



November 13, 2018

An Agenda Change Request (ACR 4) has been submitted by the Susitna Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.045(a)(14) Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose in Unit 16B. The proponent is asking the board to change the bag limit for the existing Tier II hunts in Unit 16B from one bull to one moose, and to create a resident only drawing hunt for antlerless moose in Unit 16B.

With respect to the board's Agenda Change Request (ACR) acceptance criteria (5 AAC 92.005):

- A. The department is unaware of any error in regulation.
- B. The department is unaware of any effects of regulations that were unforeseen when the regulation was adopted.
- C. In terms of a biological concern, or a threat to meeting objectives, the population is currently at 10,000 moose which is above the upper limit of the population objectives. The population objective for moose in Unit 16B is 6,500–7,000.
- D. The department is unaware of any unforeseen or unexpected events that would otherwise restrict or reduce a reasonable opportunity for customary and traditional wildlife uses as defined in AS 16.05.258(f). There is a positive customary and traditional (C&T) use finding for moose in Unit 16B within the Redoubt Bay drainages, with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) of 10. There is a positive C&T use finding for moose in the portion of Unit 16B south of the Beluga River and north of Redoubt Bay, with an ANS of 29–37. There is a positive C&T use finding for moose in the portion of Unit 16B north of the Beluga River, with an ANS of 160–180 moose.
- E. In terms of an unforeseen, unexpected resource situation, the moose population in Unit 16B has been increasing since 2005 and the board and the department have been adding opportunity to harvest moose through additional drawing and registration hunts, not all of which have been implemented due to various reasons. Antlerless harvest is available and may be lost if severe weather causes high mortality as has occurred in the past.

Moose in Unit 16B have benefited from an intensive management program intended to produce sustainable levels of moose for human consumptive use and to help meet subsistence needs.

In RY 2010 there was a general season hunt for residents only (SF50 or 3 brow tines; August 20–September 20) and a bull only Tier II hunt with 260 permits issued. In RY 2011 a non-resident general season hunt was added with a shorter season of August 25–September 15. In RY 2013 the non-resident season was extended to match the resident season August 20–September 15. In RY 2014 two drawing hunts for any bull were added: a general drawing and a youth hunt with a total of 200 permits. The any

bull drawing permits were increased to 400 in RY 2015. In RY 2016 a winter registration any-bull hunt and a winter any-bull draw hunt were added, but have not been implemented due to a lack of current bull-to-cow ratio information, concerns from the local population that winter hunts would stress moose (particularly cows), and pending evaluation of the effectiveness of the fall draw hunt in reducing the bull-to-cow ratios. In RY 2018 the drawing permits were increased to 600. There has been no change to the number of Tier II permits issued: 100 permits for TM565, 80 permits for TM567, and 80 permits for TM569. For TM565, only 36% of applicants have received a permit; for TM567, only 38% of applicants have received a permit; and for TM569, 69% of applicants have received a permit.

Area	16B North		16B Middle		16B South	
	2014	2008	2018	2011	2018	2010
Dates	6–11 Dec	29–31 Oct	10–13 Mar	20–26 Nov	2/28–3/2 Feb/Mar	13–18 Nov
Census Type	GSPE	GSPE	GSPE	GSPE	GSPE	GSPE
Total moose obs.	835	340	1,875	825	1106	703
Calves obs.	151	21	231	127	147	75
Pop Est.	1,587*	834	5,339*	3,458*	3,074*	2,372*
Bull:100 cows	60.4	59.7		42.4		50
Calves:100 cows	34.4	11		25.9		18

* includes estimated minimum sightability correction factor

Based on recent survey information the moose population in Unit 16B is 10,000 animals. While the sex ratio is unknown this population is at least 2,500 moose above the objective of 6,500–7,500 moose. The results of the 2018 surveys were unexpected in size and warrant consideration of this ACR as an unforeseen circumstance.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting for Unit 16 is during winter/spring of 2020/2021. If the board accepts this ACR, the department recommends the proposal come before the board at its March 2019 meeting in Anchorage to allow the department time to complete fall surveys and because it is easier for the impacted residents and hunters to get to Anchorage than Petersburg, thus allowing for more public input.

Sincerely,



Bruce Dale
Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation