
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Revision to Staff Comment for Proposal 36
Arctic/Western Region Alaska Board of Game Meeting
Bethel, Alaska ~ January 6-9, 2017



The following ADF&G comment was revised 11/9/2016; the original comment is available on the Board of Game meeting information website at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo&date=01-06-2017&meeting=bethel)

PROPOSAL 36 – 5 AAC 85.045(a)(21). Hunting seasons and bag limits for moose. Reauthorize the antlerless moose seasons in Unit 23.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would reauthorize the antlerless moose season in Unit 23.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? There are two moose hunt areas in Unit 23 and each area has an antlerless moose season from November 1–December 31. The hunt areas are:

- 1) Unit 23 north of and including the Singoalik River drainage, and
- 2) Remainder of Unit 23.

The bag limit in each area is one moose; however, the taking of calves or cows accompanied by calves is prohibited by codified regulation for registration permit (RM880).

There is a positive C&T for moose in Unit 23, and an ANS of 325–400 moose.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? If the antlerless moose hunts in Unit 23 are reauthorized, resident hunters will be able to use a registration permit to harvest antlerless moose during November and December on state-managed lands in Unit 23.

BACKGROUND: The estimated moose population in Unit 23 is 7,500 moose, which is within the intensive management objectives of 3,500–9,200 moose. The harvestable surplus is 450. The 10-year average reported harvest is 153 moose, which is below the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (325– 400 moose) and intensive management harvest objective (210– 920 moose). Per capita harvest rates from 38 data points results in an estimated 274 moose harvested annually by residents of Unit 23 communities.

Aerial censuses indicate low moose densities exist throughout Unit 23 and are declining throughout most of the unit. The Selawik and Tagagawik, Lower Noatak, and Lower Kobuk river drainages comprise approximately 80% of the surveyed moose populations in Unit 23. The Selawik and Tagagawik moose population declined 12% annually between 2011 and 2016. The Lower Noatak moose population declined 8% annually between 2008 and 2013, and the Lower Kobuk moose population declined 5% annually between 2006 and 2012.

The resident registration permit hunt RM880 was implemented in RY2004 as a way to retain antlerless opportunity through substantially shortened season, which limited antlerless harvest to the months of November and December. Antlerless seasons and bag limits have not changed since RY2004, and the reported harvest of antlerless moose has been less than 15 cows annually over the last 20 years. However, 21 cows were taken in RY2015.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted, but **OPPOSES** the reauthorization of the antlerless hunt in Unit 23 due to conservation concerns. The department recommends **AMENDING** the regulation to only allow the harvest of bull moose during the November 1– December 31 hunting season. Future hunting season and bag limit restrictions may be needed in Unit 23 for nonresidents and residents, and restricting antlerless harvest of this population is a first step to respond to declining moose numbers.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal is not expected to result in additional costs to the department.
