Let the moose applications begin

The OFAH walks you through the first part of the 2021 moose tag process

On April 1, the MNRF will publish the 2021 moose tag allocations online and hunters can start applying. The OFAH is committed to making sure moose hunters have all the information they need to successfully navigate the new system. The OFAH took an in-depth look at the first round of the allocation process — the primary allocation stage.

Important things to remember

All tags — bull, cow/calf, and calf — are now allocated through this system and a calf tag no longer comes with a moose licence.

Under the new system, things are happening earlier. The primary allocation stage opens on April 1st and closes on April 30th. The MNRF will announce the results in mid-May and hunters will have until June 7th to claim a tag they are awarded.

The hard copy of the Hunting Regulations Summary should be available shortly after April 1st. All applications submitted between April 1st and 30th are treated the same, so hunters who do not use a computer are not at a disadvantage.

Applications can be done online (www.huntandfishontario.com), over the phone (1-800-288-1155), and at licence issuers and participating Service Ontario locations.

What determines your chances?

The old two-pool system has been replaced by a points-based system (see more on this in past issues or visit the links, right). Point totals can be accessed at www.huntandfishontario.com or by calling 1-800-288-1155.

The number of points needed to get a tag will vary based on demand and will likely change year-to-year as people who have gone a long time without getting a tag eventually get one, use their points, and move to the back of the line. Unless we see a significant change in the number of tags or a big shift of hunters from one WMU to another, the 2020 draw results should give a good idea of what demand will be in 2021.

The Northern Resident Draw has been replaced with a Northern Point. Hunters who live in WMUs 1 to 42 get an additional non-accumulating point when applying in those units. What this means is that a hunter who lives in a northern unit with five points will be considered to have six points if applying to a northern unit but only five if applying to a southern unit.

How are you applying?

All hunters will apply to the new system as individuals — group applications no longer exist but hunters can still party hunt. When applying, hunters will have to pay a $15 application fee and select first, second, and third choices for tags. When the MNRF runs the allocation, they will award tags based on those choices, if there are tags remaining. High-demand tags, such as bull and gun cow tags, will likely all go to applicants’ first choices so if you really want a specific tag, make that your first choice. Don’t put the same tag for all three choices as it will not increase your chances.

If you plan to hunt with a group, it is a good idea to discuss what tags you want to apply for. Because your group will need at least one tag to go hunting, some members might want to apply for lower demand tags.

After applying, check your receipt to confirm your application was successfully submitted and reflects the choices you made.

When the results are in

If you are awarded a tag, you will need to decide if you want to claim it by the deadline and use all your points.

If you fail to claim the tag by the deadline, you keep your points and the tag will be available to hunters in the second chance allocation. If you are hunting with a group, talk about what tags the members received and which one(s) you want to claim.

To claim a tag, you must purchase a moose licence ($32.59) and pay the fee for the tag you claimed ($30 calf, $150 cow/calf, and $200 bull). Only the tag holder needs to pay the tag fee.

If you are unsuccessful, chose not to claim a tag, or applied to 99Z, you will earn a point.

What comes next?

After the claim deadline, the MNRF will summarize the remaining tags and make them available in the second-chance allocation, which opens on June 15th.