2015 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose

PERIOD: 6/1/2015 - 5/31/2016

HERD: MO201 - ABSAROKA

HUNT AREAS: 8-9, 11

PREPARED BY: DOUG MCWHIRTER

	2010 - 2014 Average	**2015**	**2016 Proposed**
Population:	0	N/A	N/A
Harvest:	9	7	9
Hunters:	10	7	10
Hunter Success:	90%	100%	90 %
Active Licenses:	10	7	10
Active License Success:	90%	100%	90 %
Recreation Days:	81	47	75
Days Per Animal:	9	6.7	8.3
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:	None

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%
Juveniles (< 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

MO201 - POPULATION   —— MO201 - OBJECTIVE

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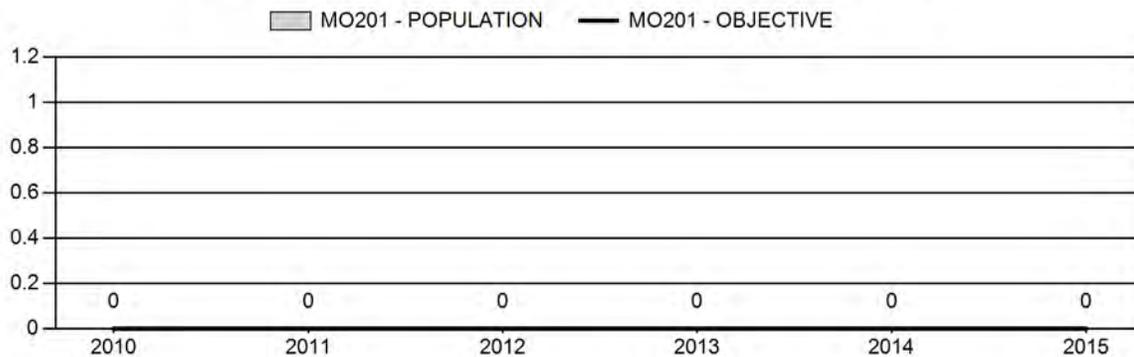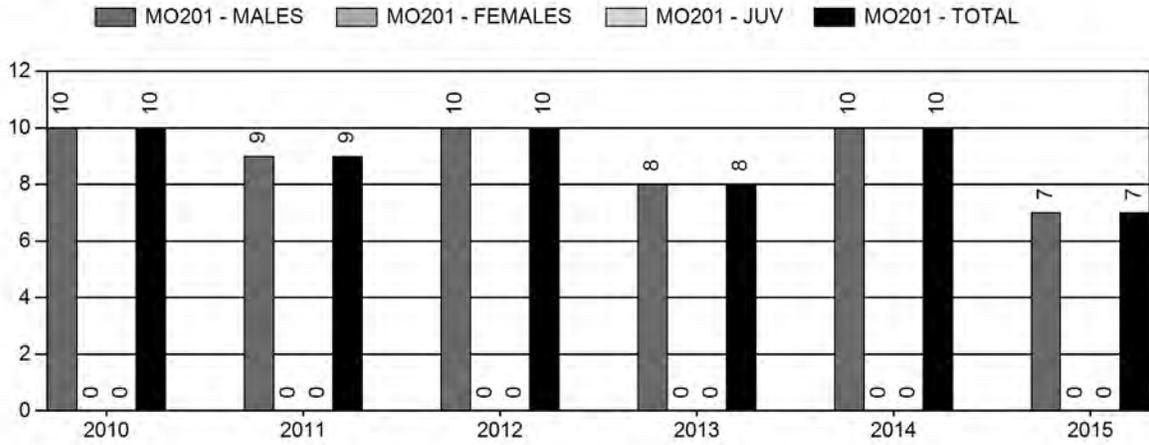
Harvest

Number of Hunters
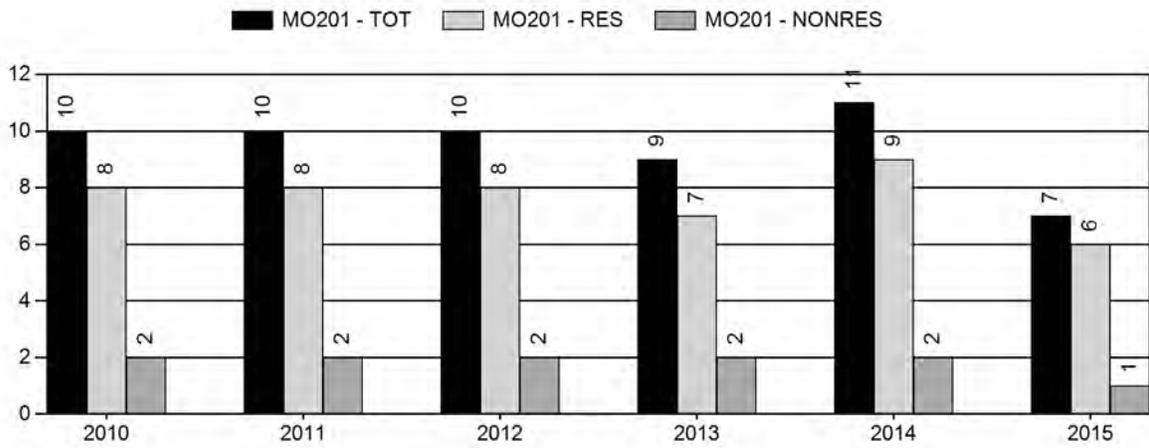
Harvest Success

Active Licenses

MO201 - Active Licenses

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	10	10	10	9	11	7
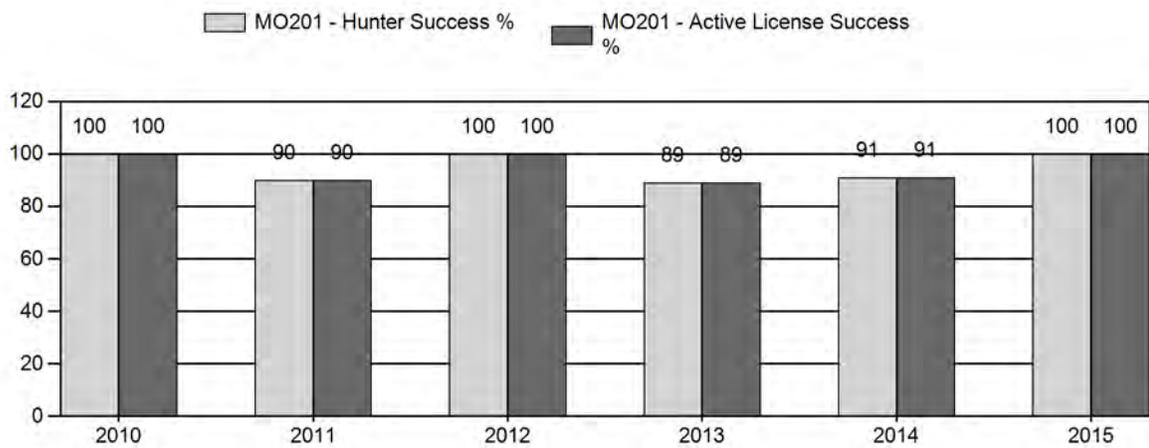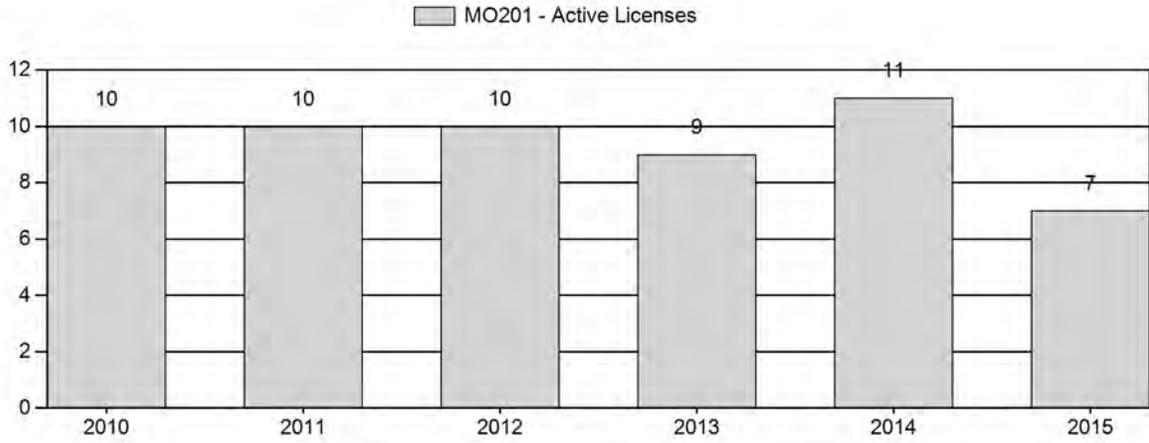
Days per Animal Harvested

MO201 - Days

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	9.8	6.9	6.3	10	10.2	6.7
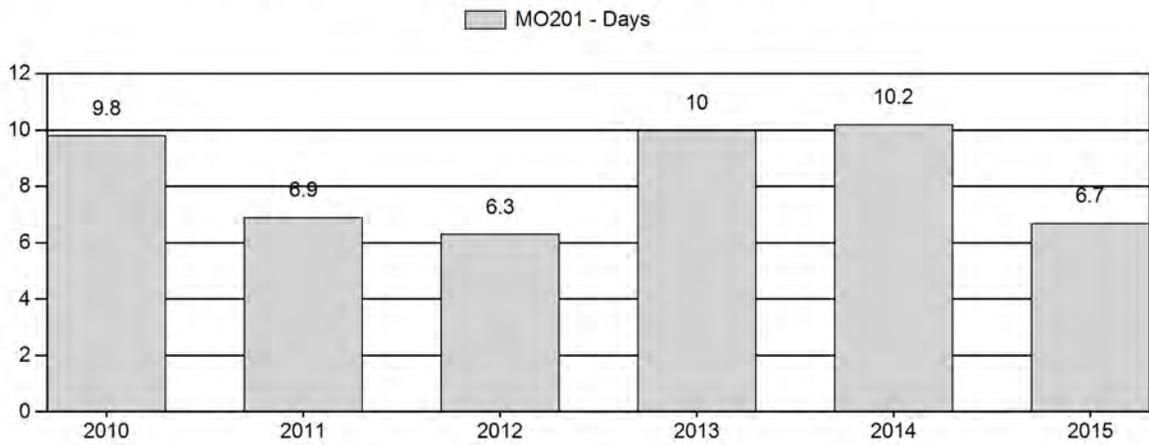
Postseason Animals per 100 Females

MO201 - Males   MO201 - Juveniles

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Males	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juveniles	0	0	0	0	0	0
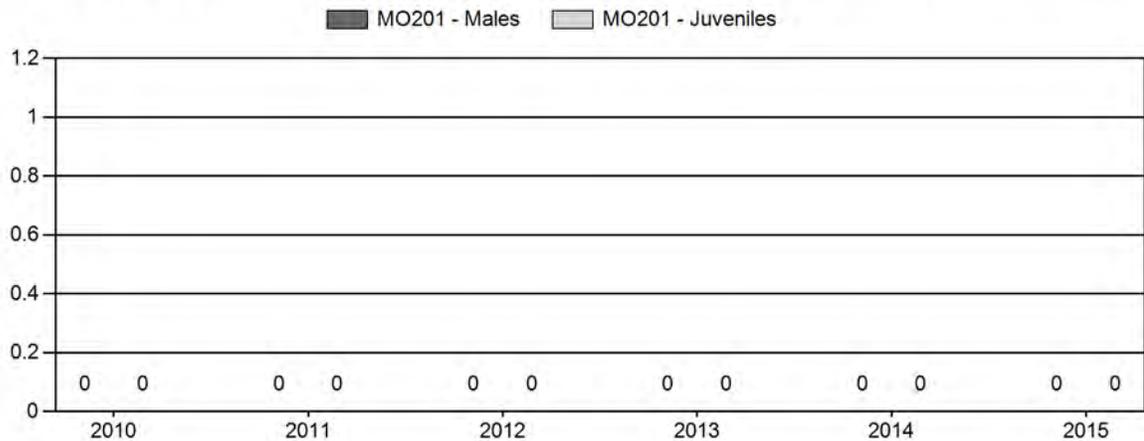
2016 HUNTING SEASONS
ABSAROKA MOOSE HERD (MO201)

Hunt Area	Type	Season Dates		Quota	License	Limitations
		Opens	Closes			
8						CLOSED
9	1	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	5	Limited quota	Antlered moose
11	1	Sep. 10	Nov. 10	5	Limited quota	Antlered moose

Special Archery Season Hunt Areas	Season Dates		Limitations
	Opens	Closes	
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	Type	Quota change from 2015
		No Changes
Total		**No Changes**

Management Evaluation
Current Median Age Objective: > 4.5 years
Current Hunter Effort Objective: < 12 days
Current Secondary Median Age Objective: 40% > 5 years
Management Strategy: Special
Most Recent 5-Year Running Average Median Age: 5.4 years
Most Recent 5-Year Running Average Hunter Effort: 7.7 days
Most Recent 5-Year Running Average % > 5 Years: 52.9%

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 2015, hunter success was 100% (4/4) in Area 9 and 100% (3/3) in Area 11. Aged animals from Area 9 included bulls aged 2.5, 2.5, 3.5, and 5.5, while three 4.5 year old bulls were aged from Area 11. Hunter effort was 3.3 days/moose harvested in Area 9 and 11.3 days/harvested moose in Area 11, and averaging 6.7 days/moose harvested for the herd unit.

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

Because the collection of survey data is difficult, if not impossible to collect, both population estimate and trend count based objectives are not possible. Therefore, information from hunters and harvested moose are used to manage the moose population in this herd unit. Primary objectives 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.

The current season structures in Hunt Areas 9 and 11 are addressing moose management goals. Therefore, 5 permits will be issued for Hunt Area 9 and 5 permits for Hunt Area 11 for 2016, which should result in the harvest of 9-10 bull moose.