

On Wolf Control—

Hunting by Aircraft

Due to the recent controversy surrounding the aerial wolf control program proposed by the Alaska State Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials in Anchorage are responding to a number of inquiries about Federal legislation concerning this type of activity.

Under the Airborne Hunting Act of 1971, no person shall shoot, or attempt to shoot, any wildlife while airborne. This Act also relates to the use of an aircraft to indirectly aid in the taking of wildlife, whether by harassment or chasing while in the air or using the radio for spotting purposes.

Under the provisions of the Act, harass can be defined as anything from merely disturbing or worrying wildlife to concentrating, chasing or actual herding from the air.

Liability also extends to any person who knowingly engages in one of these activities, whether in an aircraft or on the ground, and any person piloting or assisting in the operation of an aircraft from which another person shoots.

It also includes any person on the ground who takes or attempts to take any wildlife species with the aid of an aircraft or its communication equipment.

This law applies to all U.S. Citizens and the few exceptions are solidly outlined. The major one is the right of the state to grant its employees or agents a permit for aerial hunting or harassment of wildlife when it is being used in the course of administering or protecting land, water, wildlife, livestock, domestic animals, human life or crops.

A rigid reporting procedure is also established for when a state does issue such a permit. A report containing the name and address of each person issued such a permit and the number and species of wildlife taken in a particular area must be reported to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service within six months after the end of the calendar year.

Penalties contained within the Act provide for confiscation of the aircraft, any firearms used, a fine of up to \$5,000.00, and a jail term not to exceed one year, or both.

The pilot or person shooting from the aircraft need not be identified since identification of the planes is grounds for seizure of the aircraft and forfeiture under administrative procedures.

For further information, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Law Enforcement, 813 "D" Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.