

## **Ontario proposes inadequate changes to moose hunting**

In response to a plummeting moose population, Wildlands League has been calling for an end to calf hunting in Ontario and other changes to moose management since 2016. The response of Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to date is to lower tags for adult moose inconsistently across the province and change season dates.

Now MNR is starting to heed its own research and is proposing more restrictions on calf harvest be introduced. The appointed Big Game Management Advisory Committee (BGMAC) has recommended a quota system be put in place and a tag lottery for 5 additional Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) starting in 2020 and include all WMUs in moose range by 2021. Four WMUs have had restrictions on calf harvest since 2004 and the results have been good for moose.

MNR is receiving comments on this policy until 11:59pm Thursday September 26<sup>th</sup>.

While this is a move in the right direction, it does not go far enough and there are no additional moose protection measures being considered.

Our recommendations:

- **End the calf hunt.** Even with new restrictions, Ontario will still be in the minority of jurisdictions allowing the harvest of calves in their first year. Research is confirming that hunting calves puts additional stress on the moose population. It is time to phase it out.
- **Reduce cow tags** consistently across the province. Without a mother to protect and guide a calf for the first year of its life, its chances of survival are limited, even if it is not taken by a hunter.
- **Establish and protect moose refuge areas.** These areas would provide relief from loss of habitat, and from the easy access that forestry roads provide for hunters. New legally protected areas should be part of the solution.
- **Commit more resources for enforcement, monitoring and research** that are not tied to hunting revenue. MNR budgets continue to be slashed and funding is dependent on hunting licenses which can create a conflict between conservation and research. As it stands now, when hunting tags need to be cut, there are fewer dollars to fund increasingly needed research.
- **The composition of BGMAC needs to be more representative** of Ontario. It needs to include Indigenous People, university scientists, non-consumptive outdoor enthusiasts, environmental groups and women. Currently it consists of male hunters, outfitters, retired MNR employees and an *Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunter* biologist.

Please take time to [send a letter](#) to MNR including these concerns. Please send a copy of your letter to [info@wildlandsleague.org](mailto:info@wildlandsleague.org)