



United States Department of the Interior

KOYUKUK/NOWITNA/INNOKO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
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March 1, 2022
Announcement

Subject: Decision to Close Winter Moose Hunt on Federal public lands in GMU 24D.

Biological Status:

We conducted moose surveys in November 2021 throughout the Huslia area, including the Huslia Flats and Treat Island trend count areas. Survey conditions were relatively good everywhere we surveyed this year. These two combined TCAs cover a continuous area north/northeast of Huslia totaling 306 mi². Results from this year's 2021 surveys indicate that adult cow numbers are a little below what we've seen the last three years and are just below the long-term average while bull numbers are back up near the long-term average again this year. Calf production/survival to fall was higher than the last few years and is average. The bull:cow ratio is above average, but that is mostly due to low cow numbers (Table 1, Figs. 1, 2, & 3). Recruitment decreased in the last three years and is below average at 6 yearling bulls:100 cows. Snow conditions were good to excellent this year, though the number of cows and yearling bulls still declined, probably due to movement or the high snow levels last winter. We did not see a large decline in calf numbers, which is promising for next year's count. When the two TCAs are considered separately, Huslia Flats is performing much better than Treat Island. The two areas are adjacent to each other, but Huslia Flats shows consistent cow numbers, increasing bulls, and excellent calf production. Conversely, Treat Island has seen a steady decrease in moose density at an average annual rate of -7%. Calf production and yearling recruitment at Treat has also been consistently lower than at Huslia Flats. We do know that movement and distribution affect the annual counts in these TCAs, but the long-term trend appears to show a decline in overall density and productivity at Treat Island, relative to Huslia Flats.

Decision:

There will be NO winter moose hunt in GMU 24D on Federal public lands.

This decision was based on recent depressed adult moose numbers in this GMU. The population cannot withstand any additional harvest until adult moose numbers begin to recover from the recent declines. A few good years of calf production and survival could reverse the declines seen in this population, while additional harvest and poor production could exacerbate or accelerate declines.

For more information about this hunt, please feel free to contact us toll free @ 1-800-656-1231.