

## **Ontario's Proposed Point-Based System for Allocating Moose Tags to Hunters**

We are proposing that, beginning in 2021, the resident moose tag draw will be replaced with a new allocation process, along with some related changes. Details on these proposed changes are provided below.

### **How a preference point allocation works**

Hunters are allocated moose tags primarily based on the number of "preference points" they have. Hunters receive 1 point for each year they applied since they last received a moose tag (i.e. were successful in the draw, received a tag through a transfer, or through the surplus tag allocation). Preference points are calculated based on a hunter's individual draw application history, with application gaps allowed (no need for consecutive years applying to accumulate points).

The hunters with the most points will receive the available tags for each WMU, season and moose type. Once a hunter claims a tag they have been allocated in a point-based allocation step, they forfeit all their points. For this reason, this type of allocation is sometimes called a "stand-in-line" approach because hunters with the most points are at or near the front of the line to receive tags, and once they claim a tag they lose their points and go to the back of the line to begin rebuilding their point total.

Northern residents no longer have their own allocation step but receive one bonus preference point in any year they apply to a northern WMU (1-42). The northern resident preference point does not accumulate over time but is an in-year additional point applied to their total points.

### **How a hunter applies**

All moose hunters apply for moose tags as individuals (no group applications) based on their own draw history. A hunter applies to the moose tag allocation process with a modest application fee. The hunter is not required to purchase their moose hunting licence to apply for a tag.

### **Proposed tag allocation process**

Moose tags are allocated to hunters in a 2-stage process:

#### **Stage 1: Primary Allocation**

- Apply as an individual with an application fee.
- Enter up to three choices.
- Each choice becomes its own step in the allocation process with first choice allocated first, second choice allocated second, etc.
- Tags are allocated to applicants with the most points. A defined process will be used to break ties (e.g. random draw).
- If allocated a tag at this stage a hunter claims their tag by purchasing it and their moose hunting licence by a deadline date.

- Hunters who claim their tag forfeit all their points (reset to zero). Hunters who elect not to claim a tag they have been awarded keep their points.

### **Stage 2: Second Chance Allocation**

- Any remaining tags are then communicated to hunters.
- Apply as an individual with an application fee (free if applied in Stage 1).
- Enter up to three choices.
- Tags are allocated to first choice applicants with the most points. A defined process will be used to break ties (e.g. random draw).
- Tags are allocated to second and third choice applicants by random draw.
- If allocated a tag at this stage a hunter claims their tag by purchasing it and their moose hunting licence by a deadline date.
- Hunters claiming a tag allocated on their first choice forfeit all their points (reset to zero).
- Hunters claiming a tag allocated in the second or third choice maintain their points and gain a point, as will all unsuccessful applicants.

### **Moose Hunting Licences and Tags**

We are proposing to change the moose hunting licence to a product that allows hunting of moose but does not come with a tag that would allow the harvest of a moose. This allows applicants who are unsuccessful in, or who do not apply to, the tag allocation process to party hunt for moose on another hunter's tag.

Hunters who are awarded a tag in the allocation process must claim the tag by purchasing it. The tag costs an additional fee over and above the application fee and moose hunting licence. Tag prices will vary with bull tags priced highest, calf tags priced lowest and cow/calf tags priced in between.

### **Tag Transfers**

We are proposing that tag transfer rules be further restricted to address hunter concerns about "ghost" hunters (hunters who do not hunt moose but whose credentials are used by moose hunters to increase their chances of acquiring a tag), particularly with an application fee approach. Tag transfers are only allowed in exceptional circumstances.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Q. Does the new moose point-based allocation system still have guaranteed group sizes, group applications or pools 1 and 2?**

A. No, those aspects of the former moose tag draw would no longer exist in the new system. Instead, the proposed new moose tag allocation process is simpler and fairer by giving preference to applicants that have accumulated the most preference points because they have applied the greatest number of years unsuccessfully.

### **Q. I applied to the moose draw off and on for years. How will that affect the preference points I have in 2021?**

A. Under the proposed system, a hunter receives a point for each year they have applied and been unsuccessful in the draw going back to when they first started applying or the last time they received/accepted a tag. For example, a hunter that applied to the draw in 2005 and 2008 unsuccessfully, was successful in 2012, and applied unsuccessfully in 2018 and 2019 would have two points. We will calculate point totals as far back in time as possible.

### **Q. How can I find out how many preference points I have?**

A. We will review moose hunters' draw histories and make preference point totals available to hunters in 2020 if there is a decision to proceed.

### **Q. Why is there a second chance allocation that includes both point-based and random allocation components?**

A. The second chance allocation provides hunters who haven't already claimed a tag the opportunity to apply for tags that remain unallocated or were not claimed in the primary allocation stage. The first step in the second chance allocation is point-based because some tags that are in high demand may still be available and it's fair to require hunters to forfeit their points for these tags. Tags that remain unallocated when evaluating the second and third choices of the second chance allocation are considered lower demand. Allocating these tags through a random draw helps ensure these tags are distributed to hunters and provides hunters with low point totals the chance to receive a tag while accumulating points towards tags that are in high demand.

### **Q. Can I apply for a point instead of a tag?**

A. Yes, hunters will be able to enter a null selection as their first choice in either the primary or second-chance allocation to gain a point instead of applying for a tag. This option may appeal to hunters that want to build their point total but know they cannot hunt or do not want to be allocated a tag in a given year. All unsuccessful applicants in each year's allocation process will also accumulate one point. Applying for a tag that typically requires more points than the hunter has accumulated would likely lead to the same result.

**Q. Will northern residents be given preference in the proposed moose point system?**

A. Yes, the current northern resident draw would be eliminated but northern residents (hunters living in WMUs 1-42) would receive one extra preference point in any year they apply for a tag in a northern WMU (1-42). The northern resident preference point would not accumulate over time but would be an in-year additional point applied to their total points.

**Q. Are tag transfers going to be restricted?**

A. Yes, tag transfer rules will be further restricted to address hunters' concerns about "ghost" hunters (hunters who do not hunt moose but whose credentials are used by moose hunters to increase their chances of acquiring a tag). Without further restrictions on tag transfers the number of "ghost" hunters is likely to increase because of the reduced cost to apply to enter the allocation process. Tag transfers would only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

The proposed approach provides another option to hunters who can't use a tag for some reason. If a hunter is awarded a tag but knows right away they cannot use it (e.g. they can't go hunting that year, their hunting party received more tags than needed), they can decide not to claim the tag and maintain their points. Likely the hunter would remain at or near the front of the line for the same tag next year.

**Q. Can I return a tag that I have claimed and receive a refund of the tag cost and my preference points?**

A. No. Once a hunter claims and pays for a tag they have been awarded they can no longer return the tag.

**Q. Will the new fee structure mean that I have to pay more to moose hunt?**

A. The proposed new fee structure is in part a response to the proposed implementation of an application fee. Tag prices would be set to reflect the relative demand for different tag types (e.g. bull tags will cost the most because they are the most preferred tag type), the value of the resource and to maintain revenue to support moose management.

Hunters may have a higher total cost to moose hunt in a year they are successful in the allocation process (when they pay the application fee and purchase a licence and a tag), but a lower total cost per year averaged over time if they only hunt in those years they are awarded a tag.

**Q. Will tag allocation results be available earlier in the summer?**

A. Yes, we intend to make tag allocation results, especially from the primary allocation stage, available earlier in the summer to allow hunters more time to plan their hunt.