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PRESS RELEASE

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Hunters Asked to Avoid Taking Collared Moose Along the Yukon River in Unit 18

(Bethel) – The Alaska Department of Fish and Game plans to capture and collar moose April 11 through April 20 along the Yukon River in Game Management Unit 18. Because sedatives routinely used to immobilize captured moose may linger in the meat for up to 30 days, moose harvested within 30 days of being collared should not be consumed.

Captured moose will be tagged with a label stating, "If harvested before 05/31/2022 DO NOT CONSUME Call (907) 543-1678." Hunters are asked to avoid harvesting collared moose for the remainder of the 2021-2022 season. The moose hunting season remains open through April 30 along the Yukon and Johnson Rivers in Unit 18.

The captures are part of a four-year research project to improve area moose management by better understanding how moose populations impact and interact with their habitat. The study will be conducted along two sections of the Yukon River, one downstream of Mountain Village and another between Marshall and Russian Mission. These areas present a unique opportunity to evaluate moose movement, reproduction, causes of mortality, and how those relate to habitat quality and the ability to predict population decline of some of Alaska's highest-density moose populations.

The collaring project is especially important in Unit 18 where inconsistent snow cover has often limited the department's ability to conduct aerial moose counts. The study's primary goals are to

- assess the condition of summer and winter moose habitat,
- determine body condition and stress levels of juvenile moose,
- monitor moose movements in a high-density, highly riparian moose population, and
- assess relationships between twinning rates, habitat condition, and moose abundance in Unit 18.

Hunters who harvest a collared or ear-tagged moose this spring must notify the department and return the collar and ear-tag. For questions about moose hunting and management in Unit 18, contact Patrick Jones at (907) 543-2839 or Keith Oster at (907) 543-1678 at the department's Bethel office.

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