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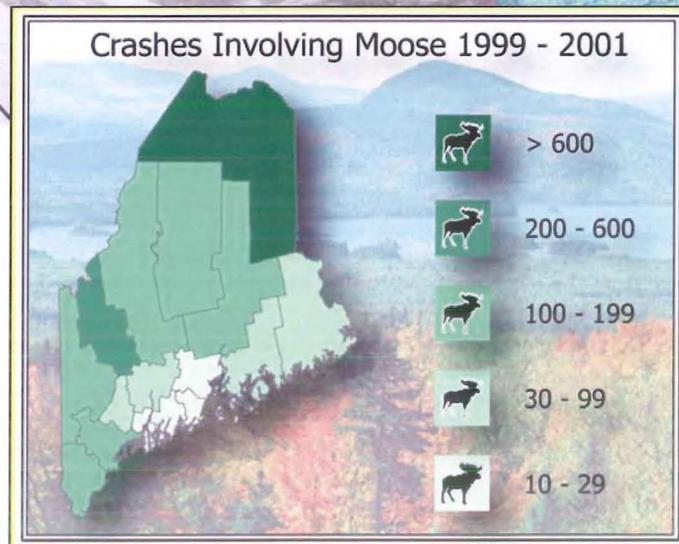
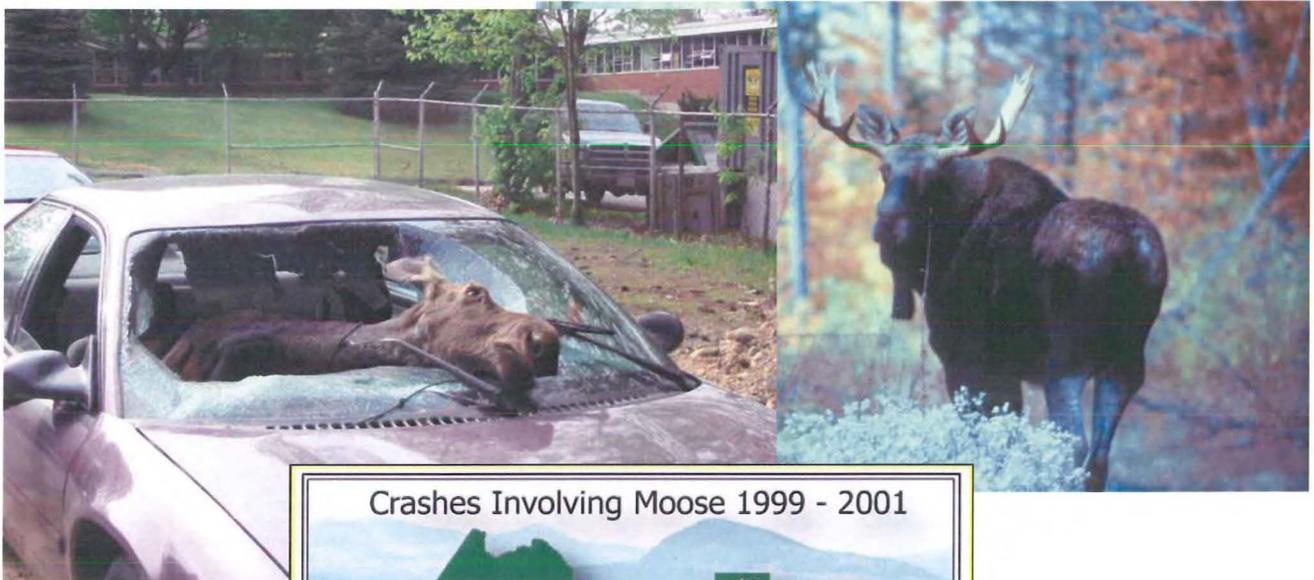


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A REPORT TO THE INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

L.D. 1313

Resolve, To Evaluate the Possibility of a Moose Hunt in Southern Maine



Roland D. Martin, Commissioner
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife



JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

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DEPARTMENT OF
INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
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ROLAND D. MARTIN
COMMISSIONER

January 18, 2007

To: Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Advisory Council

From: Roland D. Martin, Commissioner

Subject: L.D. 1313 / Resolve, To Evaluate the Possibility of a Moose Hunt in Southern Maine

Attached please find a copy of the Department's evaluation of the possibility of a moose hunt in southern Maine.

By way of executive summary, the Department proposes the following:

- a) WMDs 15, 16, 23, and 26 would be opened to moose hunting in 2008. The Department will apply the information and experience gained from the initial moose hunt in southern Maine to any future openings that may be considered for the remaining 5 WMDs currently closed to moose hunting.
- b) The southern Maine moose hunt would occur during the regular firearms deer season in November.
- c) Sufficient permits would be allocated to allow a slow to moderate decrease in moose numbers, while eliminating or greatly reducing conflicts between moose hunters, landowners, and the general public: WMD 15: 25 permits, WMD 16: 20 permits, WMD 23: 45 permits, and WMD 26: 45 permits.
- d) The Department would issue "any-moose" permits, based on the existing requirements that 10% are allocated to non-residents.
- e) There would be one drawing for all WMDs, season dates, and permit types. This would retain a uniform system or the waiting periods and preference points; we also believe it is the simplest and fairest way to administer this hunt. As such, it would integrate the southern Maine moose hunt into the Department's on-going moose management and hunting programs.

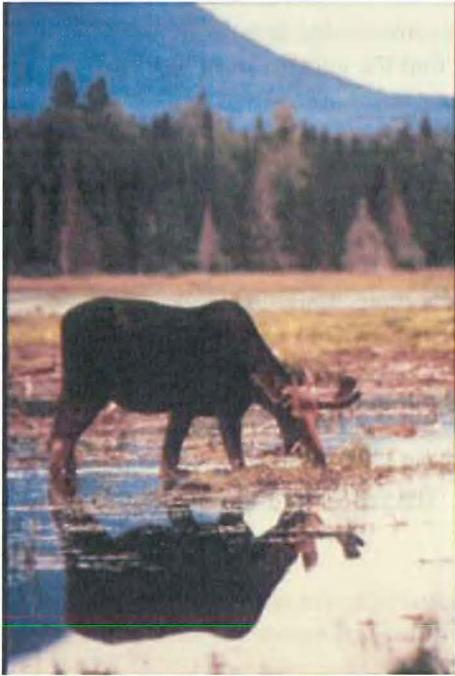
The Department currently has the statutory authority to implement a moose hunt in southern Maine, therefore, legislation to allow this would not be necessary. However, if it is the desire of the Committee, legislation to require this certainly is permissible.

Please feel free to call or contact me if you have any questions or comments regarding this evaluation.

pc: Governor John E. Baldacci



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1) Introduction

The 122nd Maine Legislature adopted a Resolve directing the Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife “To Evaluate the Possibility of a Moose Hunt in Southern Maine” – The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife shall evaluate the possibility of a moose hunt in southern Maine and shall submit a report based on the evaluation, including necessary implementing legislations, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters no later than December 1, 2006. The joint standing committee may submit a bill based on the report to the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.¹

The report that follows is the Department’s evaluation of the possibility of a moose hunt in southern Maine, and it contains a suggested southern Maine moose hunting season developed in response to public input.

The Department believes that no legislation will be required to implement its proposal.

2) Background

Maine moose and the “Maine Woods” are important to many people – residents and non-residents alike. Some are hunters who enjoy moose hunting; others are those who enjoy watching moose feed in a remote pond at the foot of a forested mountain, or who are simply surprised by the moose that ventures across the family’s backyard. Moose hunting has been controversial in the past; in 1981, a referendum was held to eliminate moose hunting, but was defeated. Today, differing public opinions and attitudes continue to exist surrounding moose hunting. Nevertheless, over twenty years later, moose hunting and moose watching are both important contributors to the state’s economy. But moose also cause human injury and death when motorists are involved in collisions with them. The Department has the responsibility of managing Maine’s moose population to ensure a healthy, secure population for both viewing and hunting, but at a balance that is mindful of moose-vehicle collisions.



Moose populations in southern Maine, moose-vehicle collisions, and moose hunting are issues that have been around for a while. They were topics considered and addressed in 2000 by the Department’s Big Game Public Working Group – more about this group and the Department’s species planning process is discussed below. In helping the Department to chart its current moose management direction, this public working group chose moose management goals for certain parts of the state that would reduce the number

¹ The Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife granted the Department an extension on the Resolve’s December, 1, 2006 deadline for submitting its evaluation.

of moose and reduce the risk of moose-vehicle accidents; this included that portion of southern Maine not open to moose hunting. In a portion of this area, the working group recommended that the number of moose be reduced by one third; in the remainder, they recommended that the number of moose be reduced to a very low, but unspecified, level.

However, both the Department and the public working group recognized that moose hunting in southern Maine, especially at the level that would be needed to meet the goal of reducing the moose population to very low levels, would be controversial. Given this reality, we (the Department) recognized the need for a dialogue with the public on southern Maine moose hunting. Because of our current staffing constraints, we decided to first focus our efforts on meeting the moose management goals and objectives established for western, northern, and eastern Maine. By doing this, we will be able to ensure that our moose management program is operating smoothly in these areas before attempting to implement it in the other unhunted areas of southern Maine.

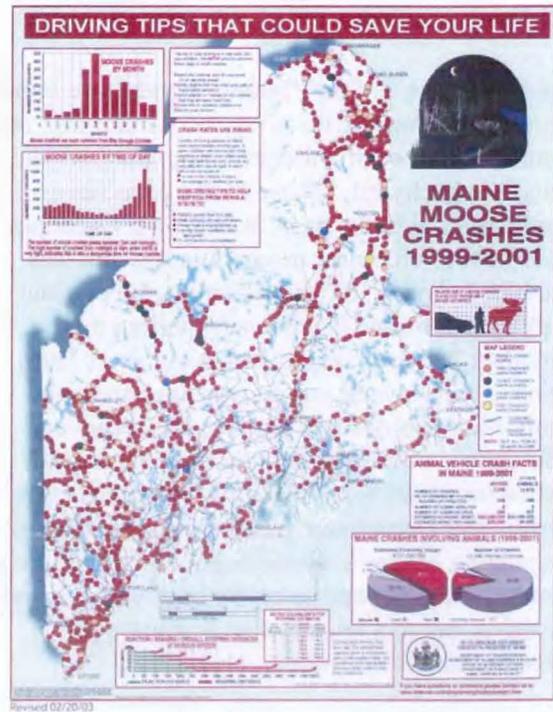
The Legislative Resolve brought the issues of moose populations in southern Maine, moose-vehicle collisions, and southern Maine moose hunting once again to the fore. The report that follows is our evaluation of the possibility of a moose hunt in southern Maine.

It should be noted that in 1999, the Maine legislature granted all responsibility for administering the moose hunt in the year 2001 and beyond to the Department. A brief history of moose hunting in Maine is presented in Appendix 1.

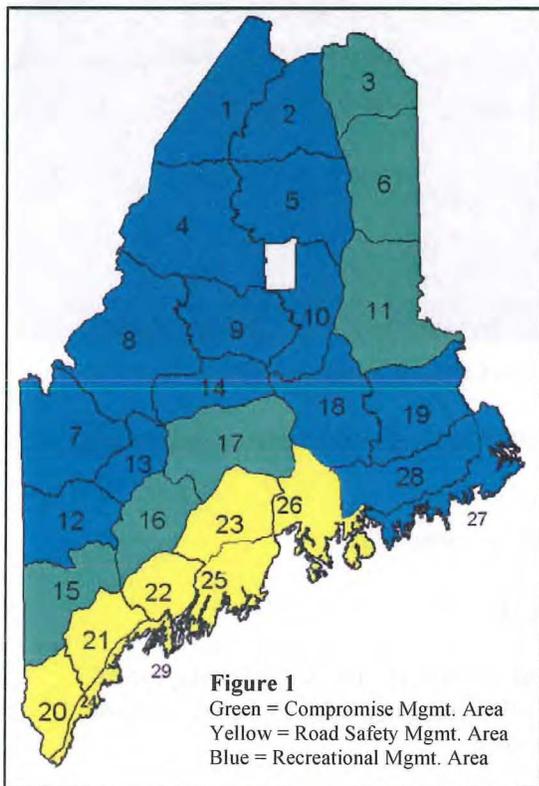
3) Moose Species Planning

In 1999, we convened a Big Game Public Working Group to develop goals and objectives that would guide moose management [as well as the management of deer, bear, and coyote] for the period 2000 – 2015. The Big Game Working Group was a stakeholder group having diverse interests in moose, including moose hunting, moose viewing, and car-moose collisions. The group worked on moose management issues for six months and recommended a series of goals and objectives that covered the entire state, including reducing the moose population in southern Maine and increasing hunting opportunities in other parts of the state.

Prior to convening the working group, we prepared the *Moose Assessment*, an exhaustive review and analysis of all that is known about Maine moose; this assessment outlined management history and the current status of the population, habitat, and biological knowledge. Once convened, the working group used the *Moose Assessment* to guide its development of moose management goals and objectives – the goals are broad statements of management direction, but the objectives establish timelines and are specific and measurable. The working group developed goals and objectives within the following broad sideboards: moose may not be put in jeopardy of extirpation, and they may not be managed in a manner that degrades habitat.



The working group put each Wildlife Management District (WMD) into one of three categories based on the management goals they developed; the categories were Recreation Management, Road Safety, and Compromise Management. WMDs having the same category were grouped into management areas (Figure 1). In the Recreation Management Area, hunting and viewing opportunities were the most important goals. In the Road Safety Area, reducing the number of moose-vehicle collisions was the only goal. In the Compromise Management Area, the goal was to balance recreation and safety concerns. Population objectives were developed for each management goal (Appendix 2).



For WMDs in the Road Safety and Compromise Management Areas, which include the un hunted portions of southern Maine, current populations were considered to be unacceptably high, and the public working group recommended those populations be reduced.

For WMDs in the Recreation Management Area, the working group wanted to have high moose populations, but not so high that habitat would be damaged or animal health compromised. Therefore, the desired population size was expressed relative to the carrying capacity (K) of the habitat. The population objective for the Recreation Management Area was set at 55%-65% K. At this level, the allowable harvest would be nearly maximized, and habitat impacts were expected to be within acceptable limits. The target population of 55%-65% K was expected to be similar to or higher than current populations in most WMDs in the Recreation Management Area.

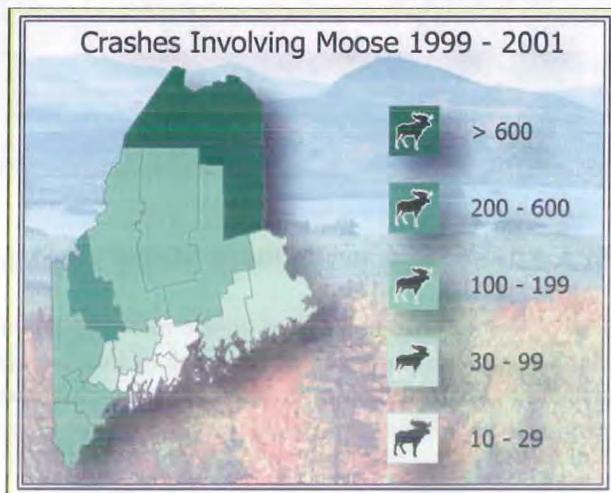
Based on the moose management goals and objectives established by the working group, we prepared the *Moose Management System*, which outlines how we will determine if we are meeting management objectives and

what management actions we will take if the objectives are not being met.

4) A Moose Hunt in Southern Maine – Several Potential Options

To fulfill our mandate under the Legislative Resolve, we began considering how to implement a process to evaluate the possibility of a moose hunt in southern Maine. We decided the process would be most productive if the public were presented several options for its consideration, rather than starting with a “blank slate” and asking the public to conduct its evaluation “from scratch.” Of course, the public could reject our options and make alternative proposals, but we felt that presenting options up front would greatly facilitate public comment and evaluation.

During the summer of 2005, our staff met to consider the various forms that a southern Maine moose hunt might take and the advantages and disadvantages of each (Appendix 3). In these



deliberations, we were guided by the *Moose Management System* and by recommendations provided by the Big Game Public Working Group. We decided to propose the following options to the public:

Option 1

Add WMDs 15, 16, and 27² to the list of WMDs currently open to October moose hunting.

Open WMDs 23 and 26 to moose hunting **during the last week of the muzzleloader deer season** [2nd week in December].

Open WMDs 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 under the above framework at a later date.



Option 2

Add WMDs 15, 16, and 27 to the list of WMDs currently open to October moose hunting.

Open WMDs 23 and 26 to moose hunting **during the last week of the regular firearms deer season** [currently the week of Thanksgiving].

Open WMDs 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 under the above framework at a later date.

Option 3

Add WMDs 15, 16, and 27 to the list of WMDs currently open to October moose hunting.

Open WMDs 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 to moose hunting **during either the Option 1 or Option 2 frameworks.**

Under each of the three options, the Department would allocate moose permits among Wildlife Management Districts, and allocate a combination of any-moose and antlerless-only moose permits as needed.



5) A Moose Hunt in Southern Maine – Public Involvement in 2005

During the fall, we conducted public informational meetings in Bridgton, Readfield, Thorndike, Bucksport, and Machias – one in each of the five affected WMDs – to present an overview of our moose management goals and objectives, moose-vehicle accident data, and to present and discuss options for a southern Maine moose hunt, as outlined above (Appendix 4). At each meeting, we distributed a

² WMD 27 was opened to October moose hunting via Department rule in 2006.

questionnaire and invited the public to provide written comments (Appendix 5). Twenty-six people attended the informational meetings. The questionnaire was also available on our webpage. Two people completed the web-based questionnaire.

In addition, we conducted a voluntary survey of public opinion regarding moose-vehicle collisions, moose populations, and southern Maine moose hunting at our annual September open house at the Maine Wildlife Park in Gray, and approximately 70 people participated.

The Maine Wolf Coalition provided both oral [at the Bridgton informational meeting] and written comments opposing southern Maine moose hunting. The Sportsman's Alliance of Maine provided written comments in support of efforts to expand moose hunting in southern Maine.

As can be seen from the above, public participation in the review and critique of the Department's three southern Maine moose hunting options was limited. However, based on this public input, it seems that a majority of people support or accept a southern moose season, and, while opinions vary, a season during the November firearm deer season seems to be preferred. Most do not believe that there are too many moose in southern Maine, but about half of the public is concerned about moose-vehicle collisions.

Most public comment fell into one of four categories. These were: 1) the desirability of reducing moose numbers, 2) issues and concerns regarding season timing, 3) general concerns about hunting moose in southern Maine, and 4) how the southern season would be administered and how a person's participation in the southern moose hunt would impact their hunting opportunity in the recreation management area (western, northern, and eastern WMDs).



In addition to general comments for or against reducing the moose population, several people pointed out that even if the number of moose were reduced, there would still be a risk of hitting a moose. Some felt that alternative risk-reduction techniques (lighting, education, speed limit) should be used in conjunction with a lower moose population³, while some felt alternatives should be used without reducing the population. Several people thought there was more risk in areas that were not proposed for the initial expansion, and they

urged opening these areas either in addition to, or instead of, the proposed WMDs. Some questioned if there was adequate information to hold a hunt in southern Maine.

Some questions about season timing were raised including: Will there be different hunter success rates at different times of year? When do bulls lose their antlers? Will holding moose season during muzzleloader season increase deer poaching or make law enforcement difficult? Several members of the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine thought that most landowners would prefer a November season, and some hunters apparently agreed, because they felt that a season other than November would result in

³ The Department, the Maine Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Safety are working together to find mechanisms to reduce large-animal collisions. These include signage and lighting, public service announcements, and driver's education materials, among others.

more posted land. On the other hand, several people commented that a December season would result in less interference between deer and moose hunters.

A number of individuals pointed out that hunting in southern Maine would be very different from what occurs in the north. Some thought that success would likely be low, especially for hunters not from the immediate area who did not have a guide. Several expressed concern that it would be difficult to remove moose from private land or that removing moose could damage private land.

Several people were concerned that if a person chose to hunt moose in southern Maine and killed a moose there, that he/she could not apply for a permit in the “traditional” moose hunting area for 2 years, and that this might discourage people from hunting in the south. One person suggested a landowner preference in the allocation of moose permits in southern Maine.

An analysis of the public input received at the informational meetings, from the Internet, and at the wildlife park is presented in Appendix 6.

6) A Moose Hunt in Southern Maine – A Proposal Based on the Public Comment

During the early months of 2006, we modified our initial slate of options into a single southern Maine moose hunt proposal, which was based on the public comment received during 2005 and incorporates the following:

a) The Goals

Allocate sufficient moose permits in southern Maine to allow a slow to moderate decrease in moose numbers and to eliminate or greatly reduce any conflicts between moose hunters, landowners, and the general public.

b) Areas Proposed to be Opened

Open WMDs 15, 16, 23, and 26 to moose hunting in 2008.

We proposed expanding moose hunting to the remaining five southern Maine WMDs after we had reviewed the information and gained experience from the initial moose hunt in southern Maine.

c) Season Timing

Hold the southern Maine moose hunt during the regular firearms deer season in November.

Most people who attended the public meetings preferred that the moose season in southern Maine be held in November, in conjunction with the regular firearms season for deer, rather than during October or December. This was true for landowners, the general public, and is in agreement with the public working group’s recommendation.



d) Permit Numbers

Allocate sufficient permits to allow a slow to moderate decrease in moose numbers: WMD 15: 25 permits, WMD 16: 20 permits, WMD 23: 45 permits, and WMD 26: 45 permits.

The majority of people generally accepted the idea of moose hunting in southern Maine, however, there was little enthusiasm for greatly reducing the number of moose. Although the public working group recommended a large reduction in moose numbers, they also noted that such a season would be controversial. The public working group recommended a conservative start. The Department anticipates, and many of the public concur, that the success rate of moose hunters in the southern Maine WMDs will likely to be less than in the “traditional” moose-hunting districts; and so, the number of permits proposed will likely result in a conservative reduction in moose numbers.

Below is a summary of the additional number of hunters that we proposed will be afield moose hunting during the November firearms deer season. [One permit allows a “permittee” and a “sub-permittee” to hunt.]

WMD 15	25 permits / 996 sq mi = 5.0 moose hunters / 100 sq mi.
WMD 16	20 permits / 718 sq mi = 5.6 moose hunters / 100 sq mi.
WMD 23	45 permits / 913 sq mi = 9.8 moose hunters / 100 sq mi
WMD 26	45 permits / 619 sq mi = 14.6 moose hunters / 100 sq mi

e) Type of Permit

Allocate “any-moose” permits.

In northern WMDs, where we are seeking to increase or maintain moose population levels and maximize



hunter opportunity, we proposed issuing bull-only and antlerless-only permits. This will allow us to regulate the growth of the moose population by controlling the cow harvest, and to maximize hunter opportunity by allowing hunters to kill bulls without over harvesting cows.

In the WMDs proposed for the southern Maine moose hunt, the goal is to reduce the moose population. [We will be concerned if hunters select for bulls and do not remove an adequate number of cows.]

Hunter success is expected to be low, and this may make hunters less selective in their decision to shoot a cow or bull moose.

f) Mechanism for Allocating Permits

Hold one drawing for all WMDs, season dates, and permit types.

This will retain a uniform system for the waiting period and preference points; we also believe it is the simplest and fairest way to administer this hunt.

7) 2006 Public Involvement

During 2006, we took the southern Maine moose hunting proposal outlined above out for further public review and comment. The results of this effort are reported below.

a) Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine / Maine Farm Bureau Association

We reviewed this new southern Maine moose-hunting proposal with both the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine and Maine Farm Bureau Association – two landowner-based organizations – to determine if the proposal presented concerns.

On July 14, 2006, the board of directors of the Maine Farm Bureau Association chose to support the hunt proposal; and they provided a letter stating that support to us.

The Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine, through its board, voted to support the southern Maine moose hunt proposal provided that the following conditions were met:

- The season occurs only during the regular firearm season for deer;
- That permits granted also contain information for the hunters to educate them on the subject of landowner relations, permission to hunt, and aspects of private property; and
- That harvest levels be set based on science and sustainability of moose populations.

SWOAM provided us with a letter outlining its conditional support for the Department’s proposal.

b) 2006 Public Information Meetings

In October, we held a second round of public informational meetings in Thorndike and Bridgton. Again, we gave an overview of the moose management goals and objectives, moose-vehicle accident data, and a presentation on the moose hunt proposal (Appendix 7). Two members of the public attended the Thorndike meeting and supported the hunt proposal. Twenty-one attended the Bridgton meeting; based on the questions and comments, it appeared that those in attendance generally supported the concept. Once again,



those attending indicated that hunting in southern Maine would be very different from what occurs in the north. There was concern that it would be difficult to remove moose from private land or that there could be damage to private land from removing moose. The suggestion of a landowner preference in the allocation of permits was again voiced. Several people were concerned that if a person chose to hunt moose in southern Maine and killed a moose there, that he/she could not apply for a permit in the “traditional” moose hunting area for 2 years, and this might discourage people from hunting in the south.

c) 2006 Public Hearing

On December 13, 2006, we held a public hearing at the Pine Tree Arboretum in Augusta regarding the southern Maine moose hunt proposal. Two members of the public attended. A representative of the Maine Wolf Coalition testified in opposition to the proposal. No other public comment was offered.

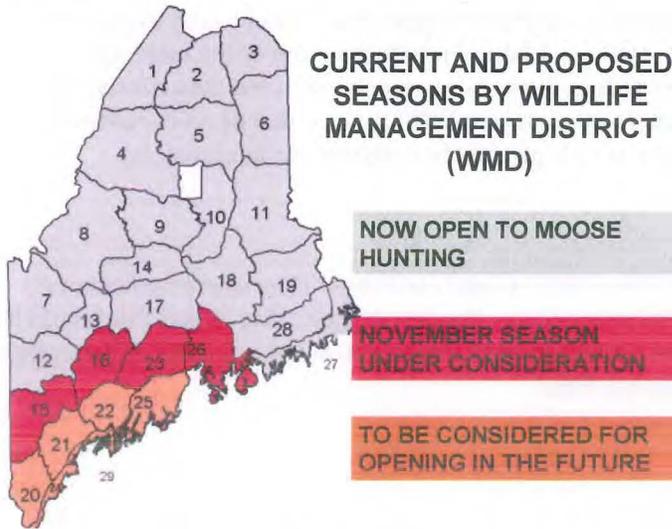
d) Other Public Comment

Throughout the entire public involvement process, we received 18 additional comments via letter, e-mail, and telephone. Eleven of these opposed moose hunting in southern Maine; the remainder supported the concept of southern Maine moose hunt, but of these, one-half disagreed with some aspect of the proposal, most often the season framework of the regular firearm deer season.

In addition to the above, the Wildlife Alliance of Maine provided written comments stating its opposition to southern Maine moose hunting. The Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance in Monroe provided comments questioning the science behind the southern Maine proposal and indicated that it would consider closing its lands to hunting.

8) The Department’s Recommendations to the Legislature

Drawing upon the moose management system, the recommendations of the Big Game Public Working Group, public comment received, the support of the Farm Bureau Association of Maine, the Small Woodland Owners of Maine, and the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, as well as the input of staff, the Department proposes the following:



a) Open WMDs 15, 16, 23, and 26 to moose hunting in 2008.

We will apply the information and experience gained from the initial moose hunt in southern Maine to any future openings that may be considered for the remaining 5 WMDs currently closed to moose hunting.

b) Hold the southern Maine moose hunt during the regular firearms deer season in November.

c) Allocate sufficient permits to allow a

slow to moderate decrease in moose numbers, while eliminating or greatly reducing conflicts between moose hunters, landowners, and the general public.

WMD 15 – 25 permits; WMD 16 – 20 permits; WMD 23 – 45 permits; and WMD 26 – 45 permits.

d) Issue “any-moose” permits, based on the existing requirements that 10% are allocated to non-residents.

e) Hold one drawing for all WMDs, season dates, and permit types.

This will retain a uniform system for the waiting periods and preference points; we also believe it is the simplest and fairest way to administer this hunt. As such, it will integrate the southern Maine moose hunt into our on-going moose management and hunting programs.

We believe that no implementing legislation will be required to initiate this suggested moose hunt in southern Maine.

9) Additional issues to be considered

In closing, we would like to bring to the Committee’s attention several concerns expressed by hunters and landowners that relate to a southern Maine moose hunt, moose hunting, and hunting in general.

a) Access

We heard many times that a moose hunt in southern Maine will be very different from the moose hunting that occurs in western, northern, and eastern Maine. This is because hunters participating in a southern Maine moose hunt will be hunting largely on small, private landholdings. There was concern that hunting access may be a challenge, that it will be difficult to remove moose from private land, and that hunters could damage private land by removing killed moose. SWOAM volunteered to work with the Department to develop informational materials for southern Maine moose hunters to educate them on the subject of landowner relations, permission to hunt, and other appropriate aspects of private property.

b) Landowner Preference

Landowners whom are also hunters asked us to provide a landowner preference for moose hunting like that provided for deer hunting. We heard this request in southern Maine, but we have also been hearing this idea expressed in the agricultural regions of northern Maine. In both portions of the state, the landowners’ logic is that it is their land that is providing the hunting opportunity, but they receive no recognition for this. Both agricultural landowners in the northern WMDs [1, 3, and 6] and southern landowners are requesting that a percentage of the moose permits be reserved for landowners.

c) Resident-only Saturday

Several non-resident landowners attended the public informational meetings. They expressed concern about the “unfair” nature of the residents-only Saturday during the deer season; they stated this would be further aggravation to them if they held a southern Maine moose permit but could not hunt on the opening Saturday during the proposed southern Maine moose hunt.

Appendix 1

A brief history of moose hunting in Maine

History Of Moose Hunting In Maine

Since moose hunting was reestablished in 1980, MDIFW has attempted to meet publicly derived Goals and objectives by adjusting the hunting seasons within season frameworks set by the legislature. Significant changes in seasons and management objectives are outlined below.

- 1935:** Last legal moose hunting prior to the re-establishment of modern day moose hunting in Maine.
- 1980:** “Experimental” moose season established North of the CP tracks for 6 days, 700 permits and no zones.
- 1982:** Annual 6 day seasons north of the CP tracks with up to 1,000 permits established. Hunting zones were established to distribute hunting pressure. The maximum number of permits were issued.
- 1985:** A public working group establishes a management goal to “**Maintain moose numbers at 1985 levels, increase harvest, and maintain viewing opportunity.**” During the time this objective was in effect the moose population was above 1985 levels.
- 1986:** Area open to hunting is expanded south to routes 16, 6, 2, 178 and 9.
- 1994:** Allowable number of permits is increased to 1,200 and the maximum number is issued.
- 1995:** Allowable number of permits is increased to 1,400 and the maximum number is issued.
- 1996:** Allowable number of permits is increased to 1,500 and the maximum number is issued.
- 1997:** Additional area (South Moose hunting Zone) is opened.
- 1998:** Allowable number of permits is increased to 2,000 and the maximum number is issued.
- 1999:** Emergency legislation increases permits to 3,000 and introduces antlerless only permits to increase the number of cows killed and reduce the moose population. The antlerless only Permits are issued in the NE and SW MHZs where moose/vehicle accidents are common.
- 2000:** A public working group establishes population goals for each WMD. There are now 3 types of goals for different parts of the state:
- 1. Manage the population in balance with the habitat and maintain mature bulls.**
 - 2. Reduce the population by 1/3.**
 - 3. Reduce the population to promote road safety.**
- 2001:** MeDIF&W receives authority to manage the moose hunt. Permits are issued by WMD rather than moose hunting zone. WMDs 28 and 29 are opened to hunting and a split season is introduced for many WMDs.
- 2002:** Permit allocations are changed in response to changing objectives and populations. Antlerless only permits are decreased and any moose permits are replaced with bull only permits in most WMDs to be managed in balance with habitat. In WMDs where populations are to be reduced by 1/3 permit numbers and Antlerless only permits are increased (WMDs 3, 6, and 11) and additional area (WMD 17) is opened.
- 2003:** In response to the stated goal and public demand for a reduction in moose numbers the permit allocation was increased in WMDs 3, 6, and 11.
- 2005:** Legislative resolve directing MDIFW to evaluate expanding moose hunting into southern Maine.

Appendix 2

Species planning / moose population goals and objectives

MOOSE MANAGEMENT - SPECIES PLANNING

- Moose (and other species) are managed based on goals and objectives developed by a public working group. **See Moose Management Goals and Objectives below.**
- Working groups are convened about every 15 years, or sooner if changes in habitat, social concerns, or biological knowledge indicate that the goals are no longer appropriate.
- Members of working groups represent various interests in the species. **The big game working group had representatives from:**

Sportsman's Alliance of Maine
Moosehead Lake COC
Maine Professional Guides Association
Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council
Forest Products Council
Defenders of Wildlife
Bethel Area COC
Maine Lyme Disease Working Group
Depredation Impacts

Legislative Fish and Wildlife committee
Penobscot Nation
Maine Sporting Camp Association
Moose Vehicle Collisions
Passamaquoddy Nation
Maine Farm Bureau
Small Woodlot Owners Association of Maine
Maine Audubon
Maine Trappers Association

- The planning process has several steps:
 - IF&W prepares an assessment that outlines management history, the current status of the population, habitat, and biological knowledge.
 - The working group develops goals and objectives within the following sideboards: The species may not be put in jeopardy of extirpation and it may not be managed where habitat damage will occur.
 - IF&W prepares a management system that outlines how we will measure where the population is relative to the objective and what management actions will be taken when the objective is not being met.

MOOSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

DEVELOPMENT OF GOALS

The Big Game Public Working Group convened in 1999 to develop goals and objectives that would guide moose management for the next 10-15 years. The goals are broad statements that describe the "products" wanted from the moose population.

The working group put each WMD (wildlife management district) into one of three categories based on the management goals they developed; the categories were Recreation Management, Road Safety, and Compromise Management. Wildlife Management Districts having the same category were grouped into management areas (Fig. 1). In the Recreation Management Area, hunting, and usually viewing, opportunities were the most important goals. In the Road Safety Area, reducing the number of moose/vehicle collisions was the only goal. In the Compromise Management Area, the goal was to balance recreation and safety concerns. Population objectives were developed for each management goal.

For WMDs in the Road Safety and Compromise Management Areas, current populations are considered to be unacceptably high, and the public working group recommended those populations be reduced

For WMDs in the Recreation Management Area, the working group wanted to have high moose populations, but not so high that habitat would be damaged or animal health would be compromised. Therefore, the desired population size was expressed relative to the carrying capacity (K) of the habitat. The population objective for the Recreation Management Area was set at 55%-65% K. At this level, the allowable harvest would be nearly maximized, and habitat impacts were expected to be within acceptable limits. The target population of 55%-65% K was expected to be similar to or higher than current populations in most WMDs in the Recreation Management Area.

2000 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES *(these were based on old WMDs. WMD boundary changes that effect goals and objectives are noted in parenthesis)*

Recreation Management Area

WMDs 1, 2, 4-9, 10, 12, 13, 18, 19, 28, & 29 *(New 27 includes part of former 29 and part of former 27. New 29, is off shore islands, is roughly equivalent to old 30 and has no moose management goals)*

Goal: Balance concerns over moose/vehicle collisions with the desire to provide excellent hunting and viewing opportunity. **Or** Maximize hunting opportunity while maintaining the availability of mature bulls.

Objective: Manage the moose population at 55%-65% K with 17% mature bulls.
(moose/vehicle collisions to be addressed by methods other than reducing the number of moose)

Compromise Management Area

WMDs 3, 6, 11, 15, 16, & 17

Goal: Reduce moose/vehicle collisions.

Objective: By 2005, reduce the current (2000) moose population by 1/3 (several different objectives for herd composition).

Road Safety Management Area

WMDs 20 – 27 *(This roughly corresponds to the new 20-26)*

Goal: Reduce moose/vehicle collisions

Objective: Reduce the moose population to the extent necessary to minimize the danger to motorists.

MOOSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM -MONITORING THE POPULATION

In the **compromise area**, the number of moose relative to the objective (1/3 of 2000 population) is measured using deer hunter sighting rates.

In the **safety area**, the number of moose relative to the objective (much lower) is measured using deer hunter sighting rates.

In the **recreation area**, the number of moose relative to the habitat is evaluated by either a census or a model that predicts moose numbers based on deer hunter sighting rates. The number of moose in relation to the habitat is monitored by checking for a reduction in the weight and antler development of harvested animals.

...the ... and the ...

Appendix 3

During the summer of 2005, Department staff met to consider the various forms that a southern Maine moose hunt might take and the advantage and disadvantages of each.

Southern Maine Moose Hunt

Option 1

-- Add WMDs 15, 16 and 27 to the list of WMDs currently open to October moose hunting beginning with the October 2006 moose hunting season.

Number of Permits: Yet to be determined, but likely within the following range

WMD 15	20-50 permits
WMD 16	15-40
WMD 27	20-60

-- Open WMDs 23 and 26 to moose hunting **during the last week of the muzzleloader deer season**, beginning with the 2006 muzzleloader season – **December 4 – December 9, 2006**

Number of Permits: Yet to be determined, but likely within the following range

WMD 23	30-70 permits
WMD 26	30-75

Open WMDs 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 under the above framework in 2007

All other rules governing moose hunting would remain in effect.

Advantages:

Higher probability for tracking snow and frozen ground, the latter facilitating removal of moose without damaging roads, field, etc., --landowner issues
Fewer hunters afield: landowner issues, hunt quality??
Allows hunters to concentrate on moose after most are finished deer hunting
Bulls have started to regain weight and body mass following the September rut

Disadvantages:

Enforcement issues with regular firearms being used during the muzzleloader deer season?? However, regular firearms can still be in the field during this season for other hunting seasons.

Option 2

-- Add WMDs 15, 16 and 27 to the list of WMDs currently open to October moose hunting beginning with the October 2006 moose hunting season.

Number of Permits: Yet to be determined, but likely within the following range

WMD 15	20-50 permits
WMD 16	15-40
WMD 27	20-60

-- Open WMDs 23 and 26 to moose hunting **during the last week of the regular firearms deer season**, beginning in the 2006 firearms deer season – **November 20 – November 25, 2006.**

Number of Permits: Yet to be determined, but likely within the following range

WMD 23	30-70 permits
WMD 26	30-75

Open WMDs 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 under the above framework in 2007

All other rules governing moose hunting would remain in effect.

Advantages:

Allows hunters to take moose while deer hunting; may improve efficiency of achieving moose harvest goals
Long Thanksgiving holiday would be available to families for moose hunting

Disadvantages:

Lower probability for tracking snow and frozen ground, the latter facilitating removal of moose without damaging roads, field, etc., --landowner issues
More hunters afield: landowner issues, hunt quality??
Bulls would perhaps not have regained as much weight and body mass as during a December season

Option 3

-- Add WMDs 15, 16 and 27 to the list of WMDs currently open to October moose hunting beginning with the October 2006 moose hunting season.

Number of Permits: Yet to be determined, but likely within the following range

WMD 15	20-50 permits
WMD 16	15-40
WMD 27	20-60

-- Open WMDs 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 to moose hunting **during either the Option 1 or Option 2 framework.**

Number of Permits: Yet to be determined, but likely within the following range

WMD 20	20-50 permits
WMD 21	20-45
WMD 22	15-45
WMD 23	30-70
WMD 24	10-30
WMD 25	25-60
WMD 26	30-75

Advantages:

Implements southern Maine moose management goals and objectives immediately in 2006

Disadvantages:

Options 3 does not allow for a “go-slow” approach, as do options 1 and 2, that would allow the Department to gauge public acceptance and work out the bugs [landowner issues, hunter success / permit numbers, etc.,] before moving forward with moose hunting in populated, southern coastal Maine.

Appendix 4

During the fall, the Department conducted public informational meetings in Bridgton, Readfield, Thorndike, Bucksport, and Machias -- one in each of the five affected WMDs – to present an overview of its moose management goals and objectives, moose-vehicle accident data, and to present and discuss possible options for a southern Maine moose hunt.

MOOSE HUNTING IN SOUTHERN MAINE

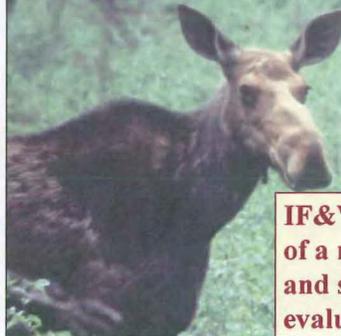
Agenda for public meeting:



- Legislative resolve
- Moose management goals and objectives
- Moose/vehicle accident data
- Season proposals
- Comments and suggestions



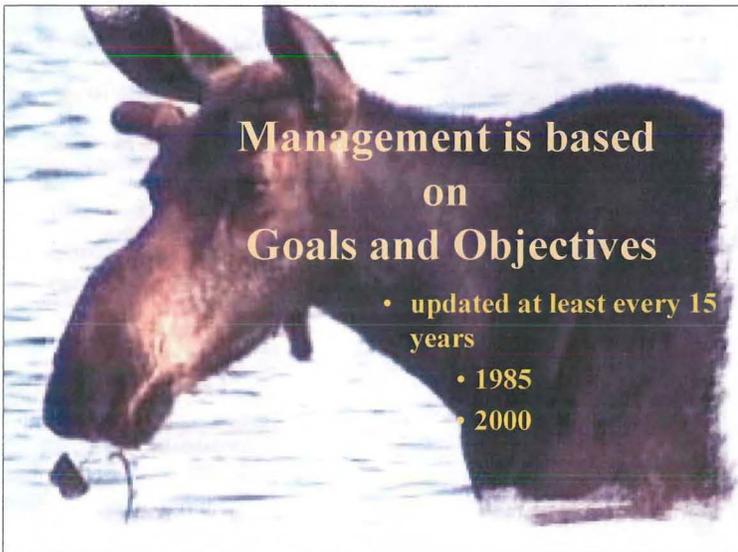
LEGISLATIVE RESOLVE TO EVALUATE THE POSSIBILITY OF A MOOSE HUNT IN SOUTHERN MAINE



IF&W shall evaluate the possibility of a moose hunt in southern Maine and submit a report based on that evaluation to the legislature.

Management is based on Goals and Objectives

- updated at least every 15 years
 - 1985
 - 2000



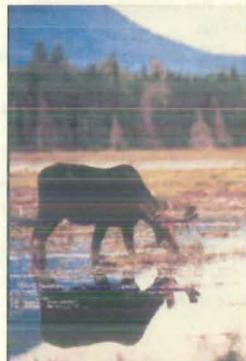
SPECIES ASSESSMENT

- Prepared & reviewed by IF&W
- Assembles most current information & professional judgments available
- Status of species & biological sideboards for developing Goals & Objectives



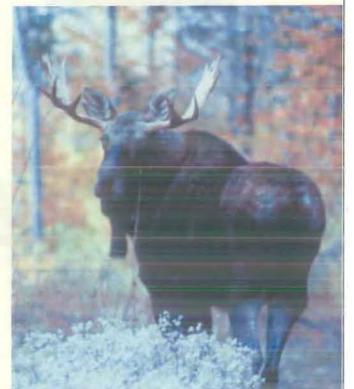
MANAGEMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Developed by a public working group
- Balanced representation
- Minimal IF&W involvement
- Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council adopts

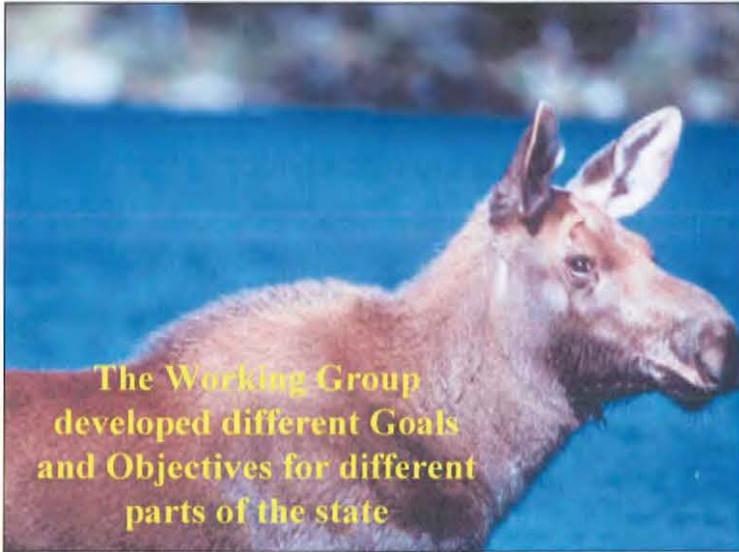


ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2000 BIG GAME WORKING GROUP

- ✓ Sportsman's Alliance of Maine
- ✓ Moosehead Lake Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Maine Professional Guides Association
- ✓ Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council
- ✓ Forest Products Council
- ✓ Defenders of Wildlife
- ✓ Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Maine Lyme Disease Working Group
- ✓ Deer Depredation Impacts
- ✓ Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee
- ✓ Penobscot Nation
- ✓ Maine Sporting Camp Association
- ✓ Moose Vehicle Collisions
- ✓ Maine Bowhunters Association
- ✓ Maine Trappers Association
- ✓ Passamaquoddy Nation
- ✓ Maine Farm Bureau
- ✓ Small Woodlot Owners Association of Maine
- ✓ Maine Audubon



* Groups in BOLD participated



Recreation Management Area

Goal: For any WMD in this area the goal is either:
 Maximize hunting and viewing opportunity and maintain the availability of mature bulls OR
 Balance concerns over moose/vehicle collisions with the desire to provide excellent hunting and viewing opportunity.

Objective: Manage the moose population in balance with available habitat while maintaining 17% mature bulls.

Management to date: Permits have been reduced to allow the population to increase toward the objective.
 Moose/vehicle accidents are addressed with signage and driver education.

MOOSE /VEHICLE ACCIDENTS
3-YEAR AVERAGE
 WMD 27 8

Compromise Management Area (northern)

Goal: Balance the public's concern about moose/vehicle collisions with the public's desire to hunt moose.

Objective: Reduce the current (2000) moose population by one-third.

Management to date: Permit numbers have been increased and antlerless only permits have been introduced.
 Moose/vehicle accidents are also addressed with signage and driver education.

Compromise Management Area (southern)

Goal: Reduce moose/vehicle collisions.

Objective: Reduce the current (2000) moose population by one-third.

Management to date: WMD 17 has been opened with a conservative number of permits.
 Hunting seasons are now being considered for WMDs 15 and 16.
 Moose/vehicle accidents are being addressed with signage and driver education.

MOOSE /VEHICLE ACCIDENTS
3-YEAR AVERAGE
 WMD 15 25
 WMD 16 17

Road Safety Management Area

Goal: Reduce moose/vehicle collisions

Objective: Reduce the moose population to the extent necessary to minimize the danger to motorists.

Management to date: To date no action has been taken to reduce the number of moose.
 Hunting seasons are now being considered.
 Moose/vehicle accidents are being addressed with signage and driver education.

MOOSE /VEHICLE ACCIDENTS
3-YEAR AVERAGE
 WMD 23 9
 WMD 26 11

Moose-Vehicle Collisions - What is the problem?

- About 700 collisions annually, statewide
- 150 collisions result in human injury
- 2-3 people die each year
- Est. annual economic impact is \$17.5 million
- 90% occur at dawn or dusk
- Moose collisions are 14% of Maine's large animal collisions but lead to 80% of the fatalities
- Peak collision season is May-June, but they can occur anytime of the year or anyplace.

Crashes Involving Moose 1999 - 2001



Moose/vehicle accident data



Average number of moose/vehicle accidents by county (last 3 years)

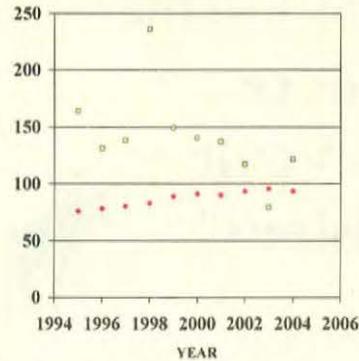
Androscoggin	8
Aroostook	243
Cumberland	25
Franklin	66
Hancock	14
Kennebec	17
Knox	7
Lincoln	5
Oxford	49
Penobscot	72
Piscataquis	31
Sagadahoc	3
Somerset	53
Waldo	9
Washington	37
York	32

Average number of moose/vehicle accidents by county (last 3 years)

Androscoggin	8
Aroostook	243
Cumberland	25
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Hancock	14
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Penobscot	72
Piscataquis	31
Sagadahoc	3
Somerset	53
Waldo	9
Washington	37
York	32

Number of moose/vehicle accidents and number of miles driven by year in southern Maine

(Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo and York counties)



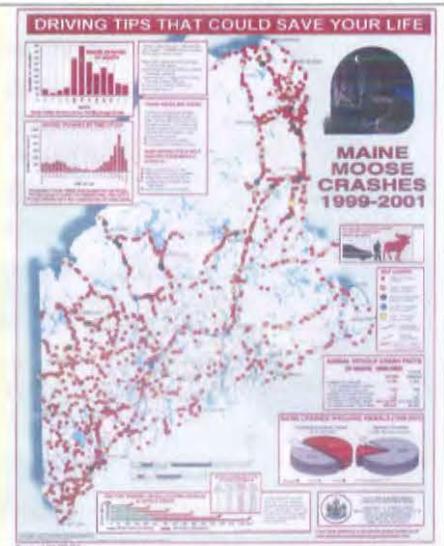
• 100 MILLION MILES DRIVEN
 ◻ ACCIDENTS

Moose vehicle collisions continue to average over 100 per year in this portion of Maine.

What has been done to address Moose-Vehicle Collisions?

- Increase # of permits in high risk areas. IF&W did this in 2003 in WMDs 3, 6 and 11 in northern Maine.
- Maine Interagency Work Group has worked on outreach (maps, Public Service Announcements), driver education, safety video, and are currently looking at specific methods to reduce accidents at high risk sites.

IF&W HAS BEEN WORKING WITH DOT TO REDUCE POTENTIAL FOR MOOSE/VEHICLE COLLISIONS



We have been taking steps to affect driver actions, but moose vehicle accidents continue to occur!



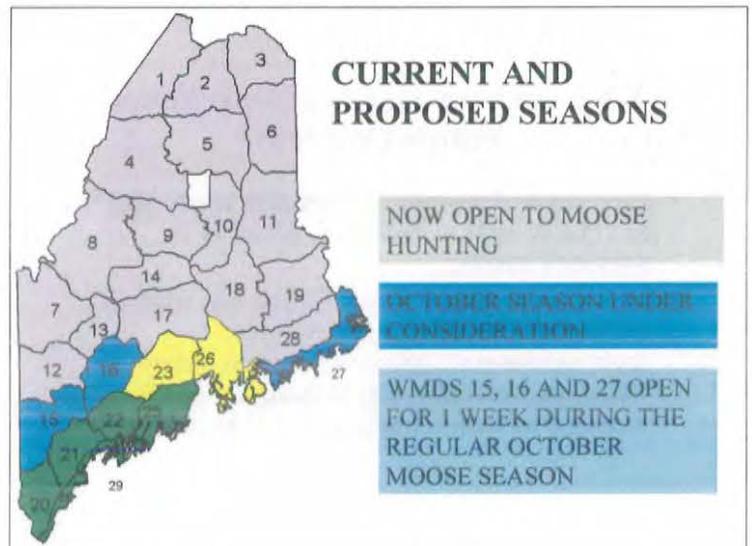
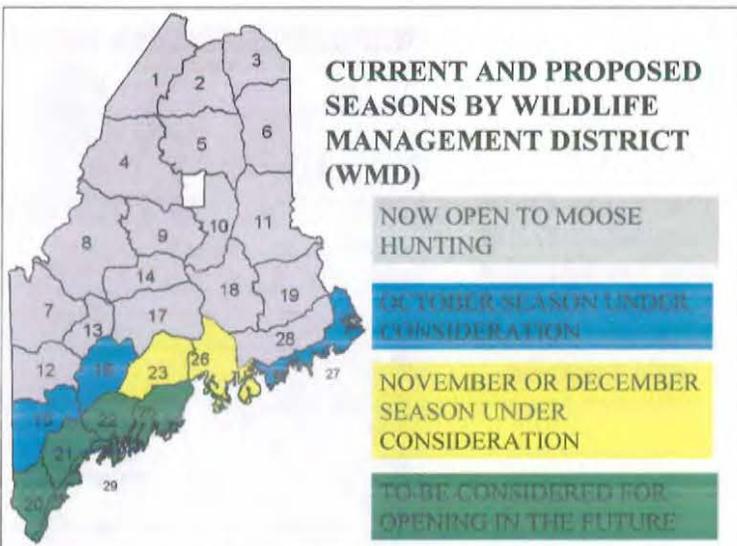
Any moose vehicle accident has the potential to result in serious injury or death!

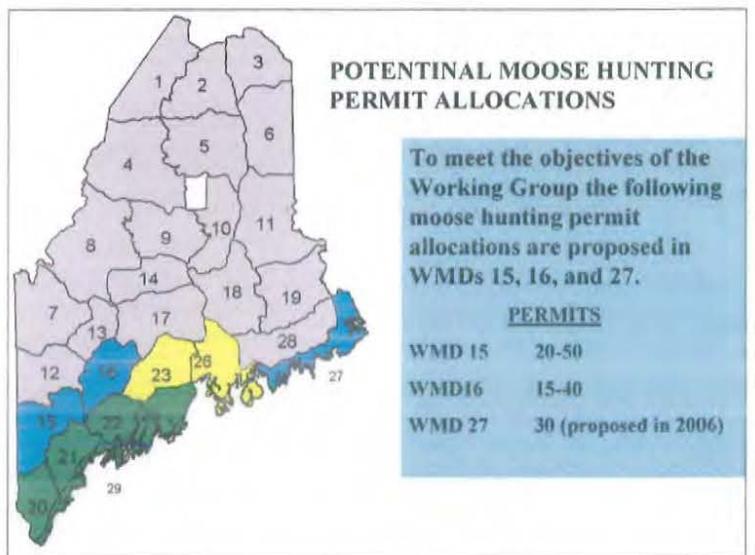
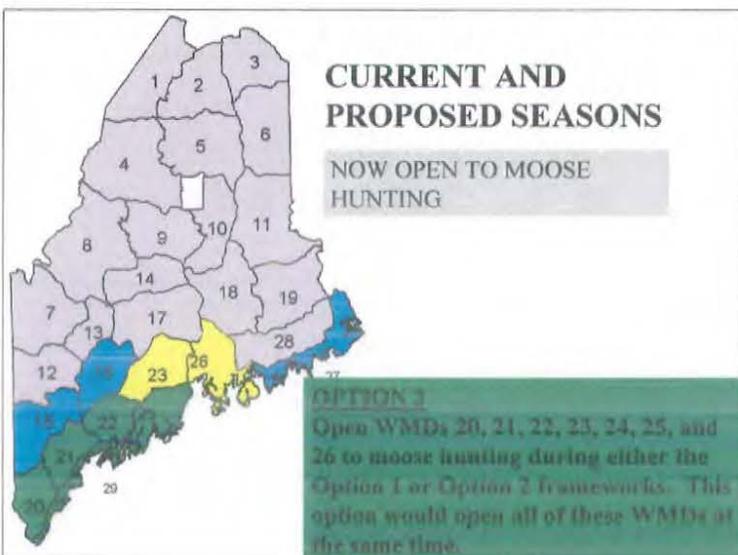
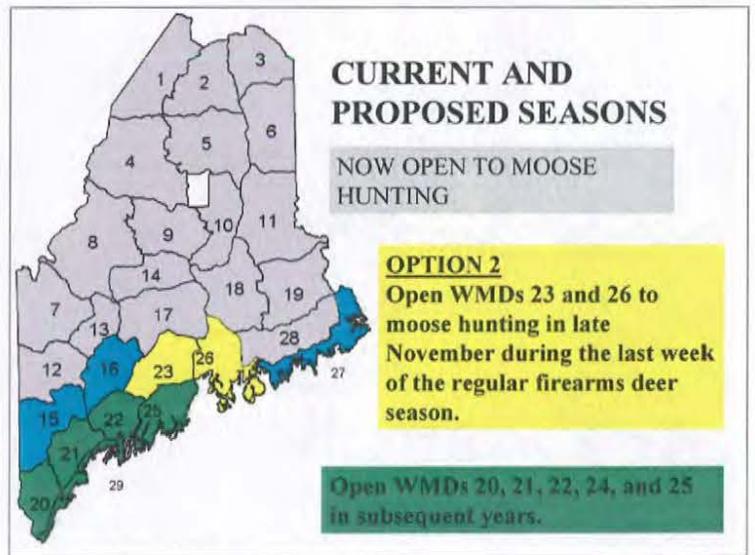
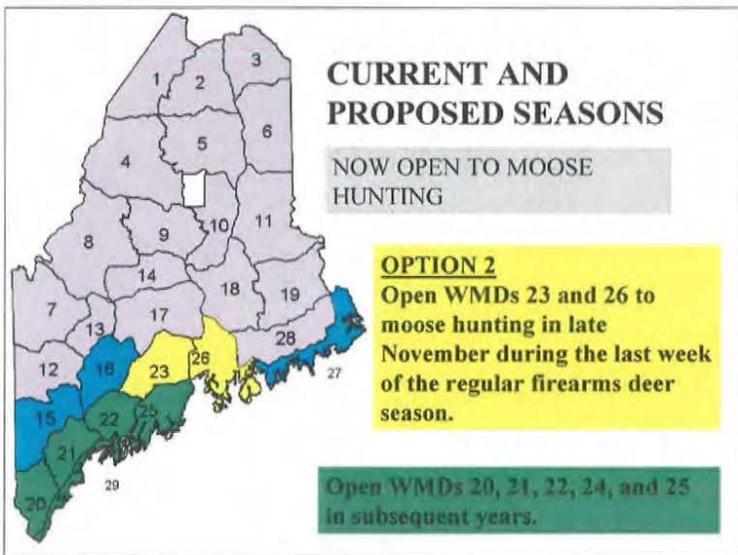
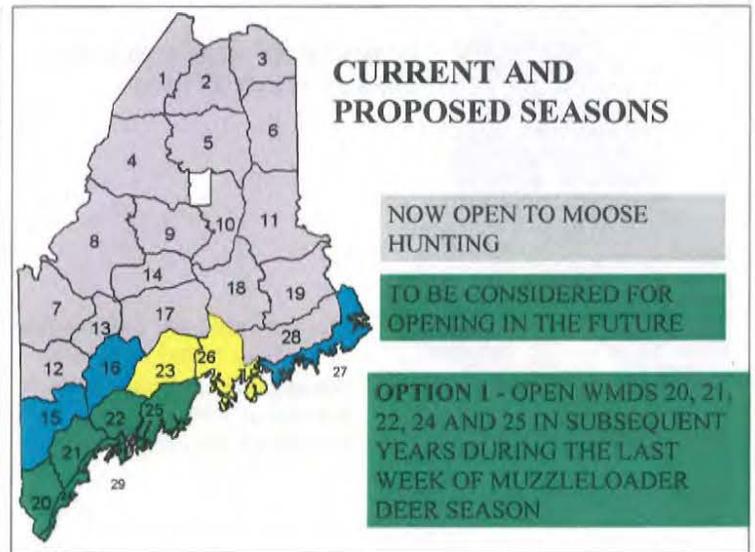
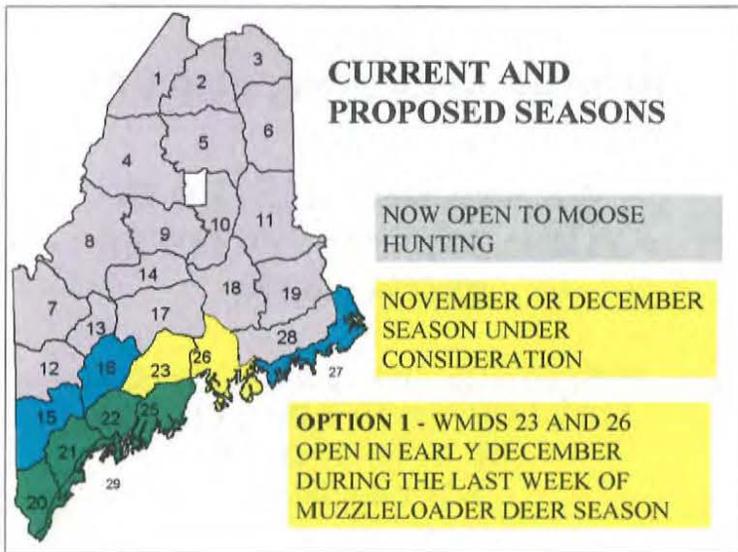


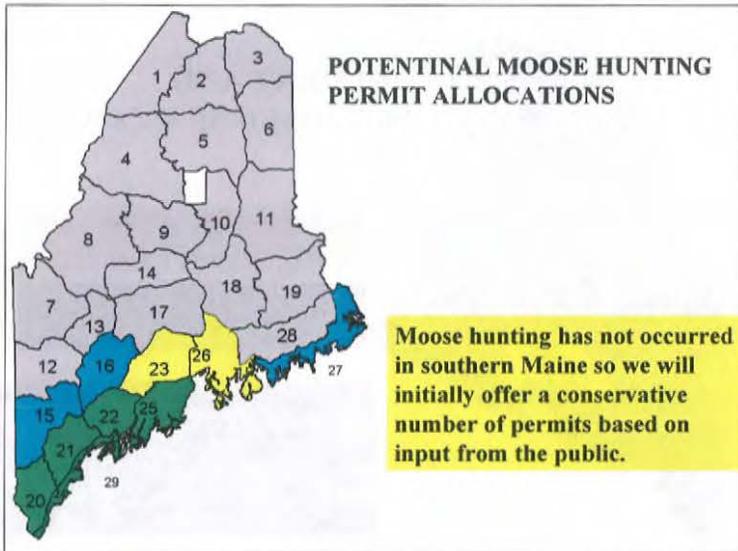
What Options Remain to Further Reduce Moose/Vehicle Collisions?



THE BIG GAME WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDED REDUCING THE MOOSE POPULATION TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY TO MINIMIZE THE DANGER TO MOTORISTS.



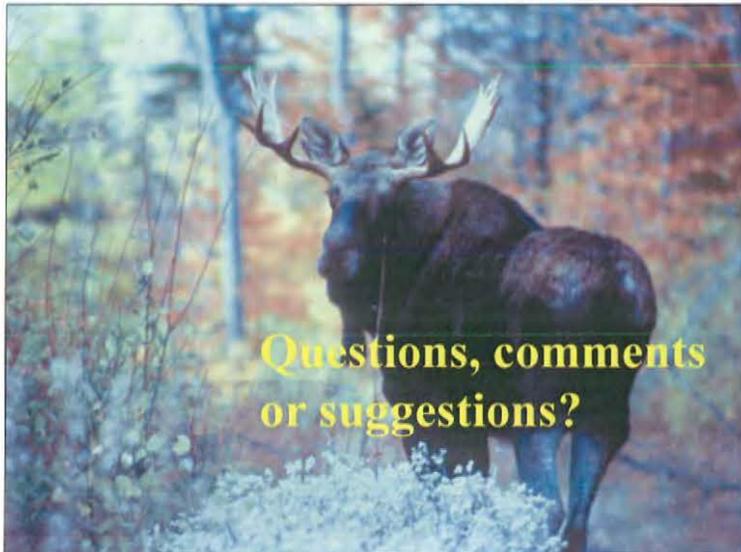




PUBLIC MEETING SURVEY

WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOUR OPINION ON THESE PROPOSALS!

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY WILL BE SUMMARIZED AND INCLUDED IN THE REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE.



Appendix 5

Questionnaire distributed at public information meetings and on the Department's web page.

PUBLIC MEETING SURVEY

Location of Public Meeting: _____

1. What town do you live in? _____
2. Please circle the letter before the statement that best describes your opinion of moose numbers in the area where you live.
 - A. There are too many moose.
 - B. The number of moose is about right
 - C. I would like to have more moose in the area.
 - D. Not sure
3. Do you think that moose pose an **unacceptable** road hazard in the area where you live?
Please circle the answer reflecting your opinion.

YES NO NOT SURE

4. If your answer to 3. is YES, please circle letter before all the ways you would like to have used to reduce the hazard.
 - A. driver education (signs, public service announcements, driver ed classes)
 - B. reduced (and enforced) speed limits
 - C. improved visibility (cleared roadsides, striping on edge of road)
 - D. a slight reduction in the number of moose
 - E. reduction of moose numbers to near zero
 - E. other _____
5. **If** a moose hunt is held in the area where I live, the best time would be Please circle the letter before the statement that best describes your opinion:
 - A. During the regular moose season in October
 - B. In late November during the regular firearm deer season.
 - C. In early December during the muzzleloader season
 - D. other _____

6. Do you own agricultural or forested property? Please circle the answer.

YES NO

7. If your answer to 6. is YES, would you permit moose hunting on your property? Please circle the answer reflecting your opinion.

YES NO NOT SURE

8. Has your opinion regarding moose hunting in southern Maine changed as a result of this meeting?

YES NO NOT SURE

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS? Please use other side of paper. Thanks.

Appendix 6

An analysis of the public input received at the informational meetings, from the Internet, and at the wildlife park.

Public Response To Proposal To Open Southern Maine To Moose Hunting

The legislature directed the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to evaluate the possibility of a moose season in southern Maine. There is no legal obstacle because the Department has the authority to establish such a moose season (see 7463-a of Inland fisheries and Wildlife laws). Furthermore, the Big Game Public Working Group (PWG) chose moose management goals for these areas that would reduce the number of moose for the purpose of reducing the risk of moose vehicle accidents in all areas that are not yet open to hunting. For WMDs 15 and 16, the PWG recommended that the number of moose be reduced by one third. For the safety management area (now roughly WMDs 20 –26 due to boundary changes) they recommended that the number of moose be reduced to a very low, but unspecified, level. However, the PWG recognized that moose hunting in the more developed areas of the state, especially at the level that would likely be needed to meet the goal of reducing the moose population to very low levels, would have more social issues than the current recreational hunt which takes place primarily on commercial forest land.

The Department used several means of gauging public sentiment about moose numbers, moose hunting and possible season frameworks. Five public informational meetings were held where attendees were invited to provide oral comment and to complete a survey. The same informational presentation and survey were available on the Department's web site. An informal survey was done at the open house at the Wildlife Park in conjunction with a display on moose biology and management.

Informational Meetings

One informational meeting was held in each of WMDs 15, 16, 23, 26 and 27 (new). These are the WMDs that the Department proposes to open first. No meetings were held farther south in more developed WMDs, so the results of the comments and surveys may be biased.

Survey Results

The 26 members of the public who attended informational meetings on expanding moose hunting into southern Maine were asked to complete a survey form. Respondents who lived outside the WMD of the meeting were included in the tally for the WMD of the meeting if the WMD they reside in did not hold a meeting and was adjacent to the WMD of the meeting. In one case a person who resided in WMD 23 attended a meeting in WMD 15; because the survey was directed at the area of residency their responses are tallied under WMD 23.

Question 1: Number of people filling out surveys at each meeting by WMD of residency.

	WMD of meeting	Number of surveys	WMD of residence						
			15	16	21	23	25	26	27
Bridgton	15	10	7		2	1			
Readfield	16	6		6					
Thorndike	23	3				2	1		
Bucksport	26	4						4	
Machias	27	3							3
ALL	---	26	7	6	2	3	1	4	3

Questions 2 and 3 attempted to gauge people’s feelings about the number of moose and the risk of moose vehicle accidents in the 5 WMDs that we proposed to open to hunting. Although slightly more people thought there were too many moose than thought there were too few, peoples’ opinions on moose numbers in the 5 WMDs seem to be fairly evenly split. Less than half (38%) of the respondents felt that moose posed an unacceptable traffic risk but if the survey is representative of the population as a whole, this is still a substantial number of people.

Question 2. “Please describe your opinion of moose numbers in the area where you live. (One person did not respond to this question.)

WMD	Too many	About right	Too few	Not sure	Total
15	3	3	1	1	8
16	2	2	1	1	6
23	2	0	2	0	4
26	1	1	1	1	4
27	0	3	0	0	3
ALL	8	9	5	3	25

Question 3. “ Do you think that moose pose an unacceptable road hazard in the area where you live?

WMD	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
15	3	6	0	9
16	3	3	0	6
23	2	2	0	4
26	2	2	0	4
27	0	2	1	3
ALL	10	15	1	26

Question 4 was to determine if people who felt that moose posed an unacceptable hazard were supportive of reducing the number of moose. Although most of the people who feel that moose pose an unacceptable traffic hazard support reducing the number of moose; most do not support the working groups goal of reducing the number of moose to near zero.

Question 4: If you think moose pose an unacceptable road hazard in the area where you live, circle all the ways you would like to have used to reduce the hazard? (Respondents could circle more than one answer.)

WMD	N	Driver ed	Reduce speed	Improve visibility	Slight reduction in # of moose	Large reduction in # of moose	Other
15	3	1	1	3	2	0	0
16	3	2	0	2	2	1	0
23	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
26	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALL	10	4	1	5	6	2	0

Several respondents provide written comments regarding their opinions on moose numbers and management options:

Over the counter moose tag, last week Nov.!

I would like to see consideration for wildlife watchers. In Hancock Co. these folks outnumber hunters. I do not hear people complaining about their being a moose danger in my area.

Q4 - even though my answer is NO to 3, why not be proactive to educate people before the moose population increases and becomes a problem.

Question 5 was included to evaluate when people would prefer the moose season. Because hunting the proposed expansion area will take place on parcels of individually held land, the responses were analyzed by all respondents and by landowners.

Question 5 for all respondents: If a moose hunt were held in the area where I live, the best time would be:

WMD	October	November	December	Other	Total
15	0	6	3		10
16	6	0	0	0	6
23	0	1	2	No hunt	3
26	0	3	0	Feb 29	4
27	1	1	0	November or December	3
ALL	7	11	5	3	26

The public working group recommended that moose seasons in the “safety area” (WMDs 20-26) be held during deer season. The department has proposed seasons during the regular October moose season for WMDs in the compromise area (15, 16 and 27) and during either the regular firearm or muzzleloader seasons in the Safety area. Although respondents prefer an October season for WMD 16, a November or December season seems to be preferred in and WMDs 15 and to a lesser extent 27 as well as both WMDs in the safety area. Among all respondents, more would prefer to have the hunt held in November during the regular firearm season rather than in December. Although the same general patters held for season preference, landowners seem to be somewhat more likely to prefer a November season to a December season.

Question 5 for respondents who own agricultural or forested property: If a moose hunt were held in the area where I live, the best time would be:

WMD	October	November	December	Other	Total
15	0	3	1	0	4
16	5	0	0	0	5
23	0	1	1	0	2
26	0	3	0	February 29	4
27	0	0	0	November or December	1
ALL	5	7	2	2	16

Four people had specific written comments regarding the timing of the moose season:

1. An October moose hunt is unacceptable!; Q7 - Yes in November only?;
2. **Over the counter moose tag**, last week Nov.!
3. I'm tentatively in favor of the expanded moose hunt - especially Option 1, but I do see the logic of the later hunt dates.
4. I am concern about land owners relations. I have 600 acres in this area and am concerned about letting people I do not know hunt moose on my property - as it is a lottery system. **I am a avid hunter that has never been drawn for a moose hunt. Why would I want to open my land to the public, especially during the deer hunting season.** Also the issue is there on getting the moose out. There are not tote roads and access roads to hunt the moose from it is a different kind of hunting.

Question 7.

Question 7: If your answer to 6 (do you own agricultural or forested property) is yes, would you permit moose hunting on your property?

WMD	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	
15	2	0	2	4	1 "not sure" would allow in November only
16	2	1	2	5	1 "not sure" has reservations about allowing moose hunting during the November deer season.
23	1	1	0	2	
26	3	1	0	4	
27	1	0	0	1	
ALL	9	3	4	16	

Question 8: Has your opinion of moose hunting in southern Maine changed as a result of this meeting? 19 people did not change their opinion, 1 changed their opinion, and 5 are not sure if they have (will?) changed their opinion. All but one of the people who have changed or might change their mind attended the Readfield meeting.

The following **additional comments** were received:

Could you change to 5 from 2-year waiting period to apply for a permit?

IFW should have made its three options available before meeting

Please consider WMD 25 along with WMD 23 and WMD 26 for an open moose season in 2007. There is a very healthy moose population in this area. I could sustain a limited hunt as soon as possible.

I am concern about land owners relations. I have 600 acres in this area and am concerned about letting people I do not know hunt moose on my property - as it is a lottery system. I am a avid hunter that has never been drawn for a moose hunt. Why would I want to open my land to the public, especially during the deer hunting season. **Also the issue is there on getting the moose out. There are not tote roads and access roads to hunt the moose from it is a different kind of hunting.**

Oral comment at public meetings

Most oral comments fell into one of four categories. These were the desirability of reducing moose numbers, reasons and concerns regarding season timing, general concerns about hunting moose in southern Maine and how the southern season would be administered and how it would impact hunting opportunity in the recreation management area. Because most meeting attendees filled out a survey the comments should be used as supplemental or explanatory information and the survey should be viewed as the means of evaluating the relative numbers holding various views.

In addition to general comments for or against reducing the moose population several people pointed out that even if the number of moose were reduced there would still be a risk of hitting a moose. Some felt that alternative risk reduction techniques (lighting, education, speed limit) should be used in conjunction with a lower moose population while some felt alternatives should be used without reducing the population. Several people thought there was more risk in the areas that were not proposed for the initial expansion and urged opening these areas either in addition to or instead of the WMDs that are proposed in options 1 and 2. Some questioned if there was adequate information to hold a hunt in southern Maine.

Concerns about season timing included the likelihood of different success rates at different times of year, when bulls would loose their antlers and if a moose season during muzzleloader season would increase deer poaching or make law enforcement difficult. SWOAM thought that most landowners would prefer a November season and some hunters apparently agreed because they felt that a season other than November would result in more posted land. On the other hand, several people commented that a December season would result in less interference between deer and moose hunters.

Several people pointed out that hunting in southern Maine would be very different from what occurs in the north. Some thought that success would likely be low, especially for hunters not from the immediate area who did not have a guide. Several expressed concern that it would be difficult to remove moose from private land or that there could be damage to private land from removing moose.

Several people were concerned that hunting moose in southern Maine would mean that they could not apply for a permit in the area that is currently open for 2 years and felt that this might discourage people from hunting in the south. One person suggested landowner preference.

Website Survey

The same survey was available on the department website but only 2 were returned. One thought the number of moose was too high and the other had no opinion. One preferred an October hunt and one preferred November.

Wildlife Park Open House survey

As part of a display about moose, visitors and the 2005 Open House at the Gray Wildlife Park were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with three statements about moose and moose hunting in southern Maine. The results were as follows:

1. I am worried that I will have an accident with a moose in southern Maine.

Agree	36 (48.6%)
Disagree	30 (40.5%)
<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>8 (10.8%)</u>
Total	74

2. The moose population should be reduced in southern Maine.

Agree	16 (24.6%)
Disagree	41 (63.1%)
<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>8 (12.3%)</u>
Total	65

3. I would support moose hunting in southern Maine.

Agree	44 (62.0%)
Disagree	22 (31.0%)
<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>5 (7.0%)</u>
Total	71

Although people often participated in the survey, none felt strongly enough to ask questions about the proposed season or initiate a discussion with the staff members at the display.

Summary

Response to the proposal to open southern Maine to moose hunting has been limited. Based on very small samples it appears that while most people would support or accept a moose season there is not a strong desire to have the number of moose reduced. While opinions vary, a moose season during the November firearm deer season seems to be preferred.

Appendix 7

Again, the Department gave an overview of its moose management goals and objectives, moose-vehicle accident data, and a presentation on the proposed moose hunt at the 2006 public informational meetings in Thorndike and Bridgeton, and again at the public hearing in Augusta

Moose Hunting in Southern Maine

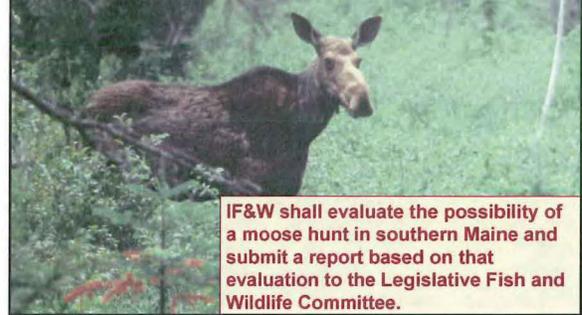


Agenda

- Legislative Resolve
- Moose Management Goals and Objectives
- Moose/Vehicle Accident Data
- Public Input to Date
- Season Proposal
- Comments and Suggestions



Legislative Resolve to Evaluate the Possibility of a Moose Hunt in Southern Maine



IF&W shall evaluate the possibility of a moose hunt in southern Maine and submit a report based on that evaluation to the Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee.

Management Goals and Objectives Developed by a Public Working Group



Updated at least every 15 years (1985 and 2000)

Species Assessment

- Prepared and reviewed by IF&W
- Assembles most current information and professional judgments
- Status of species and biological sideboards for developing Goals and Objectives



Management Goals and Objectives

- Developed by a public working group
- Balanced representation
- Minimal IF&W involvement
- Adopted by Fish & Wildlife Advisory Council

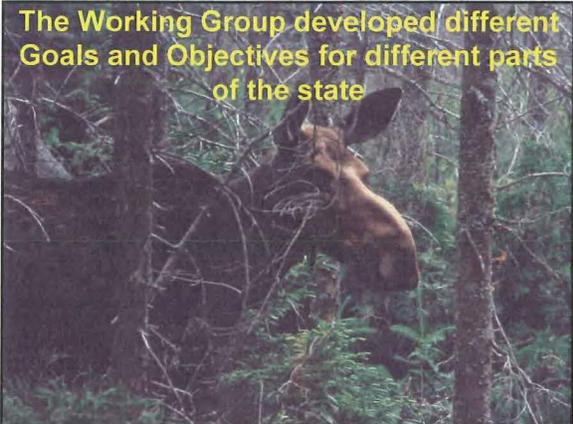


Organizations Invited to Participate in the 2000 Big Game Working Group



Sportsman's Alliance of Maine
 Moosehead Lake Chamber of Commerce
 Maine Professional Guides Association
 Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council
 Forest Products Council
 Defenders of Wildlife
 Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce
 Maine Lyme Disease Working Group
 Deer Depredation Impacts
 Legislative Fish and Wildlife Committee
 Penobscot Nation
 Maine Sporting Camp Association
 Moose Vehicle Collisions
 Maine Bowhunters Association
 Maine Trappers Association
 Passamaquoddy Nation
 Maine Farm Bureau
 Small Woodlot Owners Association of Maine
 Maine Audubon

* Groups participated



WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS (WMDs)

Recreation Management Area

Goal: For any WMD in this area the goal is either:
 Maximize hunting and viewing opportunity and maintain the availability of mature bulls, OR
 Balance concerns over moose/vehicle collisions with the desire to provide excellent hunting and viewing opportunity.

Objective: Manage the moose population in balance with available habitat while maintaining 17% mature bulls.

Management to Date:

- Permits have been reduced to allow the population to increase toward the objective.
- Moose/vehicle accidents are addressed with signage and driver education.

Moose Vehicle Accidents 3-yr Average
 WMD 27 = 8

Compromise Management Area (North)

Goal: Balance the public's concern about moose/vehicle collisions with the public's desire to hunt moose.

Objective: Reduce the current (2000) moose population by one-third.

Management to Date:

- Permit numbers have been increased and antlerless-only permits have been introduced.
- Moose/vehicle accidents are also addressed with signage and driver education.

Compromise Management Area (South)

Goal: Reduce moose/vehicle collisions.

Objective: Reduce the current (2000) moose population by one-third.

Management to Date:

- WMD 17 has been opened with a conservative number of permits.
- Hunting seasons are now being considered for WMDs 15 and 16.
- Moose/vehicle accidents are being addressed with signage and driver education.

Moose Vehicle Accidents 3-yr Average:
 WMD 15 = 25
 WMD 16 = 17

Road Safety Management Area

Goal: Reduce moose/vehicle collisions.

Objective: Reduce the moose population to the extent necessary to minimize the danger to motorists.

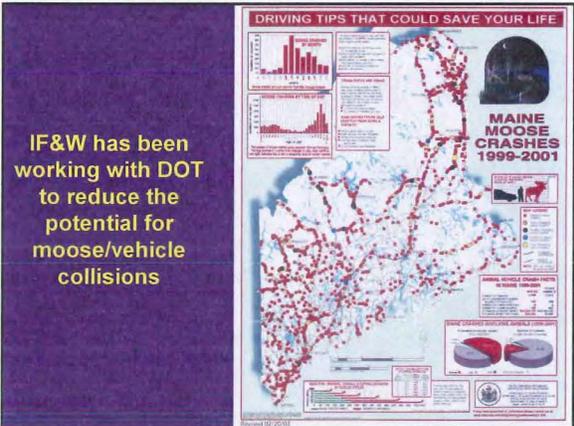
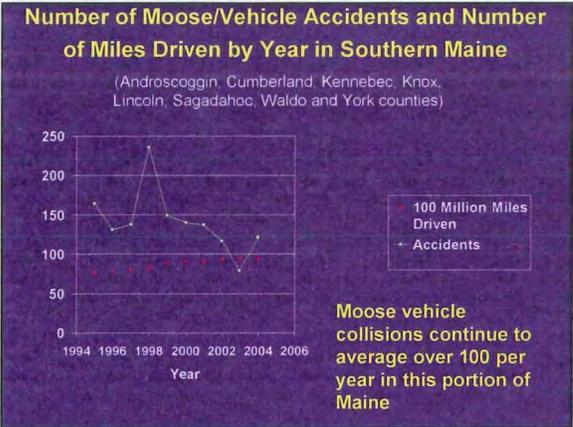
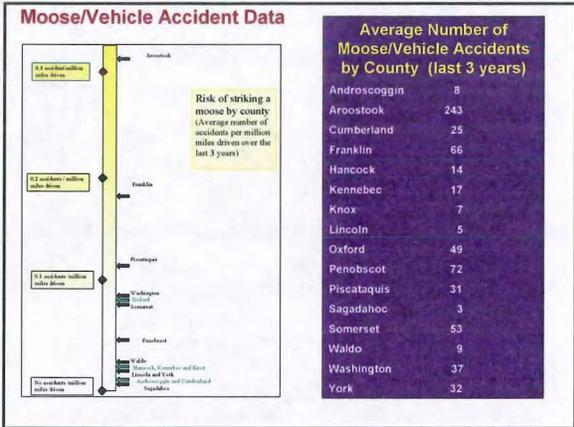
Management to Date:

- To date no action has been taken to reduce the number of moose.
- Hunting seasons are now being considered.
- Moose/vehicle accidents are being addressed with signage and driver education.

Moose Vehicle Accidents 3-yr Average:
 WMD 23 = 9
 WMD 26 = 11

Moose-Vehicle Collisions - What is the Problem?

- About 700 collisions annually, statewide
- 150 collisions result in human injury
- 2-3 people die each year
- Estimated annual economic impact is \$17.5 million
- 90% occur at dawn or dusk
- Moose collisions are 14% of Maine's large animal collisions but lead to 80% of the fatalities
- Peak collision season is May-June, but they can occur anytime of the year or anyplace

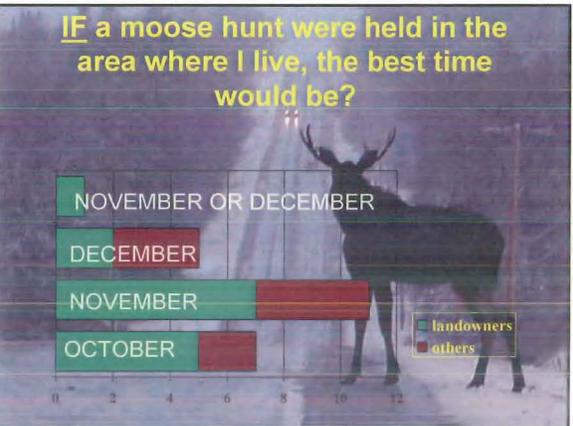
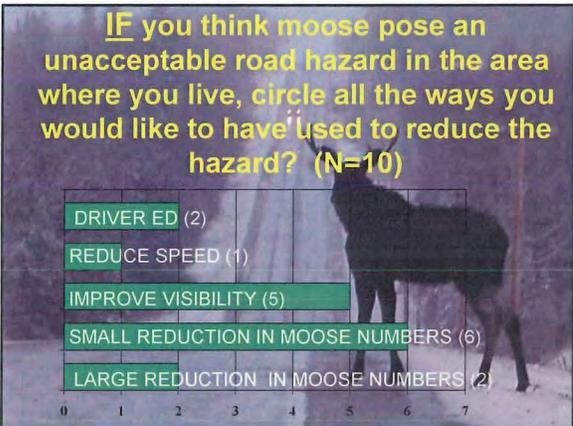
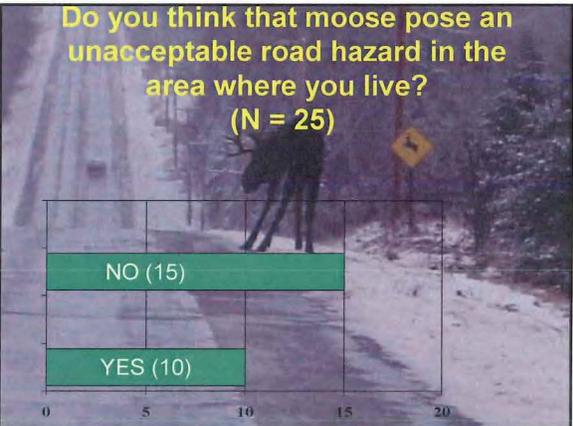
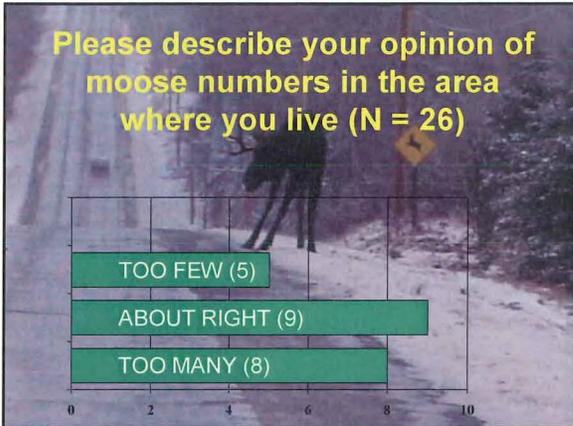


- ### What Has Been Done to Address Moose-Vehicle Collisions?
- Increased # of Permits in High Risk Areas
 - 2003: WMDs 3, 6 and 11 in northern Maine.
 - Maine Interagency Work Group Outreach
 - Maps
 - Public Service Announcements
 - Driver Education
 - Safety Video
 - Currently looking at specific methods to reduce accidents at high risk sites

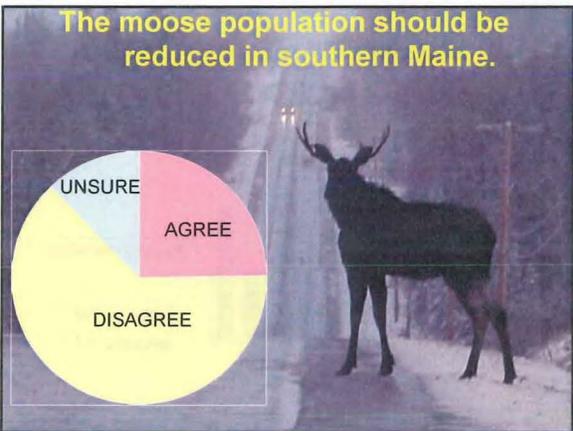
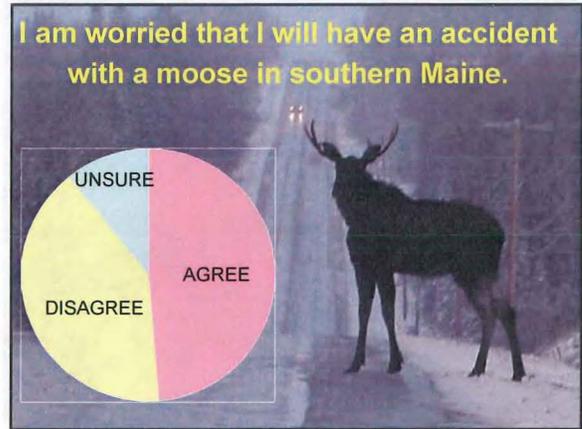
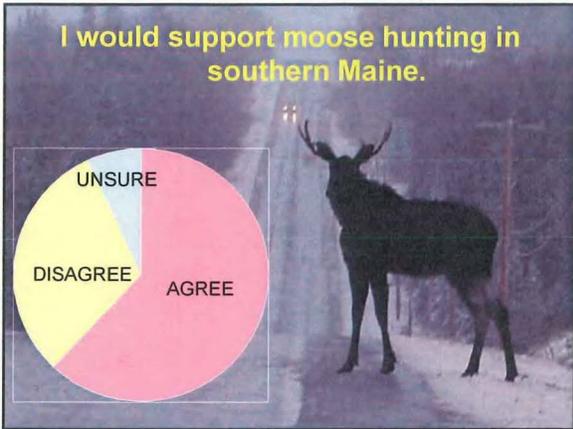
What Options Remain to Further Reduce Moose/Vehicle Collisions?

The Big Game Working Group recommended reducing the moose population to the extent necessary to minimize the danger to motorists

Public input regarding moose population size and hunting was gathered from 26 attendees at 4 informational meetings conducted by IFW&W during the Fall of 2005

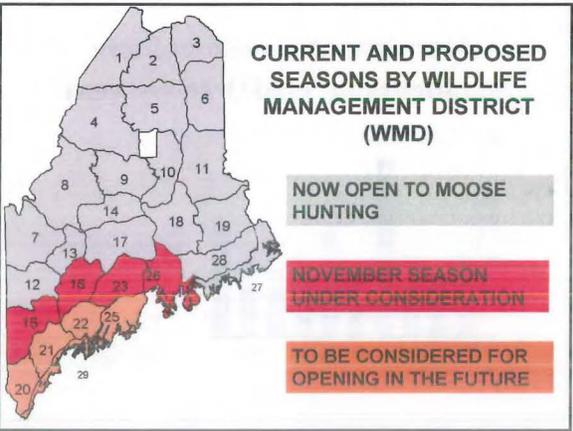


Attendees at the open house at the Maine Wildlife Park were asked about their agreement with 3 statements



Southern Maine Moose Hunting Proposal

- **Goals**
 - Slow to moderate decrease in moose numbers
 - Eliminate or greatly reduce conflicts between hunters, landowners, and the public
- **Areas to be Open to Hunting**
 - WMDs 15, 16, 23, and 26 beginning in 2008
 - Future openings will be considered
- **Season Timing**
 - Regular firearms season in November

Southern Maine Moose Hunting Proposal

- **Permit Numbers**
 - WMD 15: 25
 - WMD 16: 20
 - WMD 23: 45
 - WMD 26: 45
- **Type of Permit**
 - Any-moose Permits
- **Allocating Permits**
 - One drawing for all WMDs, season dates, & permit types
 - Retains uniform system of waiting periods & preference points



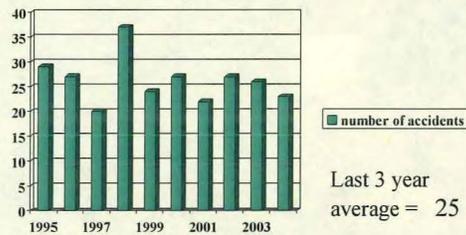
Questions, Comments, Suggestions?



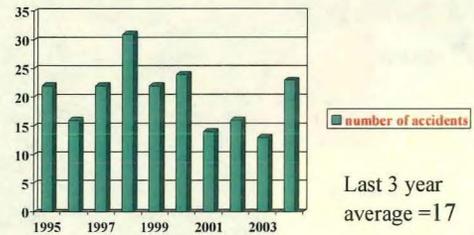
Average number of moose/vehicle accidents by county (last 3 years)

Androscoggin	8
Aroostook	243
Cumberland	25
Franklin	66
Hancock	14
Kennebec	17
Knox	7
Lincoln	5
Oxford	49
Penobscot	72
Piscataquis	31
Sagadahoc	3
Somerset	53
Waldo	9
Washington	37
York	32

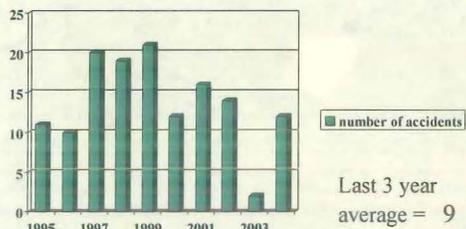
Number of moose/vehicle accidents in WMD 15 by year



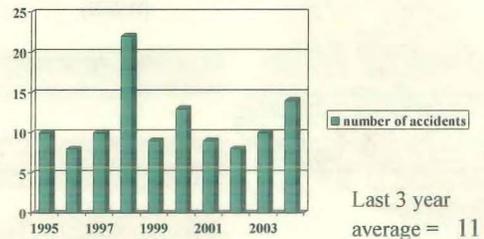
Number of moose/vehicle accidents in WMD 16 by year



Number of moose/vehicle accidents in WMD 23 by year



Number of moose/vehicle accidents in WMD 26 by year



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