AN OVERVIEW OF THE UPPER KUSKOKWIM CONTROLLED USE AREA AND THE USE OF MOOSE BY AREA RESIDENTS, 1981-1984

by

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the controlled use area for moose in the upper Kuskokwim area, and the use of moose by local residents from 1981 to 1984. At the spring 1981 Board of Game meeting, a controlled use area for moose harvest was established for the upper Kuskokwim drainages in Game Management Unit 19(d) (Fig. 1). The area was so designated in response to local, advisory committee, and departmental concerns over apparent general declines in the moose population from levels during the late 1960s and 1970s. The controlled use area restricts the use of aircraft in any manner for hunting moose and transporting hunters and moose parts.

1981-82 SEASON

The Division of Subsistence was directed to monitor the subsistence hunting of moose in the newly established Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area during the 1981-82 season. The Subsistence Division followed that directive and found that the controlled use area management practice achieved its objectives by restricting aerial access and subsequently reducing overall harvest in the area. In the 1981-82 season, Nikolai and Telida, the two communities in the controlled use area with a population of 120 people, harvested about 56 moose (Table 1). Hunting occurred during two periods -- a fall hunt by skiff and an early winter hunt by snowmachine. Local harvests have remained essentially constant over the recent past in the controlled use area in terms of numbers of moose and seasons hunted (Stokes and Andrews 1982). Further, while moose harvests
Fig. 1 UPPER KUSKOWIM CONTROLLED USE AREA 1983-84
### TABLE 1. NIKOLAI AND TELIDA MOOSE HARVESTS, 1981-1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and Season</th>
<th>Harvest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1981-82</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall (Sept. 1-30; Sept. 10-25)</td>
<td>52 (+ 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter (Nov. 15-30; Nov. 25-Dec. 10)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1982-83</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall (Sept. 1-30)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter (Dec. 1-Feb. 28)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1983-84</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall (Sept. 1-30)</td>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter (Dec. 1-Feb. 28)</td>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
generally occur in the fall, other seasons might be more beneficial and compatible with customary and traditional practices.

Following the presentation of information on local use of moose and the biological status of moose in the controlled use area, the Board of Game adopted an extended winter season for a portion of the area. This provided a late season which accommodated customary use given the constraints of climatic factors which often did not provide for adequate hunting opportunity during fall.

1982-83 SEASON

The Division of Subsistence continued to monitor moose harvests by community residents in the area in the fall and late winter of the 1982-83 season (Stokes 1983). Again, it was found that the annual harvest remained about the same for the communities of Nikolai and Telida, about 52 moose (Table 1). The extended winter season, in particular, had met the objectives of the Board: area residents were provided adequate hunting opportunity with the late winter season since poor weather conditions during the early fall season often resulted in low moose harvests.

1983-84 SEASON

This year, the Division has continued the monitoring of moose harvests in the Upper Kuskokwim Controlled Use Area. In 1983-84, the fall season harvest of about 20-25 moose was lower than that of the previous two years for Nikolai and Telida hunters (Table 1). There was a relative absence of bull moose along the river corridors in part due to unseasonably mild weather; bull moose had not yet moved to the river corridors.
where residents hunt (Stokes 1984). The winter season of 1983-84 showed an increased local participation compared with previous years, with about 20–25 moose taken. Thus, the overall annual harvest by community residents in 1983-84 (40–50 moose) was about the same as that recorded for the two previous years in the controlled use area (Table 1).

SUMMARY

In summary, the use of management practices such as the controlled use area and the refinement of hunting seasons by the Board of Game appears to be successful. The Board has provided Nikolai and Telida residents the opportunity to legally harvest moose during time compatible with local environmental conditions favorable for moose hunting and compatible with cultural circumstances while at the same time enabling management for the conservation of the moose resource in the area.
REFERENCES

Stokes, J. and E. Andrews

Stokes, J.

Stokes, J.
1984 Memorandum dated February 29, 1984 to Elizabeth Andrews. Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.