

## The Alberta Fish and Game Association

### 83rd Annual Conference Resolutions

#### GENERAL RESOLUTIONS:

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association ask Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to cancel all allocations for big game to outfitters in each Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) where residents are applying for more than three years to be drawn.

**RESPONSE:** A committee has been struck to reopen and discuss the Outfitter-Guide Policy. The Alberta Fish and Game Association can present this as a member of that committee.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Sustainable Resource Development change partner licences to allow any resident hunters successful in drawing a special licence in any of the other draws may designate a senior (65 years of age or older) to be a partner on their special licence.

**RESPONSE:** There are many opportunities for resident hunters in Alberta to have hunting opportunities and obtain licences. Currently residents can partner licence on moose and bison and youth can partner on any special licence. The rationale behind the moose and bison is that these are large animals and this allows groups to strategically put in for the draw and increase the chances of someone within the group to get drawn. The partner licence for youth is providing youth with an opportunity to get involved with hunting. There is no need to expand the partner licence beyond this. If the intent of providing partner licences for those over 65 is to provide opportunity because they have not been drawn, they can still buy and hunt on a general white-tailed deer licence. Environment and Sustainable Resource Development will not be moving this resolution forward.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and the Alberta Government take steps to change legislation so that non-resident aliens convicted of a major offence under the Alberta *Wildlife Act* receive a lifetime ban from hunting in Alberta.

**RESPONSE:** The Alberta Government, through the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, already has the ability to give hunting suspensions beyond the standard suspensions that are in the *Wildlife Act* for offences that are deemed to deserve it. There is no time limit to the suspensions that can be given, so lifetime suspensions are possible. We feel that the current regulation is adequate to address this concern.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** in addition to identifying themselves as guides and/or outfitters when requesting permission from private landowners or leaseholders, guides and outfitters must also obtain that permission in writing from the landowner or leaseholder.

**RESPONSE:** A committee has been struck to reopen and discuss the Outfitter-Guide Policy. The Alberta Fish and Game Association can present this as a member of that committee.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** a committee made up of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Fish and Game Association, and Alberta Professional Outfitters Society representatives review and make revisions to the Big Game Outfitter-Guide Policy dated June 2001 as required, prior to completion of the scheduled 2012 five-year allocation review.

**RESPONSE:** This committee has been formed but, because of timing issues, it will not be able to finish its mandate prior to the 2012 allocation review.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request Alberta Sustainable Resource Development remove the NO HUNTING WITH PISTOLS OR REVOLVERS clause from the hunting regulations.

**RESPONSE:** The Wildlife Regulation has been recently amended to prohibit all types of pistols or hand guns for the purposes of hunting. There are provisions within the Wildlife Regulation whereas licensed trappers who have obtained proper federal authority may carry and use hand guns to dispatch live captured furbearers. Environment and Sustainable Resource Development does not support the use of revolvers or pistols during hunting seasons and therefore will not be moving this resolution forward.

#### **FISHERIES RESOLUTIONS:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association ask Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to increase the non-resident Canadian angling licence fee to achieve parity with neighbouring provinces.

**RESPONSE:** The Fisheries Management Branch has initiated a licensing review process and notification has been given at the Alberta Fisheries Management Round Table meetings in the spring of 2012. The Fisheries Management Branch will work with a stakeholder-driven committee to draft suggested changes to the fisheries licence format and provide advice to the Minister. Non-resident Canadian fees will be one of the issues that will be reviewed.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request that Alberta Sustainable Resource Development allow anglers to purchase undersubscribed walleye tags for more than one lake and more than one class.

**RESPONSE:** As walleye tag harvesting opportunities have increased to 15 lakes for the 2012/13 season, we will continue to monitor the number of undersubscribed licences to determine if they are purchased throughout the year. In past years, the Class A and Class B licences for lakes are generally used completely after being offered as undersubscribed following the initial draw. Class C licences for some lakes, such as Pigeon, are not used completely by the end of the season. If we continue to see a trend toward low uptake of Class C licences on lakes, we will discuss potential ecological and allocation effects and consult with users on potential options for management.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request that Alberta Sustainable Resource Development institute a walleye stocking program in all of Alberta for the walleye inhabited lakes that are not producing sufficient walleye fry on their own.

**RESPONSE:** The Fisheries Management Branch is currently developing a walleye stocking strategy for Alberta that considers a directional, objective-based approach to walleye management with both ecological and social considerations being discussed. At the same time, the Fisheries Management Branch has drafted the Fisheries Conservation and Management Strategy for 2011-15 which provides the vision and strategic direction for issues such as walleye restoration and stocking. If stocking is required, we place priority on lakes that will take stocks and maintain populations via natural reproduction. Through regulatory changes and active restoration programs, we have achieved success on a number of fisheries including Lac La Biche, Lesser Slave Lake, Pigeon Lake, and we are now actively stocking Wabamun Lake such that it becomes self-sustaining. Options for 'put and take' walleye are being discussed, but these must be weighed against the priority of maintaining self-sustaining populations while ensuring we manage for a diversity of species in our waters.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request that the Alberta Government put in place legislation, within the Sustainable Resources Department, to enforce the mandatory licensing of ice fishing structures using the owner identification, which would allow identification of the owner for purposes of removal before the ice is out.

**RESPONSE:** There is currently no regulation or legislation in place to license fishing structures. A review of the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act* and Regulations is planned to commence over the next two years. This review will provide an opportunity to evaluate this proposed legislative change with consultation from stakeholders. Fisheries Management Branch is committed to include this request for licensing of fishing structures in that review.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to allow a harvest of walleye from Sylvan Lake.

**RESPONSE:** Fisheries staff in the Prairies Area have been monitoring walleye populations in Sylvan Lake for a number of years in order to evaluate the success of past (1998, 2000) and more recent (2006, 2007, 2008) stocking efforts. Information collected by the Fisheries Management Branch from fall walleye index netting (FWIN) in 2008 and 2010, a summer angler creel survey in 2010, along with anecdotal responses by anglers has shown that fish survival post stocking has been good.

Despite this success, data from the two recent FWIN surveys clearly indicates that almost no natural recruitment has occurred from stocking these fish. As a result, almost every walleye currently caught at Sylvan Lake is a stocked fish. The primary goal and objective for stocking Sylvan Lake with walleye was to achieve a stable, naturally-reproducing population where annual surplus production could be allocated for harvest amongst the various user groups. Unfortunately, without evidence of natural recruitment, allowing any significant harvest at this point in time could jeopardize the objective of achieving a naturally-spawning, self-sustaining walleye population.

This summer, work plans in the Red Deer sub-area include conducting monitoring surveys specifically aimed at determining if there are younger age classes (<4 year of age) of walleye in Sylvan Lake. These collection efforts will include targeted angling for walleye to collect younger year classes for age verification; additional efforts could include setting small mesh gill nets for short durations and night time boat electrofishing in late August to target young-of-the-year walleye in the shallow littoral zones. Some of this work will afford a unique opportunity to collaborate with the Sylvan Lake Fish and Game Association and its members as volunteer anglers. Pending the success of targeted angling, further collection efforts may be required to confirm the presence and abundance of younger year classes of walleye.

The results of these planned field collections will help determine if walleye spawning and natural recruitment is occurring in Sylvan Lake. Data collected during the summer will be used to determine whether a FWIN survey is necessary on Sylvan Lake this fall. Based on the data accumulated this year, the Fisheries Management Branch will decide whether to implement a regulation change, for example, introducing the walleye tag system and a walleye special harvest licence for Sylvan Lake in the future. As part of the provincial fisheries management process, consultation with stakeholders and First Nations on any proposed regulation change would also occur.

**WILDLIFE RESOLUTIONS:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association ask that Alberta Sustainable Resource Development return the bag limit for grouse (ruffed, blue, spruce) to 10 daily but with a maximum of two spruce and five blue daily in the aggregate.

**RESPONSE:** With lack of population data for most game bird populations, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development is forced to manage using precautionary principle. This dictates that in the event there is evidence of a concern, we manage populations to safeguard against potential of overharvest. In areas of high suspected populations, there is traditionally high harvest. In areas of low or no suspected populations, there is traditionally little to no harvest. By this, we need to make precautionary decisions in areas where harvest is suspected to be highest. The regulation changes that were enacted in 2011 are monitored by a new online Game Bird Harvest Survey. It is Environment and Sustainable Resource Development's intent to more or less stabilize regulations (unless there is ecological concern) for a period of three to five years to allow sufficient harvest data to accumulate. Following that, game bird management strategies can be revisited to determine if further restriction or liberalization is needed. Ongoing harvest can then be compared to baseline estimates that are currently being accumulated.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association ask Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division, to implement a late season muzzleloader black powder season for white-tail deer and/or mule deer does to be held in all WMUs where deer populations need to be reduced from December 15 to December 20 of each year.

**RESPONSE:** Currently hunting seasons (both archery and rifle combined) in Alberta typically run for three months; September 1 – November 30. Environment and Sustainable Resource Development will extend seasons if required for management purposes. Examples of this include extended antlerless elk seasons which are open to either December 20 or January 20, depending upon the area, and extended Chronic Wasting Disease seasons that ran until December 20. These seasons were in place to increase harvest for management reasons and any legal weapon could be used during these seasons. The population objectives have been met in WMUs that had extended seasons for Chronic Wasting Disease, therefore, they have been discontinued. If the purpose is to reduce white-tailed and/or mule deer populations as stipulated in the above resolution, then the department would consider extending hunting seasons for management reasons but without limiting weapon choice. For this reason, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development will not be forwarding this resolution.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association ask Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to reduce the number of moose tags issued in WMU 352, WMU 353 and WMU 355 to a level that maintains the moose herd at 2005 population numbers.

**RESPONSE:** The caribou management wolf control program in these WMUs has resulted in an increase in moose calf survival, and a subsequent increase in the moose population. The increased moose permits that are currently being issued are resulting in a stable moose population at a higher level than occurred in the early 2000s. Environment and Sustainable Resource Development will continue to calculate the moose permits for these WMUs in a science-based manner allowing for good hunting opportunity for resident hunters and stable moose populations.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association ask Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to develop a mourning dove season in Alberta. This must be with the cooperation of the migratory bird regulation, through the federal and international partners.

**RESPONSE:** Before a season can be implemented, a proper population monitoring program must be implemented. Canadian Wildlife Service is looking at potential survey methods, after which Alberta will be asked if we want to submit an application for a dove season. Once Canadian Wildlife Service is ready to receive applications for a dove season, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development will consult with stakeholders to determine if that is the direction we wish to go.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association ask that Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, in cooperation with the Alberta Trappers' Association, initiate a wolf control program including incentives to hunters and trappers to decrease the wolf population.

**RESPONSE:** Environment and Sustainable Resource Development works with the Alberta Trappers' Association in delivering courses to trappers on proper snaring techniques and in some areas the department also offers road killed ungulates to trappers for use in baits. Environment and Sustainable Resource Development will not offer financial incentives, however, several non-government organizations and some municipalities do offer financial incentives that trappers and hunters can take advantage of.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request Alberta Sustainable Resource Development open a sandhill crane season province-wide in conjunction with the other migratory bird seasons.

**RESPONSE:** There is ongoing population analysis and consultation with other jurisdictions in regards to a potential sandhill crane hunting season in Alberta. Depending on the result of the most updated survey data, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development may request a sandhill crane hunting season for 2013.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Alberta Fish and Game Association request that Alberta Sustainable Resource Development create an archery-only cougar season without dogs prior to the existing fall general cougar season.

**RESPONSE:** Major changes to cougar hunting regulations were implemented in 2011, and Environment and Sustainable Resource Development plans to monitor the current hunting season structure for several years before considering additional changes. Gathering a few years of data on harvest rates and hunter success rates with the current hunting season framework is required before season extensions can be considered.