

# Identifying a legal muskox

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<http://hunt.alaska.gov>



**Fig. 1**

2-year-old bulls in spring



**Fig. 2**

2-year-old bull in spring (left)  
 3-year-old bull in spring (right)



**Fig. 3**

3-year-old bull develops large horn boss by fall



**Mature bull**

**Fig. 4**



**Mature cow**

**Fig. 5**



**Fig. 6**

## Bull muskox horn characteristics:

- Young bulls have larger horn mass than cows, but incomplete growth of a horn boss. (Figs. 1 & 2)
- By fall, 3-year-old bulls have a thin, but developed horn boss. (Fig. 3)
- Mature bulls (4-years-old and older) develop a thick horn boss at the base of each horn. (Fig. 4)
- All bulls have horns that are thicker and more massive than cows. (Figs. 4 & 5)
- Black horn tips can be found on bulls.

## Cow muskox horn characteristics:

- Cows do not have a horn boss at any age. Mature cows (4-years-old and older) have horn bases that are small, dark, and visible. (Fig. 5)
- Cow horn diameter is smaller and less massive than bulls. From a distance, the length of the hook may be similar to bull horns.
- Young cows have incomplete growth of horn bases and considerable white hair between the horns.
- Black horn tips can be found on cows.

## How many animals do you see in Fig. 6?

- Know what is behind your target before you shoot.
- Muskox cluster together as herd animals making separate individuals hard to see.
- Calves, yearlings, and 2-year-olds often stand behind larger animals for protection.
- Take your time! The group will eventually disperse giving you a clear shot.

**Trophy destruction required for Unit 22 & 23 subsistence hunts. See permit for details.**

### Photos courtesy of:

- Fig. 1, 3 & 4: Claudia Ihl
- Fig. 2: Peter Bente
- Fig. 5: Sue Steinacher
- Fig. 6: Patrick Jones

