2016 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose   PERIOD: 6/1/2016 - 5/31/2017

HERD: MO201 - ABSAROKA

HUNT AREAS: 8-9, 11   PREPARED BY: Doug McWhirter/Tony Mong

	2011 - 2015 Average	**2016**	**2017 Proposed**
Population:	0	N/A	N/A
Harvest:	9	11	10
Hunters:	9	11	10
Hunter Success:	100%	100%	100%
Active Licenses:	9	11	10
Active License Success:	100%	100%	100%
Recreation Days:	71	105	100
Days Per Animal:	7.9	9.5	10
Males per 100 Females	0	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	0	0	

Population Objective (± 20%) :   0 (0 - 0)

Management Strategy: Special
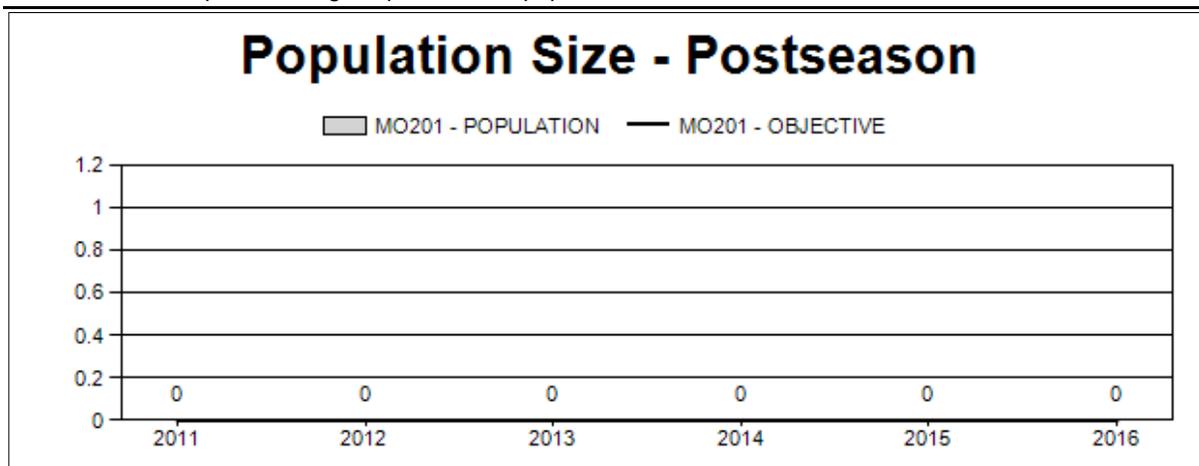Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: N/A%
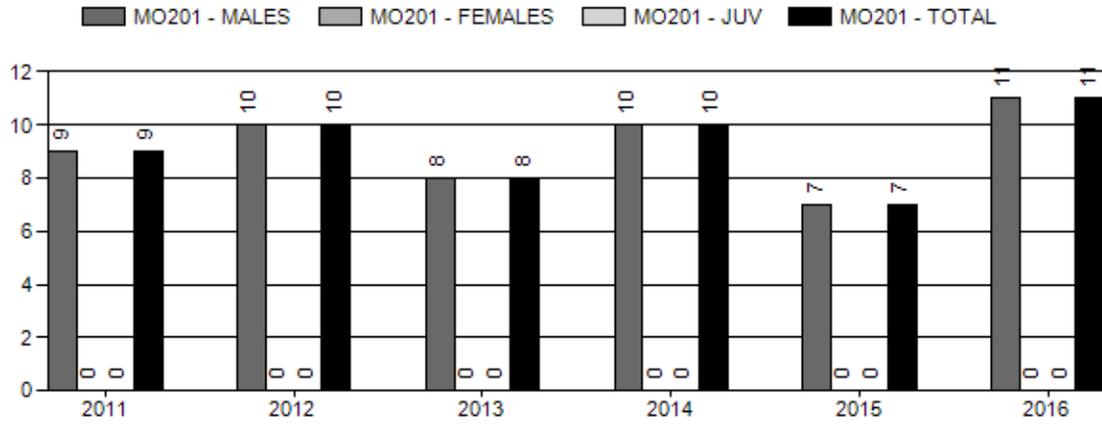Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 0
Model Date: 12/12/2016

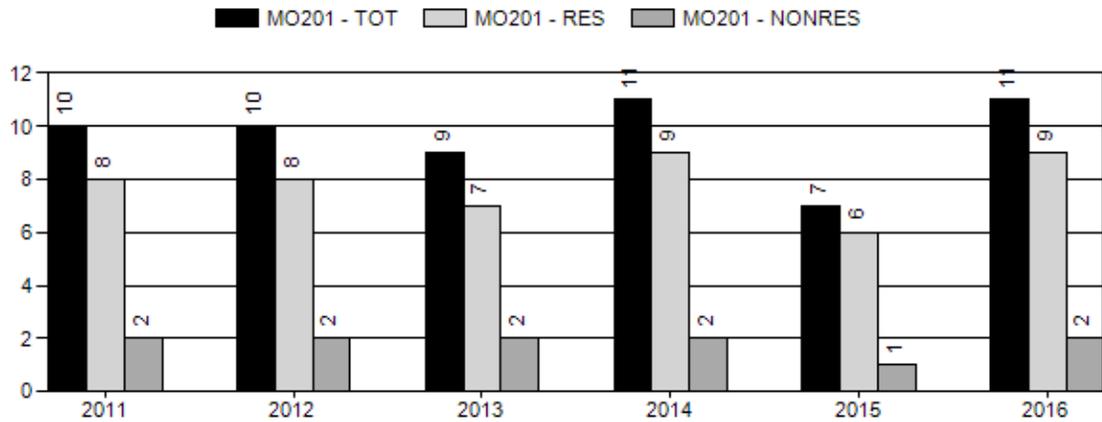**Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):**

	JCR Year	**Proposed**
Females ≥ 1 year old:	N/A%	n/a%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	N/A%	n/a%
Total:	N/A%	n/a%
Proposed change in post-season population:	N/A%	n/a%

Population Size - Postseason

Harvest

Legend: MO201 - MALES, MO201 - FEMALES, MO201 - JUV, MO201 - TOTAL

Year	Males	Females	Juv	Total
2011	9	0	0	9
2012	10	0	0	10
2013	8	0	0	8
2014	10	0	0	10
2015	7	0	0	7
2016	11	0	0	11

Number of Active Licenses

Legend: MO201 - TOT, MO201 - RES, MO201 - NONRES

Year	Tot	Res	Nonres
2011	10	8	2
2012	10	8	2
2013	9	7	2
2014	11	9	2
2015	7	6	1
2016	11	9	2

Harvest Success

Legend: MO201 - Hunter Success %, MO201 - Active License Success %

Year	Hunter Success %	Active License Success %
2011	90	90
2012	100	100
2013	89	89
2014	91	91
2015	100	100
2016	100	100

Active Licenses

MO201 - Active Licenses

Year	Active Licenses
2011	10
2012	10
2013	9
2014	11
2015	7
2016	11
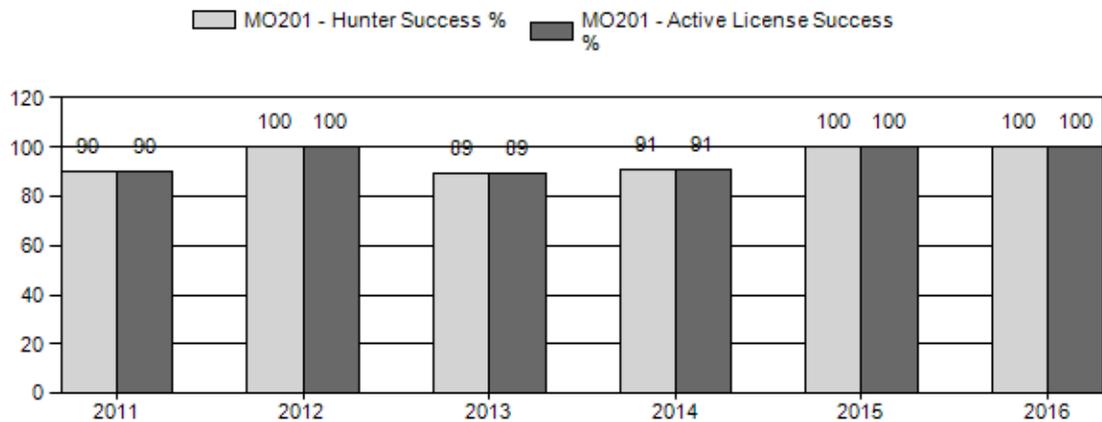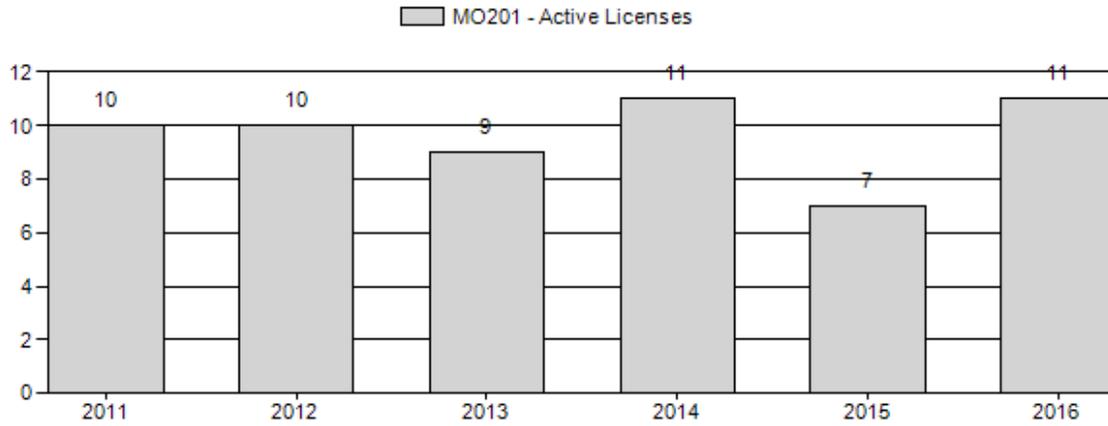
Days per Animal Harvested

MO201 - Days

Year	Days
2011	6.9
2012	6.3
2013	10
2014	10.2
2015	6.7
2016	9.5
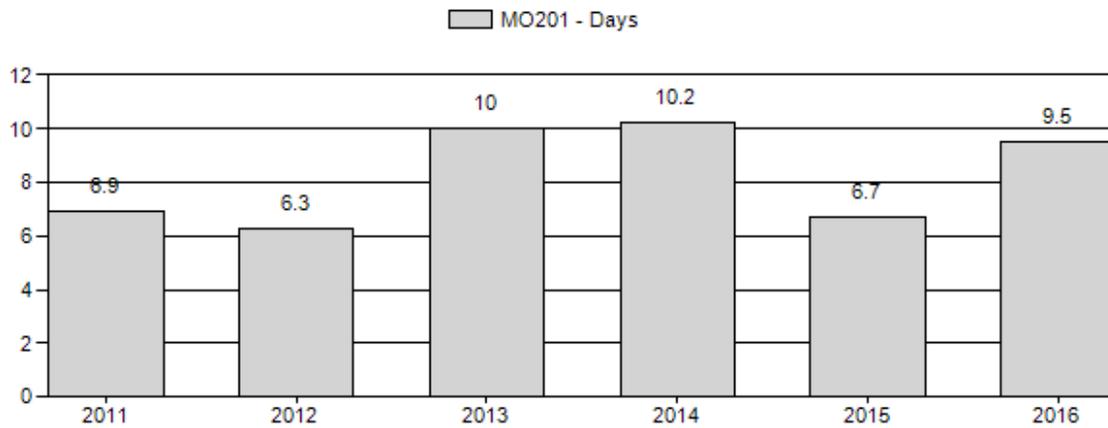
Postseason Animals per 100 Females

MO201 - Males   MO201 - Juveniles

Year	Males	Juveniles
2011	0	0
2012	0	0
2013	0	0
2014	0	0
2015	0	0
2016	0	0
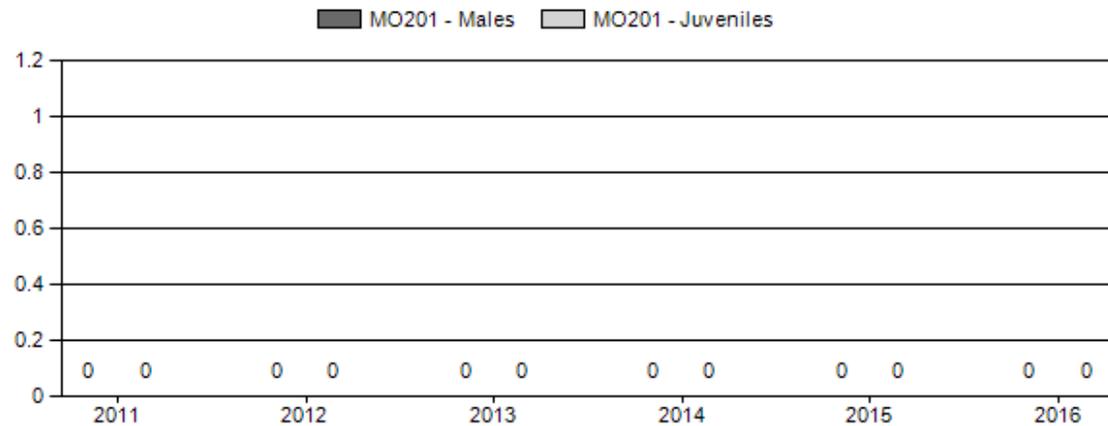
2017 HUNTING SEASONS
ABSAROKA MOOSE HERD (MO201)

Hunt Area	Type	Season Dates Opens	Season Dates Closes	Quota	License	Limitations
8						CLOSED
9	1	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	5	Limited quota	Antlered moose; the Wood River drainage off national forest shall be closed
11	1	Sep. 10	Nov. 10	5	Limited quota	Antlered moose

Special Archery Season Hunt Areas	Season Dates Opens	Season Dates Closes	Limitations
9	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Refer to Section 2 of this Chapter
11	Sep. 1	Sep. 9	Refer to Section 2 of this Chapter

Hunt Area	License Type	Quota change from 2016
		No Changes
Hunt Area Total		**No Changes**

Management Evaluation
Median Age Objective: > 4.5 years
Hunter Effort Objective: < 12 days
Secondary Median Age Objective: 40% > 5 years
Management Strategy: Special (2015 data)
Most Recent 5-Year Running Median Age: 5.0 years
Most Recent 5-Year Running Average Hunter Effort: 9.5 days
Most Recent 5-Year Running Average Age Objective, % > 5 Years: 49%

Herd Unit Issues

Due to very low moose densities and the resulting lack of population data, there is no postseason population estimate for this herd unit. Six previously existing moose herd units (Thorofare, Crandall, Sunlight, North Fork, South Fork, Greybull/Gooseberry) were combined in 2003 to create the Absaroka Moose Herd Unit. In 2008 Hunt Areas 11, 12, 13, and 31 were combined to form the current Hunt Area 11. Hunt Area 9 (Greybull River and Gooseberry Creek drainages)

and Hunt Area 8 (Thorofare, which has been closed since 2006) represent the remaining hunt areas in this herd unit. Management direction at the current time is to allow some moose hunting opportunity while encouraging moose numbers to grow, or at least be maintained.

Weather

The influence of weather on moose population dynamics in the Absaroka and Beartooth Mountains is unknown. Most areas occupied by moose in this herd unit do not experience significant snow depths, and when and where that does occur, movement to more favorable areas is possible. On the other hand, because good moose habitats are so limited in this herd unit, weather conditions that negatively impact these habitats may have a significant role.

Habitat

No habitat monitoring data is collected in this herd unit. Moose habitats throughout the Absaroka Mountains vary widely from expansive, willow-covered flood plains and remote wilderness setting of the Thorofare, to rather narrow ribbons of riparian habitats along the Absaroka Front. Lack of expansive willow-riparian habitats along most of this herd unit has made increased use of spruce-fir forest types a necessity for moose compared to other areas. Major portions of this herd unit burned in 1988 and effects of significant habitat changes from these fires on this habitat type specifically have generally been detrimental to moose. Recent drought has presumably had a negative effect on moose survival and recruitment, as have increasing numbers of large predators. It is suspected that the combination of habitat loss, drought, and predation has negatively influenced moose in most portions of this herd unit.

Field Data

None exists for this herd unit. Because moose exist at such low densities in this herd unit, collection of classification and trend information is essentially impossible. The last effort was in 2004, when 9.3 hours of helicopter survey time was spent to survey the entire herd unit and only 32 moose were observed.

Harvest Data

Management of moose in the Absaroka Moose Herd Unit since its creation in 2003 has remained similar, with 5 permits issued in Hunt Area 9 and 5 permits issued in Area 11. An average of 8-10 bulls/year are taken by hunters, and hunter effort usually ranges from 8-10 days per moose harvested. Moose hunters generally observe an average of 8-12 moose during their hunt.

In 2016, hunter success was 100% (5/5) in Area 9 and 100% (6/6) in Area 11. Average age of harvested moose in hunt area 9 was 3.6 with 1 out of the 5 moose being 5 years or older. We saw a similar average age of moose harvested in hunt area 11 at 4.1 with 3 moose being 5 years or older. For the entire herd unit we see an overall average age of 3.9 and a 5 year running average of 5. Hunter effort was 7.8 days/moose harvested in Area 9 and 11.0 days/harvested moose in Area 11, and averaging 9.5 days/moose harvested for the herd unit.

Population

Although population models have been constructed, the lack of data has rendered them useless and unreliable for this large herd unit. Past attempts to estimate population sizes based on extrapolations of the harvest rate of adult males from other moose populations have produced estimates with little to no reliability.

Management Summary

The current season structures in Hunt Areas 9 and 11 address moose management goals and we think 5 permits in Hunt Area 9 and 5 permits for Hunt Area 11 for 2016 should result in the harvest of 9-10 bull moose. The primary objectives for this herd include managing for the following 5-year running averages; median age of 4.5 years or greater and hunter effort of less than 12 days/moose harvested. A secondary objective is that 40% or greater of harvested bull moose meet or exceed 5 years of age. Currently all of these objectives are being met.

MO201 Absorka Moose Herd Seasonal Ranges

Seasonal Ranges

	MO201 Hunt Areas
	Crucial Winter
	Crucial Winter/Yearlong
	Out of Range
	Summer
	Undetermined
	Winter
	Winter/Yearlong
	Yearlong

0   10   20   40 Miles