

# Utqiagvik Area – Unit 26A

## Proposal 53

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

Reauthorize the resident antlerless moose season in Unit 26 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<br>Open Season<br>(Subsistence and<br>General Hunts) | Nonresident<br>Open Season |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (24)                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                               |                            |
| ...                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                               |                            |
| Unit 26(A), that portion west<br>of the eastern shore of<br>Admiralty Bay where the<br>Alaktak River enters,<br>following the Alaktak River<br>to 155°00' W longitude<br>excluding the Colville<br>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 by the Board of Game (board). This hunt was recently reauthorized by the board at the 2024 board meeting in Kotzebue after being closed for the previous year after the board did not reauthorize it 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 with the distribution being 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. To date, the marginal habitat in this portion of Unit 26A has not allowed moose to establish a population and these select few 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, moose counts have observed 348 moose and 438 moose in 2018 and 2021, respectively. The overall trend appears to be slow growth after a decline that started in about 2007. The number of moose in the antlerless hunt area is difficult to estimate but is likely 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 2025 indicate no moose reported harvested in this hunt, but harvest reporting is ongoing and incomplete as of the time of writing for the proposal submission deadline. Due to the estimated 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 who opportunistically harvest antlerless moose in this remote portion of Unit 26A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F26-019)  
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