

Proposal 156

5 AAC 85.045(a)(19). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize a winter any-moose season during March in a portion of Unit 21D as follows:

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

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(19)		
...		
Unit 21(D), that portion south of the South bank of the Yukon River, downstream of the up-river entrance of Kala Slough and west of Kala Creek		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 moose, by registration permit only, up to 15 days during March; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf	(Season to be announced)	
...		

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

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually by the Board of Game. The management goal for this antlerless hunt is to provide additional harvest opportunity and meet harvest objectives. This harvest opportunity of antlerless moose is recently possible because the moose population in the Kaiyuh Flats is increasing rapidly, especially the number of cows in the population. This reauthorization will likely improve or better maintain hunting opportunity. If this antlerless moose hunt is not reauthorized, opportunity to utilize a harvestable surplus of cow moose would be lost and the ability to meet intensive management (IM) harvest objectives

could be reduced. Slowing the rate of growth in this population will also reduce the likelihood of dramatic shifts in population expansion and contraction.

The IM harvest objective for Unit 21D is 450–1,000 moose. The 10-year average estimated harvest during 2015–2024 was 388 moose, which includes the reported and estimated unreported harvest. The annual estimated harvest has not been within the harvest objective since 2003 when the estimated harvest was 489 moose. Additional harvest from this hunt will help make progress toward achieving the IM harvest objectives without reducing bull-to-cow ratios to low levels and allow subsistence hunters to benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose.

Analysis of three trend count areas (Squirrel Creek, Pilot Mountain, and Kaiyuh Slough) within the Kaiyuh Flats in this hunt area demonstrated an increasing trend in moose abundance from 2001 to present. Geospatial population estimate data also increased from 1,897 ($\pm 11\%$) moose in 2011 to 4,116 ($\pm 10\%$) moose in 2017. Moose twinning data for the hunt area also showed high twinning rates from 2004 to 2024 (avg. = 36.1%), with the most recent 5-year twinning rate average (2020-2024) of 27.8%.

The portion of 21D affected by this reauthorization is approximately 21% (2,559 mi²) of Unit 21D (12,093.6 mi²). The department estimates moose abundance in this area at 4,000–4,500 moose, which is approximately 39–44% of the total moose estimated in Unit 21D (10,478 moose ($\pm 1,572$)) in 2024. The current total 21D moose population estimate was above the IM population objective for all of Unit 21D (12,093.6 mi²) of 9,000–10,000 moose.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F26-017)
