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# Moose



Moose is the singular and plural name for moose; he/she and they are all called moose.

There are many members of the deer family, but the moose, or elk as it is called in Europe, is the largest member. The largest moose can be found in Alaska. Though rare to see in our area, they are a unique mammal of northern North America.

**Description:** Male and female adult moose have large shoulders that appear like a hump behind its head. The upper body is covered with brownish-black fur, while the belly and legs are grayish-brown. The fur is hollow, meaning empty space in the middle, which keep them warm. Its front legs are longer than its back legs. Hanging from its throat is a flap of skin and fur called a bell. The *Calves*, or baby moose, have reddish-brown fur and stays with its mother until it is a year old. At birth, they weigh 28-35 lbs and at two months, 400 lbs.

**Environment:** Moose are commonly found in forests in northern Scandinavia and eastward to Siberia, Canada, Alaska, in the Rocky Mountains area, Utah, Colorado, and northern parts of Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and North Dakota. They live in areas where there is snow in the winter and near a body of freshwater, such as, lakes, streams, ponds, swamps, and marshes. They cannot handle temperatures over 80°F, because of their large size.

**Food:** Its main food source is woody plants, shrubs, and underwater plants. They eat leaves, twigs, and buds of trees and shrubs, and underwater plants. They really like twigs of willow, dogwood, and mountain maple trees, hazel shrubs, and water lilies, but will also eat balsam, birch, and aspen tree bark and twigs. Moose eat 30-40 lbs of food a day; as each bit only contains a few grams, usually a total of 8 hours of their day is eating!

**Predators:** Their main challengers are wolves and bears, but usually only the young, very old, and weak moose are in danger. A full grown, healthy moose is rarely attacked. Most wolf packs attempt to separate a calf from its mother, but if a strong, protective mother can keep defending the calf until the pack gives up, the young will survive.

## ♦ Scientific Name

*Alces alces*

## ♦ Size:

*Alaskan* 7 1/2 ft tall

*Normally* 6 1/2 ft tall

## ♦ Weight:

800-1,400 lbs

## ♦ Life Span:

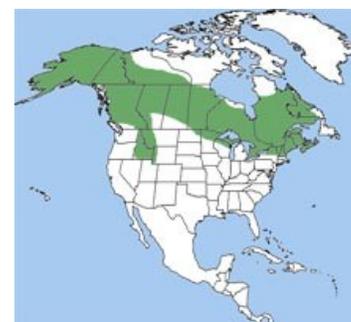
Only 10-20% survive 1st year

Average: 12 years

## ♦ Male Antlers:

Measure 5-6 ft wide

Weigh 85 lbs



**North American  
Moose Location Map**

## Unique Fact:

Moose are color blind,  
meaning they see  
everything in shades of gray.



**Male antlers:** These begin to grow in early summer and take a lot of energy to grow. They are covered with velvet/felt that allows blood to reach the antlers to continue its growth. Once they have reach the largest they will grow, the velvet falls off, like human skin peels after being sunburned. The process lasts 3-5 months and they are grown to attract a mate. After mating season ends in mid-October, the males shed the antlers to stay healthy.



**Extra Insight:** Outside of the mating season, all moose are usually loners by nature.

### Adaptations:

**Tall, strong legs:** Their legs assist in walking easily through shallow water, marshy/swampy areas, and through deep snow. They also help them swim in deeper water. Their height also allows them to reach twigs and other food items. The front legs are longer making it easier to jump over fallen logs and other debris.



**Broad hoofs:** Its hoofs make it more steady and surefooted in wet areas and assist in making it a strong swimmer when paddling with the larger surface area.

**Nose:** The nose of a moose is large and long. It contains lots of cartilage, special muscles, unique skin that is folded and indented, and fatty portions that allows the moose to eat underwater without breathing the water into its lungs.

**Four-chambered stomach:** Their stomach allows them to eat the harsh vegetation they eat and digest it for nutrients. Moose eat, swallow and digest the food within the first two chambers of the stomach which softens the food, then they throw it up, chew on the cud (or the partly digested food), and swallow it for a second round of digestion and absorb the water and nutrients they need.

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