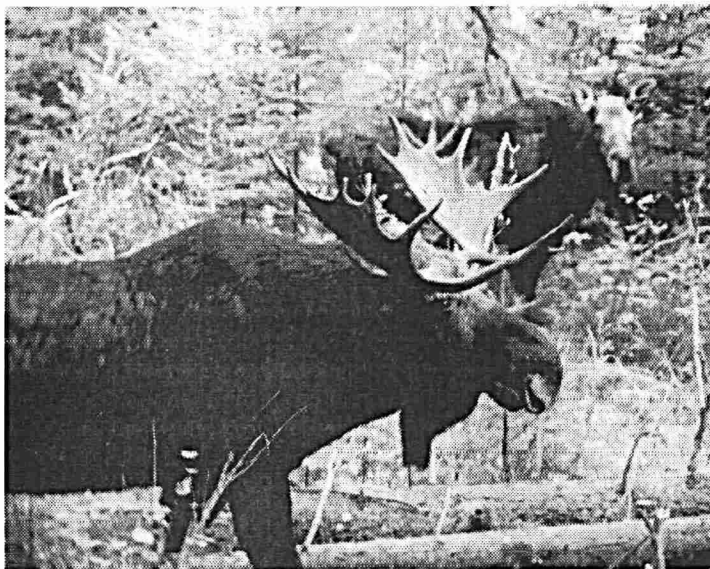


Public sightings of moose needed; Scientists begin counting on the ground



Hunters and wildlife watchers are seeing fewer moose in northeastern Minnesota. A scientific study shows higher than expected mortality of adult moose. Calf production is also lower than it has been in the past.

Are moose in northeastern Minnesota in trouble?

Scientists at the Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota Duluth, are teaming up with state, federal and tribal natural resource organizations to understand what is happening to moose populations in northeastern Minnesota. And they need your help.

The study team is asking people to report any moose sightings via their Web site at www.nrri.umn.edu/moose.

"Sightings are useful for several reasons immediately, and their value will increase over time," said NRRI biologist Ron Moen. "We'd like to hear about sightings of moose across northern Minnesota."

Moose are important to Minnesota, and many recall the decline of moose in the northwest from over 4,000 to fewer than 100 in less than 20 years. Could the Arrowhead region, with over 7,000 moose, be starting a similar decline?

"We regularly count moose in the northeastern corner of the state only and it's logistically impossible to fly over every square mile of moose habitat each year," said Mike Schrage, wildlife biologist with the Fond du Lac Resource Management Division. "Public reports of moose sightings can help us keep track of where moose are doing well in the northeast, and if pockets of moose remain in the rest of the state."

In addition it's important to receive reports of sick or dead moose to help understand causes of mortality.

"Sick or dead moose should be reported to the local DNR office



immediately,” according to DNR Wildlife Veterinarian Erika Butler. “If we can get to the carcass quickly, even more can be learned about the diseases and parasites infecting moose.”

Moen added that warming temperatures, increased deer populations, diseases and parasites could all be contributing to a decline of moose in Minnesota.

“Our goal with the overall project will be to use existing research and new data to understand their world better,” he said.

Research cooperators and sponsors include The U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources Division, Voyageurs National Park, the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, the 1854 Treaty Authority, the Superior National Forest, the Fond du Lac Resource Management Division, the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, the Minnesota Zoo, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the University of Minnesota Duluth Natural Resources Research Institute.