

# **Reauthorization of Antlerless Moose Hunts and Brown Bear Tag Fee Exemptions for other Regions**

## **PROPOSAL 249**

### **5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemption.**

Reauthorize the brown bear tag fee exemptions for the Central and Southwest Region as follows:

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

(1) Unit 11;

(2) Units 13 and 16(A);

(3) Units 16(B) and 17;

...

(11) Unit 9, within the following areas, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit:

(A) Unit 9(B), within five miles of the communities of Port Alsworth, Nondalton, Iliamna, Newhalen, Pile Bay, Pedro Bay, Pope Vanoy Landing, Kakhonak, Igiugig, and Levelock;

(B) Unit 9(C), within five miles of the communities of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek;

(C) Unit 9(D), within five miles of the communities of Cold Bay, King Cove, Sand Point, and Nelson Lagoon;

(D) Unit 9(E), within five miles of the communities of Egegik, Pilot Point, Ugashik, Port Heiden, Port Moller, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Bay, Perryville, and Ivanof Bay;

(12) Unit 10, within three miles of the community of False Pass, unless a smaller area is defined by the department in an applicable permit.

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

(1) Unit 9(B);

(2) Unit 9(E), that portion including all drainages that drain into the Pacific Ocean between Cape Kumliun and the border of Unit 9(D) and Unit 9(E);

(3) Unit 17;

...

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

Brown bear tag fee exemptions must be reauthorized annually, or the fee will be automatically reinstated.

General Season Hunts: The board liberalized brown bear hunting regulations including the tag fee exemption to increase the harvest of brown bears in Units 11, 13, and 16 during the March 2003 Board of Game (board) meeting and in Unit 17 during the March 2011 Board of Game meeting. The tag fee exemption in these units provides greater opportunity to harvest brown bears by allowing opportunistic harvest.

In March 2011 the board also exempted brown bear tag fees for bear hunts near communities in Unit 9 to address public safety concerns in communities. Brown bears are abundant in Unit 9 and are managed primarily as a trophy species. Brown bears are frequently observed in communities where they destroy property in search of food or garbage and occasionally kill pets. The bear seasons and bag limits adopted along with the elimination of the tag fee were intended to allow people to take bears before they destroy property, to promote a greater acceptance of the unit's bear population, and to resolve some of the compliance issues associated with the take of bears in defense of life or property.

Subsistence Brown Bear Hunts: The board waived the brown bear tag fee requirement for subsistence brown bear hunts in Unit 17 and portions of Unit 9. Subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustainable limits. Exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest in these units. Continuation of the exemption accommodates customary and traditional uses of brown bears in these units and provides an alternative for hunters who take brown bears primarily for their meat.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game HQ-F25-027  
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**PROPOSAL 250**

**5 AAC 92.015(a)(4). Brown bear tag fee exemptions.**

Reauthorize resident grizzly/brown bear tag fee exemptions throughout Interior and Northeast Alaska as follows:

- (a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:
  - ...
  - (4) Units 12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26(B), and 26(C)
  - ...

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

Brown bear tag fee exemptions must be reauthorized annually. Reauthorizing the exemption allows residents who have not purchased the \$25 brown bear tag to take bears opportunistically. This reauthorization would assist with the objective of managing Region III (Interior and Northeast Alaska) brown bear populations for hunter opportunity and would continue to allow

hunters to take brown bears opportunistically.

Region III brown bear populations are healthy, and harvest is monitored through the brown bear sealing requirement. Reauthorizing all resident brown bear tag fees throughout Region III maintains simpler regulations, provides high resident hunter opportunity, and is not likely to cause declines in these brown bear populations. This reauthorization includes tag fee exemptions for subsistence registration permit hunts in Units 19A and 19B (downstream of and including the Aniak River drainage), 21D, and 24.

The department estimates that brown bear harvest accounts for less than 6% of the bear population. Harvest is comprised primarily of males and is sustainable. Where harvests are elevated (i.e., Units 20A, 20B, 20D, and portions of 26B), brown bear populations are managed by adjusting seasons and bag limits. The absence of resident tag fees that were in place prior to 2010 appears to have little effect on net harvest across the region in general.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game HQ-F25-044  
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**PROPOSAL 251**

**5 AAC 92.015. Brown bear tag fee exemptions.**

Reauthorize the current resident tag fee exemptions for brown bear in Units 18, 22, 23 and 26A as follows:

(a) A resident tag is not required for taking a brown bear in the following units:

- ...
- (4) Units... 26;
- ...
- (8) Unit 22;
- (9) Unit 23;
- ...
- (13) Unit 18;
- ...

(b) In addition to the units as specified in (a) of this section, if a hunter obtains a subsistence registration permit before hunting, that hunter is not required to obtain a resident tag to take a brown bear in the following units:

- ...
- (4) Unit 18;
- ...
- (7) Unit 22;
- (8) Unit 23;
- ...
- (10) Unit 26(A).

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

The Board of Game must reauthorize brown bear tag fee exemptions annually or the fee automatically becomes reinstated. The department recommends continuing resident tag fee

exemptions for the general season and subsistence season hunts in Region V (Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A).

General Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for: Unit 18, where the tag fee has been exempted for 10 years; Unit 22, where the tag fee has been exempted for 20 years; Unit 23, where the tag fee has been exempted for 15 years; and Unit 26A, where the tag fee has been exempted for 10 years. Tag fee exemptions are desired to allow: 1) incremental increase in annual harvest; 2) opportunistic harvest by resident hunters; and 3) harvest by a wide range of users.

General season brown bear harvest rates are within sustained yield limits and previous exemptions of the resident tag fee have not caused dramatic or unexpected increases in overall harvest. In Units 18 and 26A, tag exemptions were authorized for RY2012 and harvest has remained within sustained yield and continues to be similar to the preceding ten-year period. In Unit 22, the 18-year tag-free period for residents has had an average annual harvest of 50 brown bears (range 41–63 bears). In Unit 23, general harvests have been increasing slowly since 1961 primarily in response to increases in human population rather than regulatory changes, although annual harvests vary due to weather and hunting conditions. Harvest data for Unit 23 show no trend in the sex ratio, age or size of bears harvested under all types of hunts.

Subsistence Season Hunts: Reauthorizations are needed for Units 18, 22, 23, and 26A where brown bear subsistence hunt requirements include: 1) registration permit, 2) tag fee exemption, 3) salvaging meat for human consumption, 4) no use of aircraft in Units 22, 23 and 26A, 5) no sealing requirement unless hide and skull are removed from subsistence hunt area, and 6) if sealing is required, the skin of the head and front claws must be removed and retained by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) at the time of sealing. Continuing the tag fee exemption helps facilitate participation in the associated brown bear harvest programs maintained by ADF&G for subsistence hunts.

In all units, subsistence brown bear harvest rates are low and well within sustained yield limits and exempting the resident tag fee has not caused an increase in subsistence harvest. In Unit 18, it is estimated that 0–3 bears are taken annually in subsistence hunts. In Unit 22, subsistence harvest by permit is quite low, averaging less than one bear per year (less than 1% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 23, subsistence permit harvest is less than five bears annually since 1992 (less than 10% of the total brown bear harvest). In Unit 26A, between zero and five bears are taken annually by subsistence hunters.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

HQ-F25-024

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**PROPOSAL 252**

**5 AAC 84.045(a)(12). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose hunts in Units 14A and 14B as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(12)		
Unit 14(A) 1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows: ...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 antlerless moose permits may be issued; or	Aug. 20–Sept. 25 (General hunt only) Nov. 1–Dec. 25 (General hunt only)	No open season
...		
1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun or bow and arrow only; up to 200 permits may be issued	Winter season to be announced (General hunt only)	No open season
Unit 14(B)  1 moose per regulatory year, only as follows: ...		
1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued. ....	Winter season to be announced (General hunt only)	No open season

**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. There are two types of antlerless moose hunts in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley – a drawing permit hunt used to regulate growth of the moose population in Unit 14A, and targeted hunts used to mitigate public safety concerns in Units 14A and 14B.

Antlerless moose hunts have been authorized in Unit 14A since 2001 in order to regulate the growth of the population. The permit level was increased from 450 to 1,000 in 2013 to account for the continued increase in the population and again in spring 2018 from 1,000 to 2,000. Increased harvest based on the increased permit levels has brought the population back to near the objective for the unit of 6,000–6,500. Permit levels have been reduced significantly as the population approached the objective and will be adjusted as necessary.

Moose surveys conducted in November 2023 yielded an estimate of 6,657 moose in Unit 14A. This estimate was greater than the post-hunt objective of 6,000–6,500 moose and less than the 2020 survey estimate of 7,112 moose, indicating that antlerless harvests are having the desired effect of reducing the population to near objectives. The sex and age composition demonstrated a bull ratio of 30 bulls:100 cows and a calf ratio of 28 calves:100 cows.

Moose-human conflicts have declined along with the moose population as it has approached the population objective. The targeted moose hunts in Units 14A and 14B, which are authorized to include an antlerless component, have been a tool to address public safety concerns related to moose-vehicle collisions and nuisance management issues. Moose-vehicle collisions result in property damage and may result in human injury or death. An average of 316 moose per year were killed in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley area during the last five years of average snowfall and substantially more are killed during higher snowfall years. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game also receives periodic complaints from the public about crop depredation and aggressive behavior that can be mitigated by this hunt structure. Antlerless hunts are an important tool to control the moose population’s trajectory and recommend additional moose hunting opportunity in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley when appropriate.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F25-029)

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**PROPOSAL 253**

**5 AAC 85.045(a)(15). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in Unit 17A as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(15)		
Unit 17(A)		
Up to 2 moose per regulatory year only as follows: RESIDENT HUNTERS: 1 moose by registration permit only; or	Aug. 25–Sept. 25 (Subsistence hunt only)	
...		
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only;	Jan. 1 – last day of Feb. (Subsistence hunt only)	

....

**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 (board). The goal is to provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits, and to protect the health and habitat of moose populations. Antlerless hunts are important for improving or maintaining the ability of moose habitat to support current populations. They also help regulate moose population growth, help to meet Intensive Management objectives for high levels of harvest, and provide subsistence hunters with the opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios. The board adopted an antlerless moose hunt in 2013 after hearing many comments from heavily invested groups such as the federal Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Nushagak and Togiak Fish and Game Advisory Committees, and the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge.

The Unit 17A moose management plan calls for antlerless moose hunting opportunity when the population is above 600 moose and increasing. When the population exceeds 1,200 moose, a bag limit of up to two moose is needed to provide increased opportunity and to reduce moose abundance to protect habitat. Based on the most recent survey in October 2022, the population estimate was 1,967 ±358 moose. After further analyses, this estimate will be corrected for sightability which will result in a higher population estimate further supporting strategies for additional harvest opportunities. The bag limit of two moose and antlerless harvest opportunity provide a mechanism to limit population growth and allow hunters to harvest surplus animals.

The moose population in subunit 17A is over objective and can sustain additional harvest. The objectives for this population include allowing it to expand into neighboring areas to provide additional harvest opportunities. This population is currently contributing to the growth of adjacent moose populations, especially to the north and west.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game HQ-F25-028  
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**PROPOSAL 254**

**5 AAC 85.045(a)(16). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in Unit 18 as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
<p>(16)</p> <p>Unit 18 Kuskokwim Area, that portion easterly of a line from the mouth of the Ishkowiik River to the closest point of Dall Lake then to east bank of the Johnson River at its entrance into Nunavakanukakslak Lake (60 59.41' N. latitude, 162 22.14' W. longitude), continuing upriver along a line one-half mile south and east of, and paralleling a line along the southerly bank of the Johnson River to the confluence of the east bank of Crooked Creek, then continuing upriver along the east bank of Crooked Creek to the outlet at Arhymot lake, then following the south bank of Arhymont Lake easterly to the Unit 18 border and north of and including the Eek River drainage</p>		



RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only, up to 100 permits may be issued Sept. 1-Oct. 15

...

Unit 18, that portion that drains into Kuskokwim Bay south of the Carter Bay drainage

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 moose by registration Permit only; to be announced by emergency order Dec. 1—Mar. 31 (Season to be announced) No open season.

Remainder of Unit 18

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

3 moose; of which only 1 may be an antlered bull; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf; or Aug. 1—Sept. 30

3 antlerless moose; or Oct. 1—Nov. 30.

3 moose Dec. 1—April 30.

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 antlerless moose Dec. 1— Mar. 15

...

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

To be retained, the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 18 must be reauthorized annually. The current antlerless hunts in the Remainder of Unit 18 were adopted at the January 2014 Board of Game meeting in Kotzebue. The current antlerless hunt in the Goodnews Hunt area and nonresident antlerless hunt was adopted at the January 2017 Board of Game meeting in Bethel. The Kuskokwim hunt was adopted at the January 2024 Board of Game meeting in Kotzebue. Both the Remainder and Goodnews antlerless hunts were amended at the BOG meeting in 2020 in Nome. The Board of Game (board) has previously reauthorized the antlerless moose season for resident hunts in Unit 18 Remainder for regulatory year (RY) 2016 through RY2024. This proposal requests reauthorization for RY2025.

Implementation of antlerless hunts began in 2007 and has continued each year due to increased moose abundance, productivity, and population growth along the Yukon River drainage in Unit 18. Based on the steady growth in moose populations and productivity, ADF&G proposes continued antlerless moose hunts in the Remainder of Unit 18.

Within the areas near the Yukon River, the moose population is estimated at a minimum of 24,000 animals with calf:cow ratios ranging from 36:100 to 61:100, and twinning rates from 15% to 50% for all areas. Population growth and range expansion continues in this portion of Unit 18. The population is expected to continue to grow with high recruitment and adult survival.

Current year harvest data in the Remainder of Unit 18 has not been finalized; however, harvest is expected to be similar to the past 4 years and well below sustained yield for this robust population. In RY2023 the antlerless harvest in Unit 18 remainder was 157 moose. Allowing antlerless harvest will benefit hunters through increased opportunity, and any increases in harvest may help slow the growth rate of the population in this portion of Unit 18. The nonresident antlerless moose hunt has had very low participation. In 2024 there have been four cows harvested. Harvest has been four antlerless moose (all cows) in the previous past five years.

The moose population in the Goodnews River drainage had grown steadily in the past 15 years following a closure in 2004. The fall hunt has a quota of 10 in the first few years of the hunt and recently increased to 45. The season has not been closed by EO and the past few years the quota was not meet. In the seven years that the winter hunt has been held, harvest has been low (with a range of 0-6 animals). A March 2024 survey found 450 moose and, based on the steady growth in moose populations and productivity, ADF&G proposes continued antlerless moose hunts in the Goodnews River Drainage.

In January of 2024 at the Board of Game meeting in Kotzebue, the board adopted a drawing hunt for antlerless moose on the Kuskokwim River. The first hunt is anticipated to be held in the fall of 2025. In February of 2024 the midpoint of the population estimate was 3,336 moose in Zone 1 of the Kuskokwim hunt area. In the same month, an additional 2,327 moose were counted in a minimum count of Zone 2 of the hunt area. Following a moratorium on moose hunting (2004-2008) the Kuskokwim moose population has experienced rapid growth and range expansion and is starting to see early signs of resource limitation and high browse removal rates.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

HQ-F25-025

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**PROPOSAL 255**

**5 AAC 85.045(a)(17). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.**

Reauthorize a fall antlerless hunt during September and a winter any-moose season during February in a portion of Unit 19D as follows.

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(17)		
...		
Unit 19(D), that portion of the Black River drainage within 2 miles of the Kuskokwim River and that portion of the Selatna River drainage north of the Selatna River within 2 miles of the Kuskokwim River.		
...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 20 cows may be taken.	Sept. 1 – Sept. 30 (General hunt only)	o open season
...		
Unit 19(D), that portion 2 miles on either side of the Kuskokwim River from the Selatna River upstream to the confluence of the South Fork and the North Fork of the Kuskokwim River, and 2 miles on either side of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River from the mouth to Nikolai, and 2 miles on either side of the Takotna River from the mouth to the bridge at Takotna, excluding the Black River drainage and the Selatna River drainage		
...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 20 cows may be taken; or	Sept. 1 – Sept. 30 (General hunt only)	No open season

1 moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf	Feb. 1 – Last day of Feb.	No open season
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... ..

Unit 19(D), that portion of the Black River drainage excluding that portion within 2 miles of the Kuskokwim River, and that portion of the Selatna River drainage north of the Selatna River, and excluding that portion with 2 miles of the Kuskokwim River

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 20 cows may be taken; or	Sept 1 – Sept 30 (General hunt only)	No open season
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...

1 moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf	Feb 1 – Last day of Feb	No open season
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**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?**

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually.

The moose population in Unit 19D upstream of the Selatna River recently experienced a significant decline due to an extremely difficult winter in 2022/2023. During a November 2023 geospatial population estimate (GSPE) the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (department) documented a decline from 2,471 moose (2.2 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>) to 1,591 moose (1.4 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>) . Due to this decline, the department closed the winter hunt in regulatory year (RY) 23 by emergency order. Proposal 66, which was submitted by the McGrath Advisory Committee (AC) prior to the documented decline, was passed by the Board of Game (board) in March 2024 authorizing a new draw permit hunt in the fall for cows in a portion of Unit 19D. The hunt was reauthorized by the board during March 2025 with unanimous support from the McGrath AC. While the department does not intend to issue antlerless permits in RY26, the department would like to keep the hunt available as a tool to provide additional opportunity when it is again warranted.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game HQ-F25-043  
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**PROPOSAL 256**

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

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20A as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(18)  Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with the Remainder of Unit 20(A); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 15–Nov. 15 (General hunt only)	
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 1–Last day of Feb.	
...		
1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued	Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only)	
...		
Remainder of Unit 20(A)		

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

...

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 2,000 permits may be issued in combination with Unit 20(A), the Ferry Trail Management Area, Wood River Controlled Use Area, and the Yanert Controlled Use Area; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 15–Nov. 15  
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 25–last day of Feb.

...

1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order  
(General hunt only)

...

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

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The primary goals of the Unit 20A antlerless hunts are to regulate moose population growth and size within the Intensive Management (IM) population objective and at levels that the habitat can support, provide harvest opportunity to help meet IM harvest objectives, and provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios.

The Unit 20A moose population is currently within the IM population objective and nutritional indices suggest the population is at moderate nutritional levels. In November 2024, the Unit 20A population estimate was 11,696 moose (90% confidence interval 10,155–13,237 moose; 2.0–2.6 moose per square mile). This is within the IM population objective of 10,000–15,000 moose and similar to the previous estimated Unit 20A population size from fall 2022. The 3-year (2021, 2022, and 2024) average twinning rate was 15%, which is within the 10–20% range that suggests moderate nutrition. Furthermore, short-yearling weights collected during 2023–2024 averaged 398 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 estimate, the short-yearling weights suggest the moose population nutrition is at moderate levels. Since the moose population is currently within the IM population objective and at moderate nutritional levels, the goal is to manage the population for a stable population trend and antlerless harvest is an important component of this management strategy.

No antlerless hunts have been held in Unit 20A since the winter of 2021–2022, which was a difficult winter with deep snow and icing events and resulted in a decline in the moose population. However, antlerless hunts will likely occur again beginning in regulatory year 2026 with the primary goal of maintaining a stable population size. Previous years of antlerless hunts in Unit 20A have demonstrated that an antlerless harvest rate of 1% of the total population is generally suitable for maintaining a stable population trend. Furthermore, this increase in harvest opportunity will help achieve the IM harvest objective and provide for additional subsistence harvest opportunity within that portion of Unit 20A outside the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game HQ-F25-038  
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**PROPOSAL 257**

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

Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 20B as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(18)		
...		
Unit 20(B), that portion within Creamer’s refuge		
...		
1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or	Sept. 1–Nov. 27 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1–Nov. 27

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts	Nonresident Open Season
1 antlerless moose by muzzle-loader by drawing permit only; up to 10 permits may be issued; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area  Unit 20(B), remainder of the Fairbanks Management Area  ...	Dec. 1–Jan. 31 (General hunt only)	No Open Season
1 antlerless moose by bow and arrow only, by drawing permit only; up to 150 bow and arrow permits may be issued in the Fairbanks Management Area; a recipient of a drawing permit is prohibited from taking an antlered bull moose in the Fairbanks Management Area; or	Sept. 1–Nov. 27 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1–Nov. 27
1 moose by targeted permit only; by shotgun or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued  Unit 20(B), that portion within the Minto Flats Management Area  RESIDENT HUNTERS:  ...	Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only)	No open season.
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only  ...	Oct. 15–Feb. 28 (Subsistence hunt only)	No open season.
Unit 20(B), the drainage of the Middle Fork of the Chena River RESIDENT HUNTERS:		



**Units and Bag Limits**

**Resident  
Open Season  
Subsistence and  
General Hunts**

**Nonresident  
Open Season**

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 300 permits may be issued; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Aug. 15–Nov. 15  
(General hunt only)

1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or

Oct. 1–Last day of Feb.  
(General hunt only)

...

Unit 20(B), that portion southeast of the Moose Creek dike within one-half mile of each side of the Richardson highway

**RESIDENT HUNTERS:**

...

1 moose by drawing permit only; by crossbow, bow and arrow, or muzzleloader only; up to 100 permits may be issued; or

Sept. 16–Last day of Feb.  
(General hunt only)

1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued

Season to be announced by emergency order  
(General hunt only)

Remainder of Unit 20(B)

**RESIDENT HUNTERS:**

1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; by youth hunt only; up to 200 permits may be issued; or

Aug. 5–Aug. 14  
(General hunt only)

...

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season Subsistence and General Hunts	Nonresident Open Season
1 antlerless moose by drawing permit only; up to 1,500 permits may be issued in the remainder of Unit 20(B); a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Aug. 15–Nov. 15 (General hunt only)	
1 antlerless moose by registration permit only; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf; or	Oct. 1– Last day of Feb.	
1 moose by targeted permit only; by crossbow, shotgun, or bow and arrow only; up to 100 permits may be issued	Season to be announced by emergency order (General hunt only)	

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

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The primary goals of the Unit 20B antlerless hunts are to regulate moose population growth and size within the Intensive Management (IM) population objective and at levels that the habitat can support, provide harvest opportunity to help meet IM harvest objectives, provide subsistence hunters with a reasonable opportunity to pursue moose for subsistence uses without reducing bull-to-cow ratios, and reduce moose-vehicle collisions and nuisance moose issues.

The most recent Unit 20B moose population estimate was below the IM population objective and thus there are currently few antlerless hunts offered within the unit. In November 2023, the Unit 20B moose population estimate was 7,848 moose (90% confidence interval 6,613–9,083 moose; 0.7–1.0 moose per square mile), which is below the IM population objective of 12,000–15,000. This estimate was a decrease from the previous survey in fall 2020, when the population estimate was 12,480 moose. The primary cause for the decline was likely the difficult winter of 2021–2022, which was a prolonged winter with deep snow and icing events both of which negatively impacted moose populations throughout the interior. Following the winter of 2021–2022, no antlerless hunts have been offered in Unit 20B except for within the Fairbanks Management Area (FMA) and within the Richardson Highway corridor. The primary purposes of the FMA and Richardson Highway corridor hunts are to reduce vehicle-moose collisions, and for the FMA, to reduce nuisance moose issues.

The only antlerless hunts planned for Unit 20B for regulatory year 2026 are within the FMA and Richardson Highway corridor. Furthermore, targeted hunts for any moose may be used to address public safety or nuisance moose issues. Antlerless hunt plans for regulatory year 2027 and beyond will be based upon the results of the planned unitwide moose population survey in fall 2025 as well as ongoing monitoring of nutritional indices. Recent twinning and browse removal surveys within the Minto Flats Management Area, which is in western Unit 20B, suggest the nutritional

condition of the moose in this area has improved and is currently at moderate to high levels. Thus, no additional antlerless hunts beyond the FMA, Richardson Highway corridor, and targeted hunts will be held in the near future unless the unitwide population increases to within the IM population objective, nutritional condition declines, or there is an identified harvest surplus within a portion of the unit due to a rapidly increasing population.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game HQ-F25-039  
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**PROPOSAL 258**

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

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

(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 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 registration permit only; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf

Oct. 10 - Nov. 25  
(General hunt only)

...

Unit 20(D), that portion within the Bison Range Controlled Use Area

...

1 antlerless moose, per lifetime of a hunter, by youth hunt 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;

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

No open season.

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 person 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 registration permit only; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf

Oct. 10 - Nov. 25  
(General hunt only)

**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

...

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

Antlerless moose hunts must be reauthorized annually. The objectives of the Unit 20D antlerless moose hunts are to 1) stabilize population growth of this high-density moose population; 2) address concerns about range degradation, reduced nutritional condition of moose, and reduced reproductive success of moose; 3) make progress toward meeting the Unit 20D intensive management (IM) harvest objective of 500–700 moose; and 4) provide youth and disabled veteran hunting opportunity.

The Unit 20D moose population is currently below the IM population objective and nutritional indices suggest the population is at low to moderate nutritional levels. In November 2023, the Southern Unit 20D population estimate was 3,250 moose (90% confidence interval 2,715–3,786 moose; 2.1 moose per square mile). This estimate represents a slight increase in moose abundance compared to the 2022 survey, which estimated 2,530 moose (1.62 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>). 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 2024 observed twinning rate of 27.5% (up from 8% in 2023) was a near record high for GMU 20D. The two-year (2023 and 2024) average twinning rate is 17.8%. 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 less 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 estimate, the short-yearling weights suggest the moose population nutrition is now at moderate levels. The goal is to manage the 20D moose population for stability, and antlerless harvest is an important component of this management strategy.

No antlerless moose were harvested in regulatory year (RY)22 or RY23 as the moose population experienced a 40% decline as a result of the severe winter of 2021 – 2022. During RY24 a limited number of antlerless permits were offered, and 12 cows were harvested.

Continued antlerless harvest is needed to maintain this population at an optimal density relative to habitat constraints and will contribute additional harvest towards 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, in conjunction with other mortality factors (including ceremonial harvest, vehicle collision, accidents, and predation), is appropriate to maintain population stability. If antlerless moose hunts are not reauthorized, the moose population could increase to levels beyond the capacity of the habitat. 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 of Fish and Game (department) will continue to evaluate antlerless moose hunts and their effect on moose density and population growth. The department will implement future antlerless moose hunts as needed based on the evaluation of 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 & Game

HQ-F25-040

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**PROPOSAL 259**

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

Reauthorize a winter antlerless moose season during March in a portion of Unit 21D.

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(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		
<b>RESIDENT HUNTERS:</b>		
...		
1 moose, by registration permit only, up to 15 days during March; however, 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. The goal is to provide additional harvest opportunity and meet harvest objectives. This harvest opportunity of antlerless moose recently emerged 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 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 Alaska Department of Fish & Game’s (department) ability to meet IM harvest objectives could be reduced. In addition, slowing the rate of increase, rather than allow the population to go through dramatic rates of expansion and contraction, is appropriate for providing stable hunting opportunity.

The Intensive Management (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 met 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. Subsistence hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose.

Analysis of three Trend Count Areas (TCAs) (Squirrel Creek, Pilot Mountain, and Kaiyuh Slough TCAs) 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 2004-2024 (avg. = 36.1%), although the five-year twinning rate average (2020-2024) was 27.8%.

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

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game

HQ-F25-041

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**PROPOSAL 260**

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

Reauthorize a winter antlerless moose season during part of February and March in Unit 21E as follows.

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
(19)		
...		
Unit 21(E)		
RESIDENT HUNTERS:		
...		
1 moose, by registration permit only, a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf	Feb 15. – Mar. 15	No open season.
...		

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

Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The goal is to provide additional harvest opportunity and meet harvest objectives.

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game’s completed its most current survey in 2022 and it indicated there are approximately 9,300 moose in Unit 21E, which is within the range of the Intensive Management (IM) population objective of 9,000–11,000 moose. There is currently a harvestable surplus of 390 moose; however, many of those moose are not accessible in the fall. Approximately 200 moose are harvested each fall along the rivers. The most recent composition survey in 2024 showed 33 bulls per 100 cows and 41 calves per 100 cows. The IM harvest objective for Unit 21E is 550–1,100 moose.

Within the Unit 21E moose survey area (4,094 mi<sup>2</sup>), the overall moose density increased from 1.0 moose/mi<sup>2</sup> in 2000 to 1.9 moose/mi<sup>2</sup> in 2022. The 2024 2-year average twinning rate in the Holy Cross area was 42%, while north of Anvik and Shageluk (where the moose density is lower) the twinning rate was 56%.



Additional harvest opportunity is available. Furthermore, winter hunts distribute hunter pressure temporally and allow access to areas inaccessible in the fall.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish & Game

HQ-F25-042

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**PROPOSAL 261**

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

Reauthorize the resident antlerless moose season in Unit 26 as follows:

<b>Units and Bag Limits</b>	<b>Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)</b>	<b>Nonresident Open Season</b>
<p>(24)</p> <p>...</p> <p>Unit 26(A), that portion west of the eastern shore of Admiralty Bay where the Alaktak River enters, following the Alaktak River to 155°00' W longitude excluding the Colville River drainage</p>	<p>July 1 - Sept. 14</p>	<p>No open season.</p>
<p>1 moose</p>		

**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. This hunt was recently adopted by the Board of Game at the 2024 meeting in Kotzebue after being closed for the previous year after failing to be reauthorized 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, and the distribution is 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. So far, the marginal habitat in this portion of Unit 26A has not allowed moose to establish a population, but these 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, 348 moose and 438 moose were observed in 2018 and 2021, respectively. The overall trend appears to be slow growth after a decline that started about 2007. The number of moose in the antlerless hunt area is difficult to estimate but is 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 2024 indicate there have been no moose reported harvested in this hunt. Due to the 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 to opportunistically harvest antlerless moose in this remote portion of Unit 26A.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

HQ-F25-026

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