



Green Mountain *National Forest*

Caring for the Land and Serving People

Moose Watching

One of the most sought-after sights on the Green Mountain National Forest is the majestic American Moose (*Alces alces*). The largest member of the deer family, moose are identified by their great mass (6 feet tall at the shoulder and 1200 pounds), overhanging snout, a bell of skin under the neck, and the huge spreading antlers of the male.

Life History:

The average moose lives from 8 to 12 years in the wild. During the summer, they eat succulent, sodium rich vegetation found in or near clearings, swamps, bogs, or wet forest edges. This vegetation includes grasses, lichens, mosses, mushrooms, and herbaceous plants as well as twigs and leaves of deciduous trees. In the winter their browse is limited to bark and twigs from balsam fir, aspen, beech, and pin cherry. Breeding season (also called the rutting season) occurs from mid-September through October, with calves being born in May or June. The calves remain with their mother until she has calved the following spring. A healthy adult cow will usually have twins.

Most moose sightings occur at dusk or dawn, because moose are mostly active at night. They are usually seen singly, but can be seen traveling in small family units of a cow and a calf or feeding in groups near water. Causes of death include legal hunting, collisions with automobiles, poaching, parasites, and malnutrition.

Tracks and Signs:

Moose evidence includes tracks, scat, teeth marks on trees, and dropped antlers. Hoof prints are 5 to 7 inches in length, cloven, and are easily spotted in mud or snow. Scat is deposited in large amounts and is the size and shape of small eggs in winter and more like a 'cow-pie' in the summer. Teeth marks can be found on trees where the moose have eaten the bark. Antlers are dropped in December through April and will usually be gnawed by animals. If not picked up, antlers will eventually be entirely eaten by rodents for their high level of calcium.

Sighting a Moose on Green Mountain National Forest:

Moose are most commonly seen early in the morning and late in the evening.



U.S. Department
of Agriculture

Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forests

231 North Main Street, Rutland, VT 05701



Forest Service

(802) 747-6700 Phone

(802) 747-6766 FAX

Website: www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl

r9_gmfl_webmaster@fs.fed.us

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Please remember that even if they seem tame or passive, Moose are wild animals and should be treated as such. During the rutting season, bulls are unpredictable and cows with calves are easily agitated and can be dangerous.

Viewing from your vehicle is least stressful to the moose and safest for you. If you see a moose from the road and decide to stop, use caution and pull your vehicle completely off of the road to avoid an accident. Remain in your vehicle to ensure your safety and to prevent startling the moose. When driving, remember that a moose has a dark coat and is not easy to see at night.

If you see a moose in when you are hiking, move slowly and avoid loud noises or sudden movement. This will ensure an extended, enjoyable observation and will prevent the moose from hurting itself or you.

There is no guarantee that you will see a moose, but these are a few good places to look:

North Half:

Granville Gulf: Travel North on Route 100 from the Rochester Ranger Station. In Granville Gulf Reservation there is a series of beaver ponds and wet areas that are a good place to look.

Route 125 - Middlebury Gap: Route 125 goes from Hancock to East Middlebury. Near the top of the gap on the west side, in between the Robert Frost Trail and Forest Road 32, and along east side, there are a few mud wallows where moose are sighted.

Lefferts Pond: From Rutland, follow Route 7 north, past a stoplight just outside of town. Bear right onto East Pittsford Rd. East Pittsford Rd. turns into Chittenden Rd. at 3.3 miles. Continue for 2.7 miles on Chittenden Rd. to a three-way junction. Bear right onto Dam Road and follow it for 1.3 miles. Turn right onto Wildcat Road (unmarked) and follow it for 0.9 miles. Turn left onto a dirt road and follow it for 0.5 miles to the parking lot at the end.

South Half:

Moses Pond: Moses Pond can be accessed from the Root Beer Ridge Trail. The trail begins at the end of Forest Road 29 and passes near Moses Pond and the surrounding wetland areas.

Shep Meadows: Shep Meadows is located along Forest Road 71, approximately 7.0 miles north of Route 9 and 5.0 miles south of the Kelley Stand Road. Moose are often seen in this large wetland area.

The Mountain Valley Trails: This series of trails can be accessed from various locations north of the town of Peru. There is a trailhead at the end of Forest Road 51, the Stone Place Road, off of Hapgood Pond Road and one off of North Road, at the end of Forest Road 22. There are also trailheads located along Forest Road 10, the Danby-Mount Tabor Road, and Forest Road 12, Little Michigan Road.

Griffith Lake: From the town of Peru, travel north on Hapgood Pond Road 1.0 mile, then bear left onto North Road. Take North Road for 0.5 miles, turn left onto Mad Tom Notch, and drive 1.6 miles to the junction with Forest Road 58. Follow Forest Road 58 approximately 3.0 miles to the Griffith Lake trailhead. The lake is 2.0 miles north of the trailhead.

Stratton Pond: From the Kelley Stand Road, the Stratton Pond Trail travels north 3.9 miles to the pond. A one-mile loop trail follows the shore of the pond.

For More Information:

Manchester Ranger District, 2538 Depot St., Manchester Center, VT 05255, (802) 362-2307

Middlebury Ranger District, 1007 Route 7 South, Middlebury, VT 05753, (802) 388-4362

Rochester Ranger District, 99 Ranger Rd., Rochester, VT 05767, (802) 767-4261

Rutland Supervisor Office, 231 North Main St., Rutland, VT 05701, (802) 747-6700

This Recreation Guide is Available in Large Print at Forest Service Information Centers

Last modified 3/30/2010