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Moose Encounters on the Rise; Be Cautious

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – This morning two separate moose encounters left two adults injured. In both incidents, one occurred in Willow and the other happened in Talkeetna, the adults were stomped while walking children to school bus stops.

Alaska Wildlife Troopers say more and more moose calls are coming in every day. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game agrees. Numerous calls from members of the public reporting concerns about aggressive moose were received during the past two months. While ADF&G doesn't have exact numbers, it says this winter the aggressive moose situation is worse than previous winters.

"Because an "aggressive encounter" means different things to different people, it is difficult to quantify the exact number of reports and we know that not every moose encounter is reported to the department," said ADF&G Biologist Lem Butler. "What we can say is that we are receiving considerably more reports than what we receive during a typical winter with less snow accumulation and that the reports are coming from areas throughout the Matsu Valley. We've also received similar reports about aggressive moose from the Anchorage Area and the Kenai Peninsula."

Both the Alaska Wildlife Troopers and ADF&G biologists say people should use extra caution this winter whenever you are in a place that moose may be loitering.

"It's at a point where I think people should consider driving their kids to a bus stop instead of walking them," said AWT Sergeant Doug Massie. "This winter moose seem to be more likely to charge to protect their turf. The deep snow has them hungry and mad. People need to be vigilant while outdoors."

Taking added precautions like warning neighbors of moose in the area, carrying pepper spray and driving instead of walking may be crucial in protecting yourself from moose.

For tips on what to do during a moose encounter go to:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livewith.aggressivemoose>