

PROPOSAL 256

5 AAC 85.045(18). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20A as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(18)		
Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with the Remainder of Unit 20(A); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 15–Nov. 15 (General hunt only)	
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 1–Last day of Feb.	
...		
1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued	Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only)	
...		
Remainder of Unit 20(A)		

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 15–Nov. 15
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 25–last day of Feb.

...

1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order
(General hunt only)

...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The primary goals of the Unit 20A antlerless hunts are to regulate moose population growth and size within the Intensive Management (IM) population objective and at levels that the habitat can support, provide harvest opportunity to help meet IM harvest objectives, and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios.

The Unit 20A moose population is currently within the IM population objective and nutritional indices suggest the population is at moderate nutritional levels. In November 2024, the Unit 20A population estimate was 11,696 moose (90% confidence interval 10,155–13,237 moose; 2.0–2.6 moose per square mile). This is within the IM population objective of 10,000–15,000 moose and similar to the previous estimated Unit 20A population size from fall 2022. The 3-year (2021,

2022, and 2024) average twinning rate was 15%, which is within the 10–20% range that suggests moderate nutrition. Furthermore, short-yearling weights collected during 2023–2024 averaged 398 lbs, which is greater than the 385 lb threshold suggestive of low nutrition but less than the 410 lb threshold suggestive of high nutrition. Thus, similar to the multi-year twinning rate estimate, the short-yearling weights suggest the moose population nutrition is at moderate levels. Since the moose population is currently within the IM population objective and at moderate nutritional levels, the goal is to manage the population for a stable population trend and antlerless harvest is an important component of this management strategy.

No antlerless hunts have been held in Unit 20A since the winter of 2021–2022, which was a difficult winter with deep snow and icing events and resulted in a decline in the moose population. However, antlerless hunts will likely occur again beginning in regulatory year 2026 with the primary goal of maintaining a stable population size. Previous years of antlerless hunts in Unit 20A have demonstrated that an antlerless harvest rate of 1% of the total population is generally suitable for maintaining a stable population trend. Furthermore, this increase in harvest opportunity will help achieve the IM harvest objective and provide for additional subsistence harvest opportunity within that portion of Unit 20A outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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