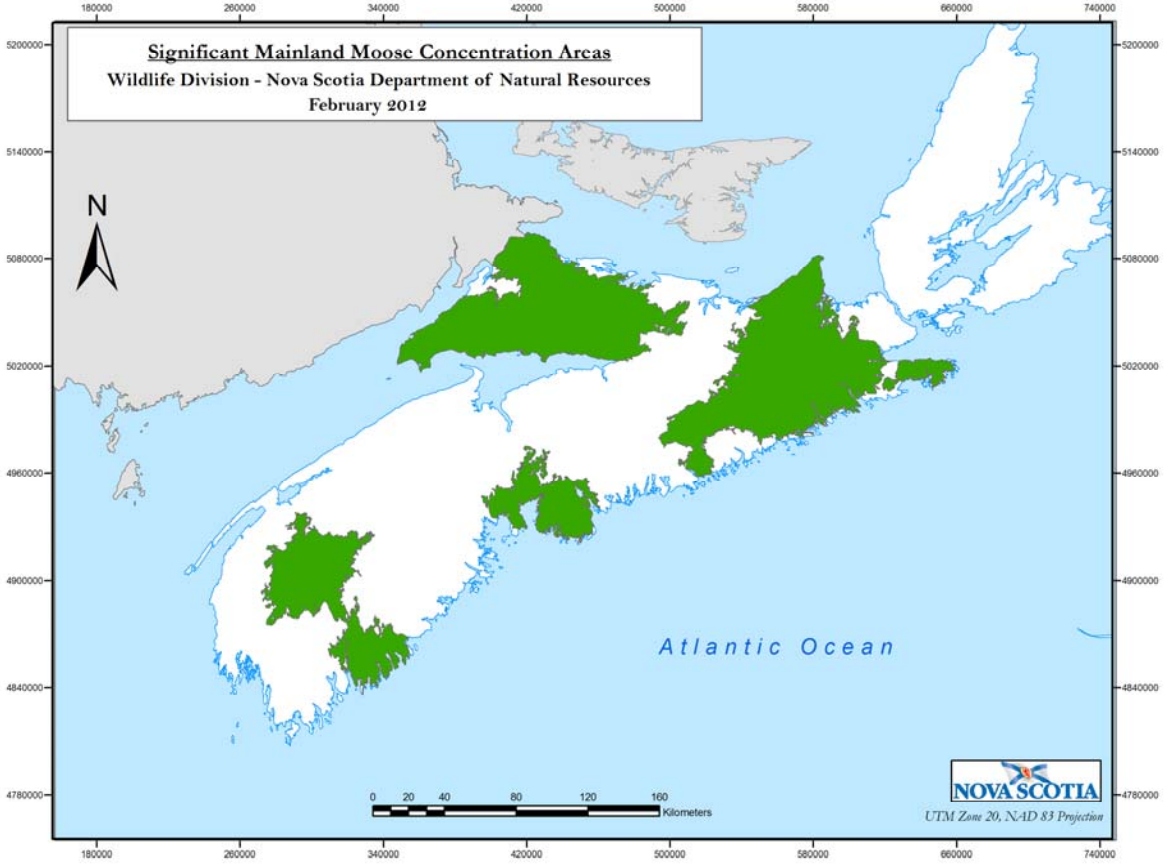
Endangered Mainland Moose Special Management Practices

Endangered Mainland Moose Significant Population Concentration Areas

Moose Special Management Practices (SMPs) will be applied within the five Significant Mainland Moose Population Concentration areas mapped by NSDNR, Wildlife Division in February 2012 (see Figure below). Moose population concentration areas were identified using a scientifically-based geographic model, expert review, and the best available data. The model included an estimate of total occupied range, relative population density, and significant population concentration areas. It was developed using 3272 moose observational records compiled between 1999 and 2011. Additional information on the model and moose population distribution patterns in Nova Scotia can be obtained from NSDNR, Wildlife Division.



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1. Moose Shelter Patches. Within 250 metres of the edge of any forest harvest (partial or clear cut) a minimum of two closed canopy coniferous stands ≥ 3 hectares in area (Forest GIS Inventory specifications: FORNON=0; ≥80% softwood; ≥ 12 meter height; crown closure >60%) must be retained to supply moose cover and security requirements. If the harvest area is large, moose shelter patches may occur within the boundary of the harvest area and augment retention patches (see 2 below). Closed canopy wet coniferous stands provide optimal shelter habitat in summer months; they may also serve as suitable calving sites or facilitate access to moose aquatic feeding areas. One of the two patches should be a coniferous wetland, where such patches are available. To maintain winter shelter habitat in the Nova Scotia Uplands Ecoregion, one of the two patches should be mixedwood on well-drained sites in the upper third (greater than 150 m or 500 ft elevation) of a south facing slope, where such patches are available; in this ecoregion, shelter patches located adjacent to mature hardwood stands are ideal. In areas where moose shelter patches meeting the criteria outlined above are not available, the appropriate local NSDNR regional biologist must be contacted to develop alternate plans.

2. Moose Retention Patches. Smaller coniferous (Forest GIS Inventory specifications: FORNON=0; ≥80% softwood; ≥ 12 meter height; crown closure >60%) patches (0.1- 0.5 hectares) must also be retained within each harvest area to provide temporary shelter and concealment for moose moving within and among areas of travel or foraging habitat. These patches should be distributed so that moose will be no more than 100 m from cover at any time. Moose retention patches can be established by increasing the size of coniferous legacy tree clumps, as outlined under the Wildlife Habitat and Watercourse Protection Regulations, where those clumps meet canopy structural parameters outlined above.

3. Moose Buffers. Forested buffers should be retained around and or near open wetlands, watercourses, and waterbodies (Forest GIS Inventory specifications: ForNon=70, 71, 72, 75, and 77). Buffers need to be equal to or greater than 20 meters wide and located in such a way (i.e. on higher ground, or between a road and the water) to conceal moose utilizing open wetland and aquatic habitats.

4. Roads and Access Points. Development of roads and improved trails should be avoided where extended extraction trails can be used as an alternative. Roads, access points, and improved trails should be decommissioned after they are no longer needed.

5. Coarse Woody Debris. Forest harvesters are encouraged to leave tree tops and substantial amounts of woody debris on extraction trails to discourage access. Levels of coarse woody debris should correspond with indices outlined in the Nova Scotia Forest Ecosystem Classification.