



## News Release

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### **Be Alert If You See Young Wildlife: Give Them Space**

(Anchorage) – Moose calves, bear cubs, and other newborn wildlife are being seen across Alaska, with most appearing between mid-May and the end of June. Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) biologists warn people who may encounter newborn wildlife to resist the urge to approach or "rescue" them; a protective mother is almost always nearby.

If a moose calf or bear cub is encountered without its mother immediately in view, be alert in case you've walked between them. The best course of action is usually to back away and leave from the direction you came. Cow moose can be particularly dangerous during calving season, and attacks on people and pets by cows defending their calves are reported each spring. Making noise to alert wildlife to your presence is always a good precaution but may not be enough to avoid clashes with moose cows with calves.

"Newborn moose calves aren't able to run from predators - or from pets, or people on bicycles," said Regional Supervisor Cyndi Wardlow. "Moose are likely to stand their ground, even when they hear you coming and especially if they are defending a new calf. Try to avoid single tracks and narrow, brushy trails where limited visibility might lead to a run-in with a cow moose and calf, or any other wildlife. Don't approach wildlife for pictures and give them plenty of space to move away safely."

Take steps to avoid potentially dangerous encounters with wildlife by following this important advice:

- Give moose plenty of space – Be extremely cautious when trying to navigate around moose. If a moose is blocking your road or trail, try to find an alternative route or wait for them to move out of the way.

- Moose are found throughout Anchorage, including in neighborhoods and other developed areas. Be cautious in your own yard when going around corners, when leaving businesses, and in parking lots. A cow and calf may be right there.
- Keep dogs on a leash or under control – Dogs may bark at or chase wildlife. If moose or bears are agitated, they may charge and attack the dog causing serious injury or death. If you are nearby, they may also attack you.
- Be very careful trying to scare moose away – Moose do not react to hazing (yelling, honking, banging pots, etc.) in the same way bears and other wildlife react. A common reaction for a moose is to turn and attack the person or vehicle that is trying to get them to move out of the way or off a road or trail.
- Do not feed wildlife – It doesn't matter whether the feeding is by hand, or if the food is left out for them. Feeding wildlife is dangerous and illegal and may put other people at serious risk of injury. Moose, brown bears, and black bears may become aggressive when defending a food source or can develop the expectation of being fed if they approach people. This can create a very dangerous, but avoidable, situation.
- Do not assume young animals found alone are orphaned. Mother moose and bears frequently walk out of sight, cache their young, or become separated from them by fences or roads. Sow bears often send cubs up trees to wait before leaving to find food. In nearly all cases, the mothers return to their young. Even when young animals truly are orphaned it's best to leave them alone. Don't attempt to feed or pick them up; this type of contact with animals is illegal and could result in a citation and fine. Lingering near or approaching a young animal for a photo or any other reason may discourage the mother from returning.

If you observe a young animal that appears to have been left alone for more than 48 hours, contact the nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game office during regular business hours, or use the department's smartphone-friendly link to file a report online by visiting [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov) and clicking the "Report a Wildlife Encounter" button. If a situation involves an immediate public safety concern, call 9-1-1.

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