

# Valuable Cow Moose Study Now Done By Helicopter

If you are one of the many in Fairbanks who have reported a helicopter flying into town with a moose slung underneath, put your mind at ease. It's only the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's moose biologists hard at work.

Ten female moose will be collected for valuable information on the welfare of the moose herd south of the Tanana River.

Biologist Bob Rausch has been studying this herd for years and has kept a close watch on developments this winter.

According to Rausch, the moose had a tough go of it this winter. About 70% to 80% of the yearlings did not survive the winter. Also adult moose were in bad shape at calving time. Many calves were stillborn, and a number of the ones born

alive died soon after birth.

Thus far Rausch has collected 5 female moose without calves. Autopsies showed that 4 of these adult cows had lost their calves and one did not produce. Five more adult females without calves will be collected in the next few days to complete the study.

The moose collected showed evidence of extreme malnutrition during the past winter. Little fat was found around the heart and kidneys. The moose were very poor with the hip bones showing. These animals also had infestations of parasites. Three types of tape worms and rumen flukes were found in these moose, and one had lung worms.

Rausch said these parasites usually do not cause undue harm to the moose unless it is associated with

severe malnutrition or other disabling conditions which then can make the difference of life or death.

Rausch said there is no need for alarm about the heavy loss of moose, as the area is still well stocked with animals. This is nature's way of harvesting a moose population that has increased beyond the capacity of the range to support them.

Moose hunting is light in this area, because of accessibility problems, and moose numbers are still very high in the Tanana Flats, said Rausch.