



The gestation period for Colorado's female Shiras moose is about 230 days, with birth typically occurring from mid-May to early June. Mothers usually seek privacy and push their yearlings away before giving birth. They then continue to be alone with their calves for the next month or so and chase off bulls and other cows. Newborns typically weigh in at about thirty pounds, but gain up to two pounds a day as they suckle frequently on their dam's rich milk. Within a couple of weeks of birth, as a calf begins to eat willow leaves and other vegetation, mom licks its mouth frequently as a way of transferring bacteria that are essential for digestion. This and other actions like mother's soft grunts and head rubbing also enhance bonding. Surprisingly, these adorable calves look quite different from mature moose in the first months of their lives: by themselves, they may not even be easy to identify as moose because they lack many of the unique characteristics of the adults, such as the long face and extended nose and lips. Note the difference between Billi's head and those of her twins Kid and Kei depicted here. But growing up involves so much more...

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