

State ponders lowest moose hunt numbers in modern era

March 12 2018, by Wilson Ring

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife is recommending the lowest number of moose hunting permits this year in the modern era as the herd continues to decline from infestations of ticks and brain worms believed to be caused by the warming climate.

The department is recommending the state issue only 14 permits, and if the decline continues, it is possible the department will recommend issuing no permits for 2019, said Vermont Director of Wildlife Mark Scott.

"It's a fair question," Scott said. "If their numbers continue to get below a threshold we wouldn't recommend any permits at all."

Vermont's modern moose hunt began in 1993 when the state issued 30 permits. The [number](#) of permits, along with the size of the moose herd, reached a peak in the mid-2000s. In 2007 and 2008, the state issued 1,251 [hunting](#) permits in hopes of reducing the size of the herd.

But then came warmer weather that encouraged the growth of ticks and brain worms that drove down their numbers even more. The moose herd is currently believed to be below 2,000 animals.

Vermont issued 265 moose permits in 2015, 160 in 2016 and 80 permits last year.

Officials hope a smaller moose herd will stabilize the populations.

Scott said the 10 rifle and four archery permits that are being recommended for this October in two [wildlife](#) management zones of northeastern Vermont would have no effect on the size of the moose [herd](#), but it would allow limited hunting opportunities. There would be no moose hunting in the rest of the state.

The Fish and Wildlife board will vote on the proposal next month.

Most [moose](#) hunting permits are issued by lottery.

Moose in both New Hampshire and parts of Maine also have been affected by the parasites. Scientists in the three [states](#) have been studying the impact of ticks.

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Citation: State ponders lowest moose hunt numbers in modern era (2018, March 12) retrieved 28 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-03-state-ponders-lowest-moose-modern.html>

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