

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Notice of Agency Rulemaking Proposal

AGENCY: Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Advertise: December 31, 2025

CHAPTER NUMBER AND RULE TITLE: Chapter 16 – Hunting (Moose permit allocations)

TYPE OF RULE: Routine Technical

PROPOSAL FILING NUMBER: [Leave Blank - Assigned by the Department of the Secretary of State]

BRIEF SUMMARY: The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is proposing allocation numbers for moose hunting permits to be issued for the 2026 moose hunting season. Permits will be issued for antlered and antlerless moose. This proposal also includes the discontinuation of the Adaptive Management moose hunt referred to as WMD 4a, which was established as a 5-year research project and has now concluded. Proposed permit allocations according to Wildlife Management District are as follows:

WMD 1 – 450 antlered / 175 antlerless

WMD 2 – 350 antlered / 175 antlerless

WMD 3 – 200 antlered / 125 antlerless

WMD 4 – 400 antlered / 100 250 antlerless

WMD 4A (adaptive hunt) – 550 antlerless

WMD 5 – 250 antlered / 125 antlerless

WMD 6 – 200 antlered / 60 antlerless

WMD 7 & 13 (combined) – 140 antlered

WMD 8 – 200 antlered / 150 antlerless

WMD 9 – 125 antlered

WMD 10 – 60 antlered

WMD 11 – 50 antlered

WMD 12 & 15 (combined) – 40 antlered

WMD 14 & 17 (combined) – 40 antlered

WMD 16 – 0 permits

WMD 18 – 40 antlered

WMD 19 – 60 antlered

WMD 27 & 28 (combined) – 40 antlered

Totals: 4,105 3,705 – 2,645 (antlered); 1,460 1,060 (antlerless)

Please contact the agency contact person for a complete copy of the rule proposal.

PUBLIC HEARING: January 20, 2026 @ 4:00pm – Rangeley Region Guides & Sportsman Assoc., 41 Old Skiway Rd, Oquossoc and January 22, 2026 @ 4:00pm – Greenville Public Safety, 10 Minden St., Greenville. An online option for attending via Microsoft Teams will also be available. For those wishing to attend remotely, please contact the Agency Contact Person for this filing.

COMMENT DEADLINE: February 2, 2026

CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS FILING:

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CONTACT PERSON FOR SMALL BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT (if different): Click or tap here to enter text.

FINANCIAL IMPACT ON MUNICIPALITIES OR COUNTIES (if any): None anticipated

STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR THIS RULE: 12 MRS Section 10104, 11551, 11552

SUBSTANTIVE STATE OR FEDERAL LAW BEING IMPLEMENTED (*if different*): Click or tap here to enter text.

AGENCY WEBSITE: www.maine.gov/ifw

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Choose one of the following:

The summary provided above is for publication in both the newspaper and website notices.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE WEB NOTICE

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Rulemaking Fact Sheet
(see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1))

Agency: Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Name, Address, Telephone Number, and Email Address of Agency Contact Person:

Becky Orff

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Chapter Number and Rule Title: Chapter 16 – Hunting (Moose permit allocations)

Type of Rule: Routine Technical

Statutory Authority: 12 MRS Section 10104, 11551, 11552

Public Hearing(s) (include day, date, time, and location): January 20, 2026 @ 4:00pm – Rangeley

Region Guides & Sportsman Assoc., 41 Old Skiway Rd, Oquossoc and January 22, 2026 @ 4:00pm – Greenville Public Safety, 10 Minden St., Greenville. An online option for attending via Microsoft Teams will also be available. For those wishing to attend remotely, please contact the Agency Contact Person for this filing.

Comment Deadline(s) (include day, date, and time): February 2, 2026

Principal Reason(s) or Purpose for Proposing this Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(A)]:

Moose permit numbers are adjusted on an annual basis in response to moose population estimates and population goals in each Wildlife Management District (WMD). Department biologists use moose harvest levels, aerial surveys, and biological data to evaluate the status of moose within each WMD. This information is compared to publicly derived goals outlined in the moose management system to determine whether the population in an individual WMD should be stabilized, increased, or decreased when making annual permit recommendations. This permit allocation also addresses ongoing concerns about the impacts of winter tick on moose survival and productivity while continuing to provide hunting opportunity across Maine's moose range.

Is Material Incorporated by Reference into the Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8056(2-A)? No

Analysis and Expected Operation of the Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(B) & (D)]:

For the 2026 season, the Department is recommending 3,705 permits be issued statewide to meet our moose harvest objectives. This proposal includes the discontinuation of the Adaptive Management moose hunt referred to as WMD 4a, which was implemented for five years beginning in 2021. This hunt, which was established as a 5-year research project, has now concluded and the Department will be analyzing the results before recommending adjustments to moose hunting permit levels in future years. Therefore, this proposal recommends a total of 2,645 antlered moose permits, and 1,060 antlerless permits statewide. The proposal also removes the reference to the Adaptive Hunt in Chapter 16.

Brief Summary of Relevant Information Considered During Development of the Rule (including up to 3 primary sources relied upon)[see 5 M.R.S. §§ 8057-A(1)(E) & 8063-B]:

Adjustments to moose permit numbers are based on the Department's Moose Management System, which was developed as part of our long-term species planning process. This comprehensive system includes an extensive scientific assessment of moose populations and management strategies. Our management approaches are also reviewed and discussed on an annual basis with other moose biologists across the

northeastern U.S. and eastern Canada. Currently, we collect and analyze several types of data to develop informed recommendations on moose permit numbers. These data sources include helicopter surveys to estimate moose numbers and herd composition, hunter success rates, ages of harvested moose, and reproductive rates.

Estimated Fiscal Impact of the Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(C)]: None anticipated.

FOR EXISTING RULES WITH FISCAL IMPACT OF \$1 MILLION OR MORE, ALSO INCLUDE:

Economic Impact, Whether or Not Quantifiable in Monetary Terms [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(2)(A)]:
Click or tap here to enter text.

Individuals, Major Interest Groups and Types of Businesses Affected and How They Will Be Affected [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(2)(B)]:
Click or tap here to enter text.

Benefits of the Rule [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(2)(C)]:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Note: If necessary, additional pages may be used.

Chapter 16: HUNTING

16.08 Moose Hunting

1. Moose Hunting Season and Districts
2. Areas Closed to Moose Hunting
3. Moose Permits
4. Restrictions
5. Moose Permit Auction
6. Moose Permit Auction by Conservation Organizations
7. Moose Permit Point System
8. Depredation Moose Hunt
9. Adaptive Moose Hunt

3. Moose Permits

For the purposes of this rule, the following terms have the following meanings:

A.

- (1) **Antlerless moose:** means a moose without antlers;
- (2) **Antlered moose:** means a moose with antlers; and
- (3) **Any-moose:** means a moose of either sex.

B. The number of moose hunting permits to be issued for each WMD shall be as follows:

20256 Moose Permit Allocations	
WMD	# of Permits
WMD 1	450 antlered/175 antlerless
WMD 2	350 antlered/175 antlerless
WMD 3	200 antlered/125 antlerless
WMD 4	400 antlered/250 antlerless
WMD 4A (adaptive hunt)	550 antlerless
WMD 5	250 antlered/125 antlerless
WMD 6	200 antlered/60 antlerless
WMD 7 & 13 (combined)	140 antlered
WMD 8	200 antlered/150 antlerless
WMD 9	125 antlered

WMD 10	60 antlered
WMD 11	50 antlered
WMD 12 & 15 (combined)	40 antlered
WMD 14 & 17 (combined)	40 antlered
WMD 16	0 permits
WMD 18	40 antlered
WMD 19	60 antlered
WMD 27 & 28 (combined)	40 antlered

TOTAL: 2,645 antlered / 1,4601,060 antlerless

9. Adaptive Management Hunt Location

A. **WMD 4A North:** Beginning at the point where the St. Aurelie Road intersects with the Quebec Border in Big Six township then northerly along the Quebec-Maine border to the point where the American Realty Rd. intersects the Maine-Quebec border in T11R17 WELS; then following the American Realty Rd. easterly to the Maibec Connector Rd. (also known as the Thibodeau Connector Rd.) south to the intersection with the Ross Mountain Rd., then east on the Ross Mountain Rd. to the intersection with the St. Juste Connector Rd., then southwesterly to the intersection with the St. Juste Rd., then easterly along the St. Juste Rd. to the intersection with the St. Aurelie Rd., then south along the St. Aurelie Rd. to the intersection with the Caucomgomoc Road. Then westerly along the St. Aurelie Road to the Quebec border.

B. **WMD 4A South:** Beginning at the point where the Golden Rd. intersects the Maine-Quebec border in T5R20 WELS; then following the Maine-Quebec border northerly to the point where the St. Aurelie Rd. intersects with the Quebec border in Big Six township; then following the St. Aurelie Rd. easterly to the intersection with the Caucomgomoc Rd., then southeasterly along the Caucomgomoc Rd. to the intersection with the Russell Mountain Rd. then southwesterly along the Russell Mountain Rd. until the junction with the 490 Rd. then southerly along the 490 Rd. to the Golden Rd., then westerly to the start at the Canadian Border.

C. Adaptive Moose Hunt Season Dates and Permit Allocations

(1) The number of permits issued for the 2025 Adaptive Hunt Unit will be as follows:

DATES	Subunit A-North	Subunit A-South	TOTAL PERMITS
	ANTLERLESS	ANTLERLESS	
Oct. 20-25, 2025	100	100	200
Oct. 27-Nov. 1, 2025	75	75	150
Nov. 3-Nov. 8, 2025	100	100	200

D. Training for eligible participants

Each hunter selected must attend a training session conducted by the department before being issued their moose hunting permit. A selected hunter who fails to attend the required training session will forfeit their permit.

E. Other Parameters for the Adaptive Management Moose Hunt

All other laws and rules relating to moose hunting shall apply.