



# 2026 MOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR QUÉBEC

SUMMARY DOCUMENT



## **IMPORTANT**

**The content of this document does not have the force of law.**

**At all times, consult [Québec.ca](https://www.quebec.ca) to obtain current harvesting conditions.**

Photos: Laurent De Vriendt

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Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre  
les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs

# Introduction

## Context

Developing and implementing a management plan provides an opportunity to assess the situation of a species. A management plan is a structuring document that guides actions toward the most effective possible management of species and their habitats, with the goal of maintaining healthy populations and supporting their development. It identifies issues related to species, specifies wildlife objectives and proposes actions and harvesting modalities adapted to regional realities. A management plan is developed in collaboration with various provincial and regional partners and stakeholders.

The 2026 Moose Management Plan for Québec recognizes the great importance of the species for sport hunters and for Indigenous communities. The plan considers the current situation of populations, which are relatively stable at the provincial scale, while also showing an increase in the herd in several hunting zones and a decrease in certain other zones.

The work has been guided mainly by the desire to maintain healthy moose populations, enabling an attractive and sustainable hunt, while respecting Indigenous rights. Special attention has been devoted to developing and maintaining management tools that reflect regional biological, socioeconomic and cultural particularities, while simplifying regulations for hunters whenever possible.

The new management plan also aims to:

- optimize the conservation and development of moose;
- increase the Ministère's agility in managing moose;
- expand our knowledge of the species, particularly regarding habitat monitoring and the prevalence of parasites and diseases, with a view to sustainable population management.

# Moose, the king of our forests

The moose is the largest cervid in the world and inhabits the northern forests of North America, Europe and Asia. In Québec, it is found from the hardwood forests bordering the United States to the south, up to the forest tundra near the Baie d'Hudson and Baie d'Ungava to the north.

Québec has one of the largest moose herds in Canada. Populations are especially abundant in Gaspésie and Bas-Saint-Laurent, where the absence of wolves, high-quality habitat and sound species management have led to a significant increase in populations during the 2000s (Figure 1).

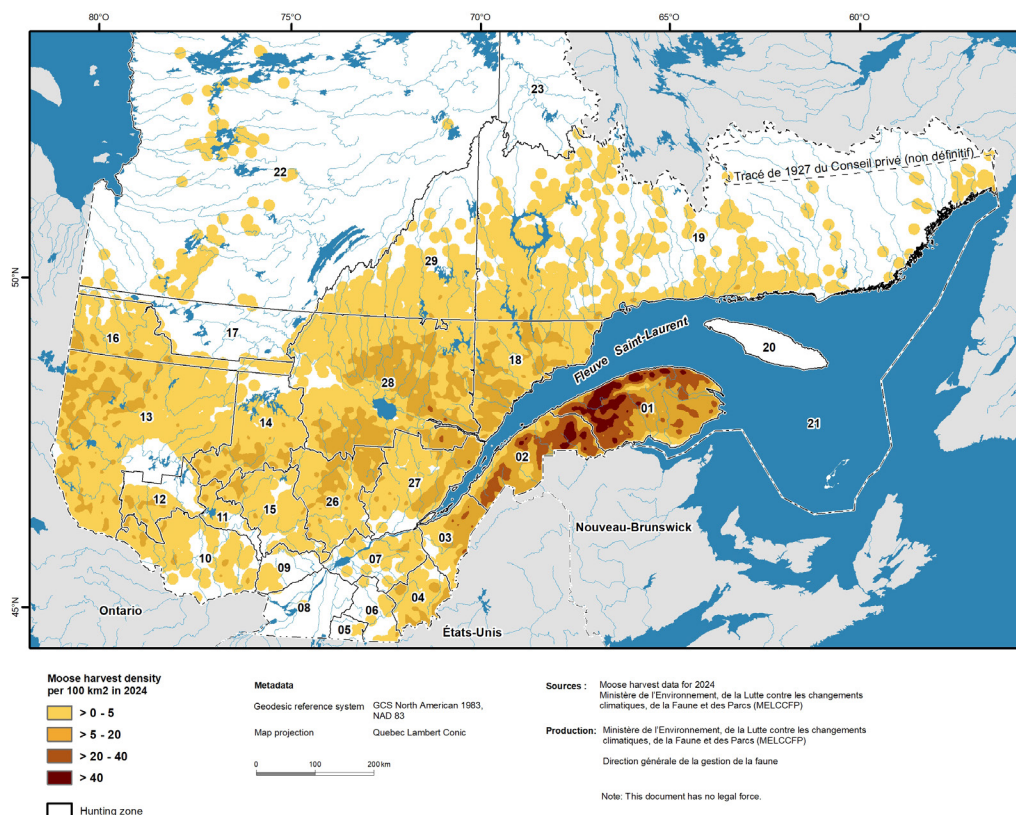
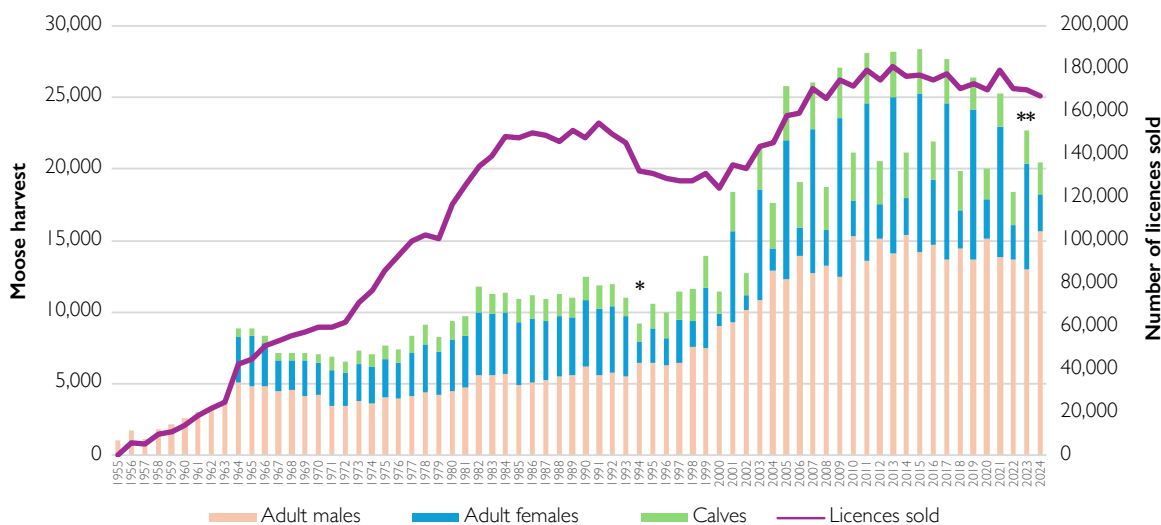


Figure 1: Distribution of the 2024 moose harvest in Québec

Moose is the most popular big-game species among hunters in Québec. Approximately 170,000 licences are sold annually in the province, one of the only jurisdictions where moose hunting is not limited by quotas. Hunting is the main factor influencing moose population dynamics in most of Québec's hunting zones.

Annual harvests have fluctuated since the introduction of alternating permissive and restrictive years in most hunting zones during the 1990s. Since the implementation of the first Moose Management Plan in 1993, harvest numbers have doubled, reaching record levels between 2011 and 2015 (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Annual summary of the moose harvest and number of licences sold in Québec.**

\* The first Moose Management Plan was implemented in 1993.

\*\* A restrictive year was imposed in hunting zones 2 and 27 in 2023, reducing the number of females normally harvested during a permissive year.

## Sociocultural and economic importance of moose hunting

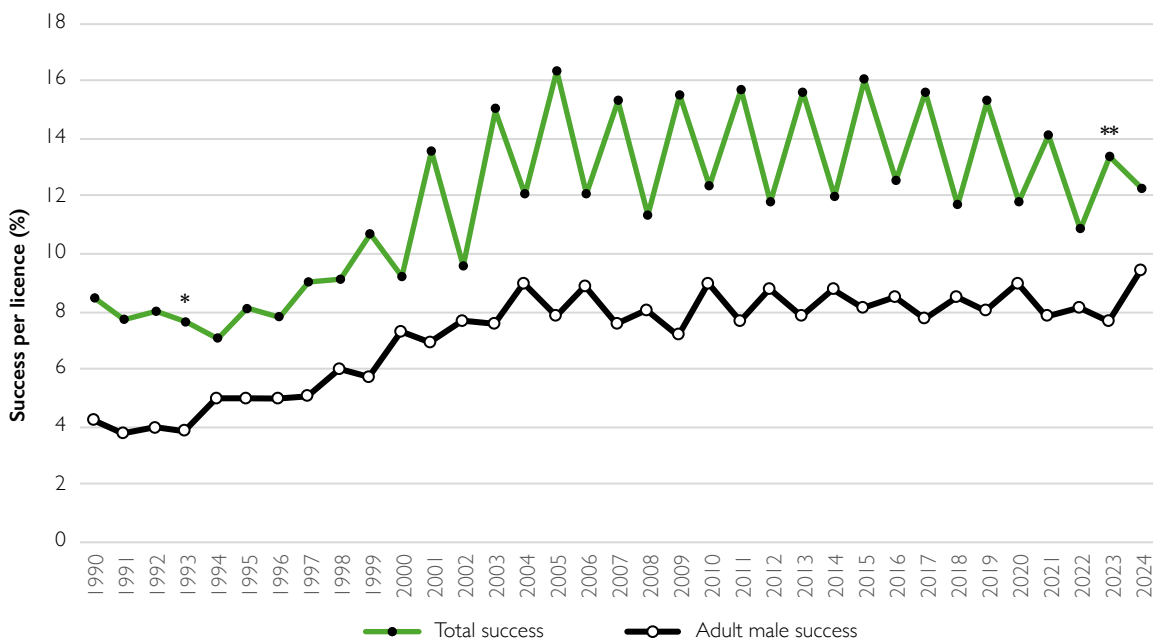
- Approximately 170,000 moose hunters have been recorded annually since 2007. The number of hunters peaked at 181,291 in 2013 and appears to have slightly declined since.
- 74% of participants are 45 years of age or older<sup>1</sup>.
- Adult bull hunting success<sup>2</sup> is one of the best indicators of population status<sup>3</sup>. Provincial adult bull success has been relatively stable since 2004, with an average value of 8.2% per licence, equivalent to 16.4% for a group of two hunters (Figure 3).
- Total hunting success during permissive years has been 15.2% per licence since 2004, and 11.8% per licence during restrictive years.
- Moose hunting generates significant economic benefits for Québec. It produces nearly \$200 million in gross domestic product (GDP) annually and supports nearly 2,000 jobs<sup>1</sup>.

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1 Gouvernement du Québec (2023). *Retombées économiques des activités de chasse, de pêche, de piégeage et d'observation de la faune au Québec en 2022* - Rapport de septembre 2023, Direction du développement socioéconomique et du service à la clientèle, ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs, Québec, 28 p.

2 Le succès de chasse est calculé ainsi : nombre d'originaux récoltés/nombre de chasseurs × 100.

3 LAVOIE, M. et C. DUSSAULT (2024). *Analyse du système de suivi de l'original au Québec*, Direction de l'expertise sur la faune terrestre, l'herpétofaune et l'avifaune, Direction générale de la gestion de la faune et des habitats, ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs, Québec, 125 p.



**Figure 3: Monitoring of moose hunting success in Québec.**

\* The first Moose Management Plan was implemented in 1993.

\*\* A restrictive year was imposed in hunting zones 2 and 27 in 2023, reducing total provincial success compared to that of a permissive year.





## Management tools and guiding principles

For management to be effective, moose populations must be managed over sufficiently large territories to account for species ecology and the environmental factors that influence population dynamics. Given the large home range of a moose (20 to over 100 km<sup>2</sup>) and the distances it may travel, a significant land area is important for effective management.

Thus, in Québec, the management scale for moose is the hunting zone, or in some cases, the subzone. To guide decision-making, the Ministère relies on a robust population and harvest monitoring system that has existed for several decades<sup>3</sup>. This system uses several indicators, including harvest data, licence sales, winter tick counts, tooth analysis for age determination, and the presence of milk. These indicators provide information on population abundance and trends, productivity and health. Aerial surveys may also be conducted to confirm observed trends or document concerns arising from indicator analysis.

Registration of harvested moose is mandatory in Québec, and it provides essential data for monitoring several indicators. Various management tools are available to adjust hunting pressure on the herd or on specific population segments based on the analysis of indicator trends. Regulations governing hunting seasons, their length, permitted hunting weapons, the number of special licences and the number of transportation tags required per moose may be redefined, among others.

Moose hunting is permitted in two main types of territories in Québec: open territory, consisting primarily of Crown land and private land, and structured wildlife territories (TFS), which include wildlife reserves, controlled harvesting zones (zecs) and outfitters. To adapt moose hunting to their territory and clientele, some TFS may have hunting modalities that differ from those of the hunting zone in which they are located. These modalities must nonetheless respect the management objectives of the hunting zone. For example, when modalities within a TFS are more permissive (e.g., a longer hunting season), they are subject to a moose quota or to limits on the number of hunters authorized to hunt in the territory.

The guiding principles governing moose management are:

- Maintaining healthy moose populations;
- Ensuring a sustainable hunting activity for current and future generations;
- Equitable moose management and hunting accessibility for all;
- Respecting the ancestral rights of Indigenous communities;
- Optimizing the development of moose populations;
- Considering other forest users, coexistence issues (e.g., road collisions) and environmental issues (e.g., impacts of high moose densities on habitat).

## Issues, directions and objectives of the 2026 Moose Management Plan

Discussions and consultations with partners and Indigenous communities helped identify and group concerns into five major issues. These issues translate into five directions and nine objectives:

Issues
1. Moose populations harvested sustainably and in accordance with management objectives.
2. Moose populations managed to limit the incidence of diseases and parasites.
3. An activity generating significant economic, social and cultural benefits for Québec.
4. Available and high-quality habitat.
5. Accessible, plain-language scientific information for clients and users.



Directions	Objectives
1. Ensure moose management that supports conservation and optimizes harvest opportunities.	1.1 Ensure robust scientific monitoring of moose populations and broaden the sources of information used in moose management.
	1.2 Adapt harvesting modalities to maximize harvest opportunities while respecting biological, environmental and social constraints, and considering the needs of Indigenous communities.
	1.3 Continue the Ministère's knowledge-acquisition projects on demographic parameters, interactions among cervid species and the impacts of climate change, and adjust harvest thresholds as needed to maintain biodiversity.
2. Reduce risks and monitor diseases and parasites that may affect moose population dynamics.	2.1 Continue, coordinate and integrate into management the knowledge-acquisition work on the impacts of moose parasites and diseases, in collaboration with partners and hunters.
	2.2 Enable adaptive practices to reduce the risk of transmitting parasites and diseases between moose and other native cervids.
3. Ensure the long-term viability of the activity by promoting equitable access to the resource and by creating conditions conducive to developing an active new generation of hunters and supporting business continuity.	3.1 Implement stable regulatory harvesting modalities, standardized assessment methods and standardized methods for allocating quotas to support the development of the activity.
4. Assess habitat availability and quality for moose.	4.1. Continue research projects and integrate the habitat concept into moose population management by ensuring access to modern, high-performance geomatics tools.
	4.2. Promote the enhancement of high-quality habitat through land-use planning.
5. Provide users with clear, accessible information.	5.1. Simplify and improve available resources concerning, among other subjects, the Ministère's activities, hunting modalities, interactions among different species, the effects of diseases and parasites, and the management of Indigenous hunting.



## Actions and harvesting modalities of the Moose Management Plan

### Agility and population monitoring: the keys to moose management

The moose management plan includes 18 actions and modalities. These will help increase the Ministère's management agility, improve the moose monitoring system and implement adjustments to the harvesting modalities of certain hunting zones, based on moose population trends observed since the previous management plan. Some actions and modalities will have a direct impact on hunters:

#### Association of calf and cow under the designation of “antlerless moose”

Beginning in fall 2026, the Ministère will group the calf (often called “veau”) together with the cow under the regulatory designation of “antlerless moose” (OSB). This change will apply province-wide.

#### Random draw for antlerless moose hunting licences

Implementing a random draw represents a major change in moose management and for affected user groups. Although this approach is already well known to hunters, it will have to be clearly explained to be widely accepted. It will therefore be implemented gradually, starting with the zones where the moose situation is more fragile. In hunting zones or subzones where herd status allows, moose without antlers hunting licences (OSB licences) will be issued. The number of OSB licences per zone or subzone will be set annually, taking into account regional biological and socioeconomic realities. Hunters will still be able to buy their regular hunting licence (“Moose, all areas”) each year, without a random draw, which will entitle them to harvest an adult male moose in the hunting zone

they select when purchasing it. To be able to harvest a moose without antlers, hunters will have to enter the [random draw](#) for OSB licences and be selected, as is the case for deer without antlers hunting licences for white-tailed deer.

### **Sharing an OSB licence among members of a hunting expedition<sup>4</sup>**

The Ministère intends to allow the sharing of an OSB licence among members of a hunting expedition. The OSB licence holder will therefore have to sign and issue an individual authorization to each hunter with whom they wish to share their OSB licence. All hunters must hold a valid hunting licence for the relevant hunting area. Criteria defining a hunting expedition will also be added to the regulation.

### **Changes to seasons and hunting weapons in certain hunting zones**

In some hunting zones, the hunting seasons and permitted types of hunting weapons will be modified to reflect herd trend since the previous 2012 Moose Management Plan and to ensure consistency with management objectives and regional characteristics. Where possible, seasons in hunting zones sharing similar characteristics have been harmonized for consistency. The result is a simplified hunting calendar that still reflects regional differences.

### **Natural moose urine: harvesting and use remain authorized<sup>4</sup>**

To limit the risk of spreading diseases, including cervids chronic wasting disease, the Ministère intends to prohibit the sale and importation of natural moose urine. All cervid species in Québec will therefore be subject to these restrictions.

The possession and use of natural moose urine will remain legal. A hunter may therefore collect urine from the moose harvested by them or their group and use it for future hunts but they will not be permitted to buy or sell it. The importation and sale of synthetic urine will remain legal.

### **Annual survey of moose hunters**

The Ministère will conduct a province-wide survey to gather information from hunters, including their moose observations and number of hunting days. These data will support the calculation of new indicators that will be incorporated into moose population monitoring.

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The [measures governing moose hunting](#) are available on [Québec.ca](#). To obtain details on changes to moose harvesting modalities, consult the [new measures](#).

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<sup>4</sup> This information may change following the adoption of the regulations.



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