

Division of Wildlife Conservation
Doug Vincent-Lang, Acting Director
Headquarters
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Cora Campbell, Commissioner
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

NEWS RELEASE
Friday, February 14, 2014

CONTACT:

Cathie Harms
907-459-7231

Unit 20A Antlerless Moose Permits Won't be Issued

Drawing Hunt Permits for antlerless moose will not be issued for Unit 20A in 2014-15 because the moose population estimate conducted in December was lower than anticipated.

Decisions on whether to issue permits are based, in part, on population estimates and trends. Moose population estimates for Unit 20A became available to wildlife managers in late December, after all applications for the antlerless hunts had been received. The application deadline for all drawing permits was in mid-December.

The \$5 application fees will not be refunded. "The permit supplement newspapers and website have always stated that if drawing permits aren't awarded, no refunds will be given. This is the first time we're faced with the decision to not hold an antlerless hunt in our region," said Management Coordinator Roy Nowlin. "The Department is considering alternatives for antlerless moose hunts to avoid this situation in the future."

Antlerless hunts were instituted in Unit 20A in 2004 in an effort to reduce the moose population from an estimated 17,500 animals to around 12,000 moose, a level that available habitat could better support. At the time, Unit 20A moose showed symptoms of nutritional stress including low twinning rates and low 10-month old calf weights. In addition, cows in the unit did not produce calves until three to five years of age, at least one to three years later than moose in good quality habitat.

In 2011 and 2012, moose population estimates were just over 12,000, and managers reduced the antlerless harvest to lower levels aimed at stabilizing moose numbers. But surveys conducted last December produced an estimate of just over 10,000 moose, lower than anticipated.

The late spring last year resulted in higher calf mortality and lower number of yearling moose surviving the winter. In addition, radio collar information indicates more adult moose may have been lost due to the late spring as well.

Managers don't yet know how much of the reduction is due to actual losses and how much might be due to poor survey conditions.

Managers are taking a conservative approach by discontinuing the antlerless hunts for at least a year, but are confident that habitat is improving for moose in the long-term. Areas burned by wild land fire within the past decade are starting to regenerate moose browse, which will be able to support more animals in better condition.

Department staff plan to conduct a high-intensity moose survey next November to get a clearer picture of the population status.

###