

# **Antlerless Moose & Brown Bear Tag Fee Reauthorizations for Other Regions**

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## **PROPOSAL 189**

### **5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemption.**

Reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemptions for the Central/Southwest Region as follows:

#### **5AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemption**

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

- (1) Unit 11;
- (2) Units 13 and 16(A);
- (3) Unit 16(B) and 17;

...

(11) Unit 9, within the following areas, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit:

- (A) Unit 9(B), within five miles of the communities of Port Alsworth, Nondalton, Iliamna, Newhalen, Pile Bay, Pedro Bay, Pope Vanoy Landing, Kakhonak, Igiugig, and Levelock;
- (B) Unit 9(C), within five miles of the communities of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek;
- (C) Unit 9(D), within five miles of the communities of Cold Bay, King Cove, Sand Point, and Nelson Lagoon;
- (D) Unit 9(E), within five miles of the communities of Egegik, Pilot Point, Ugashik, Port Heiden, Port Moller, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Bay, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay;

(12) Unit 10, within three miles of the community of False Pass, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit.

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

- (1) Unit 9(B);
- (2) Unit 9(E), that portion including all drainages that drain into the Pacific Ocean between Cape Kumliun and the border of Unit 9(D) and Unit 9(E);
- (3) Unit 17;

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Brown bear tag fee exemptions must be reauthorized annually, or the fee will be automatically reinstated.

General Season Hunts: The board liberalized brown bear hunting regulations including the tag fee exemption to increase the harvest of brown bears in Units 11, 13, and 16 during the March 2003 Board of Game meeting and in Unit 17 during the March 2011 Board of Game meeting. The tag fee exemption in these units provides greater opportunity to harvest brown bears by allowing opportunistic harvest.

In March 2011 the board also exempted brown bear tag fees for bear hunts near communities in Unit 9 to address public safety concerns in communities. Brown bears are abundant in Unit 9 and are managed

primarily as a trophy species. Brown bears are frequently observed in communities where they destroy property in search of food or garbage and occasionally kill pets. The liberalized bear seasons and bag limits adopted along with the elimination of the tag fee were intended to allow people to take bears before they destroy property, to promote a greater acceptance of the unit's bear population, and to resolve some of the compliance issues associated with the take of bears in defense of life or property.

Subsistence Brown Bear Hunts: The board waived the brown bear tag fee requirement for subsistence brown bear hunts in Unit 17 and portions of Unit 9. Subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustainable limits. Exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest in these units. Continuation of the exemption accommodates cultural and traditional uses of brown bears in these units and provides an alternative for hunters who take brown bears primarily for their meat.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F23-040)  
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## **PROPOSAL 190**

### **5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemptions.**

Reauthorize the current resident tag fee exemptions for brown bear in Units 18, 22, 23 and 26A as follows:

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

- ...
- (4) Units... 26;
- ...
- (8) Unit 22;
- (9) Unit 23;
- ...
- (13) Unit 18;
- ...

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

- ...
- (4) Unit 18;
- ...
- (7) Unit 22;
- (8) Unit 23;
- ...
- (10) Unit 26(A).

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Board of Game must reauthorize brown bear tag fee exemptions annually or the fee automatically becomes reinstated. The department recommends continuing resident tag fee exemptions for the general season and subsistence season hunts in Region V (Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A).

General Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for: Unit 18, where the tag fee has been exempted for 10 years; Unit 22, where the tag fee has been exempted for 20 years; Unit 23, where the tag fee has been

exempted for 15 years; and Unit 26A, where the tag fee has been exempted for 10 years. Tag fee exemptions are desired to allow: 1) incremental increase in annual harvest; 2) opportunistic harvest by resident hunters; and 3) harvest by a wide range of users.

General season brown bear harvest rates are within sustained yield limits and previous exemptions of the resident tag fee have not caused dramatic or unexpected increases in overall harvest. In Units 18 and 26A, tag exemptions were authorized for RY2012 and harvest has remained within sustained yield and continues to be similar to the preceding ten-year period. In Unit 22, the 18-year tag-free period for residents has had an average annual harvest of 50 brown bears (range 41–63 bears). In Unit 23, general harvests have been increasing slowly since 1961 primarily in response to increases in human population rather than regulatory changes, although annual harvests vary due to weather and hunting conditions. Harvest data for Unit 23 show no trend in the sex ratio, age or size of bears harvested under all types of hunts.

Subsistence Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A where brown bear subsistence hunt requirements include: 1) registration permit, 2) tag fee exemption, 3) salvaging meat for human consumption, 4) no use of aircraft in Units 22, 23 and 26A, 5) no sealing requirement unless hide and skull are removed from subsistence hunt area, and 6) if sealing is required, the skin of the head and front claws must be removed and retained by ADFG at the time of sealing. Continuing the tag fee exemption helps facilitate participation in the associated brown bear harvest programs maintained by ADFG for subsistence hunts.

In all units, subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustained yield limits and exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest. In Unit 18, we estimate zero to three bears are taken annually in subsistence hunts. In Unit 22, subsistence harvest by permit is quite low, averaging less than one bear per year (less than 1% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 23, subsistence permit harvest is less than five bears annually since 1992 (less than 10% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 26A, between zero and five bears are taken annually by subsistence hunters.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F23-068)  
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## **PROPOSAL 191**

### **5 AAC 85.045(4) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in Unit 6C as follows:

| <b>Seasons and Bag Limits</b>                    | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (4)  |   |                                    |
| ...  |   |                                    |
| Unit 6(C)  |   |                                    |
| 1 moose per regulatory year,<br>only as follows: |   |                                    |

|  |  |                 |
|--|--|-----------------|
| 1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 40 permits for bulls and up to 20 permits for antlerless moose may be issued | Sept. 1-Oct. 31<br>(General hunt only) | No open season. |
|--|--|-----------------|

or

|                                      |                |                 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 moose by registration permit only; | Nov. 1-Dec. 31 | 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 department recommends reauthorizing the state antlerless hunt in Unit 6C to achieve the harvest objectives when the federal subsistence hunt is not able to achieve the desired level of harvest.

The population objective in Unit 6C is 600–800 moose. A population estimate completed during March 2023 yielded an estimate of 503 moose, 22% of which were calves. Because the available antlerless harvest quota in Unit 6C is currently harvested under a federal subsistence season administered by the U. S. Forest Service, we have not held the antlerless hunt since RY99.

A registration hunt was approved by the board (RM169) to provide additional hunt opportunity if harvestable surplus existed after federal hunts were administered. Without an antlerless moose hunt, this hunt cannot function as indented if it is needed. Continuation of the antlerless hunts may be necessary to manage population growth and keep it within the limits of what the habitat can support.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F23-033)

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## **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:

| <b>Units and Bag Limits<br/>(11)</b> | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

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 | Oct. 1–Oct. 31<br>Mar. 1–Mar. 31<br>(General hunt only) | No open season |
|--|---|----------------|

be issued; a person may not  
take a calf or a cow  
accompanied by a calf; or  
...

**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)

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## **PROPOSAL 193**

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

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

| <b>Units and Bag Limits<br/>(11)</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Unit 13<br>1 moose per regulatory year,<br>only as follows:<br><br>...  |   |                                    |
| 1 antlerless moose by<br>drawing permit only in Unit 13(C);<br>up to 200 permits may<br>be issued; a person may not<br>take a calf or a cow<br>accompanied by a calf; or<br><br>... | Oct. 1–Oct. 31<br>(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.

Unit 13 has an active intensive management program, designed to increase moose abundance to within objectives, and increase available harvest for humans. Since the early 2000s, moose abundance in most subunits has increased until recent years when many subunits have peaked and/or stabilized at, above, or within abundance objectives.

As moose populations approach carrying capacity, the population becomes less productive, and may eventually decline. Stabilizing a population below carrying capacity allows it to remain highly productive if additional moose are removed annually. This requires harvest of both cows and bulls. The Intensive Management abundance objectives for moose in Unit 13 are designed to maintain moose populations in Unit 13 subunits below carrying capacity, at a more productive level. Unit 13C has reached abundance levels for which cow harvest is necessary to stabilize the population at a more productive level and allow for human harvest of excess moose. In recent years the bull-to-cow ratio in Unit 13C averages just below the objective of 25 bulls per 100 cows, suggesting that there are not additional bulls available for harvest at this time. Harvest of up to 1% of the estimated cow moose population in Unit 13C would allow for roughly 23 cow moose to be harvested annually in recent years.

Harvest objectives for Unit 13C are 155–350 moose, but those objectives have not been met since 1995, when 154 moose were harvested, and 1996, when 169 moose were harvested. The only other years when harvest exceeded 150 moose were in 1989 (154 harvested), and 1988 (199 harvested), which was the most

moose ever reported harvested in a single year in Unit 13C. As moose abundance in Unit 13C increased above objectives in recent years, harvest peaked at 117 moose in 2014. Evidence suggests that the current moose harvest objectives for Unit 13C may not be attainable due primarily to accessibility. Harvest of excess cow moose to stabilize the Unit 13C population will increase overall harvest and provide additional opportunity for hunters to harvest cows as well as additional bulls. The department plans on providing five resident antlerless permits in Unit 13C for RY23.

If antlerless moose hunting opportunities are not reauthorized in Unit 13C, 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-F23-065)  
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**PROPOSAL 194**

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

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

| Units and Bag Limits<br>(11)  | Resident<br>Open Season<br>(Subsistence and<br>General Hunts) | Nonresident<br>Open Season |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| Unit 13<br>1 moose per regulatory year,<br>only as follows:<br><br>...  |   |                            |
| 1 antlerless moose by<br>drawing permit only in Unit 13(E);<br>up to 200 permits may<br>be issued; a person may not<br>take a calf or a cow<br>accompanied by a calf; or<br><br>... | Oct. 1–Oct. 31<br>(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.

Unit 13 has an active intensive management program, designed to increase moose abundance to within objectives, and increase available harvest for humans. Since the early 2000s, moose abundance in most

subunits has increased until recent years when many subunits have peaked and/or stabilized at, above, or within abundance objectives. As moose populations approach carrying capacity, the population becomes less productive, and may eventually decline. Stabilizing a population below carrying capacity allows it to remain highly productive if additional moose are removed annually. This requires harvest of both cows and bulls. The Intensive Management abundance objectives for moose in Unit 13 are designed to maintain moose populations in Unit 13 subunits below carrying capacity, at a more productive level. Unit 13E has reached abundance levels for which cow harvest is necessary to stabilize the population at a more productive level and allow for human harvest of excess moose.

The moose abundance index indicated fewer than 4,000 moose in Unit 13E in 2000 but the population has been increasing since then and the current abundance is well above the abundance objectives of 5,000 to 6,000 moose. Harvest levels increased with the increase in abundance, but harvest levels remain below the harvest objectives of 300 to 600 moose. Bull-to-cow ratios are at the objective of 25 bulls to 100 cows. Additional harvest has been requested by the public for Unit 13E but cannot be obtained without harvesting cow moose. Cow moose harvest opportunity will provide for the reduction of moose abundance to within objectives before the population becomes nutritionally stressed and experiences a decline due to nutritional constraints. The department plans to provide five resident antlerless moose permits in Unit 13E for RY23.

If antlerless moose hunting opportunities are not reauthorized in Unit 13E, 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-F23-066)

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## **PROPOSAL 195**

### **5 AAC 85.045(a)(12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose draw permits in Units 14A and 14B as follows:

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b>                          | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| (12)   |  |                                    |
| Unit 14(A)<br>1 moose per regulatory year,<br>only as follows:<br><br>...  |  |                                    |
| 1 antlerless moose by<br>drawing permit only; up to 2,000<br>antlerless moose permits<br>may be issued; or                 | Aug. 20–Sept. 25<br>(General hunt only)  | No open season                     |
| 1 moose by targeted<br>permit only; by crossbow,<br>shotgun or bow and arrow<br>only; up to 200<br>permits may be issued   | Nov. 1–Dec. 25<br>(General hunt only)<br>Winter season to<br>be announced<br>(General hunt only) | No open season                     |
| Unit 14(B)<br><br>1 moose per regulatory year,<br>only as follows:<br>...  |  |                                    |
| 1 moose by targeted<br>permit only; by crossbow,<br>shotgun, or bow and arrow<br>only; up to 100<br>permits may be issued. | Winter season to<br>be announced<br>(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. There are two types of antlerless moose hunts in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley – a drawing permit hunt used to regulate growth of the moose population in Unit 14A, and targeted hunts used to mitigate public safety concerns in Units 14A and 14B.

Moose surveys conducted in November 2020 yielded an estimate of 7,112 moose in Unit 14A. This estimate was greater than the post-hunt objective of 6,000–6,500 moose and less than the 2019 survey estimate of 7,900 moose indicating that the increased antlerless harvests are having the desired effect of

reducing the population. A sex and age composition survey in 2021 demonstrated a bull ratio of 28 bulls:100 cows and a calf ratio of 35 calves:100 cows.

Antlerless moose hunts have been authorized in Unit 14A since 2001 in order to regulate the growth of the population. The permit level was increased from 450 to 1,000 in 2013 to account for the continued increase in the population and again in spring 2018 from 1,000 to 2,000. Continued increased harvest based on the increased permit levels is expected to bring the population back to within the objective for the unit of 6,000–6,500.

The current increases in the harvest have seemingly slowed the population growth; however, it has not reduced the moose population to within objectives. An increase the number of moose-human conflicts is anticipated as the moose density increases, and moose may experience nutritional stress as the population nears carrying capacity. Cow harvests are warranted to control the moose population's growth and recommended to provide additional moose hunting opportunity in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley.

The targeted moose hunts in Units 14A and 14B are an effective tool to address public safety concerns related to moose-vehicle collision and nuisance management issues. Moose-vehicle collisions result in property damage and may result in human injury or death. An average of 316 moose per year were killed in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley area during the last five years of average snowfall and substantially more are killed during higher snowfall years. ADFG also receives periodic complaints from the public about crop depredation and aggressive behavior that can be mitigated by this hunt structure.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-038)

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## **PROPOSAL 196**

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

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 14C as follows:

| <b>Seasons and Bag Limits</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (12)   |   |                                    |
| ...  |   |                                    |
| Unit 14(C), Joint Base<br>Elmendorf-Richardson<br>(JBER) Management<br>Area  | Sept. 1—Mar 31<br>(General hunt only)                                   | Sept 1.—Mar 31                     |
| 1 moose by regulatory year by<br>drawing permit, and by muzzleloading<br>blackpowder rifle or bow and arrow<br>only; up to 185 permits may be issued           |   |                                    |
| Unit 14(C), that portion<br>known as the Birchwood<br>Management Area  | Sept. 1—Mar 31<br>(General hunt only)                                   | Sept 1.—Mar 31                     |
| 1 moose by drawing permit, by<br>bow and arrow only; up to 25<br>permits may be issued   |   |                                    |
| Unit 14(C), that portion<br>known as the Anchorage<br>Management Area  | Sept 1.—Nov. 30<br>(General hunt only)                                  | No open season                     |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit<br>only, and by bow and arrow, shotgun,<br>or muzzleloading black powder rifle<br>only; up to 50 permits<br>may be issued |   |                                    |
| Unit 14(C), that portion<br>of the Ship Creek drainage<br>upstream of the Joint Base<br>Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER)<br>Management Area                         |   |                                    |
| 1 moose by drawing permit<br>only; up to 50 permits may  | Sept. 1—Sept. 30<br>(General hunt only)                                 | Sept. 1—Sept. 30                   |

be issued; or

|  |   |                  |
|--|---|------------------|
| 1 bull by registration permit only   | Oct. 1—Nov. 30<br>(General hunt only)   | Oct. 1—Nov. 30   |
| ...  |   |                  |
| Remainder of Unit 14(C)  |   |                  |
| 1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows:  |   |                  |
| 1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side; or | Sept. 1—Sept. 30<br>(General hunt only) | Sept. 1—Sept. 30 |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits may be issued; or                          | Sept. 1—Sept. 30<br>(General hunt only) | No open season   |
| 1 bull by drawing permit only, by bow and arrow only; up to 10 permits may be issued                   | Oct. 20—Nov. 15                         | No open season   |
| ...  |   |                  |

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually, and the department recommends reauthorizing the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 14C. The harvest of antlerless moose provides the department with a management tool to maintain the number of moose in Unit 14C at the desired population level, which has been demonstrated to reduce overbrowsing of winter habitat, moose-vehicle collisions, moose-human conflicts in urban areas, and significant mortality events during severe winters. These hunts have also been successful in providing additional moose hunting opportunities in the state's human population center with little controversy.

The number of antlerless permits issued depends on the current population level and bull:cow ratios, as well as estimated winter mortality. A combined 2021 aerial composition count of the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) Management Area and the Ship Creek drainage (the area that provides the most hunting opportunity in Unit 14C) found 301 moose with a bull:cow ratio of 44 bulls per 100 cows and a calf:cow ratio of 20 calves per 100 cows. In 2020, a survey of the same area found a total of 242 moose with bull:cow and calf:cow ratios of 30:100 and 25:100, respectively. Compared to the 2013 survey, which found 225 moose with a bull:cow ratio of 39 bulls per 100 cows and a calf:cow ratio of 20 calves per 100 cows, little change has occurred. In addition, harvest numbers have remained relatively steady, indicating that the population level has likely not changed dramatically. At this population level, we have received fewer reports of human-moose conflicts and of winter mortalities. Harvesting cow moose is paramount to maintaining the population at lower levels while providing harvest opportunity.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-036)

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## **PROPOSAL 197**

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

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer hunt area in Units 7 and 14C as follows:

| <b>Seasons and Bag Limits</b> | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

(5)

...

Unit 7, the Placer River drainages, and that portion of the Placer Creek (Bear Valley) drainage outside the Portage Glacier Closed Area, and that portion of Unit 14(C) within the Twentymile River drainage

#### **RESIDENT HUNTERS:**

1 moose by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits for bulls will be issued in combination with nonresident hunts, and up to 70 permits for antlerless moose will be issued

Aug. 20—Oct. 10  
(General hunt only)

#### **NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:**

1 bull by drawing permit only; up to 60 permits for bulls will be issued in combination with resident hunts

Aug. 20—Oct. 10

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually, and the department recommends reauthorizing the antlerless hunt in Units 7 and 14C. The moose population in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer area has a history of rapid increase following mild winters and sharp reductions during severe winters. In 2009, antlerless permits were issued for the first time since 2004. The number of permits issued depends on the current population estimate and bull:cow ratios, as well as estimated winter mortality. A December 2021 aerial composition count of moose in the Twentymile, Portage, and Placer River drainages found 185 moose with a bull:cow ratio of 36 bulls per 100 cows and a calf:cow ratio of 19 calves per 100 cows. This is an increase when compared

to the December 2020 count, which found 153 moose with a bull:cow ratio of 30 bulls per 100 cows and a calf:cow ratio of 14 calves per 100 cows, and the December 2016 count which found 153 moose with a bull:cow ratio of 30 bulls per 100 cows and a calf:cow ratio of 18 calves per 100 cows.

The harvest of antlerless moose provides the department with a management tool to maintain the number of moose in the Twentymile/Portage/Placer area at a population level low enough to reduce over-browsing of winter habitat, moose-vehicle collisions, and significant mortality events during severe winters. The moose population will be healthier and more productive due to decreased stress levels associated with winter food shortages. This hunt has been successful in creating additional moose hunting opportunity with little or no controversy.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F23-035)  
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## **PROPOSAL 198**

### **5 AAC 85.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B as follows:

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>                                 | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| (13)  |   |                                    |
| ...   |   |                                    |
| Unit 15(B), Kalgin Island                                   |   |                                    |
| 1 moose per regulatory year,<br>by registration permit only | Aug. 20—Sept. 20  | Aug. 20—Sept. 20                   |
| ...   |   |                                    |

**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 for hunting moose on Kalgin Island in Unit 15B allows hunters to harvest antlerless moose with the goal of reducing the population to the management objective.

In response to concerns that the moose population on Kalgin Island had exceeded the island's carrying capacity and deteriorating habitat conditions, the board established a drawing permit hunt for antlerless moose in 1995. In a further attempt to reduce the number of moose on the island, the board established a registration hunt for any moose in 1999. Despite these measures to reduce moose numbers, moose remain abundant on the island and continue to meet or exceed the management objective.

During the most recent moose survey, department staff counted 90 moose on Kalgin Island in December 2022. This count is larger than the population objective of 20–40 moose. In the last 10 years, an average of 118 permits were issued for this hunt; of which 89 permittees hunted, with an annual average harvest of 30 moose.

The any moose registration hunt is recommended to provide liberal harvest opportunity on this predator-free island population. A registration hunt also allows the department to continue gathering biological information from specimens provided by successful hunters. The difficult hunting conditions and limited access will make over-harvest unlikely.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F23-034)  
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**PROPOSAL 199**

**5 AAC 85.045(13). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 15C as follows:

This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt for the Homer bench (DM549) and the targeted hunt (AM550).

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>   | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b> | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| (13)  |   |                                    |
| ...   |   |                                    |
| Unit 15(C), that portion<br>south of the south fork of<br>the Anchor River and northwest<br>of Kachemak Bay   |   |                                    |
| RESIDENT HUNTERS:   |   |                                    |
| ...   |   |                                    |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing<br>permit only; the taking of<br>calves, and females accompa-<br>nied by calves, is prohibited;<br>up to 100 permits may be issued in<br>combination with the nonresident<br>drawing hunt: or | Oct. 20—Nov. 20   |                                    |
| ...   |   |                                    |
| 1 moose by targeted permit only[,]  | Oct. 15—Mar. 31   |                                    |
| NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:  |   |                                    |
| ...   |   |                                    |
| 1 antlerless moose by drawing<br>permit only; the taking of   |   | Oct. 20—Nov. 20                    |

calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the resident drawing hunt

Remainder of Unit 15(C)

...

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 moose by targeted permit only[,] Oct. 15—Mar. 31

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually, and the department recommends reauthorization of the Homer bench hunt (DM549) and the targeted hunt (AM550) along the Sterling Highway in 15C for the 2023-24 hunting season.

In February 2023, a GSPE census was conducted in the northern portion of Unit 15C (north of Kachemak Bay). Analyses of this data to account for high degree of spatial variability in winter density is in process. Preliminary data indicates the population is within or above Intensive Management Population Objective for this GMU. Fall composition counts in core count areas during December 2022 provided a bull ratio of 34 bulls:100 cows.

The Homer bench land in Unit 15C, which encompasses the hunt boundary of DM549, contains high densities of moose when deep snow drives moose into human populated areas. Even without deep snow, some moose die due to malnutrition and negative interactions with humans occur as moose become more aggressive in their search for food around human residences. Fifty permits were issued in each of the last 10 years resulting in an average harvest of 25 cows annually.

The purpose of AM550 is to allow for the harvest of antlerless moose along the Sterling Highway in Unit 15C during deep snow winters to reduce moose and vehicle collisions. On average, 63 known animals are killed each year in vehicle collisions in Unit 15C. The department will decide when and where permits will be issued during the hunt period. Targeted hunts are administered through a registration permit and up to 100 moose may be taken. The number of permits issued each year will depend on conditions, and it is possible no permits will be issued in some years.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-037)

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## **PROPOSAL 200**

### **5 AAC 85.045(a)(15). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in Unit 17A as follows:

| <b>Units and Bag Limits</b>  | <b>Resident<br/>Open Season<br/>(Subsistence and<br/>General Hunts)</b>           | <b>Nonresident<br/>Open Season</b> |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| (15)   |   |                                    |
| Unit 17(A)   |   |                                    |
| Up to 2 moose per<br>regulatory year only as follows:  |   |                                    |
| RESIDENT HUNTERS:  |   |                                    |
| 1 moose by registration<br>permit only; or   | Aug. 25–Sept. 25<br>(Subsistence hunt only)                                       |                                    |
| 1 antlered bull by registration<br>permit; during the period Dec. 1<br>–Last day of Feb. a season of up<br>to 31 days may be announced<br>by emergency order; or | Winter Season to be<br>Announced by<br>Emergency Order<br>(Subsistence hunt only) |                                    |
| 1 antlerless moose by registration<br>permit; during the period Dec. 1<br>–Last day of Feb. a season of up<br>to 31 days may be announced<br>by emergency order; | Winter Season to be<br>Announced by<br>Emergency Order<br>(Subsistence hunt only) |                                    |
| ...  |   |                                    |

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by the board. The goal is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits, and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. Antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of moose habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate moose population growth; help to meet Intensive Management (IM) objectives for high levels of harvest; and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios. The board adopted an antlerless moose hunt in 2013 after hearing comments from heavily invested groups such as the Bristol Bay Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Nushagak and Togiak Fish and Game Advisory Committees, and the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge.

The Unit 17A moose management plan calls for antlerless moose hunting opportunity when the population is above 600 moose and increasing. When the population exceeds 1,200 moose, a bag limit of up to two moose is needed to provide increased opportunity and to reduce moose abundance to protect habitat. Based on the most recent survey, conducted under good conditions, in March 2017, both conditions have been

met with a raw data population estimate of 1,990  $\pm$ 437 moose. After further analyses, this estimate will be corrected for sightability which will result in a higher population estimate further supporting liberal harvest strategies. The bag limit of two moose and antlerless harvest opportunity provides a mechanism to limit population growth and allows hunters to harvest surplus animals.

The moose population in subunit 17A is growing and can sustain additional harvest; however, the objectives for this population include allowing it to expand into neighboring areas to provide additional harvest opportunities. This population is currently contributing to the growth of adjacent moose populations, especially to the north and west.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-039)

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