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## **PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release:*  
**Friday, February 10, 2017**

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### **Unit 20B Antlerless Moose Hunts Cancelled for Fall 2017**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has cancelled some of the antlerless moose hunts in Game Management Unit 20B for the 2017 hunting season. Because of low snows before December 1, biologists were unable to conduct a moose population estimate in Unit 20B. Without this population estimate, area managers decided on a conservative approach to moose harvest in the area to avoid the risk of harvesting too many antlerless moose, which could reduce the population.

"We estimate the moose population in Unit 20B at 12,000-13,000 moose, which is within, but at the low end of the population objective of 12,000-15,000 moose. We currently want to harvest antlerless moose at a rate which allows the population to remain stable," said Tony Hollis, Acting Area Biologist for Wildlife Conservation in Fairbanks. The harvest strategy to maintain the current moose population includes about 90 antlerless moose. The Department estimates that this harvest will be met during the 2017 season without utilizing drawing permit hunts.

Antlerless moose hunts are important because they help wildlife managers regulate moose populations and keep them at a size that does not damage their habitat yet provides the maximum opportunity for hunters.

The Department hopes that survey conditions will be adequate to conduct a moose population estimate in the fall of 2017. "If we conduct a survey next fall and we find out that the population is higher than desired or increasing, we will work with local fish and game advisory committees to reinstate the drawing permits, but without a population estimate this winter, we need to be conservative" said Hollis.

The cancellation applies to the Unit 20B drawing permit hunts DM698-DM748 and includes youth hunts YM601-YM609 and YM611-YM624.

Some antlerless moose hunts in Unit 20B will continue to be offered. They include the Fairbanks Management Area drawing hunts (DM786, DM788, and DM789), the Richardson Highway any moose hunt (DM783), the Minto Flats Management Area registration hunt (RM785), and the targeted hunts (AM751).

The canceled Unit 20B antlerless hunts were pulled from the drawing system before the drawing was conducted and did not affect an applicant's chances of winning other hunts.

Application fees for hunts cancelled by the Department will be refunded. Refund checks will be mailed to all applicants. Refunds will not be available from state Fish and Game offices.

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