



### **CANADA MOOSE ENTRIES FROM MAINE**

DATE RANGE	NUMBER OF ENTRIES
From 1830 to 1949	2
1950 through 1959	0
1960 through 1969	0
1970 through 1979	0
1980 through 1989	16
1990 through 1999	30
2000 through 2009	45

# Then Now

C A N A D A   M O O S E   >   M A I N E

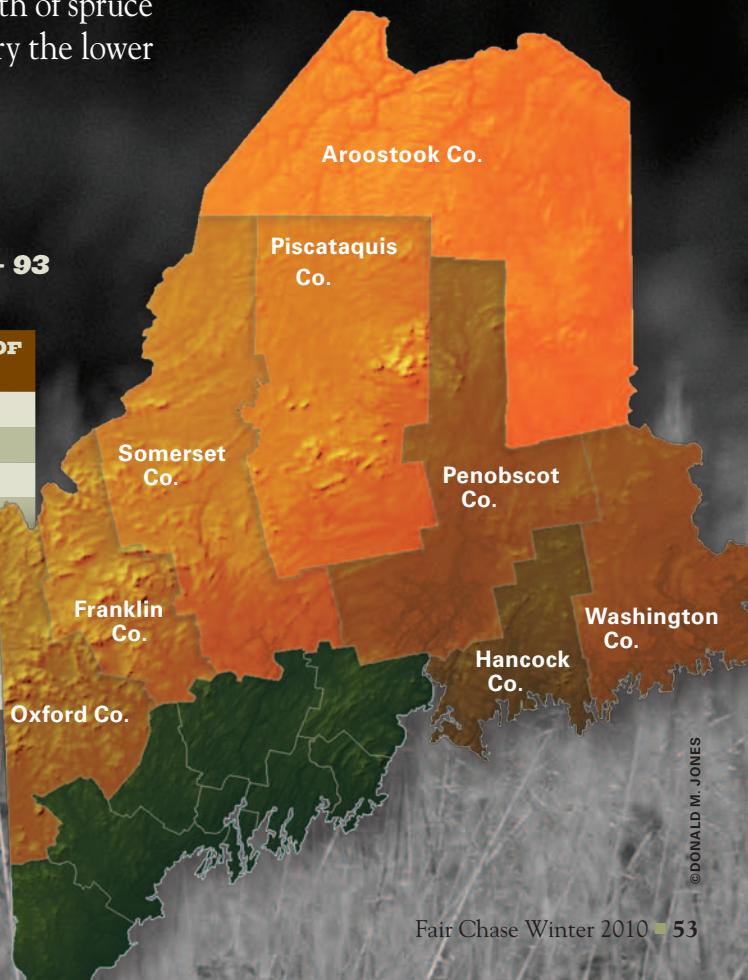
It's early morning, still dark, and I am heading north for the second week of Maine's moose-hunting season to check hunter-harvested moose. Heading to Jackman, my heart skips a beat when the gorgeous colors of fall greet me as I drop into the Moose River Valley—its mountains, lakes and rivers and the dark growth of spruce and fir tell me that I am in some of the best moose country the lower 48 states has to offer.

By Lee Kantar

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Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

## TOTAL CANADA MOOSE ENTRIES FROM MAINE – 93 County Locations

RANK	COUNTY	NUMBER OF ENTRIES
No. 1	Aroostook Co.	24
No. 2	Piscataquis Co.	19
No. 3	Somerset Co.	18
No. 4	Franklin Co.	10
No. 5	Oxford Co.	7
No. 6	Penobscot Co.	6
No. 6	Washington Co.	6
No. 8	No county info	3
No. 9	Hancock Co.	1



# Then & Now



## 2000-2009 CANADA MOOSE ENTRIES IN MAINE

### Top Five Entries

SCORE	LOCATION	HUNTER	OWNER(S)	DATE	RANK
220 6/8	Aroostook Co.	Cynthia M. Higgins	Cynthia M. Higgins	2000	*
220 3/8	Hancock Co.	James T. Robertson	James T. Robertson	2002	24
217 2/8	Somerset Co.	Roy M. Norton	Roy M. Norton	2008	39
216 1/8	Aroostook Co.	Chris T. Smith	Cabela's, Inc.	2005	47
211 6/8	Aroostook Co.	Dale J. O'Leary	Dale J. O'Leary	2004	91

\* Final score subject to revision by additional verification measurements.

**1980-1989****CANADA MOOSE ENTRIES IN MAINE****Top Five Entries**

SCORE	LOCATION	HUNTER	OWNER(S)	DATE	RANK
220 2/8	Somerset Co.	D. Toma & J. Toma	Maine Antler Shed & Wildlife Museum	1988	26
214 4/8	Piscataquis Co.	Desmond Harvey	Desmond Harvey	1984	63
206 7/8	Somerset Co.	Stephen D. Cole	Stephen D. Cole	1984	195
206 2/8	Piscataquis Co.	Vernon Knott	Vernon Knott	1987	209
201 1/8	Piscataquis Co.	Walter V. Scott	Walter V. Scott	1980	417

Moose need the big woods. They need room to roam to stretch those long legs over miles of uninhabited country so they can feed in the young choppings and drink from the abundant wetlands and waterways of the state.

Maine is about 90 percent forested, and much of the expansive North Maine Woods consists of commercial forestlands that shape not only the composition, structure and age of the forest, but the wildlife that lives there. This is a good thing for moose. Much of the "Big Woods" consists of unorganized territories with a human population of one person for every 100 square miles, so in addition to moose, bears, lynx, martens, a cadre of other northern-adapted species thrive. It may come as a shock to many folks outside of Maine that much of the state embodies a wildness that is shared with many western locales, and likewise, that we have more moose and moose-hunting opportunities than most other lower 48 states.

Much of central to northern Maine was the land of moose and caribou, and up until the close of the 1800s, moose hunting was unregulated. At the same time, the human population was making inroads into the North Maine Woods and land-use practices across the state were changing not only the composition and abundance of forests and fields, but wildlife as well. Throughout the 1900s, the North Maine Woods only had a few years open to moose hunting. By 1980, the state Legislature, after much debate and public scrutiny, decided to open the state's first moose hunt since 1935.

The opening of the season was created not only by public interest, but by the great changes in habitat that had occurred and was continuing to unfold. By the late 1960s the spruce-fir region of the state was at a high point of mature softwood, and these stands, while beneficial for some species, didn't produce much moose habitat. But an insidious pest was idling in the woods and waiting to capitalize on the opportunity. The spruce budworm is an insect that has a particular taste for balsam fir and easily kills these trees when they reach maturity. By the



**TOP:** William H. Gagnon, Jr., harvested this bull in Piscataquis County in 1980. The bull scores 195-2/8 points. **BOTTOM:** This bull was harvested in 1984 by Stephen D. Cole. With a score of 206-7/8 points, it was the third largest Canada moose harvested in Maine in the 1980s.

1980s the budworm had taken a firm hold of the northeast and devastated vast stretches of Maine. The loss of these stands and subsequent salvage work opened up the forest to young stands of intolerant hardwoods that set the stage for moose population growth and expansion.

Maine is naturally blessed with a high diversity and abundance of lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and bogs. Moose have an affinity for these areas, born out of their thirst for sodium when spring has ebbed and summer begins in earnest. Sodium-rich aquatic plants provide critical nutrients to moose that are depleted of these elements over the long winter. In addition, as the long summer days stretch on, water provides some additional benefits for maintaining homeostasis when things are really heating up.

By the 1990s the amount of available forage due to changes in forest conditions and forest management practices provided optimal moose habitat. The mix of these habitat variables and moderate Maine climate

resulted in a moose population approaching 30,000 animals. Over the last 20 years, the moose population is estimated to have doubled with forest management maintaining a relatively constant supply of forage.

The forest industry has changed greatly since the 1970s with mechanization, increased utilization of smaller diameter trees, and new markets for wood products such as biomass harvesting. At the same time, legislative action in the form of the Maine Forest Practices Act (1989) essentially curbed the creation of clear-cuts larger than 250 acres. In practice, clear-cuts remain relatively small today; however, increases in the partial harvesting of timber creates stands with relatively low basal area, which continue to provide ample levels of available browse preferred by moose. Today, Maine's forest continues to be shaped by economics, and the commercial forestlands of the Big Woods provide a landscape with few people and a lot of moose habitat.

Rolling into Jackman, I spy a young bull accompanied by a cow moving through

# Then & Now

1990-1999

## CANADA MOOSE ENTRIES IN MAINE

### Top Five Entries

SCORE	LOCATION	HUNTER	OWNER(S)	DATE	RANK
217	Franklin Co.	Clifford H. Damon	Clifford H. Damon	1997	42
216	Oxford Co.	Brian A. Martin	Brian A. Martin	1998	*
207 7/8	Aroostook Co.	Michael C. Hall	Michael C. Hall	1991	172
206 1/8	Aroostook Co.	Shawn LeClair	Shawn LeClair	1993	212
205 6/8	Piscataquis Co.	Steve Heath	Brian Ross	1997	226

\* Final score subject to revision by additional verification measurements.

a stand of young trees not far from the road and stop to watch these two on opening day of moose season. I give a few beeps of the horn as they trudge onto the road—a logging truck is coming the other way and these moose need to move along. There is something about this place that just makes you feel like you are in the center of it all. Looking out at this autumn landscape, you can just sense that it is crawling with moose. Down at Bishop's Store, the first moose to be registered rolls in, with many more to

come in rapid succession, including two post-put bull moose field-dressed at over 900 pounds! The crowds of people gather to size up each moose, hedge their bets on the weight of each animal and talk about seasons past, partridge (ruffed grouse) numbers, and the one that got away.

Maine allocates over 3,000 permits annually across the state compared to 700 permits in 1980. Typically a dozen or more bulls dress out at over 1,000 pounds, and a few come in with spreads greater than 60

The trophy quality of Maine's Canada moose population continues to improve. John Albee, right, harvested this bull scoring 202 2/8 points in Somerset County in 1998.

inches. Moose harvests are designed to provide hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities, and in some areas, to reduce negative impacts from road collisions and crop depredation. By all current measures, moose remain in great condition and in balance with available habitat. The future outlook remains positive for maintaining strong moose numbers in many parts of Maine where timber is king and development is kept at bay—good news for all those with a passion for this icon of the North Woods. ■

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