

PROPOSAL 85 – 5 AAC 85.045. Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Lengthen the resident hunting season for moose in Unit 16B Remainder (DM540, YM541 and RM574) as follows:

The solution to the problem is to expand the any bull fall moose harvest opportunity. How we do this is the debate. I suggest we go back to the refugia system of management where we trust that the inaccessible areas of the unit will protect the bulls from over harvest. This was a proven method prior to the 1993 antler restriction management system. ADF&G appears to want to micromanage the harvest. I have a hard time figuring out how this can be done when we rarely collect population and/or composition data. The concern with over participation causing conflicts in the field may be valid. This could be dealt with by restricting any bull seasons to August 20 to September 10 a rarely utilized part of the season. In an effort to allow all Alaskans who desire to participate in any bull hunting in Unit 16B, I submit the following proposal:

My solution to chronic under-harvest of the surplus bulls of the unit in the fall is replace the existing hunts DM540, YM541 and RM574 with an August 20 to September 30 any bull bag limit for residents.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Unit 16B moose population is now a growing population which has led to a growing harvestable surplus of bulls. Increased calf survival (up from the lows of ten calves per 100 cows to highs of near 50 calves per 100 cows in much of the unit) has also increased the yearly supply of harvestable bulls. Two recently created draw hunts were created with little or no public participation. DM540 and YM541 were created at the 2013 Board of Game (board) meeting from an ADF&G proposal to do minor changes to predator control plan under 5 AAC 92.125 has nothing to do with moose seasons. No proposal to create these seasons was ever put before the public prior to the board meeting; therefore no public input was received. Generally, changes in seasons and bag limits are considered "allocative" in nature and ADF&G generally takes no position on these matters. This was one of the most bizarre things I have witnessed at a board meeting. The youth hunt idea in particular could have benefited from some local knowledge of the hazardous and unreliable travel conditions in the unit during the youth trophy hunt conducted November 15 to December 15 known locally as "freeze up". The goal of these draw hunts was apparently to reach the midpoint of the unit's harvest objective. These hunts have failed in this objective.

The unit also has a recently created winter registration hunt on the books. This hunt was the result of an emergency petition by ADF&G to allocate moose from fall sport hunters to winter meat hunters. The justification was that their previously created hunts were failures in reaching the midpoint of the harvest objective. I find it odd that it is an emergency not to reach the midpoint of a harvest objective range when it was not an emergency for a decade during the 90s when we never reached the minimum and the harvestable surplus existed. I would like to make a public proposal that will be reviewed by the public, commented on by the public, and testified at the board meeting by the public to allocate the public's resource created by the combined efforts of the people of Alaska. The failure to reach the midpoint of the harvest objective is because of the restrictive nature of the fall hunt and goes back to the conversion of the unit to spike-fork, 50-inch in 1993. The moose hunt was converted due to concerns of increase participation due changes in adjacent units that had low bull/cow ratios where antler restrictions were put in place.

The antler restrictions made it near impossible to achieve the unit harvest object although seasons were expanded. Eventually the declining moose population made it impossible.

PROPOSED BY: David McHoes

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