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PRESS RELEASE

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Help Wanted: Sharp-Eyed Citizens Sought for 2021 Anchorage Moose Survey Project

(Anchorage) – The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is recruiting citizens to report moose sightings this weekend for the Anchorage winter moose survey. Now entering its fifth and final year since a pilot project in February 2017, the novel, ground-based survey technique uses DNA taken from city moose to determine the number of moose in the Anchorage Bowl. Moose sighting reports from Anchorage residents are key to the survey's success.

"The public's help the past several years has made all the difference," said wildlife research biologist David Saalfeld. "With Anchorage residents reporting moose locations, we have been able to collect DNA samples from moose every year since 2017. Analysis of samples collected in February of 2020 identified 161 different moose (110 cows and 51 bulls), and when combined with data from previous years, estimated approximately 350 moose living within Anchorage. The samples from this 2021 survey will allow us to refine the estimate of the moose population this year." Additional samples have been collected from hunter harvested and roadkill moose throughout the Anchorage area during the project.

This survey technique is unique and ideally suited for urban moose in Anchorage. Moose are located with the help of citizens reporting moose sightings online, by text, or by phone. Biologists respond and find the moose to collect a DNA sample using specialized darts that lightly strike the moose and fall to the ground with a skin sample. DNA from the sample is used to identify individual animals, moose relatedness, and to generate a minimum count.

Citizens are invited to report moose sightings within the Anchorage Bowl between 8 a.m. Friday, February 19, through 5:00 p.m. Sunday, February 21.

Sightings may be reported by:

- **Online** at www.adfg.alaska.gov;
- **Phone** at 907-267-2530; or
- **Text message** at 907-782-5051

-more-

Reports should include the number of moose observed, the time of the sighting, and most importantly the location of the moose.

Safety is paramount with this project. Moose can be dangerous, and citizens are reminded to avoid approaching moose or department survey teams out collecting DNA samples. Staff wearing blaze orange vests or safety yellow jackets clearly identifying them as Department of Fish and Game employees will be using dart projectors that closely resemble long-guns or hunting rifles. Additionally, staff will be driving state vehicles marked with the ADF&G logo.

Project expenses are covered by funds generated by hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts through payment of federal taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment, and through state hunting license and tag fees.

For more information about the Anchorage moose study, contact Dave Battle at 907-267-2185 or Dave Saalfeld at 907-267-2387

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