

Moose / Giants of the North Woods

The moose is the largest member of the deer family and one of the most iconic animals of northern Minnesota. Towering up to 7 feet at the shoulder and weighing between 800 and 1,300 pounds, these gentle giants are perfectly adapted to life in the North Woods. Their long legs help them move through deep snow and wade into lakes and marshes to feed. Moose coats range from dark brown to almost black, providing insulation during long, frigid winters. They play an important ecological role by shaping forest vegetation through their heavy browsing of shrubs and aquatic plants. Once common across the northern United States, moose have faced population challenges in Minnesota due to warming winters, disease, and parasites—but they remain a treasured symbol of the state's wild beauty.



Life of a Moose: Moose are solitary animals for much of the year, except during the autumn mating season (rut) and when females are raising calves. Cows give birth to one or two calves in late spring, fiercely defending them from predators such as wolves and bears. Moose are herbivores, feeding on leaves, twigs, and bark in summer and shifting to woody browse in winter. They are also strong swimmers, often diving to reach aquatic plants that provide essential minerals. In winter, moose use their size and strength to create trails through deep snow, which other animals sometimes follow. By grazing and browsing heavily, moose influence the growth and regeneration of northern Minnesota's forests and wetlands.

Moose and People: For generations, moose have held cultural, economic, and recreational importance for Minnesotans. They are admired by wildlife enthusiasts, photographers, and hunters alike. In some regions, hunting permits are carefully managed to maintain healthy populations while supporting traditional practices. However, declining numbers in certain areas have led to increased research and conservation efforts. Wildlife managers track moose health, study the impacts of climate change and parasites like winter ticks, and work with communities to preserve the wetlands and forests moose depend on. The moose's presence is a reminder of both Minnesota's rich natural heritage and the importance of protecting vulnerable species.

How to Prevent Dangerous Interactions with Moose

- **Keep Your Distance** – Moose may appear calm but can become aggressive if threatened, especially cows with calves or bulls during the rut. Always observe from a safe distance and never approach for photographs.
- **Give Them the Right of Way** – On roads or trails, stop and allow moose to move away on their own. Never attempt to chase or herd them.
- **Avoid Disturbing Feeding Areas** – Moose need large amounts of food to maintain their size and strength. Avoid crowding or lingering near lakeshores, wetlands, or browse sites where they are feeding.



Scan here to see a video of a moose on the Flowage