

PROPOSAL 184

5 AAC 85.045(a)(19)(B). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize a winter antlerless moose season during March in a portion of Unit 21D as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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(19)

Unit 21(D), that portion south of the South bank of the Yukon River, downstream of the up-river entrance of Kala Slough and west of Kala Creek

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

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1 moose, by registration permit only, up to 15 days during March; a person may not take a cow accompanied by a calf

...

(Winter season to be announced)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Antlerless moose hunting seasons must be reauthorized annually. The goal is to provide additional harvest opportunity and meet harvest objectives. This harvest opportunity of antlerless moose recently emerged because the moose population in the Kaiyuh Flats is increasing rapidly, especially the number of cows in the population. If this antlerless moose hunt is not reauthorized, opportunity to utilize a harvestable surplus of cow moose would be lost, and our ability to meet Intensive Management (IM) harvest objectives could be reduced. In addition, rather than allow the population to go through dramatic rates of expansion and contraction, it is prudent to dampen the current accelerating rate of increase.

The Intensive Management (IM) harvest objective for Unit 21D is 450–1,000 moose. The 10-year average estimated harvest during 2012–2021 was 401 moose, which includes the reported and estimated unreported harvest. The annual estimated harvest has not met the harvest objective since 2003 when the estimated harvest was 489 moose. Additional harvest from this hunt will help make progress toward achieving the IM harvest objectives without reducing bull-to-cow ratios to low levels. Subsistence hunters will benefit from the opportunity to harvest cow moose.

Analysis of three Trend Count Areas (Squirrel Creek, Pilot Mountain, and Kaiyuh Slough TCAs) within the Kaiyuh Flats in this hunt area increased in moose abundance among all age classes, and adult moose abundance was 32% above the 18-year average by 2021. Geospatial Population Estimate data also increased from 1,897 ($\pm 11\%$) moose in 2011 to 4,116 ($\pm 10\%$) moose in 2017. Moose twinning data for the hunt area also showed high twinning rates between 2004 and 2021

(avg. = 36%), although the 5-year twinning rate average (2017-2021) was 29%.

The portion of 21D affected by this reauthorization is approximately 21% (2,559 mi²) of Unit 21D (12,093.6 mi²). Moose abundance in this area was estimated at 4,000–4,500 moose, which is approximately 39–44% of the total moose estimated in Unit 21D at 10,478 moose ($\pm 1,572$) in 2021. The mid-point for the total 21D moose population estimate was above the IM population objective for all of Unit 21D (12,093.6 mi²) of 9,000–10,000 moose.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F22-041)
