

PROPOSAL 188

5 AAC 85.045(a)(24). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose.

Reauthorize the antlerless moose season in the western portion of Unit 26A as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
(24) ...		
Unit 26(A), that portion west of 156° 00' W. longitude and excluding the Colville River drainage.		
1 moose; a person may not take a calf or a cow accompanied by a calf	July 1—Sept. 14	No open season.
...		

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To be retained, the antlerless moose season in the portion of Unit 26A west of 156° 00' W longitude and excluding the Colville drainage must be reauthorized annually.

The moose population in the western portion of Unit 26A north of the Colville drainage is somewhat unique compared to the unit-wide population, and the distribution is very sparse because there is very little moose habitat in the coastal plain. However, each year a small number of bulls and cows migrate into the area from the major river drainages in the central and southern parts of the unit. So far, the marginal habitat in this portion of Unit 26A has not allowed moose to establish a population, but these moose provide the only opportunity to harvest a moose in the northwestern portion of Unit 26A.

Unit 26A moose population estimates have historically fluctuated between 294 and 609 moose between 2011 and 2014. More recently, moose counts have observed 145 moose and 218 moose in 2015 and 2018, respectively. The overall trend appears to be slow growth after a decline that started about 2007. The number of moose in the antlerless hunt area is difficult to estimate, but is approximately 10 moose. Harvest reports indicate 4 antlerless moose have been harvested since 2005, and the annual harvest rate of antlerless moose is less than 1% of the total population. Due to the low harvest rate the Department of Fish and Game recommends reauthorization of the antlerless moose season in this area to provide additional hunting opportunity for the small number of hunters to opportunistically harvest antlerless moose in this remote portion of Unit 26A.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F20-049)
