

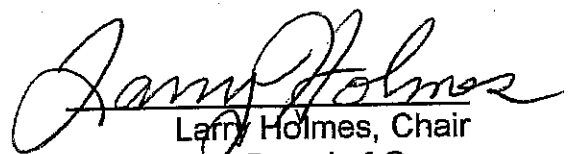
Findings of the Alaska Board of Game
on Moose Management in Game Management Unit 16B South
97-109-BOG

The Board of Game passed a proposal to provide a general resident only spike-fork 50-inch hunt from August 20 through September 30, and extended the season per an existing Tier II subsistence hunt by sixty days (Nov. 15 to Feb. 28) in Game Management Unit 16B south, that portion of 16B south of the Beluga River, Beluga Lake, and Triumvirate Glacier. Based on the reports presented by Division of Wildlife Conservation, Subsistence Division and the Department of Law, and after due consideration, the Board of Game makes the following findings:

1. The moose population in Unit 16B south is estimated to be 1200 moose (200 bulls, 820 cows, 110 calves) based on the most recent survey estimates made in 1996. The moose population in Unit 16B south consists of a single population or subpopulation that is relatively distinct during the fall hunting and breeding season with emigration and immigration of small numbers of bulls across the Beluga River.
2. The current total harvestable surplus of moose in Unit 16B south is approximately 105 bulls. Although the population goals for cows have been exceeded, it is not desirable to harvest the surplus of cows at this time due to the low recruitment of calves.
3. On March, 1993, the Board of Game found that the harvestable portion of Unit 16B south moose population that is reasonably necessary for subsistence uses is 39 - 47 moose. Between 1993 - 1996 the average harvest was fifteen spike-fork 50 inch bulls in the Redoubt Bay drainage area and 13 bulls for the Tier II permit area in the remainder of the unit. The total harvest for the 1996/97 season is 37 bulls in Unit 16B south.
4. The harvestable portion of Unit 16B south moose (105 bulls) is substantially more than the amount necessary for subsistence uses (39 - 47 moose). There are sufficient numbers of harvestable moose in Unit 16B south to provide for a subsistence hunt that satisfies subsistence uses, as well as to provide for a managed general hunt for residents.
5. The fall general hunt will provide additional opportunity for subsistence uses to Alaska resident hunters. In addition, the Board has authorized an extension to the existing winter Tier II hunt of sixty days, which provides additional opportunity to take moose in excess of what is legally required. Hunting in winter is important to residents in some areas of the state.

6. The Unit 16B south moose population is more vulnerable to overharvest during the winter, therefore the winter hunting opportunity must be managed carefully. Resident hunter success during the fall season has averaged 33 percent. During the fall, local hunters use boats, off-road vehicles and highway vehicles, while non-local residents predominantly use aircraft for access. Hunter success in winter is slightly higher, averaging around 35 percent. Currently, it is not desirable to harvest the surplus of cows and the winter hunt is a bull-only hunt during a time of year when bulls are antlerless, requiring that the Board manage hunter participation differently during the hunt periods. The factors outlined previously require that the moose which are the subject of the winter hunt be managed as a discrete "portion of a population" as set forth in AS 16.05.258.
7. It is necessary to manage the winter hunt by limiting the number of permits in a Tier II hunt. Unlimited participation would likely lead to an overharvest of bulk due to accessibility and herd concentration in wintering areas, unless the season was short. However, a short season would not provide adequate opportunity for subsistence uses.
8. Providing a general hunt with a bag limit of one bull with spike-fork 50 inch antlers for residents only and a long winter season with a bag of one bull by Tier II permit will not result in a significant cost to private persons. Such a hunting regime is consistent with sustained yield principles, provides a reasonable opportunity for subsistence use by all Alaska residents.

Date: 4/20/97


Larry Holmes, Chair
Alaska Board of Game

Vote: 4-0-3

Absent: { Fleagle
Quakenbush
Whittington-Evans