

Wildlife Advisory Committee

22 December 2020

Teleconference

Moose Mortality, Gerry Kuzyk

Gerry is originally from Saskatchewan and has spent most of his career studying moose in BC and Alberta. He recently returned to Saskatchewan and is employed with the Ministry of Environment working on moose studies here in Saskatchewan.

- 18 months before a young cow is accepted into the herd and will breed and only 30% of these young cows will reproduce that year
- Cows actively reproduce for 10-12 years
- Lose up to 50% of the calves in the first 6 weeks after birth
- Some cows abort the fetus
- Need 85% or higher cow survival to maintain a stable population
- Mortality of cows in the study were:
 - o 60% to predators
 - o 14% to hunting, in the BC study only 2% were licensed hunters
 - o 20% health related deaths, average age 11.4 years
 - o 2% accidents (fairly remote in BC, not farmland moose)
- Quite a few of the moose starved to death (natural causes).

Antlerless Deer Study, Tom Perry

- Demand is still high, in 2020 14,579 applicants and only 6,132 licenses
- Under subscribed in the SW—might go to Overt The Counter (OTC) tags
- Possible to extend the season to 31 December
- Possible reasons for under subscription:
 - o CWD
 - o Cost and travel to get to the areas where there are available licenses
- Looking for ways to inform hunters of available tags. First come first served isn't necessarily the best or fairest way to distribute available licenses. Suggested that they send an email to unsuccessful applicants and/or set up a notification list that hunters can subscribe to receive information about hunting opportunities.

Landowner request to increase the buffer for snaring fur bearing animals

- Quite a lengthy discussion on a resolution of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA). It appears in some areas that herd dogs are getting caught in snares set for coyotes. Currently the regulation states a buffer is required around farm yards and stock pens, however farmers are now grazing herds in fields away from their buildings.
- The SSGA is requesting a 1500 m buffer around any herds regardless of where they are located.

- It appeared that the SSGA had not spoken with the Trappers Association. I recommended that these 2 groups get together to discuss the issue and work out a reasonable solution and come back to WAC (if required).
- I would think the farmers would want the trappers snaring coyotes near their herds and in most instances would be working with the trappers.
- Extending the buffer to 1500 m raises a bunch of questions around limiting activity on land that the herd farmer does not control.

Regulation/Policy Changes Kevin Schoepp

- Hides in the field is still an issue—more so around heavily populated areas where hunters are driving out of the city and dumping the hides in the ditch (Regina and Amour Road).
 - o The SWF Hide Collection stopped in 2018 and with no place to dispose of the hides is an issue
 - o CWD may be an issue as there are a limited number of garbage dumps that will accept hides (I think they said 8 dumps in Saskatchewan)
 - o Unresolved issue.
- Feeding Dangerous Wildlife
 - o Regulation is unclear regarding bear, wolves, and other dangerous wildlife.
 - o Should not impact bear hunting/baiting
 - o May standardize with baiting for ungulates
- Signage for Baiting
 - o Will allow use of HAL or Name and Address—Use of HAL is not in effect yet
- Waste of Game
 - o Regulation does not permit disposal of a diseased carcass. CO's are using their judgement (common sense) to allow a hunter to dispose of a diseased carcass, but this technically is not allowed under the regulation. Propose to allow disposal of diseased game. Section 22 of the regulations.
- Removal of bait, equipment
 - o Looking at simplifying the regulation as there are different dates for bait and equipment
- Tracking Dogs
 - o When they brought this forward a year ago they asked for letters of support or opposition. They didn't receive much feedback and the interest waned. Most of the attendees indicated they were in favour of **allowing "TRAINED" dogs for retrieval of wounded animals**. The SBPA sent a letter of support when this issue was first raised a year ago.

Mandatory Hunter Surveys

- Hunter surveys are mandatory for 2020.
- I am in favour of supporting hunter surveys but I am opposed to mandatory hunter surveys. The ministry is typically getting 20-25% response rate which is more than adequate to do what they need for measuring hunting success. There are a few WMZ and species where they are not getting high enough response rates—my suggestion was to use education and incentives for those areas as opposed to going mandatory across the board.
- This year is a trial year. They don't have a firm plan of what they are going to do if hunters do not comply with the mandatory regulation.