

Division of Wildlife Conservation  
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Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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### ADF&G Closes Moose Hunts in Unit 26A and 26B for Fall 2014

Drawing permit hunts for moose on Alaska's North Slope will not open this coming fall due to declining numbers of moose.

Drawing permits for moose hunting in Units 26A and 26B in northern Alaska (DM980, 981, and 996) will not be issued. Hunters who had been drawn for permits will receive letters explaining the closure.

In addition, the Department is shortening the Unit 26A fall general seasons by two weeks and closing the general season moose hunt in 26B.

Moose surveys conducted in April of this year showed significant decreases in moose numbers north of the Brooks Range. In Unit 26A (western North Slope) the surveys documented a 50% reduction in moose numbers since 2011. In Unit 26B (eastern North Slope), the moose population declined from approximately 400 moose in 2013 to 109 in 2014. Similar results were seen in Unit 26C.

"We found a surprising and drastic reduction in moose numbers earlier this month" said Geoff Carroll, Area Biologist for Wildlife Conservation in the Barrow office. "We need to cut back on moose harvest while we see how the population responds. No doubt it will take some time."

Most of the decline appears to be a result of poor nutrition related to a very late spring in 2013 and poor conditions during the following summer. Very few 10 month old calves were observed, indicating that most of last year's calves did not survive. Predation by wolves on weakened moose may have also contributed.

Moose on the North Slope are at the northern extent of their range, and we have observed severe declines in the past. "Moose numbers declined across most of the North Slope during the mid-1990s," said Eastern North Slope Area Biologist Beth Lenart. "We plan to carefully monitor the population and reinstate the drawing hunt when population numbers allow."

The changes are expected to dramatically reduce or eliminate moose harvest this year. All nonresident moose hunting opportunity on the North Slope is closed for the coming season. Although the Board of Game had voted to extend the moose season through the end of September, the general season for residents will be open in Unit 26A from August 1 through September 14, 2014.

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A controlled use area prevents the use of aircraft in moose hunting in the area. A moose season west of 156° 00' W. longitude remains open because of the extremely low harvest in that area. Only two moose have been taken under this hunt since 2006.

Hunters with questions about the hunt can call Fish and Game offices in Barrow or Fairbanks.

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