



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Federal Subsistence Board

1101 E Tudor Rd, MS 121
Anchorage Alaska 99503



UNIT 18 KUSKOKWIM MOOSE

SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of 50 CFR Part 100.10(6) and .19

Issued at: Bethel, Alaska
August 18, 2015

Effective Date: September 1, 2016 12:01 a.m.
Expiration Date: September 15, 2016 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

EXPLANATION:

Based on delegated authority from the Federal Subsistence Board, the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (YDNWR) manager is announcing a September 15, 2016 moose season closure on **Federal public lands** of Unit 18 Kuskokwim in anticipation of reaching the harvest quota of 90 bull moose in the September 1-15 season. This would be an increase in season length from previous years and is justified by an increase in population and healthy bull and calf ratios. A State registration permit (RM615) will be required to hunt on Federal public lands with a 72-hour reporting requirement for successful hunters and a September 25, 2016 deadline for unsuccessful hunters to report.

The YDNWR concludes that a 15-day season will allow hunters to reach the harvest quota of 90 bull moose (utilizing past harvest rates), allow better planning for hunting, and still allow for population growth. A set closure date should allow hunters to plan their hunts, particularly for those that want to travel long distances to Federal public lands.

REGULATION:

Unit 18-Moose

Unit 18—that portion east of a running line from the mouth of the Ishkowik River to the closest point of Dall Lake, then to the east bank of the Johnson River at its entrance into Nunavakanukakslak Lake (N 60° 59.41' Latitude; W 162° 22.14' Longitude), continuing upriver along a line ½ mile south and east of, and paralleling a line along the southerly bank of the Johnson River to the confluence of the east bank

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of Crooked Creek, then continuing upriver to the outlet at Arhymot Lake, then following the south bank east of the Unit 18 border and north of (and including) the Eek River drainage.--1 antlered bull by State registration permit (RM 615); quotas will be announced annually by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager.

Federal public lands are closed to the hunting of moose except by residents of Akiachak, Akiak, Atmautlauk, Bethel, Eek, Kalskag, Kasigluk, Kwethluk, Lower Kalskag, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Nunapitchuk, Oscarville, Tuluksak, and Tuntuliak.

JUSTIFICATION

Biological

The YDNWR conducted moose surveys in March 2015 and composition surveys within the Kuskokwim tributaries (Eek, Kwethluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and Fog Rivers) in November 2015. Surveys indicated an increase in the moose population (508 moose), a high bull:cow ratio (83 bulls: 100 cows) and high calf:cow ratio (62 calves: 100 cows), indicating rapid population growth. The 2010 estimate was 345 moose and no compositional data has been collected before 2015. An increase in hunting opportunities is warranted based on the population increase and ratios. We are anticipating 90 moose to be harvested in a Sept. 1-15 season in order to bring the bull ratio down to 40 bulls: 100 cows (a conservative ratio). In 2015, during an eight-day season, 40 bull moose were harvested at an average of 5 bull moose / day. Therefore, a 15-day season should allow hunters to harvest at least 75 bull moose. We do, however, expect an increase in the daily harvest rate particularly after the State Kuskokwim River moose season closes and unsuccessful hunters that have hunted the State managed lands move to hunt within Federal public lands. In addition, the Federal September 1-15 season would extend into the rutting season. The harvest limit is for one antlered bull. In addition many of the areas in the Kuskokwim Mountains are difficult to access and require multiple days afield for ingress and egress.

Although the season is stated in the regulations as a Sept. 1-30 season, in years prior to 2016 the Yukon Delta Wildlife Refuge Manager has announced quotas that have been reached well before Sept. 30 thus requiring earlier closures. The season ending date of Sept. 30 has allowed flexibility for the Refuge Manager to continue to increase the actual season lengths in anticipation of a growing population. Therefore, a Sept. 1-15 season, will increase opportunity from previous years.

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

By delegation to:



Vernon "Ray" Born, Acting Refuge Manager
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

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