

## **A quick look at Maine's 2021 moose hunt + moose management**

Maine's 2021 moose hunt attracted tens of thousands of applicants, with 4,030 permits allocated to participate in one of the most sought after and prized hunting opportunities. In 2021, MDIFW allocated an additional 510 permits solely for the first hunt in the Adaptive Management Zone. After seven years of research, it was clear that cow productivity and calf survival were significantly impacted by winter tick loads throughout the core moose range in the state of Maine. Across the northeast, moose populations have been experiencing the same struggles; parasite loads. In an attempt to reduce winter tick loads on large cervids, adaptive management techniques are being implemented in Wildlife Management District 4A in an effort to lower the moose population density, effectively reducing the winter tick's host.

September marked a return to seasonably cool temps that equated to high hunter success. On the opposite end, October's bull season was marked by both day and night warm temperatures providing little relief or change in the weather to move moose. This played out in typically high September bull success (77%) and atypically low October bull success across management units (57%). The "traditionally" timed antlerless season at 79% success was on par with 2020 (78%). In addition, this was the initial year of the [Adaptive Unit Hunt \(4A\)](#) that occurred over three consecutive weeks with overall success at 50%. Overall, during the traditional moose hunts 2,353 moose were harvested providing a 68% statewide success rate.

In coming years, Maine is expected to continue experiencing warmer temperatures. These warming climates will provide more ideal environments for winter tick survival, and will influence movement patterns and behaviors of moose, often leading to moose laying low and moving less. Hunters lucky enough to participate in Maine's moose hunt should consider best hunting methods when moose are more likely to stay put, increasing their chances of success in future years.

As winter approaches, MDIFW begins diving back into the many monitoring programs developed for our state's moose population. For a third consecutive year, MDIFW teamed up with Native Range Wildlife Capture to collar 70 moose in the first week of January. Biologists will continue to respond to deceased collared moose to identify causes of death, and MDIFW will be implementing a new, noninvasive study to further monitor the species, deploying camera traps to measure moose occupancy and abundance. Keep an eye out to learn more.