

Proposal 225

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

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

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

This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose hunt for the 15C Antlerless (DM549) and the targeted hunt (AM550).

Units and Bag Limits	Resident	Nonresident
	Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Open Season

(13) hunting seasons and bag limits for moose in Unit 15 are as follows:

...

Unit 15(C), that portion from the mouth of Deep Creek easterly along the south bank of Deep Creek to N 59° 55.183', W 151° 8.155'; then southeasterly in a straight line to the unnamed creek at N 59° 54.342', W 151° 6.459'; and easterly down the south bank of this stream to Caribou Lake and easterly along the south shore to the outlet of Fox Creek, then south along the west bank of Fox Creek to the mouth of Fox Creek, and along the mean high tide line to the point of origin

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the nonresident drawing hunt: or

Oct. 20—Nov. 20

...

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

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; the taking of calves, and females accompanied by calves, is prohibited; up to 100 permits may be issued in combination with the resident drawing hunt Oct. 20—Nov. 20

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 by the Board of Game. The department recommends reauthorization of the 15C antlerless hunt (DM549) and the targeted hunt (AM550) along the Sterling Highway in Unit 15C for the 2027-28 hunting season.

In February 2023, a geospatial population estimator (GSPE) census was conducted in the northern portion of Unit 15C (north of Kachemak Bay) and resulted in an initial population estimate of 5,162 moose (95% CI: 3,934–6390), of which 22% (95% CI: 15–28) were calves. This equates to a density of approximately 4.4 moose/mi² in the census area and indicates the population has continued to grow since 2010. However, the spatial distribution of moose during winter is heavily skewed away from elevations > 1000 feet in Unit 15C. This creates high variance of moose abundance in grid cells and removal of a single high density grid cell from the GSPE census reduces the population estimate to 4,486 moose (95% CI: range 3,581–5391), of which 22% (95% CI: 14–28) were calves. Despite this variability in moose distribution influencing precision of GSPE censuses, the population appears to be at or above the upper end of the intensive management population objective of 3,500 moose. Fall composition counts in core count areas during November 2025 provided a bull ratio of 28 bulls:100 cows. Antlerless

hunts, such as DM549 and AM550, provide potential opportunities for hunter harvest and improved food security while maintaining healthy moose herds and habitat.

The lowlands in Unit 15C, south of Deep Creek and Caribou Lake, which encompass the hunt boundary of DM549, contain high densities of moose when deep snow drives moose to lower elevations. The human population continues to grow in this area and, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, has doubled in size since the 1980s. Negative interactions with humans can occur as moose become more aggressive in their search for food around human residences in years of low food abundance. In 2023, the hunt area was expanded to reduce hunter conflicts with private property owners. Fifty to 65 permits were issued in each of the last 10 years resulting in an average harvest of 26 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, 65 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 depends on existing conditions, and it is possible no permits will be issued in some years.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F26-010)
