

PROPOSAL 192

5 AAC 85.045(a)(11). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 13A as follows:

| Units and Bag Limits (11) | Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts) | Nonresident Open Season |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Unit 13 1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows: ... | | |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only in Unit 13(A); up to 200 permits may be issued; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or ... | Oct. 1–Oct. 31 Mar. 1–Mar. 31 (General hunt only) | No open season |

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by the board. The current regulation allows hunters to take a limited number of cows in specific areas to keep the population and composition ratios within objectives.

This Unit 13 antlerless hunt was initially adopted in March 2011, and the first Unit 13 antlerless hunt under this regulation took place in September 2012. The hunt was modified when the Board of Game adopted an October and March season during the February 2013 board meeting.

Since the inception of this hunt, the department has issued 10 permits annually for a hunt in Unit 13A. The department intentionally limited the number of permits issued annually to gain public support for the hunt, even though a higher rate of cow harvest was desirable to regulate the moose population within objectives. After considering a proposal during the 2015 Board of Game meeting, which was submitted by the public to increase the number of cow permits issued annually, the board directed the department to issue enough permits to allow the harvest of up to one percent of the cow population, when the moose population is above the midpoint of the population objective for the subunit. Twenty-five permits were issued for regulatory year (RY) RY2021 and 25 permits were issued for RY22.

The current population objective for Unit 13A is 3,500–4,200, and the population was estimated to be above objective in 2015 and 2016, within the higher end of the objectives in 2017–2021. In 2022 the Unit 13A moose population was estimated to be above the objectives at 3,621, and the 3-year average remains just within the higher end of the objectives. The antlerless hunt in western Unit 13A contributes to maintaining the moose population within the intensive management objectives. The additional harvest provided through this hunt will also assist in achieving the harvest objectives for the population.

If antlerless moose hunting opportunities are not reauthorized in Unit 13A, the intensive management program and objectives will likely need to be restructured to maintain the moose population within a population size range that does not result in nutritional limitations for the moose and to achieve the harvest objectives recommended by the public, advisory committees, and the board.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-064)
