

Moose die-off: Deadly combination of factors slaying moose, \$1.2M help efforts



WebProNews



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October 15, 2013

A moose die-off is slowly but surely whittling away at the lumbering moose population, with a deadly combination of factors slaying these wildlife animals. Although the exact reason for the moose dying off remains unknown, **Web Pro News** reports this Tuesday, Oct. 15, that a \$1.2M effort is being conducted to discover the factors and causes, and how we as a people might work to help save this vanishing species.

The moose die-off has been occurring in various locations throughout the U.S., but most particularly in Montana. A deadly combination of factors has killed off the moose population numbers dramatically, slaying thousands in recent years so that less than 300 exist in some parts of the state. Biologists and wildlife experts are now working to discover just what these factors are, and mixed success has resulted at this point and time.

One extremely likely but deadly factor contributing to the moose die-off is climate change. Though this isn't drastic enough to directly affect the moose populations themselves (despite accounts of heat stress), the shorter winters and longer summers is leading to another dangerous threat: that of winter ticks. Over 100,000 winter ticks can infest and eventually kill a single moose, and their numbers are only growing in recent decades. What's worse, the winter ticks are highly contagious among the moose, and can spread disease, hair loss, and eventually make the moose to sick too find food and water.

Through unified natural and wildlife efforts, the \$1.2m expenditure is working to track down these animals and locate specifically what is ailing them, whatever the deadly combination of causes may be. Other natural factors, including liver flukes and brain worms, are also suspected as lethal culprits vicariously slaying the moose.

Deforestation of forests and other moose population homelands is also seen as part of the

combination of factors leading to the tragic moose die-off. Hunting has since been suspended in many parts of the U.S. since it was noticed how low the moose numbers had gotten, and even in places where moose hunting remains legal, it is very hard to find one nowadays due to their dwindling amounts.

“It’s complicated because there’s so many pieces of this puzzle that could be impacted by climate change,” said Erika Butler, a wildlife veterinarian saddened by this longstanding turn of events.

Hopefully, the \$1.2M monitoring technology will help us discover what is plaguing these great, lumbering animals and put an end to the moose die-off before they literally vanish from North America.

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