

Identifying a legal muskox

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Fig. 1



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

Fig. 2



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

Fig. 3



3-year-old bull in fall

Fig. 4



Mature bull in fall

Fig. 5



Mature cow in fall



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 mature bulls have horns that are thicker and more massive than mature cows (**Figs. 4 & 5**)
- It is unreliable to identify sex based solely on the color of horn tips or presence of white hair between horns.

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.

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.

Photos courtesy of:
Figs. 2,4,6: Patrick Jones

Trophy destruction is required in some hunts, which consists of removing the horns within 2 inches of the eye level at the kill site. See permit for details.

