

PROPOSAL 24

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Modify the winter season for moose in Unit 22A as follows:

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

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(20)		
Unit 22(A), that portion in the Unalakleet River drainage and all drainages flowing into Norton Sound north of the Golsovia River drainage and south of and including the Egavik Creek drainage		
1 antlered bull by registration permit only; or 1 antlered bull by registration permit only[; DURING THE PERIOD DEC 1- JAN 31, A SEASON MAY BE ANNOUNCED BY EMERGENCY ORDER]	Sept. 1 – Sept. 30 Dec. 1 –Jan. 31 [(SEASON TO BE ANNOUNCED)]	No Open Season

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Removing the requirement to announce the winter moose season in Unit 22A Central would provide Department of Fish and Game the flexibility to administer registration permit hunt RM844 during the full range of season dates adopted by the Alaska Board of Game (board) without the need to announce the season by emergency order.

The department began administering registration permit RM844 during regulatory year (RY) 2008 following a closure to moose hunting in the area RY2005-RY2007. The RM844 winter season exists to provide additional opportunity to harvest a moose when the estimated harvestable surplus was not taken during the fall season which is managed under RM841. The department will issue an emergency order to announce the winter season when the harvestable surplus was not taken in the fall.

In the spring of 2021, the department completed a spring adaptive cluster sampling (ACS) moose survey within the Unit 22A Central area which resulted in a moose abundance estimate of 766 moose (90% CI: 643-888). These results indicated that the population has remained stable since the population was last surveyed in 2017. Additionally, results from a composition survey completed in 2020 indicated the bull:cow ratio in the area was above the management objective. The results of both the abundance and composition survey led to the decision to remove the quota for the Unit 22A Central moose hunt area beginning in RY21.

Now that there is no quota for the RM841/RM844 hunt, needing to announce the winter RM844 season by emergency order creates unnecessary regulatory burden. The RM844 hunt will still be managed as a registration permit and the department will retain the ability to close the season by emergency order if the harvestable surplus were to be lowered in the future as a result of updated abundance and/or composition data.

If adopted, the department does not anticipate the extended season will create a conservation concern. The RM844 winter hunt is administered as registration permit hunts and managed with harvest quotas. Successful hunters are required to report their harvest to the department within two days of the kill resulting in timely harvest information, and the department has the authority to issue an emergency order closure. Reported harvest for the RM844 hunt has been just 0-2 moose annually for the history of the winter hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-059)
