

A Map Full of Moose

Moose are found throughout much of Alaska. Moose sightings are common but even more common is seeing their tracks and scat (poop). Many people mistake soft summer moose scat for bear poop. Moose scat is in pellet form in winter because that is when moose eat dry bark and twigs. In summer, when moose eat green vegetation, their scat gets more mushy, and looks more like bear poop. Check out the different types of moose scat below!

Winter → Summer

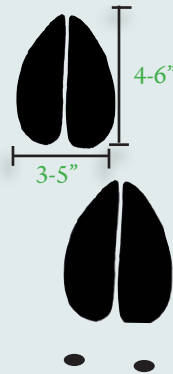


Moose are the largest member of the deer family. Adult moose range in size from 800 pounds (small adult female) to 1,600 pounds (large adult male), and they can be up to 6 feet tall! Moose range in color from golden brown to almost black. Only male moose grow antlers. Most male calves develop a hair-covered, bony knob by the end of summer that lasts through their first year. Antlers are then grown new each summer and shed each winter throughout a bull's life.

During the fall and winter, moose browse on large quantities of willow, birch and aspen twigs. In the spring, moose graze on ground plants and also browse on shrubby plants and trees. During the summer, moose feed on herbs, vegetation in shallow ponds and the leaves of birch, willow and aspen.

Can you guess? Moose are eaten by bears and wolves but are also an important source of food for Alaskans. Take a guess: 1) How many moose are harvested by people in Alaska each year? 2) How many pounds of meat do those moose provide? Write your answers below and then turn the page upside down to see how well you guessed.

No. of Moose Harvested _____ Pounds of Meat _____



About 175,000 to 200,000 moose are widely distributed throughout Alaska.

Some areas of the state have lots of moose; other areas have few or none. The number of moose living in a certain area depends on habitat quality, weather and predation by other animals such as wolves and bears. Fire and other disturbances are important for moose in many areas of the state because fire can create new vegetative growth for moose to feed upon for many years.

Female moose are called "cows." They generally breed when they are two years old. Calves are born any time from mid-May to early June after a pregnancy of about seven and a half months. A cow moose defends her newborn calf vigorously. Healthy cows often give birth to twins. Newborn calves weigh about 28 to 35 pounds. Calves begin nursing within the first few hours following birth and take solid food a few days later. During their first five months, calves will grow to more than 10 times their birth weight, occasionally weighing more than 500 pounds at fall time.

Newborn calves have a red-brown coat that fades to a light rust color within a few weeks. By late summer, the calves have shed this coat and grown one that is similar in texture and color to that of adults.



Answer: At least 7,000 moose are harvested annually in Alaska, amounting to about 3.5 million pounds of meat.