

STATE OF ALASKA

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

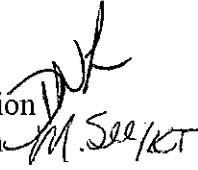
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

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TO: Alaska Board of Game Members

THRU: Kristy Tibbles, Executive Director, Boards Support

FROM: Doug Larsen, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation
Marianne See, Assistant Director, Subsistence Division 

DATE: January 26, 2009

SUBJECT: Emergency Petition – Unit 18 Moose – Lower Yukon River

The letter to the Alaska Board of Game dated January 23, 2009 from the Emmonak Tribal Council requests an “any moose” hunting season in the lower Yukon area of GMU 18 with an ending date of March 31. The village of Emmonak is within an area defined in regulation as that portion of GMU 18 “north and west of a line from Cape Romanzof to Kusilvak Mountain to Mountain Village, and excluding all Yukon River drainages upriver from Mountain Village.” This area currently has a season for one antlered bull during August 10 – September 30, and a winter season for one antlered bull or one calf during December 20 to January 20. The federal subsistence season dates mirror the state season dates, except the bag limit during the winter season is “one moose.”

The moose population in the 1100 sq. mi. area is estimated at 3300 moose, based on a winter 2008 population estimation survey. Productivity is very high, and the population is still growing in size. Growth rate is currently estimated at 27%. The reported harvest during the fall 2008 season was about 160 moose; harvest reporting is still ongoing for the season ending on January 20. During the 2007-2008 regulatory year, the reported harvest during the winter season was about 50 moose. Because of cold weather conditions prevalent during December 2008 and January 2009, we anticipate that the current harvest would be less than 50 moose.

We are confident that the Board will carefully consider the definition of an “emergency” as described in the Joint Board Petition Policy in 5 AAC 96.625(f). The joint board policy defines an emergency as “an unforeseen, unexpected resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action and such delay would be significantly burdensome to the petitioners because the resource would be unavailable in the future.” Because of the inclement weather conditions and high fuel prices, we agree with the petitioners that many hunters were not able to take advantage of the harvest opportunity afforded by the existing winter hunting season. Population and harvest data indicate that this moose population can accommodate additional harvest. Also, a majority of members of the local Fish and Game Advisory Committees voted in the affirmative for an antlerless hunt in the area for this regulatory year. In order to maintain control of the harvest, we recommend that the season ending date be set at February 28 with a bag limit of “one moose,” and the Board authorize the DWC the emergency order authority to extend the season up to an ending date of March 31 if the need is still there.