



Alaska's Moose, Mr. Bullwinkle?



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The moose is the world's largest member of the deer family. The Alaska race is the largest of all the moose. They are most abundant in recently burned areas that contain willow and birch shrubs. Historically, moose were an important source of food, clothing, and implements to Athapaskan Indians dwelling along the major rivers.

General description: Moose are long-legged and heavy bodied with a drooping nose, a dewlap under the chin and a small tail. Their color ranges from golden brown to almost black. Newborn calves weigh 28 to 35 lbs. Males in prime condition weigh from 1,200 to 1,600 lbs. Adult females weigh 800 to 1,300 lbs. Only the bulls have antlers.

Life history: Cow moose generally breed at 28 months. Calves are born from mid May to early June. Cows give birth to twins 15% to 75 % of the time and triplets may occur once in every 1,000. Calves begin taking solid food a few days after birth. They are weaned in the fall at the time the mother is breeding again. The maternal bond is generally maintained until calves are 12 months old.

Antlers are shed as early as November, but mostly in December and January.

In the wild, moose rarely live more than 16 years.

Moose Safety: Visitors to Alaska are often concerned about encountering bears; yet more people each year are injured by moose than by bears. Moose can be found in Anchorage as easily as in the woods. They aren't inherently aggressive, but will defend themselves if they perceive a threat. Since people don't usually see moose as potentially dangerous, they sometimes will approach too closely and put themselves at risk. Cow moose are extremely defensive of their young.



Moose tend to wander onto the highways of Alaska which is dangerous for both the drivers and the moose. Hitting a moose with a vehicle is especially dangerous due to the size of the animal and the fact that its stilt-like legs are usually knocked out from underneath it which brings it up through the windshield of the vehicle.

Moose are part of the reality of the wildness of Alaska. No, they are not Bullwinkle! They are wondrous animals living in the Last Frontier.



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