

Division of Wildlife Conservation
Eddie Grasser, Director
Region II, Anchorage Area Office
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK, 99518



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Dave Battle
Anchorage Area Biologist
(907) 267-2185
david.battle@alaska.gov

Help Wanted: Sharp-Eyed Citizens Sought for 2020 Anchorage Moose Survey Project

(Anchorage) – The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is recruiting citizens to report moose sightings this weekend for the Anchorage winter moose survey. Now entering its fourth year since a pilot project in February 2017, the novel, ground-based survey technique uses DNA taken from city moose to determine the number of moose in the Anchorage Bowl. Moose sighting reports from Anchorage residents are key to the survey's success.

"The public's help the past several years has made all the difference," said wildlife research biologist David Saalfeld, "With Anchorage residents calling in, we were able to collect samples and establish a minimum count of 143 unique moose in 2018, and 174 unique moose in 2019, with a recapture rate of 33%. The resulting analysis produced a rough population estimate of approximately 350 moose within Anchorage. However, this estimate will be refined as the study is repeated in subsequent years"

In 2019, the survey included 123 cow moose and 51 bulls. Of those animals, 52 were calves, including 27 cows and 25 bulls. Data gathered from this weekend's survey will allow biologists to determine a more precise number of moose in Anchorage, Saalfeld said.

The survey technique works like this: With reports from citizens across Anchorage, moose are located and DNA is collected with specialized darts. The darts strike moose lightly, collect a skin sample in the tip, and fall to the ground to be gathered after the animal leaves. DNA from those samples is used to identify moose relatedness and generate the count.

Citizens are invited to report moose sightings within the Anchorage Bowl from 8 a.m. Friday, February 21, through 5:00 p.m. Sunday, February 23.

Sightings may be reported by:

- **Phone** at 907-267-2530;
- **Text message** at 907-782-5051; or
- **Online** at www.adfg.alaska.gov

Reports should include the number of moose observed, the time of the sighting, and most importantly the location of the moose.

“This technology has the potential to improve our knowledge and management of Anchorage area moose populations,” said area wildlife biologist Dave Battle.

Safety is paramount with this project. Moose can be dangerous, and citizens are reminded to avoid approaching moose or department survey teams out collecting DNA samples. Staff wearing blaze orange vests or safety yellow jackets with logos clearly identifying them as Department of Fish and Game employees will be using dart projectors that closely resemble long-guns or hunting rifles. Additionally, staff will be driving state trucks marked with the department logo.

Project expenses are covered by funds generated by hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts through payment of federal taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment, and through state hunting license and tag fees.

For more information about the Anchorage moose study, contact Dave Battle at 907-267-2185 or Dave Saalfeld at 907-267-2387

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