

PROPOSAL 181

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

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

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts	Nonresident Open Season
(18) ...		
Unit 20(B), that portion within Creamer’s Refuge ...		
1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or	Sept. 1–Nov. 27 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1–Nov. 27
1 antlerless moose by muzzle-loader by drawing permit only; up to 10 permits may be issued; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area	Dec. 1–Jan. 31 (General hunt only)	Dec. 1–Jan. 31
Unit 20(B), remainder of the Fairbanks Management Area ...		
1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or	Sept. 1–Nov. 27 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1–Nov. 27

1 moose by targeted permit only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only)

No open season.

Unit 20(B), that portion within the Minto Flats Management Area

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

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1 antlerless moose by registration permit only

Oct. 15–Feb. 28 (Subsistence hunt only)

No open season.

...

Unit 20(B), the drainage of the Middle Fork of the Chena River

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 300 permits may be issued; 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–Last day of Feb. (General hunt only)

No open season.

...

Unit 20(B), that portion southeast of the Moose Creek dike within one-half mile of each side of the Richardson highway

...

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

Sept. 16–Last day of Feb. (General hunt only)

No open season.

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

No open season.

Remainder of Unit 20(B)

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; by youth hunt only; up to 200 permits may be issued; or	Aug. 5–Aug. 14 (General hunt only)	No open season
...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 1,500 permits may be issued in the remainder of Unit 20(B); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 15–Nov. 15 (General hunt only)	No open season.
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 1– Last day of Feb.	
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 (General hunt only)	No open season.
...		

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The 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-to-cow ratios.

If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the moose population may exceed population objectives causing habitat degradation and a loss of opportunity to hunt a surplus of antlerless moose. Furthermore, subsistence hunters in the portion of Unit 20B in the Minto Flats Management Area may not have a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses.

The reauthorization of antlerless moose hunts in Unit 20B will allow the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to manage the moose population within the population objectives of 12,000 to 15,000 moose. Hunting opportunity and harvest will increase and allow ADF&G to manage this moose population at optimum levels. The additional harvest is necessary to meet intensive management harvest objectives while maintaining bull-to-cow ratios within objectives. Subsistence hunters will have reasonable opportunity to harvest cow moose. Moose populations will benefit by maintaining moose densities at levels compatible with their habitat. Motorists and residents may benefit from reduced moose–vehicle collisions and moose–human conflicts.

The moose population level in Unit 20B is currently within the population objective of 12,000–15,000 moose. The population declined from an estimated 20,173 moose in 2009 to 11,064 in

2015, due in large part to antlerless moose hunts designed to lower the population to those objectives. The population increased slightly to 12,871 moose in 2017 and was estimated at 12,479 in 2020. To maintain the current population level the department recommends limited antlerless hunts in the Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA) and the Fairbanks Management Area (FMA). The department will continue to monitor the moose population and may implement additional antlerless hunts if the population continues to trend upward.

Fairbanks Management Area (FMA)—The purpose of this antlerless hunt is to regulate population growth in the FMA and reduce potential moose–vehicle collisions and nuisance moose problems.

The number of moose–vehicle collisions in the FMA is high and they pose significant safety risks to motorists. In addition, moose nuisance issues continue to place significant demands on property owners. To increase hunting opportunity and harvest and reduce moose–vehicle collisions, the department incrementally increased the number of drawing permits for antlerless moose in the FMA during RY99–RY10. Moose–vehicle collisions and moose nuisance problems have remained lower since, presumably, in part due to consistent antlerless moose harvests.

Minto Flats Management Area (MFMA)—The primary purpose of this antlerless hunt is to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses and to regulate the moose population in the MFMA.

The MFMA moose density was high in 2010 (4.4 moose/mi²). To reduce the moose population, the harvest of antlerless moose during RY12 and RY13 was about 2.5% of the population. The fall 2015, 2017, and 2019 estimates showed more appropriate densities of 1.6, 1.7, and 2.0 moose/mi², respectively. Because the population level has been stable and within the population objectives, the antlerless harvest has been reduced to approximately 1% of the total population to maintain the current population level.

Targeted Hunt—The purpose of the targeted hunt is to allow the public to harvest moose that are causing nuisance or public safety issues. These permits are used sparingly but allow the public to harvest the moose instead of the department just dispatching them.

Due to severe winter weather and anticipated high levels of natural mortality, the department did not issue antlerless moose drawing permits for certain hunts within Unit 20B for fall of 2022, and does not intend to hold the fall antlerless registration hunt in the MFMA. Reauthorization of these antlerless hunts is needed to retain the management options, as described for each hunt, to maintain appropriate moose abundance levels. The department will evaluate overwinter survival in the area along with other factors throughout 2022 and early winter 2023 to determine if and how many antlerless permits will be issued in Fall 2023.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F22-044)
