

Southern Maine Moose Hunting Proposal
Prepared by the
Wildlife Division, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

May 1, 2006

The 122nd Maine Legislature has 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 on 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.

Based on a series of public informational meetings conducted by MDIFW during the fall of 2005 in which it solicited input and comment about moose hunting in southern Maine, the Department is proposing the following for further public consideration.

The Goals

- 1) Allocate sufficient permits to allow a slow to moderate decrease in moose numbers in Wildlife Management Districts [WMDs] 15, 16, 23, and 26 and to eliminate or greatly reduce any conflicts between moose hunters, landowners, and the general public.*
- 2) Consider expanding moose hunting to the remaining five southern Maine WMDs after the Department has reviewed the information and experience gained from the initial moose hunt in southern Maine.*

Areas to be opened:

The Department proposes that WMDs 15, 16, 23 and 26 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 it might consider for the remaining 5 WMDs currently closed to moose hunting.

Season timing:

The Department proposes holding the southern Maine moose hunting during the regular firearms deer season in November.

The majority of 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, than during October or December. This was true for landowners, the general public, and is in agreement with the public working group's recommendation.

Permit numbers:

The Department proposed allocating 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.

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.

Below is a summary of the additional number of hunters that would be afield moose hunting during the November firearms deer season.

WMD 15	25 permits / 996 sq mi =2.5 moose hunters / 100 sq mi.
WMD 16	20 permits / 718 sq mi =2.8 moose hunters / 100 sq mi.
WMD 23	45 permits / 913 sq mi =4.9 moose hunters / 100 sq mi
WMD 26	45 permits / 619 sq mi =7.3 moose hunters / 100 sq mi

Type of Permit:

The Department proposes issuing “any-moose” permits.

In northern WMDs, where we are interested in maintaining moose population levels and maximizing hunter opportunity, we issue bull-only and antlerless-only permits. This allows us to regulate the growth of the moose population, by controlling the cow harvest, and maximize hunter opportunity, by allowing hunters to kill bulls without over harvesting cows.

In the WMDs proposed for the southern Maine moose hunt, our goal is to reduce the moose population, not to maintain it. Therefore, we would only be concerned if hunters were selecting for bulls and not removing cows. Hunter success is expected to be low during the southern Maine moose hunt. This may make hunters less selective as to whether they shoot a cow or bull moose.

Mechanism for allocating permits:

The Department proposes to have one drawing for all WMDs, season dates, and permit types. This would retain a uniform system of waiting periods and preference points; we also believe it is the simplest and fairest way to handle this hunt.