



News Release Communiqué

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For Immediate Release

2014-15 Moose Population Reduction Program Underway in Gros Morne National Park

October 8, 2014

Gros Morne National Park

Parks Canada

Parks Canada advises the public that the fourth year of Gros Morne National Park's moose population reduction program is currently underway. The moose population is being managed in co-operation with the Wildlife Division of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, using the provincial big-game licensing system. A total of 867 licences out of a possible 1,000 have been distributed for the Gros Morne Moose Management Area (MMA) this year.

The program was started in 2011 as part of a broader initiative to improve forest health within Gros Morne National Park. It had become clear through ecosystem monitoring activities that the cycle of forest regeneration in Gros Morne was impaired, mostly as a result of the effects of moose over-browsing.

For the 2014-15 season, Gros Morne will again contain a single MMA which is divided into different temporal zones. The first zone, which opened September 13, is in a very remote area of the park. Accessible only by aircraft or boat, it contains no park infrastructure, including trails. The second zone opens on October 14 following Thanksgiving weekend. This zone includes a large part of the park and is accessible by road, boat or aircraft. The third zone is a small area that surrounds the Killdevil school camp. It will open November 1 once camp activities conclude for the year. A fourth zone has been added this year consisting of four small areas adjacent to major park trails, which will be open for a different period of two to four weeks. This way, Parks Canada has ensured that a range of popular trails to suit all levels of interest remain outside the harvesting area throughout the hunting season. All four zones close on February 1, 2015.

Volunteer hunters participating in this program should also take note that where road construction is still taking place on highways within the national park, the road side areas will be closed to hunting.

Visitors planning to come to the national park this fall and winter are encouraged to review maps and safety information at: www.pc.gc.ca/foresthealth, or call Gros Morne National Park prior to their visit at: 709-458-2417. Parks Canada is also asking that they pay particular attention to signage indicating areas where hunting is taking place once they arrive.

Quick Facts

- With the help of participating volunteer hunters over the first three years of the program, approximately 1,600 moose were removed from the national park area. That number includes those removed from some of the communities surrounding the park where licences are also issued by the province. By the end of this season, it is estimated that the number will increase to over 2,000.
- A partial survey done of 24 sample blocks (approx. 4 km² each) with high moose densities found that the moose population on the coastal plain north of Rocky Harbour had declined from 6.6 moose/km² in 2009 to 3.7 moose/km² in 2014. While this is not a complete park-wide survey, it shows real declines in moose numbers.
- Gros Morne's Moose Management Area covers the majority of park lands, *i.e.*, 1,730 km², or 95% of the park.
- There is a similar program taking place in Terra Nova National Park.



Quotes

“Some of the vegetation test plots that Parks Canada is monitoring in Gros Morne show early signs that forest health is improving as moose browsing levels are reduced. While it is still too early to see major changes in forest vegetation, field crews report that shrubs and saplings appear to be growing better.”

Dr. Tom Knight, Ecosystem Scientist, Parks Canada

“The Government of Canada is committed to the preservation and protection of Canada’s national parks for current and future generations. This ecosystem management program is therefore set to continue until the moose population is reduced to a level that decreases browsing pressure, allows for adequate forest regeneration, and ultimately improves the health of the forest.”

Geoffrey Hancock, Field Unit Superintendent, Parks Canada

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