

Note: Proposal 159 was accepted by the Board of Game as an Agenda Change Request for consideration at the Interior/Northeast Arctic Region meeting scheduled for February 2017.

PROPOSAL 159 - 5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements. Require hunters on the Kenai Peninsula to take an ADF&G approved hunter orientation course for identifying legal moose.

Anyone hunting moose on the Kenai Peninsula must have successfully completed a hunter orientation class on how to identify a legal moose, approved by the Department of Fish and Game, prior to entering the field. The class should be made available online and a hunter is only required to pass the orientation course once in their lifetime.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS AND WHY? The high level of bull moose taken each year on the Kenia Peninsula in Units 7 and 15, that do not comply with the bag limit of a spike or a spread of 50 inches or greater or four brow tines on at least one side.

Reported illegal harvest: In 2013 a total of 163 moose were reported and 35 (21%) were illegal. In 2014 a total of 231 moose were reported and 27 (12%) were illegal. In 2015 a total of 221 moose were reported and 41 (19%) were illegal. Preliminary harvest figures for 2016 suggest the reported illegal will be over 20 percent.

From 2013 to 2015 the average reported illegal harvest was 17 percent, it is unknown what the actual illegal harvest was during these years but surely it was higher. Hunters that take illegal moose deprive other hunters that are careful in determining whether a bull is legal from that animal in future years. When a subpopulation of moose is managed under a selective harvest program, success of the program depends on a low percentage of illegal bulls harvested.

Due to the low bull to cow ratio the selective harvest program was changed for the fall of 2012, allowing only bulls with a spread of 50 inches or greater or four brow tines on at least one side. This regulation was changed again in 2014, allowing hunters to also harvest bulls with a spike antler. As a result of these antler restrictions, a higher than usual number of mid-sized bulls are in the population and being seen by hunters. Many of these bulls are in the mid 40 inch spread range and are being mistaken for 50 inch bulls by inexperienced hunters.

If the problem is not solved, there will probably be another year of high illegal harvest by inexperienced hunters.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-2016-ACR 9)
