

Dave Blossom

1. I am opposed to relaxing the current Bull Moose hunting regulations because when we agreed to the current 4 brow tine or 50 inch rule, it was with the understanding that we would give it at least 5 years before we made any changes. It takes about 5 years for a bull to grow a mature breeding bull. Also ADF&G says that it takes a minimum of a 26% bull to cow ratio in order to maintain a herd under normal conditions. Our bull to cow ratio is only 22% and we are not under normal conditions in light of our predator problem. In order to increase herd population the bull to cow ratio needs to be well above 26%.
2. The more critical is our cow to calf ratio. ADF&G says that it takes a cow to calf ratio of about 30% to maintain a herd under normal conditions and again we are under high predator numbers so it will take an even higher ratio to maintain and grow our moose herd. The current ADF&G cow to calf ratio is less than 18%. Because of this our herds are not growing.
3. With the low bull to cow ratio and the extremely low cow to calf ratio, I am opposed to the cow hunt in Homer and it needs to be stopped. ADF&G states that on the average a cow moose will have about 20 calves in their lifetime. If we kill on average 25 cows in that hunt a year, we are eliminating potentially 500 moose from our long term population; and each year we have the hunt it's another 500. Now I know that not all calves survive, as we see in our low cow to calf ratio, so to grow and maintain a herd it is extremely critical that we have as many cows as ultimately possible. You will hear argument for cow hunts because it gives people an opportunity to put meat in their freezer and it gives kids a chance to shoot a moose. This argument could be made for every area and not just Homer. If we did that we would not have any moose left for anyone's freezer. If we make changes to help grow and support the herd, there will be opportunities in the future for kids to shoot nice bulls instead of cows.
4. If we start to liberalize our hunting regulations and continue to have the Homer cow hunt, it makes it a lot harder to make the argument for further continued predator control or more liberalized brown bear hunts. Currently brown bears are the leading

cause of calf mortality, 54% according to ADF&G. If we want to grow our herd, we need to get brown bear under control.

5. Federal subsistence uses the liberalized bull hunts and the Homer cow hunts as some of the reasons to not change the subsistence hunting laws to be in accordance with State hunting laws. We should all be under the same restrictions for hunting moose. Those restrictions should be 4 brow tine and/or 50 inch antler spread for everyone. We all have the same opportunity to hunt and how we access that hunt is our own personal choice.
6. I am opposed to going back to a drawing for brown bear on refuge land. IT has no merit what-so-ever. The refuge just published their brown bear numbers for the peninsula based on a big study that they did. We all know that there overall number is ultra-conservative and it is still over 3 times greater than ADF&G's established number for the carrying capacity for the Kenai Peninsula. The refuge is already restricted in access to hunting on refuge land as no motorized vehicles are allowed for most of the time the bears are out of hibernation. Only 6 brown bears were taken last year in the open hunting season on the refuge out of a total of 42 taken on the entire Kenai Peninsula. This makes it hard to make the argument to further restrict the hunt based on that number. Refuge land in the Caribou Hills is critical breeding grounds for moose, so it is very important to keep brown bear under control in that area if we want to grow and maintain our moose population. My family and I have been hunting on the Peninsula since 1948 and we are seeing a lot less bulls and cows with calves overall, especially in the Caribou Hills on refuge land.
7. Moose population numbers appear on paper to be stable; but I believe that is because all the logging, fires, and beetle kill deadfall makes it a lot easier to count all the moose than it ever was before. 50 moose in an open field are a lot easier to get an accurate count of than 50 moose in dense forest. This year during hunting season was one of the lowest numbers of moose we have ever seen since we have been hunting.