
THE SCIENCE – AND ART – OF MOOSE MANAGEMENT IN THE BIG HOLE VALLEY, MONTANA

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Moose (*Alces alces*) management can be challenging because of the difficulty of quantifying population trends consistently. Because of their solitary nature and penchant for fairly dense cover, moose can be hard to see. Also, their presence in more open habitat is highly dependent on weather conditions. Where done, aerial surveys serve more as an index of population trend than as a census and should be combined with other indices to make management decisions. In the Big Hole Valley in southwestern Montana, aerial survey data is combined with harvest data when setting license quotas. Specifically, three indices are used: calf:100 adult, days per hunter, and hunter success. Results from the past 4 years suggest that this suite of indices is effective at meeting management objectives.