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Report to the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

As Required by 12 MSRA Section 11552

Proposed Actions For Moose Management in Regards to the
Number of Permits Issued, the Length and Timing of the Annual
Moose Hunting Season



**Presented by the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
January 2009**

In response to the requirements set forth in 12 MSRA, 11552, subsection 2, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife submits the following report on the actions taken and the actions proposed for the management of moose relative to the number of permits, season timing, and the areas open to hunting.

The take of moose in the 2008 September and October seasons was 2,202, which is 150 more than the kill in 2007 (2,052). There were good hunting conditions in both the September and October seasons this past fall, with cool fall weather and little precipitation.

This is the first year that Maine held a moose hunt in more central parts of the state, including Wildlife Management Districts 15, 16, 23, and 26. This hunt was held during the regular firearms season on deer, and was intended originally to be a hunt to lower moose densities moderately in these areas to reduce vehicle collisions. It also turned out to be additional opportunity for hunters in those Districts that wanted to hunt lower density moose along with deer hunting, and it helped with landowners' request to not create another separate hunt. There were only 135 permits scattered across the 4 WMD's, and 34 hunters were successful. We expected the success rate to be much lower in these districts, since the moose density is much lower. We will be analyzing the data from these 4 WMD's carefully to make sure that prospective hunters understand the nature of this hunt as compared to hunting in more northern, eastern and western districts (access issues, smaller landownerships, and low success rates).

The Department proposed keeping the number of moose permits the same next season (2009) as in 2008. We have also been working with a public group in Aroostook County to develop a process to get a controlled hunt for moose in areas that are sustaining high damage by moose to agricultural crops and high numbers of moose collisions. The Department has proposed the framework of a controlled depredation hunt for moose in several towns in Aroostook County by rule and is collecting public comment on that proposal at this time.

There are a number of moose management issues being discussed internally and with the public. We continue to try to develop a better method of estimating moose numbers, and we are developing several ideas/options to present to a public working group this coming year that will consider moose management in relation to deer, bear, marten, and lynx in northern Maine.

Attached are the rule proposals and supporting materials to which the Advisory Council gave their consent in December.

Repeal and replace Chapter 4.05, Paragraph a, Paragraph C (1) as follows:

C. Permits

For the purposes of this rule, the term “antlerless moose” means a moose without antlers or a moose with antlers that are shorter in size than its ears. The term “bull moose” means a moose with antlers. The term “any-moose” means a moose of either sex.

1. The number of moose hunting permits to be issued for each Wildlife Management District shall be as follows:

WMD 1 – 120 bulls / 20 antlerless
WMD 2 – 95 bulls
WMD 3 – 225 bulls / 230 antlerless
WMD 4 – 255 bulls
WMD 5 – 125 bulls
WMD 6 – 220 bulls / 280 antlerless
WMD 7 – 125 bulls
WMD 8 – 235 bulls
WMD 9 – 50 bulls
WMD 10 – 100 bulls / 10 antlerless
WMD 11 – 160 bulls / 120 antlerless

WMD 12 – 35 bulls / 20 antlerless
WMD 13 -- 35 bulls / 10 antlerless
WMD 14 – 35 bulls
WMD 15 – 25 any-moose*
WMD 16 – 20 any-moose*
WMD 17 – 30 bulls / 30 antlerless
WMD 18 – 80 bulls / 20 antlerless
WMD 19 – 90 bulls / 20 antlerless
WMD 23 – 45 any-moose*
WMD 26 – 45 any-moose*
WMD 27 – 25 bulls / 5 antlerless
WMD 28 – 60 bulls / 15 antlerless

TOTAL: 2,100 bulls/780 antlerless/135 any-moose

Ten percent of the total number of permits allocated to each Wildlife Management District shall be issued to nonresident and aliens.