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Federal Subsistence Board News Release

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2016 Federal Public Lands Moose Hunting Changes in Unit 18 Kuskokwim Area

The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager (YDNWR) has issued a Special Action for Refuge lands in Unit 18 Kuskokwim area for a set fifteen-day moose hunt. Residents of the Akiachak, Akiak, Atmautlauk, Bethel, Eek, Kalskag, Kasigluk, Kwethluk, Lower Kalskag, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Nunapitchuk, Oscarville, Tuluksak, and Tuntutuliak will be allowed to harvest one antlered bull moose on **Federal lands by State registration permit September 1-15, 2016**. This Special Action does not apply to the portions of Unit 18 south of and including the Kanektok River drainage, and does not affect the communities of Quinhagak, Goodnews Bay, or Platinum.

A September 1-15, 2016 Federal public lands season should allow a harvest near the goal of 90 bull moose and still allow for population growth. In addition, a fixed-duration hunt will allow hunters to better plan their hunts, particularly for those that want to travel long distances to Federal public lands.

The calf/cow ratios estimated from recent surveys indicate rapid growth of the moose population in the area. In addition much of the Refuge lands are difficult to access and require multiple days to get in and out of the field. A fixed-duration hunt for local residents will become effective at 12:00 a.m. (midnight) Thursday morning, September 1, 2016 through 11:59 p.m. (midnight) Thursday night, September 15, 2016. A State registration permit (RM615) will be required to hunt on both State and Federal lands. Successful hunters will have 72-hours to report their harvest. Unsuccessful hunters will be required to report by September 25, 2016.

Registration permits are free of charge and are available until August 25, 2016 at ADF&G and USFWS in Bethel Alaska. Permits are also available at license vendors within the hunt area. A valid hunting license is required. The moose season on State managed lands will be closed by Emergency Order when the harvest quota is reached. Therefore, the season on State managed lands will close on a different date than the season on Federal public lands.

Biological Rationale

The YDNWR conducted moose surveys in March 2015 and composition surveys within the Kuskokwim River tributaries (Eek, Kwethluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and Fog rivers) in November 2015. Surveys indicated an increase in the moose population, a high bull:cow ratio (83 bulls: 100 cows) and high calf:cow ratio (62 calves: 100 cows), indicating rapid population growth. Therefore, an increase in hunting opportunities is warranted. The YDNWR is confident this season will provide increase subsistence harvest opportunity while managing conservatively. The bag limit is one antlered bull. In addition many of the areas in the Kuskokwim Mountains are difficult to access and require multiple days a field for ingress and egress.

Additional information can be obtained from the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge at (907) 543-3151 or at (800) 621-5804.

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