the province of British Columbia, individuals who are permanent residents or citizens of Canada must have maintained a principle residence within the province for a minimum of six calendar months within the 12 months immediately preceding the license application.
- To hunt in Saskatchewan, one must be a Canadian resident whose principal

residence is in Saskatchewan, who has been living in the province for three months prior to applying for a license and possesses a valid Saskatchewan Health Services card.

- In order to qualify for a license in the province of Ontario, individuals who are permanent residents or citizens of Canada must have maintained a principle residence within the province for a minimum of six calendar months within the 12 months immediately preceding the license application.

RESPONSE:

AEP accepts this resolution and will explore this request further. We are presently in discussions with licensing and Fish and Wildlife Enforcement to look at various ways to strengthen residency requirements, and will discuss options at the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council.

At present, a first-time hunter in Alberta is someone who 1) has not previously held a hunting licence in Alberta or elsewhere, or 2) prior to April 1, 2010, has not met Alberta first-time hunter criteria, or 3) has not successfully completed a hunter education course in Alberta or elsewhere. Non-resident and non-resident alien hunters (12 years-of-age or older) are exempt from the first-time hunter eligibility requirement if they are accompanied by a hunter host or a designated guide while hunting in Alberta.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-1-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that AEP consider stocking of multiple species of trout in more pothole lakes that are now just stocked with one species (usually just rainbow trout); CARRIED.

BRIEF: Area lakes around Edmonton and other urban areas that have been stocked with more than one species have shown great success. Muir Lake west of Edmonton is one example.

With the future on some trout streams being shut down in the near future, it would be a good exercise in enhancing some fisheries to stock them with multiple species of trout. At one time, Spring Lake (Stony Plain) was considered for tiger or brown trout. Perhaps now would be an excellent time to reconsider this stocking idea for more pothole lakes in the province now that some areas of trout fishing might become closed to angling activities.

RESPONSE:

AEP supports the development of existing pothole lake fisheries by stocking the variety of trout species currently available. The management of specific pothole trout fisheries is led within the local management areas and coordinated with fish culture. Decisions about management objectives and actions involve consultation with the public. Proposals for specific waters can be directed to local fisheries management teams for consideration.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-2-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta develop and implement a plan endorsed by the public that increases the consumptive and/or recreational use of Alberta's underutilized fish resources; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Some of Alberta's fish resources are currently underutilized and with reduced or changing economic conditions in Alberta, diversification of the employment opportunities is needed to keep Alberta children working at home. There are a number of waters and fish species that are currently not being used as food items. Developing a plan that protects existing users and especially the health of the fish resource could provide economic diversity and also increase the value and importance of fish resources and fish habitat to all Albertans. By increasing the value and use of fish resources, it is expected that the protection of fish habitat will become more important to government and the general public.

RESPONSE:

We understand this request and support, in principle, the optimization of our fisheries for consumptive and recreational use bound by the constraints of ensuring conservation needs are met and in alignment with our provincial allocation priority for fisheries. This policy is to ensure 1) conservation of fish stocks; 2) Indigenous harvest; 3) recreational use; and 4) economic uses.

Through the implementation of sport fishing regulations following severe over-harvests and stock collapses of walleye and northern pike in the 1980s and 90s, many stocks have recovered. These recovered fisheries provide an opportunity to ensure we manage for a broad diversity of use while maintaining sustainable populations. For harvest opportunities, fisheries management objectives consulted with Albertans that help establish sport fishing regulations.

We continue to work with a stakeholder committee to undertake a third party scientific review of fisheries management. Through this scientific review of fisheries in Alberta, we will receive guidance on how our current management is ensuring full optimization of our fisheries.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-3-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta develop a plan endorsed by the public that increases the availability of tiger trout and splake to the list of fish species permitted for aquaculture on private fish farms; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Some fish species such a tiger trout and splake are available from fish hatcheries and such species could be added to the list of fish species that could be stocked and utilized in private fish farms at no risk to native fish stocks. By increasing the production of special species in private fish farms for food or recreation would potentially reduce the pressure on fish stocks in public waters, but also increase the interest in fish and fish habitat. Increased fishing opportunities in any available waters in Alberta, is considered a plus. By increasing the value and use of fish resources, it is

expected that the protection of fish habitat will become more important to government and the general public.

RESPONSE:

There is no intent to make tiger trout or splake available for private fish culture and pond stocking at this time. The department stocks over 200 lakes with a variety of trout species including rainbow trout, brown trout, and tiger trout. These small waterbodies are managed for several objectives, such as put and take and quality fisheries. This variety of fisheries provides for a diversity of angling and harvest opportunities for many anglers in Alberta.

AEP does not support the stocking or transfer of public fish resources into private water bodies.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-4-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta revise angling regulations to allow for the harvest of walleye and northern pike in underutilized Alberta waters including 40 to 50 lakes in NE Alberta that have had zero walleye catch and keep limits for over 20 years; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Alberta anglers are generally not certified professional biologists; however, they collectively conduct a census of fish stocks through angling, through fish cameras and through site specific frequent visits to specific lakes. Further, Alberta anglers are aware of the regulations that restrict harvest with zero catch limits, size restrictions, and likely low harvest on several specific lakes.

Meetings of large numbers of stakeholders including MLAs, mayors, reeves, and various community groups and individual people have expressed the need for change in the current angling regulations that would allow for consumptive use, but would allow for sustained and healthy fish stocks.

With insufficient numbers of government biologists, numerous lakes will never be monitored effectively in a reasonable time and in so doing restrictions will never be adjusted to allow for a fish harvest. Underutilized fish stocks will remain.

With the elimination of commercial fishing and the continued restrictions on anglers and the inability for government biologists to monitor and assess all the lakes and the fish populations, there is a need to develop angling regulations that will lead to safe harvests. Several options should be considered to establish simplified fish harvests in all Alberta lakes. Several methods should be considered including limiting numbers of fish kept on daily basis, catch seasons restricted to a number of days, catch and keep days limited by groups of lakes and numerous other methods that could simplify the regulations and still allow a safe and reasonable sustained harvest of perch, pike, and walleye.

Some of Alberta's fish resources are currently underutilized and with reduced or changing economic conditions in Alberta, diversification of the employment opportunities is needed to keep Albertans working at home. There are a number of waters and fish species that are currently not being used as food items. Developing a plan that protects existing users and especially the health of the fish resources could provide economic diversity and also increase the value and importance of fish resources and fish habitat to all Albertans.

By increasing the value and use of fish resources, it is expected that the protection of fish habitat will become more important to government and the general public.

Numerous lakes have been identified and include but not limited to the following: Lac La Biche, Heart Lake, Kehiwin Lake, Winefred Lake, Wabamun Lake, Lac Ste Anne, Lac Bellevue, Wolf Lake, Calling Lake, Whitefish Lake, Goodfish Lake, Seibert Lake, Lac Bellevue, Bangs Lake, Barnes Lake, Gull Lake, Ethel Lake, May Lake, Bourque Lake, Gregoire Lake, Ironwood Lake, Hilda Lake, Marie Lake, Touchwood Lake, etc.

RESPONSE

We support harvest of walleye and northern pike in waters capable of ensuring sustainable harvest. The third party scientific review is presently underway and results from this review will guide our fisheries management program.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-6-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta promote and require deep pool fish habitat be developed in fish-bearing watercourses in conjunction with watercourse crossings and road development; CARRIED.

BRIEF: The development of roads that cross fish-bearing watercourses has the potential for harming fish and fish habitat. For minor costs and specified designs useful fish habitats can be created. The deep pool fish habitats that may occur on the downstream side of culverts are well-known by anglers to provide useful fish habitats. The hydraulic factors associated with road crossing could provide useful flows for the development and maintenance of such deep pool fish habitats. Care must be taken to ensure for fish passage at such crossings.

RESPONSE

We ensure we are working collaboratively with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans when evaluating and offsetting impacts through watercourse crossings and road developments.

As you are aware, the *Fisheries (Canada) Act* has been modernized and updated to restore the lost protections from 2012. Alberta has been a co-chair and leader at the national level to ensure updated fish habitat protection measures and offsetting policies are in place. Appropriate requirements for proponents to mitigate or offset impacts to fish habitat will follow the approval of the *Fisheries (Canada) Act*.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-7-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta change the fishing regulations to allow Alberta residents to harvest northern pike, lake whitefish, yellow perch, burbot, and walleye in Wabamun Lake; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Wabamun Lake allowable harvest of fish has been prohibited for all fish species since 2005 (oil and pentachlorophenol spill from railway accident). As well no commercial fishing allocation has occurred since 2003. Several catch and release anglers have indicated that numbers of lake whitefish, northern pike, and yellow perch are present and could be harvested.

Some anglers are reporting thin (i.e., poor condition) pike are now evident as are the newly introduced walleye.

Fall Index Netting testing in 2007, 2010, and 2013 indicate that these fish populations appear to be similar to many Alberta lakes that currently have allowable catch limits for these fish species. Discussions on the fish populations have been occurring with Government of Alberta biologists. Reports are still unavailable on the website.

The contaminant levels of the fish tissues have been examined by the Government of Alberta and only large-sized northern pike (great than seven pounds) have a guideline on the number of servings per week. All other contaminants are no longer at risk as indicated by the Government of Alberta

RESPONSE:

A 2017-18 survey of anglers suggested strong support (>80 per cent) for setting an Old Growth Fisheries Management Objective at Wabamun Lake providing the opportunity to catch (but not necessarily keep) a memorable-sized fish, with a focal species being northern pike. To maintain this type of fishery in proximity to a large human population, a catch and release regulation was supported and selected as the management tool.

Additionally, Walleyes were re-introduced into Wabamun Lake in 2012 after extensive consultation with stakeholders (e.g., public meetings, articles in newspapers, local and national news). We are committed to revisit Wabamun Lake in 2019 and re-evaluate the fish status.

Please see <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fisheries-management/fall-index-netting/fall-index-netting-summaries/default.aspx> for the latest Lake Wabamun status report (2015).

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-8-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta develop stakeholder fisheries management surveys and a public communication plan that includes input from the various conservation organizations, public meetings and the public, including those that are not using computer communications; CARRIED.

BRIEF: The recent use of the government websites to address fisheries management issues and concerns have caused concern from a large number of the users and interested public and Alberta Fish and Game members. Many of the people were simply not aware of the surveys and many people who tried to use the surveys were unable to submit their answers. As well, many persons who reviewed the survey questions indicated that the questions were misleading and leading/biased. Questions were forcing answers that the government wanted.

A need for an effective communications plan without biased and misleading information is necessary. The resolutions presented by the AFGA (greater than 25,000 members across Alberta) should play a key role in the decision-making associated with fish and wildlife management in Alberta.

RESPONSE:

We support this recommendation and it is an item that will be reviewed through the third party scientific review of fisheries management. Alberta strives to ensure we hear the opinions and input from all interested Albertans.

During consultations last fall and winter, AEP utilized several forms of communications from local newspaper advertisements, face to face stakeholder workshops, emails sent to all WIN card holders (email addresses used to notify WIN card holders of hunting and fishing draws and information), and a variety of social medias, including Facebook and Twitter. This engagement was the most extensive ever done by the department; tens of thousands of Albertans were informed of fisheries management topics and thousands were engaged in the surveys, meetings, and correspondence.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-9-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta develop fisheries management objectives that place fish habitat protection and development, and supplemental fish stocking as priorities; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Instead of the government regularly closing and restricting fisheries in Alberta, more priority should be placed upon maintaining fish habitats, developing more fish habitats, and increased supplemental stocking. Many Albertans seek more consumptive use as a way of ensuring that fish productivity is maintained or increased. Fisheries management efforts should be placed on extending the resource use opportunities rather than increasing regulatory restrictions on use.

RESPONSE:

Tools like the Fish Sustainability Index and cumulative effects models have been developed to provide fisheries managers the ability to evaluate the relative influence of habitat-related factors on the status and sustainability of fisheries. This facilitates an approach whereby fisheries management plans can be focused on the most effective management actions, including those aimed at improving habitat condition.

A structured approach for setting fishery management objectives and appropriate actions has also been developed and incorporated into the fisheries management process. The approach for the development of fisheries management objectives includes the following categories:

1. Indigenous Fishery;
2. Recreational Fishery;
3. Habitat Management; and
4. Ecosystem Conservation.

The initial priority and focus for fishery management objectives development has been on recreational and indigenous objectives. The approach for setting habitat and ecosystem objectives will follow.

We expect the third party review will determine if our process of assessing and prioritizing cumulative threats, and setting management objectives and actions is adequate.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-10-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta revise the Sportfishing Regulations for Cold Lake to provide the harvest of one lake trout in a slot size that sustains the lake trout population and may also reduce the catch and release mortality; CARRIED.

BRIEF: The current angling regulations allow in possession one lake trout greater than 75 cm in total length. Numerous anglers are currently catching large numbers of lake trout with almost zero fish greater than 75 cm in total length. The angling is occurring in relatively deep waters and anglers are catching and releasing large numbers of trout. In so doing, some anglers claim considerable mortalities are occurring as anglers try to catch a fish greater than 75 cm in total length. Many anglers indicate that most anglers would be satisfied to catch a single Lake Trout and then would stop angling rather than continuing to catch and release with a higher risk to increased mortality and wasting fish.

RESPONSE:

Angler effort on Cold Lake is estimated to be moderate (approx. 3.5 h/ha) for a large and low productivity waterbody. Cold Lake sees about 33,000 angler trips per year. Under current angling effort, harvest is only sustainable if no more than 20 per cent of angling trips result in a harvest. That means five anglers must share one fish to sustain the population over the long term.

Lake trout are a very slow growing species. It takes approximately 12 years for a lake trout to grow to 65 cm in Cold Lake, and nearly 20 years to grow to 75 cm. Because of their slow growth, a harvest slot size would have to be very narrow in order to allow the majority of individuals to grow through the harvest slot to maturity. It may take four to five years for a lake trout to grow through a five cm harvest slot; which is too long a timespan to be vulnerable to harvest. It would not be very many years before legal-size

fish become rare and anglers continue to catch and release lake trout in pursuit of legal-size fish.

AEP monitors the lake trout population on Cold Lake closely, and accounts for harvest and hooking mortality in the allocation and long-term sustainable management of the fishery.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION NUMBER F-11-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that AEP allow spearfishing/bow fishing of northern pike in water bodies where there are no size limit restrictions on northern pike; CARRIED.

BRIEF: For many years there has been limited opportunity for spearfishing and bow fishing in Alberta. Limitations on this type of fishing were initiated due to size limit restrictions being put in place on many species of fish including the northern pike. Allowing spearfishing/bow fishing of northern pike in water bodies where there are no size limit restrictions on northern pike will create additional recreational fishing opportunities via different fishing techniques.

RESPONSE:

The concern with spearfishing/bowfishing is the inability to release fish after being speared. With the majority of lakes managed with bag and size limits and quotas (that is, special harvest tags), fish length cannot be determined before being speared and released after being speared. While trout, mountain whitefish, arctic grayling, lake sturgeon, walleye or northern pike cannot be spearfished/bowfished, other species like lake whitefish, yellow perch, burbot, where the majority of populations are managed with bag limits only, can be spearfished/bow fished.

Spearfishing/bow fishing is regulated under Section 27 of the Alberta Fishery Regulation, 1998 and would require changes to this federal regulation. No changes to the federal regulation are being contemplated at this time.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION F-12-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta revise the Sportfishing Regulations for Lac Bellevue to provide the harvest of one walleye in a slot size that sustains the walleye population and also may reduce the catch and release mortality; CARRIED.

BRIEF: The current angling regulations allow for a zero catch and keep limit except for a special walleye draw of tags. In 2017, 2500 Class B (43-50 cm total length) walleye tags were assigned. Many anglers were currently catching large numbers of walleye, with almost zero Class B walleye between 43-50 cm in total length. The majority of the walleye were just under 43 cm. Walleye greater than 50 cm appeared to be in very poor condition with large heads and small bodies. The Government of Alberta walleye population density information from 2017 was at a Catch per Unit level of 74.3 which was the highest recorded in Alberta or any other lake being sampled by these

methods (Fall Index Netting).

Many anglers indicate that most anglers would be satisfied to catch a single walleye and then would stop angling rather than continuing to catch and release with a higher risk to increased mortality and wasting fish. By allowing a smaller slot-size it is expected that less fish will be caught trying to catch a size that is not present.

RESPONSE:

AEP recognizes the importance of understanding fish populations, angler use, and satisfaction. An experimental fisheries management objective, included in the current Walleye and Northern Pike Recreational Fisheries Management frameworks, is an available option. Lac Bellevue was assessed in the fall of 2018 and, following initial discussion by the Fisheries Stakeholder Advisory Committee, consultation is planned for possible experimental management options, such as slot limits and short harvest seasons. Like all changes in direction on Fisheries Management Objectives, outcomes of broad consultation will drive the decision.

Lac Bellevue is currently managed as a sustainable walleye fishery. However, it must be noted that the current population is an unexpected outcome of a stocking effort many years ago, and consists almost entirely of one cohort of adults. Management to achieve sustainability needs to be viewed in this context.

Through evaluation of previous slot limit regulations, we have found that slot limits may not adequately protect fish populations from overharvest in situations with high angling effort. The current special harvest licence is intended to achieve sustainable harvest levels while maximizing the potential for population sustainability. Should an experimental regulation be applied to Lac Bellevue, it will be essential to work closely with the angling community to monitor results and react to unsustainable harvests of fish.

FISHERIES RESOLUTION F-13-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta introduce a new tagging system for walleye that is user friendly and fool proof. A suggestion would be to go to a numbered plastic ty wrap or similar locking device to be attached through the mouth and gill. The number on the tag is to be transferred to the licence holder; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Whereas the present system for tagging walleye is very inadequate and has resulted in many charges for improperly or untagged fish and is very unpopular with fisher men and women.

RESPONSE:

Thank you for the feedback regarding Alberta's fish tagging approach. Alberta's regulation currently requires that that tagging instruction be available to users on the reverse of the tag itself. Anglers are encouraged to report any problems with individual tag stock to AEP along with their licence and tag numbers. Using this information, AEP

is able to determine any tag stock that fails to meet manufacturer specifications and ensure that affected tag stock is removed from circulation. In past cases where this has occurred, enforcement bulletins are issued to officers notifying officers of tag stock that may be affected and in circulation. AEP is following up with Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch regarding the number incidents incurred in the field and compliance/enforcement actions taken.

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-1-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA recommends to AEP that when the next outfitter/guide allocation policy is finalized the following guidelines are used:

- The previous policy stated that allocations shall not exceed 10 per cent of the harvest goal, which was only an absolute ceiling. That got turned around in many cases to be interpreted as the outfitters get 10 per cent. That clause should be changed to read: Outfitter/guide allocations shall never exceed 10 per cent of the harvest goal for any species in any Wildlife Management Unit (WMU), this to include bighorn sheep. In WMUs for any species that resident tags are on a draw, that number be reduced to never exceed 5 per cent. In WMUs for any species that resident wait times reach five years, that number be reduced to never exceeding
- 3 per cent. In WMUs for any species that resident wait times reach 10 years or for any special hunt within the WMU, outfitter allocation cease to exist.
- In addition, this same condition applies for antelope but also have a ceiling of 55 permits, although as this turns into a once in a lifetime draw for residents it is possible the allocations should start to be phased out.
- In addition, there shall be no allocations for moose or elk in 100 and 200 series WMUs.
- In addition, there shall be no allocations for special hunts such as Camp Wainwright, Suffield, bison, goats, etc.; CARRIED.

RESPONSE:

This resolution does not align with the principles of the Big Game Allocation Policy recommendations currently submitted to AEP through the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council. Those recommendations were collaboratively developed by game stakeholders, and the AFGA played a significant role. AEP has not yet made any decision on those recommendations currently submitted

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-2-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA recommends to AEP that if separate draw codes are to be used for archery and general seasons in areas where all hunting is on a draw, then the proportion of tags available in each draw code be directly proportionate to the number of applicants in each draw choice; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Management should be by opportunity so the wait times and hunting opportunity for all Alberta residents should be equal, regardless of their choice of hunting style or season. Example, once AEP has the harvest goal set, and the expected success rate set, then the number of available tags can be determined. If we

wanted 100 tags available in a particular WMU which had separate archery and general draw codes, the number of each be determined from the number of applicants in each. If 100 hunters applied in the archery season and 900 applied in the general season, then the tags drawn would be 10 in the archery season and 90 in the general season. This would give the same percentage chance of being drawn and the same wait times for all applicants.

- At the 2017 Big Game Awards, almost half the awards were archery kills, including both mule deer categories, moose, wolf, and black bear.
- Resolution stating the above and/or for keeping a common draw code and overwhelmingly carried at each of the past four AFGA conferences.
- Resolutions asking for different draw codes have also been strongly defeated during this same period.
- Resolutions to include crossbows in archery seasons have also been carried strongly over the past seven conferences.
- Resolutions have also carried to have all hunting on a draw for any species in any area if any hunting is to be on a draw.

RESPONSE:

The recommendation to develop separate draw codes is currently being considered as part of the Big Game Allocation Policy recommendations submitted through AGPA, of which AFGA was supportive. If approved, this resolution will be considered in implementing the separate draw code process

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-3-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA recommends to AEP to continue to allow non-resident Canadians to enter the Limited Entry Harvest Draws under current conditions; CARRIED.

BRIEF: There are other options which show a greater benefit than removing non-resident Canadians, which represent less than 1 per cent of the resident opportunities.

RESPONSE:

This resolution again does not align with the principles of the Big Game Allocation Policy recommendations currently submitted to AEP through the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council. Those recommendations were collaboratively developed by game stakeholders, and the AFGA played a significant role. AEP has not yet made any decision on those recommendations currently submitted, but will consider all benefits and cost associated with this recommendation with respect to effects on game populations as well as resident hunting opportunity.

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-7-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta permit the baiting of black bears in WMUs 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 240, 252, 254, 256, 258, and 260 where recent reported sightings of grizzly bears have not been noted; CARRIED.

BRIEF: In responding to the 2013 resolution W-16-2013 that the AFGA sent to SRD, Shannon Flint, Assistant Deputy Minister at the time, noted that SRD wants to avoid conflicts between grizzly bears and humans through the baiting of black bears. Yet Alberta Fish and Wildlife has several publications including the SRD's "Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan 2008-2013" in which they clearly indicate in print and on maps that when the recovery plan was completed they expect the grizzly bear range to be west and mostly north of Edmonton occupying mountain ranges and the foothills. Furthermore, if you overlay the maps of Alberta's WMUs on top of that of the expected grizzly bear range at the end of the recovery period, and the map of those WMUs within the grizzly bear range that have permitted the baiting of black bears for several years, you will find that there are 21 WMUs that in whole or in part where the baiting of black bears is permitted, one will find it very difficult to understand the reasoning behind SRD's response and the current Alberta Fish and Wildlife's policy on the matter.

Also, for the past few years, the number of black bears reported by landowners in the WMUs indicated has increased dramatically. Many landowners report that these black bears show little or no fear of their farm equipment and has been reported as one of the reasons for high calf mortality during and following the calving season. This resolution was submitted and approved at the 86th conference in Lethbridge.

RESPONSE:

AEP will review baiting restrictions in the above noted WMUs with respect to both conflicts on private land as well as the expansion of black bear ranges provincially. Even though some of these WMUs fall well outside known grizzly bear ranges, we will look at areas where ranges between species overlap and apply measures to minimize accidental mortality. The Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan is under review and will inform on the needs to restrict the baiting of black bears in some WMUs. The Alberta Game Policy Advisory Committee will be engaged in discussion on any proposed changes. We will also look at WMUs which fall outside of known grizzly bear ranges and assess their potential for black bear baiting in future seasons.

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-10-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta amend legislation to allow hunters to use leashed dogs to track and recover big game in the field; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Alberta government legislation currently prohibits the use of dogs in the field; however, the legislation is poorly worded and should be amended in order to allow a dog and/or tracking dogs to accompany hunters or recover downed game, in particular, on multi-day hunts. Dogs used in this manner are not intended to pursue game. The use of dogs will allow for more game to be recovered. We therefore request a review and revision to existing legislation prohibiting the use of dogs to recover downed game. The recommendation above was passed at the 2017 AGM conference and was put forward to the provincial government by AFGA. We would like to follow up

on the Alberta government's response (listed below) to this recommendation.

“During the consultation portion of the Regulation Amendment (Wildlife Act) in 2015, it was expressed quite strongly that the use of dogs while hunting big game was not supported. There was, however, more tolerance for the use of dogs while tracking wounded game. Overall, the use of dogs in the field to recover big game is a proposal requiring considerable support from the hunting public with training standards, regulation for leash requirements, handler requirements, and other elements to ensure public and wildlife safety. If there is enough public support on this issue on a provincial basis, however, we will revisit this proposal in the future.”

RESPONSE:

The use of dogs while hunting big game was not publicly supported, and providing for a specific use such as game tracking will require complex regulations to ensure negative consequences are appropriately managed. We continue to explore this proposal and recommend additional discussion through the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council for determination of stakeholder support to consult publicly.

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-13-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Government of Alberta change the current harvest regulations of black bears to enable the harvest of black bears for skin or meat or both; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Currently the Government of Alberta mandates through regulations that only the skin of all black bears harvested must be salvaged by classifying it as a fur bearing animal. Many Albertans would like to harvest black bears for the meat and do not want or need a bear hide that they would be forced to salvage. A taxidermist's charge for tanning is cost prohibitive for hunters to simply tan a hide so that they can harvest and eat the meat. Taxidermists have also refused hides that have been offered to them from hunters that simply want the meat. Current regulations dictate as per below:

- Allow the skin of any bear or cougar to be wasted, destroyed, spoiled, or abandoned. See exception for salvaging skin - Access for Control of Livestock Predation.

* It is not legally necessary to salvage pelts of fur bearing animals (includes coyote and wolf) or black bear taken in accordance with regulations authorizing the control of problem wildlife set out in this part ...”. This forces hunters to only salvage the hides and heads of black bears with the exception of problem wildlife animals harvested. What we are asking for is the option to hunt just for the meat.

RESPONSE:

AEP supports the principles behind this resolution and will develop regulatory options for discussions at AGPAC

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-14-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that the Alberta Government enter into discussion with the federal government to clarify the migratory bird hunting

regulations with respect to using archery equipment to hunt waterfowl; CARRIED.

BRIEF: The federal migratory regulations prohibit the use of crossbows for waterfowl hunting. The confusion comes from the archery community that uses long bows, recurves, and compound bows, as long as they purchase the bow hunting permit. There is no regulation of the arrow tip, or type of arrow that is legal. This forces a lot of bird hunter's frustration, trying to find out if it is okay to use bows and shoot at birds coming into decoys in fields. A clearer definition would help to understand what the regulation is saving.

RESPONSE:

To assist with clarification, we provide the following:

It is legal to hunt migratory game birds with a long bow, recurve, or compound bow. It is legal to hunt upland game birds (non-migratory) with a bow (as above) as well as a cross bow. There are no regulations that define arrow tip, type of arrow, or minimum draw weight of the bow for either. A bow hunting permit is required.

Please contact staff if this does not meet the intent of the resolution.

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-15-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that AEP develop a sharp-tailed grouse recovery strategy to return sharp-tailed grouse numbers to a sustainable, harvestable level in WMUs where harvest has been prohibited and to maintain healthy populations in those where it is currently allowed; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Sharp-tailed grouse numbers have deemed to have dropped to levels unable to support harvest of this species in many WMUs in Alberta. There needs to be a strategy developed to return these numbers to a sustainable, harvestable number and to maintain healthy populations throughout the province so that the sharp-tailed grouse do not join other species which have declined in numbers and remain closed to harvest in Alberta.

RESPONSE:

AEP has a draft upland bird management plan which includes sharp-tailed grouse. A research project investigating the life history of course in affected areas should give us a better understand of the reason for decline. At present is it suspected that a changing landscape and land use practice has made much of the parkland less suitable for sharp-tailed grouse resulting in a decline in their population.

WILDLIFE RESOLUTION NUMBER W-16-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA request that AEP implement a mandatory big game registration system for all big game. The registration system would apply to all licensed, status Indian and Métis hunters; CARRIED.

BRIEF: A significant number of big game animals that are harvested each year by licensed, status Indian and Métis hunters are not accounted for. This results in wildlife biologists implementing big game management actions using estimates without the benefit of this catchable data.

- Currently some big game animals (i.e., cougar and trophy sheep) are subject to mandatory registration by all aforementioned hunting groups.
- This resolution would allow for an expansion of an already existing system.
- A user-friendly system whereby registrations could be completed would need to be developed (i.e., online, toll free telephone number) at AEP offices, at band offices or at other locations or by other means deemed appropriate.
- AEP should further implement a system, whereby licensed hunters would not be able to participate in the draw system or purchase new big game licenses until required registration information had been completed for big game in any applicable previous years.
- AEP could further implement an educational initiative for licensed hunters, status Indians and Métis whereby the principles of the province's big game management plans and the benefits of a mandatory registration process would be explained.
- Applying big game mandatory registration requirements to status Indians or Métis is not an infringement on their hunting rights as the registration occurs after the hunting has occurred.
- Mandatory big game registration for all big game hunters would greatly assist in the development of big game management plans.

RESPONSE:

The registration of all big game animals is not logistically feasible, given the capacity required to implement something of this scale. AEP is currently discussing enhancements to our current harvest surveys, including mandatory reporting for some classes of big game animals, to ensure adequate harvest data is in place to allocate big game resources responsibly. Such enhancements will be discussed with the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council for advice and support

ENVIRONMENT RESOLUTION NUMBER E-1-2018

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AFGA requests that AEP implement a requirement that the granting of surface use or access permits on public land be offset with reclamation or reforestation requirements of an area 2 to 5 times the area impacted; CARRIED.

BRIEF: Roads and linear disturbance which are the consequence of human activity represents a significant and increasing footprint on public land. An offsetting formula as a condition of development approval that leads to reclamation, restoration or reforestation of both ongoing and past habitat deficits is required.

RESPONSE:

Thank you for the recommendation. This input will be considered as offset conversations occur.