

# TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA

A Nonprofit Public Interest Law Firm Providing Counsel to Protect and Sustain Alaska's Environment

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## **JUDGE STRIKES DOWN PREDATOR CONTROL AND BOUNTY PROGRAMS**

ANCHORAGE, AK - The State of Alaska Superior Court today released a decision stating that the constitutional principle of sustained yield applies to all wildlife

The State has argued in recent years that the constitutional provision that protects all of Alaska's natural resources was never intended to include predators. In a case brought by Defenders of Wildlife, the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, the Sierra Club and others, the Court held that the constitution protects all wildlife, not just the species that the Board of Game defines as the most valuable to humans.

"The Court ruling today makes it clear that the Board of Game has to apply sustained yield to predators," said Mike Frank of Trustees for Alaska, representing the plaintiffs in the case.

The court also struck down the 2006 additions to the State's predator control areas and ruled that Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) had no legal authority to offer bounties for wolves, overturning a 2007 announcement by ADF&G offering a \$150 bounty for the foreleg of each wolf killed by aerial gunners participating in the programs.

"The ruling on bounties is a great victory for sound scientific wildlife management," said John Toppenberg, executive director of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance. "They represent a throwback to a bygone era, when predators were poisoned and exterminated because wildlife scientists did not understand the critical role they played in maintaining healthy, balanced ecosystems for predator and prey alike."

The Court allowed some of the existing predator control programs to continue, but ruled that the Board of Game failed to make the findings required under the same-day-airborne law when it adopted expansions to two of the predator control programs in 2006.

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