

Proposal 151

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

Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunting seasons in Unit 20D as follows:

What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

(18) hunting seasons and bag limits for moose in Unit 20 are as follows:

...

Unit 20(D), that portion lying
west of the west bank of the
Johnson River and south of the
north bank of the Tanana
River, except the Delta Junction
Management Area and the
Bison Range Controlled Use Area

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose, per lifetime
of a hunter, by youth hunt
drawing permit only; up to 100
permits may be issued may be issued
in combination with those portion
in the Delta Junction Management
Area and the Bison Range Controlled
Use Area; a person may not take a
calf or a cow accompanied by a calf;

Sept. 16 – Sept. 25

(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by

Oct. 10 - Nov. 25

registration permit only; (General hunt only)

a person may not take a calf or

a cow accompanied by a calf

...

Unit 20(D), that portion within

the Bison Range Controlled

Use Area

...

1 antlerless moose, per lifetime

Sept. 16 – Sept. 25

of a hunter, by youth hunt

(General hunt only)

drawing permit only; up to 100

permits may be issued in Unit 20(D)

lying west of the west bank of the

Johnson River and south of the

north bank of the Tanana

River and the Delta Junction

Management Area; a person may

not take a calf or a cow

accompanied by a calf;

Unit 20(D), that portion within

the Delta Junction Management Area

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose, per lifetime

Sept. 16 – Sept. 25

of a hunter, by youth hunt

(General hunt only)

drawing permit only; up to 100

permits may be issued Unit 20(D)

lying west of the west bank of the

Johnson River and south of the

north bank of the Tanana

River and the Bison Range

Controlled Use Area; a per-

son may not take a calf or a

cow accompanied by a calf;

1 moose every four regulatory

years by drawing permit

a person may not take a calf or

a cow accompanied by a calf; or

...

1 antlerless moose by

registration permit only;

a person may not take a calf or

a cow accompanied by a calf

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 moose every four regulatory

years by drawing permit only,

a person may not take a calf or

a cow accompanied by a calf; or

...

Sept. 1 - Sept. 15

(General hunt only)

Oct. 10 - Nov. 25

(General hunt only)

Sept. 1 - Sept. 15

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

Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually by the Board of Game. The primary goals of the Unit 20D antlerless hunts are to regulate moose population growth at levels the habitat can support, provide harvest opportunity to make progress towards IM harvest objectives (500-700), and provide hunters with an additional opportunity to pursue moose without reducing bull-to-cow ratios. Antlerless moose hunts are offered in southern Unit 20D, which has the highest moose density in the unit. This area has potential for population growth due to an abundance of

high- quality moose habitat created from extensive land clearing for agricultural use and multiple wildfires over the past 40 years.

The Unit 20D moose population is slightly below the IM population objective (8,000-10,000); however, nutritional indices suggest the population is at moderate nutritional levels. In November 2025, the Southern Unit 20D population estimate was 2,518 moose (90% confidence interval 2164-2873, moose; 1.61 moose per square mile). This estimate represents a slight decrease in moose abundance compared to the 2023 survey, which estimated 3,250 moose (2.08 moose/mi²). The 2022 population estimate was 40% lower than the 2020 estimate, likely due to increased mortality because of severe winter conditions during 2021–2022, which included deep snow and winter rain events. The two-year (2024 and 2025) average twinning rate is 19.5%. An increased twinning rate following the population reduction after the winter of 2021–2022 suggests improved nutritional condition of this moose population. A reduction in browse offtake from 41% in 2022 to 21% in 2023 in Unit 20D also supports a finding of lower browsing pressure on available forage. Furthermore, short-yearling weights collected in 2025 averaged 396 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 estimates, the short-yearling weights suggest the moose population nutrition is now at moderate levels. The goal is to manage the Unit 20D moose population for stability, and antlerless harvest is an important component of this management strategy.

Continued antlerless harvest is needed to maintain this population at an optimal density relative to habitat constraints and will contribute additional harvest toward meeting the IM harvest objective without reducing bull-to-cow ratios. The current population trend suggests that low, consistent antlerless harvest provided by drawing permit hunts in Unit 20D is appropriate to maintain population stability. If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the moose population could increase to levels beyond what the ability of the habitat can support, opportunity to hunt a harvestable surplus of cow moose would be lost, and the ability to meet IM harvest objectives could be further compromised.

The department will continue to evaluate antlerless moose hunts and their effect on moose density and population growth. Future antlerless moose hunts will be implemented as needed based on the evaluation of the three indices of density-dependent moose nutritional conditions in relation to changes in moose density: biomass removal of current annual growth on winter browse, proportion of females with twin calves, and late-winter calf weights.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F26-016)
