

Note: Proposal 149 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Southeast Region meeting in January 2019 and the Southcentral Region meeting in March 2019

PROPOSAL 149

5 AAC 85.0XX. Hunting seasons and bag limits for mule deer.

Establish seasons and bag limits for mule deer statewide, excluding Sitka black-tailed deer.

The department is asking the board to address new species coming from places in Canada that have winter ticks and perhaps other parasites and pathogens. Winter ticks are a threat to cervid health in Alaska, especially for moose.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS AND WHY?

The department would like the board to address how to best manage non-native wildlife that moves into Alaska, and how to best handle the pathogens and parasites they carry.

Currently mule deer have been documented in interior Alaska—specifically in the Interior/Northeast Arctic region—however, pathogens and parasites are not region-specific, nor are they specific to mule deer, and the department prefers this be addressed on a statewide basis or other appropriate scale.

The Board of Game received an emergency petition from the Kenai Fish and Game Advisory Committee to open a hunt for mule deer with no closed season and no bag limit as a result of the sightings. The Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game used the authority delegated him by the board to evaluate and act on the petition. The petition was denied; however, due to biological concerns, the department submitted an Agenda Change Request to discuss the issue with the board. In discussing this proposal, the board may wish to refer to the petition, as well as any samples the department may have collected from any resulting mule deer harvest in order to monitor future health risks to Alaskan wildlife.

Winter ticks have not been documented in Alaska yet; however, the department would like to provide the board with information specific to additional pathogens and parasites that might be introduced to Alaska by mule deer, not just winter ticks. Winter ticks are prevalent in other places in North America and heavy infestations of winter ticks on moose can result in severe anemia, skin irritation, hair loss, and ultimately, death. This, combined with perhaps increased sightings of mule deer in Alaska, have led to the department requesting this be discussed out of cycle.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F18-ACR2)

Note: Proposal 151 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Southeast Region Meeting in January 2019.

PROPOSAL 151

5 AAC 85.045 Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Create a winter any-moose season for residents during March in a portion of Unit 21D, south of the south bank of the Yukon River, downstream of the up-river entrance of Kala Slough and west of Kala Creek, to be announced by the department as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
...		
(19)		
...		

Unit 21(D), that portion within the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull by registration permit only; or	Sept. 1–Sept. 25	
1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 320 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 24, that portion within the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area	Sept. 5–Sept. 25 (General hunt only)	

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side by drawing permit only; up to 80 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 24, that portion within the Koyukuk Controlled Use Area		Sept. 5–Sept. 25
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Unit 21(D), that portion south of the South bank of the Yukon River, downstream of the up-river entrance of Kala Slough and west of Kala Creek

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull, by registration permit only; or

Aug. 22–Aug. 31
Sept. 5–Sept. 25

1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 600 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 21(D) remainder; or

Sept. 5–Sept. 25

1 moose, by registration permit only, up to 15 days during March, however, a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf

(Winter season to be announced)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, by drawing permit only; up to 600 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 21(D) remainder

Sept. 5–Sept. 25

Remainder of Unit 21(D)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull, by registration permit only; or

Aug. 22–Aug. 31
Sept. 5–Sept. 25

1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 600 permits may be issued in **combination with** Unit 21(D) **that portion south of the South bank of the Yukon River, downstream of the up-river entrance of Kala Slough and west of Kala Creek** [UNIT 21(D) OUTSIDE THE KOYUKUK CONTROLLED USE AREA]

Sept. 5–Sept. 25
(General hunt only)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull with 50-inch antlers or antlers with 4 or more brow tines on one side, by drawing permit only; up to 600 permits may be issued in **combination with Unit 21(D), that portion south of the South bank of the Yukon River, downstream of the up-river entrance**

Sept. 5–Sept. 25

of Kala Slough and west of Kala Creek [UNIT 21(D) OUTSIDE THE KOYUKUK CONTROLLED USE AREA]

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What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The moose population in the Kaiyuh Flats of Unit 21D is increasing rapidly, especially the number of cows in the population. The proposed season would provide a harvest opportunity of cow moose that has only recently emerged following increased habitat productivity after a 265,916 acre wildfire in the Kaiyuh Flats in 2004. Rather than allow the population to quickly exceed carrying capacity and go through dramatic rates of expansion and contraction, we believe it is prudent to allow hunters to take advantage of this harvestable surplus while it is available.

Our goal is to provide resident hunters with additional opportunity for success in harvesting moose and to make progress toward achieving the intensive management (IM) harvest objective of 450–1,000 moose in all of Unit 21D. The 10-year average estimated harvest during 2008–2017 was 412 moose, including estimated unreported harvest. The IM harvest objective has not been met since 2003 when the estimated harvest was 489 moose.

Moose abundance in the Kaiyuh Flats is estimated at 4,000–4,500 moose, which is 39–44% of the overall Unit 21D population. The initial harvest quota in this proposed hunt area will be approximately 0.9% of estimated number of cows (25 moose or no more than 20 cows). We will adjust the harvest quota each year depending on our most recent population estimates, harvestable surplus, and our assessment of carrying capacity. The proposed season would be announced each March when travel conditions are adequate, with a 2-day reporting requirement. The season will be closed once the quota is reached.

In addition to increased opportunity to harvest moose and progress toward the overall Unit 21D IM harvest objective, a 0.9% harvest rate of cow moose in the Kaiyuh Flats is expected to slow, but not stop, the population increase in that area. This will allow us to annually assess density-dependent indicators of the moose population health through twinning and browse surveys.

Analysis of three Trend Count Areas within the Kaiyuh Flats showed a significant increase in the number of moose among all age classes, and adult moose increased 57% from the 2001–2017 average count of 725 adult moose to 1,138 adult moose in 2017. Analysis of the Geospatial Population Estimate data showed a statistically significant increase from 1,897 ±11% moose in 2011 to 4,116 ±10% moose in 2017. Twinning data for the proposed hunt area also show high and stable twinning rates since 2004.

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for moose in Unit 21, and an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 600–800 moose.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F18-ACR14)
