

PROPOSAL 135

5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20A as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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(18)

Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

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1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with the Remainder of Unit 20(A); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 15—Nov. 15
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Oct. 1—Feb. 28

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1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order

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Remainder of Unit 20(A)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 15—Nov. 15

1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 25—Feb. 28

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1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order

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What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. Our goal is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. Antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of moose habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate moose population growth, help to meet Intensive Management (IM) objectives for high levels of harvest and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull:cow ratios.

If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the moose population may increase to unacceptable levels or may need reduction when new data is available and analyzed. Opportunity to hunt a harvestable surplus of cow moose will be lost and our ability to meet intensive management harvest objectives will be compromised. Subsistence hunters in the portion of Unit 20A outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (part of the western Tanana Flats) may not have a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses.

This reauthorization of antlerless moose hunts will likely improve or maintain the ability of moose habitat to support the current moose population. Hunting opportunity and harvest will increase and allow the Department of Fish and Game (department) to manage these moose populations at optimum levels. The additional harvest will help in meeting intensive management harvest objectives without reducing bull:cow ratios to low levels. Meat and subsistence hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose. Moose populations

will benefit by having moose densities compatible with their habitat. Motorists and residents may benefit from reduced moose-vehicle collisions and moose-human conflicts.

Our current objective is to maintain moose numbers within the IM population objective of 10,000–15,000 moose (the IM population objective adopted by the Board of Game in 2016) while monitoring indicators of moose and habitat condition for positive density-dependent responses. The Unit 20A population was estimated at 10,622–14,009 moose (90% confidence interval) in 2015. Because this estimate falls within the IM population objective and the department has not detected any indicators that the nutrition is not limited within this population, our intention is to harvest moose at a rate of 1% of the population, which has been shown to stabilize the moose population at its current level. Antlerless harvest will be by drawing permits for a majority of Unit 20A and a registration permit in northwest Unit 20A near Nenana. The harvest objective will be based on the most recent survey results.

The number of moose in Unit 20A was estimated at 17,768 in 2003. Research indicated this high-density moose population was experiencing density-dependent effects, including low productivity, relatively light calf weights and high removal rates of winter forage. The objective beginning in regulatory year 2004–2005 was to reduce moose numbers to the population objective of 10,000–12,000 unless indicators of moose condition showed signs of improvement at higher densities. The Unit 20A population was estimated at 10,272–14,115 moose (90% confidence interval) in 2012.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F18-058)
