

PROPOSAL 261

5 AAC 85.045(a)(24). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the resident antlerless moose season in Unit 26 as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(24) ... Unit 26(A), that portion west of the eastern shore of Admiralty Bay where the Alaktak River enters, following the Alaktak River to 155°00' W longitude excluding the Colville River drainage		
1 moose	July 1 - Sept. 14	No open season.

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

To be retained, the antlerless moose season in the portion of Unit 26A west of 156° 00' W longitude and excluding the Colville drainage must be reauthorized annually. This hunt was recently adopted by the Board of Game at the 2024 meeting in Kotzebue after being closed for the previous year after failing to be reauthorized in 2023.

The moose population in the western portion of Unit 26A north of the Colville drainage is somewhat unique compared to the unit-wide population, and the distribution is very sparse because there is very little moose habitat in the coastal plain. However, each year a small number of bulls and cows migrate into the area from the major river drainages in the central and southern parts of the unit. So far, the marginal habitat in this portion of Unit 26A has not allowed moose to establish a population, but these moose provide the only opportunity to harvest a moose in the northwestern portion of Unit 26A.

Unit 26A moose population estimates have historically fluctuated between 294 and 609 moose (2011-2014). More recently, 348 moose and 438 moose were observed in 2018 and 2021, respectively. The overall trend appears to be slow growth after a decline that started about 2007. The number of moose in the antlerless hunt area is difficult to estimate but is approximately 10 moose. Harvest reports indicate 4 antlerless moose have been harvested since 2005, and the annual harvest rate of antlerless moose is less than 1% of the total population. The preliminary reports for regulatory year 2024 indicate there have been no moose reported harvested in this hunt. Due to the low harvest rate the department recommends reauthorization of the antlerless moose season in this area to provide additional hunting opportunity for the small number of hunters to opportunistically harvest antlerless moose in this remote portion of Unit 26A.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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