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NEWS

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New regulations affect Kenai moose hunters

With the start of the fall moose hunting season on the Kenai Peninsula, hunters need to be aware of several significant regulation changes. The changes were made last spring by the Alaska Board of Game to boost low bull to cow ratios in Game Management Units 7 and 15 on the Kenai Peninsula.

An adequate bull to cow ratio is necessary to ensure all available cows are bred, which will help protect the long-term sustainability of the Kenai moose population.

The new regulations allow only the harvest of bulls with antlers at least 50 inches wide or with at least 4 brow tines on one side. A bull with spikes, forks or with an antler spread less than 50 inches or with 3 brow tines is no longer legal to harvest.

“A legal moose will be harder to find this hunting season. We recognize this is a hardship for all moose hunters. But these changes were needed to help prevent a long-term decline in moose numbers on the Kenai,” said Thomas McDonough, Assistant Area Biologist for the Division of Wildlife Conservation on the Kenai Peninsula.

In addition, non-resident moose hunting is no longer allowed in Units 15A or 15C. Hunters who take a bull moose this fall on the Kenai must also have the antlers inspected and sealed by ADF&G. Hunters need to bring in antlers to ADF&G offices in Anchorage, Homer or Soldotna within 10 days of the kill. After normal working hours or on weekends, hunters can get antlers sealed at the Wildlife Trooper offices in Seward, Cooper Landing, Soldotna, or Anchor Point by appointment only. This will allow ADF&G to monitor the antler configuration of the harvest, which should provide information on illegal harvest and help managers determine the best strategy for managing future moose harvests.

The changes are in response to a recent and wide-scale decline of the bull to cow ratio and a low number of total bulls on the Kenai. This may be due to long-term over-harvest of yearling bulls, which could have depressed the bull population enough to prevent all available cows from being bred. Illegal take may also be a factor.

The new restrictions are considered a short-term fix that will be reassessed after two years.

“We do not believe the additional antler restrictions will be a long term strategy, but we do believe they are necessary at this time to increase our depressed bull to cow ratio,” said Jeff Selinger, Area Biologist for the Division of Wildlife Conservation on the Kenai Peninsula.

If you have any questions related to these recent changes, please call the ADF&G offices in Soldotna (262-9368) or Homer (235-8191). Hunting regulations are available in ADF&G offices and online at www.hunt.alaska.gov.

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