

**PROPOSAL 178**

**5 AAC 85.045(a)(16). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the resident antlerless moose season in Unit 18 as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(16) ...		
Unit 18, that portion that drains into Kuskokwim Bay south of the Carter Bay drainage		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 moose by registration Permit only; to be announced by emergency order	Dec. 1—Mar. 31 (Season to be announced)	No open season.
Remainder of Unit 18		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
2 moose; of which only 1 may be an antlered bull; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 1—Sept. 30	
2 antlerless moose; or	Oct. 1—Nov. 30.	
2 moose	Dec. 1—April 30.	
NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 antlerless moose		Dec. 1—Mar. 15
...		

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** To be retained, the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 18 must be reauthorized annually. The current antlerless hunts in the Remainder of Unit 18 were adopted at the January 2014 Board of Game meeting in Kotzebue. The current antlerless hunt in the Goodnews Hunt area, and the nonresident antlerless hunt, were both adopted at the January 2017 Board of Game meeting in Bethel. The board has previously reauthorized the antlerless moose season for resident hunts in Unit 18 Remainder for regulatory year (RY) 2016 through RY2021. This proposal requests reauthorization of all antlerless hunts for RY2023.

Implementation of antlerless hunts began in 2006 and has continued each year due to increased moose abundance and continued high reproductive rates along the Yukon River drainage in Unit 18. Based on the steady growth in moose abundance, ADF&G proposes continued antlerless moose hunts in the Remainder of Unit 18.

Within the areas near the Yukon River, the moose population is estimated at a minimum of 23,000 animals with calf:cow ratios ranging from 36:100 to 61:100, and twinning rates from 18% to 36% for all areas. Population growth continues in this portion of Unit 18 and anecdotal evidence suggests that calf survival rates were high for the winter of 2021-2022. The population is expected to continue to grow with high recruitment and adult survival.

Although the current year harvest data in the Remainder of Unit 18 has not been finalized due to the early proposal deadline, harvest is expected to be similar to the past four years and well within sustained yield for this robust population. Allowing antlerless harvest will benefit hunters through increased opportunity, and any increases in harvest may help slow the growth rate of the population in this portion of Unit 18.

The moose population in the Goodnews River drainage had grown steadily in the past 15 years following a closure in 2004. The fall hunt has had a quota of 10 moose in the first few years of the hunt and recently increased to 30. The season has not been closed by emergency order and the past few years the quota was not met. In the two years that the winter hunt has been held, harvest has been low (only five moose harvested in RY2017 and none in RY2018). The population now is over 400 moose and based on the steady growth in moose abundance, ADF&G proposes continued antlerless moose hunts in the Goodnews River Drainage.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F22-039)

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