

Delta Junction Area - Units 20D

Proposal 148

5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM790, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits as follows:

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

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Moose drawing hunt DM790, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits. If at least 10 permits are not available a Non-Resident permit will not be available.

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

Limit the number of tags that may be drawn by Non-Residents for Moose drawing hunt DM790.

There is currently no allocation cap on how many tags may be drawn by Non-Residents.

Non-Residents are drawing a consistently high proportion of the tags for high demand drawing hunts. Moose hunting in Alaska is the only state in the Union that has opportunity to hunt Alaska-Yukon Moose unguided as a US Citizen, making it a highly desirable opportunity. Both Residents and Non-Residents compete for the tags equally in the Big Game Drawing which means Alaska Residents receive no preference in the drawing.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

No

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale

(OI-F26-195)

Proposal 149

5 AAC 85.010. Hunting seasons and bag limits for bison.

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Bison drawing hunt DI403/404, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits as follows:

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

Limit the Non-Resident permit allocation for the Unit 20 Bison drawing hunt DI403/404, to “Up To” 10% of the available permits. If at least 10 permits are not available a Non-Resident permit will not be available.

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

Limit the number of tags that may be drawn by Non-Residents for Bison drawing hunt DI403/404.

There is currently no allocation cap on how many tags may be drawn by Non-Residents.

Non-Residents are drawing a consistently high proportion of the tags for high demand drawing hunts. Free Range Bison hunting in Alaska is one of only 6 states that have genetically pure Bison, making it a highly desirable opportunity. Meat value of a Bison is high and obtaining Bison permits is difficult. Both Residents and Non-Residents compete for the tags equally in the Big Game Drawing which means Alaska Residents receive no preference in the drawing. This is a particularly easy and affordable area to access off the road system and provides an affordable opportunity to local Alaskans to harvest a Bison.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

No

PROPOSED BY: Craig Van Arsdale

(OI-F26-171)

Proposal 150

5 AAC 92.XXX. New Regulation

Establish IM area in 20D for Moose recovery as follows:

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

“The Intensive Management area shall consist of that portion of Game Management Unit 20D north of the Tanana River. The department may implement predator control measures, including aerial control and public permit programs, to reduce predator densities to levels to allow the moose population to return to historic densities.”

Objective:

We recommend using moose density thresholds to determine when to turn predator control on and off, and when to harvest cows, to maintain the moose population near historic density of ~ 1.3 moose/sq mile in 20D north. Reduce wolf densities to 5–10 wolves per 1,000 square miles to improve moose calf survival and population growth.

Control Area: All lands within GMU 20D north of the Tanana River.

Methods:

- Public aerial control (Same-Day Airborne) under permit
- Use of aircraft, including helicopters, for access to place traps and snares
- Department aerial removal using helicopters if necessary

Strategy:

- Initial reduction phase to lower predator densities
- Maintenance phase through ongoing public and department efforts
- Monitoring:
 - Annual moose population surveys
 - Calf-to-cow ratios
 - Wolf population surveys (as available)
 - Hunter success rates

Management actions will be adjusted as needed based on observed results:

- Increased calf survival and recruitment
- Moose population growth toward objective levels
- Reversal of current population decline
- Increased hunter success and opportunity

In addition, as part of a holistic moose management program, we recommend ADF&G work with Forestry to outline limited suppression areas in northern 20D to allow Wildland fires to burn. Also to consider implementing prescribed fires and developing a program to crush or roller chop designated areas each year in road or trail accessible portions of this area to maintain moose habitat.

The moose population in GMU 20D North is declining despite adequate habitat conditions. Persistent low recruitment and high predator populations indicate a predator-limited system. Reestablishing an Intensive Management program is necessary to restore moose populations and provide for sustained human use in accordance with Alaska's sustained yield mandate.

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

We have concerns about being able to maintain moose numbers in 20D north. Moose survey data shows a downward trend in population density and persistently low recruitment. Calf-to-cow ratios are consistently below levels required for population growth (15:100 in 2019, 18:100 in 2021, and 16:100 in 2024). These values are well below the generally accepted threshold of 25 calves per 100 cows necessary for population stability or growth. This moose population declined ~ 40% following the severe weather event during the winter of 2021-2022. With low recruitment this population is at risk of further decline.

Historical evidence from the Upper Yukon–Tanana Predator Control Program (2005–2018) demonstrates that predator control can be effective in this region. Predator populations are abundant following cessation of predator control efforts in 2018. This combination of declining moose density, chronically low recruitment, and high predator abundance indicates that predation is a primary limiting factor in 20D north.

The habitat within GMU 20D North can support increased moose abundance. The 2004 Alaska wildfire season, the largest on record, burned over 6.6 million acres statewide and included extensive fires in the Upper Tanana region, including the Taylor Complex Fire, which burned over 1.3 million acres. As a result, large portions of GMU 20D North are within the 10–20 year post-fire stage, which provides optimal moose habitat. Regenerating vegetation such as willow, birch, and aspen provides abundant, high-quality forage. More recent wildfire activity has continued to create and maintain excellent habitat, resulting in a diverse mosaic of vegetation conditions across the landscape. Despite these favorable habitat conditions, moose populations have declined, demonstrating that habitat is not the limiting factor and supporting the conclusion that predation is the primary constraint on population growth.

Current moose densities in northern Unit 20D offer adequate hunter opportunity but are below the carrying capacity of the habitat. Rather than trying to continue to increase the population to a higher level closer to carrying capacity, we recommend ADF&G manage for a level of predator removal adequate to return this slow growing population to historic density levels. Without action, continued decline in the moose population may further reduce hunter success and lead to more restrictive harvest regulations. Predator control is needed in this area to aid in the recovery of the moose population to near or above historic levels, ensure calf:cows ratio support population growth as to avoid implementing moose harvest restrictions.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

Yes this proposal came out of the Delta Junction Advisory Committee with assistance from ADFG Area Biologists in the Delta office.

PROPOSED BY: Delta Fish & Game Advisory Committee (OI-F26-152)

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	Sept. 16 – Sept. 25
of a hunter, by youth hunt	(General hunt only)
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;	

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
of a hunter, by youth hunt
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;

Sept. 16 – Sept. 25
(General hunt only)

1 moose every four regulatory
years by drawing permit
a person may not take a calf or
a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Sept. 1 - Sept. 15
(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	

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 moose every four regulatory	Sept. 1 - Sept. 15
years by drawing permit only,	
a person may not take a calf or	
a cow accompanied by a calf; or	

...

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)

Proposal 152

5 AAC 84.270. Furbearer trapping.

Allow the use of a firearm and bow and arrow to take beaver during an open trapping season 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?

Allow the use of a firearm and bow and arrow to take beaver during an open trapping season in Unit 20D.

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

In 2022 the regulations were changed to allow the use of a firearm and bow and arrow to take beavers under a trapping license statewide. This method of beaver harvest was allowed from 2022 until 2026, when the board was made aware of a conflicting regulation. The board clarified the conflicting regulation by returning the regulations to pre-2022 language. There are no current conservation concerns for beaver. I would like the board to restore the use of a firearm and bow and arrow as a legal method and means to take beaver under a trapping license in Unit 20D.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

Yes, the Fairbanks AC developed this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee (OI-F26-159)
