



Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
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CONTENTS

Status of the WAH..... 1

Federal Subsistence Board Regulation Changes 2

Listening to our Elders..... 4

The Subsistence Way of Life 5

WAH Harvest Patterns 6-7

Caribou Roundtable 8

GMU 22 Regulation Changes.. 9

Education and Taikus..... 10-11

About the Group 12

Status of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd

The Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) population is currently estimated at 201,000 by Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) biologists, based on results of a July 1, 2016 photocensus (see Figure 1).

This indicates herd numbers are still declining. However, the estimated 5% annual rate of decline between 2013 and 2016 was lower than the estimated 15% annual rate of decline between 2011 and 2013 that prompted recent changes in hunting regulations. Even more encouraging are data points from the last year; in 2016, calf

photographs, which are later used to identify and count individual caribou. Caribou are found primarily by tracking-in on radio collared caribou. The counts from these photos provide a minimum count. Then, using a mathematical model, biologists estimate the population size for the WAH across its entire range. Photocensus surveys for population estimates typically occur every one to three years. This new population count comes after a three year lag, as census data had not been available since 2013. In 2015, smoke and unfavorable weather prevented the completion of the planned photocensus. The

2016 photocensus population survey result of 201,000 was not a big surprise, given the additional population data collected in the past three years on other caribou surveys, such as the monitoring of adult female survival, and calving studies on the North Slope.

While worries about a continued decline prompted a few key changes to hunt regulations in recent years, the new information indicates that for now, harvest levels can continue at a similar rate to ADF&G's understanding of historic harvest patterns. More importantly, the new population estimate provides the public with new information

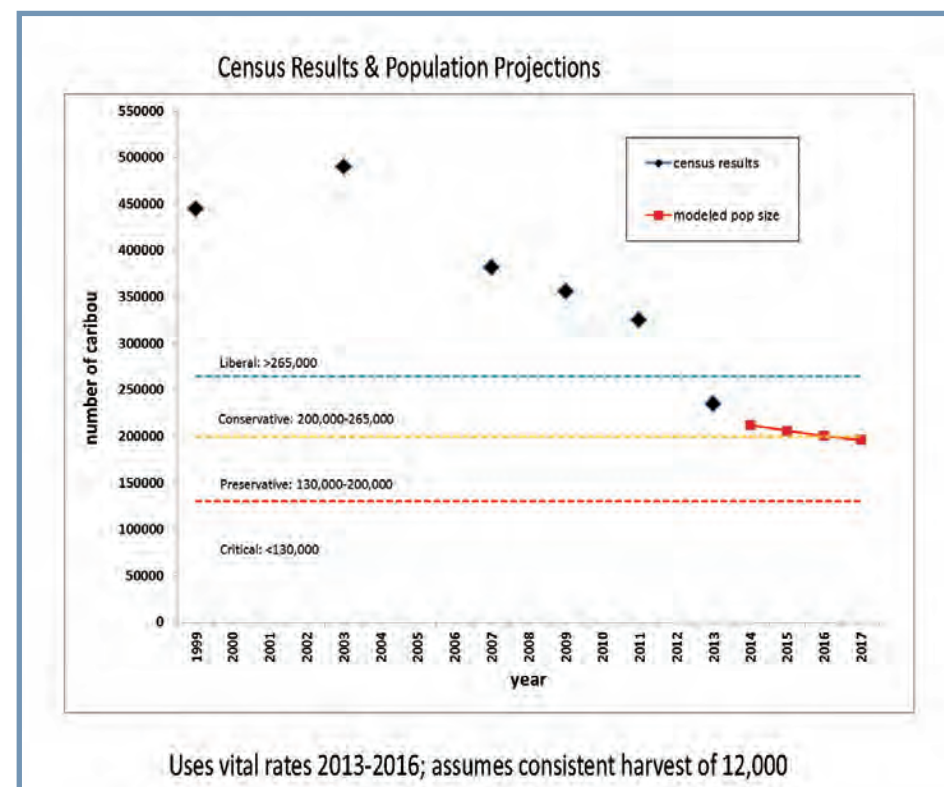


Figure 1

production was very high, calf weights were heavier than any previous years. Further, the proportion of both calves and adult females surviving winter were both the highest recorded since 2007.

ADF&G biologists use a variety of methods to assess the health and estimate abundance of the WAH. One of these methods, a photocensus, includes taking a series of aerial

to consider for future regulation development affecting the WAH. It is important the public actively engage in Alaska's unique wildlife management process and provide managers with regulatory options to understand how the WAH can be managed if there is continued population decline and historic harvest patterns are no longer sustainable.

Last year, the Board of Game implemented the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group's recommendation to reduce caribou harvest, which accounts for the 2015 changes in caribou hunt regulations. More changes are coming for the 2016-17 hunt season. In an effort to reduce caribou harvests the Board of Game approved the implementation of a registered hunt permit, RC800, in Game Management Unit (GMU) 22 (see pg. 9) with the potential for GMU's 23,

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Status of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (cont.)

24, and 26 to adopt similar regulations in the future. The Unit 22 regulation was spearheaded by the Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee and provides managers with key regulatory language to help ensure sustainable harvest levels in Unit 22. However, managers understand that a registration permit hunt may not be the preferred tool for Units 23, 24, and 26 hunters, so it is increasingly important hunters provide managers with other regulatory options to reduce caribou harvest if the WAH continues to decline. During April 2016, the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) approved Wildlife Special Action WSA16-01, which states that beginning July 1, 2016, federal public lands in GMU 23 will be closed to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users, for one year. The State has asked the FSB to reconsider the caribou hunt closures in GMU 23, because of anticipated hunter crowding problems on non-federal lands, and because the WAH Working

Group was not able to comment on the proposed regulation change. Following this fall's hunting activities biologists should better understand the impact of the Federal lands closure and its ability to help mitigate user conflict issues in Unit 23.

Changes in the herd presents new opportunity for all those who use and value these caribou to share thoughts and ideas with ADF&G Advisory and RAC committees or their representative to the WAH Working Group. Using the most recent biological information and feedback from local users, the WAH Working Group will meet this December to provide guidance to state and federal managers as they work cooperatively to ensure the long-term conservation of the Western Arctic caribou herd.

ADF&G biologists complete Western Arctic caribou herd photocensus



Photo of Western Arctic caribou herd photocensus, completed in June 2016



Federal Subsistence Board Regulation Changes

Federal Caribou Harvest Regulations Update, July 2016

Regulations for hunting caribou on federal lands have changed this year. These include both season date and bag limit changes for local hunters under the Subsistence harvest regulations, as well as a year-long closure of federal lands in GMU 23 to some hunters.

Caribou Hunting Closure:

Beginning July 1, 2016, federal public lands in GMU 23 are CLOSED to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users for one year. This is the result of the Federal Subsistence Board approving Wildlife Special Action WSA16-01 in April 2016, a request submitted by the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The main facts you need to know are:

- This ONLY applies to Game Management Unit 23.
- Only “federally qualified users” are allowed to hunt caribou on federal public lands for one regulatory year beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017. See more information below.
- “Federal public lands” are lands and waters managed by the National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management. Other State and private lands, including Alaska Native corporation lands (NANA and KIC lands) are NOT subject to this closure.
- This ONLY applies to caribou hunting. Non-federally qualified users may still hunt other species such as moose, bears, or wolves.
- This closure is in effect for one regulatory year (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017).
- National Park Service lands have additional restrictions on eligibility to hunt on Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk Valley National Park and Gates of the Arctic National Park. These areas are open ONLY to subsistence hunters who reside in “resident zone communities.” For Cape Krusenstern National Monument and Kobuk Valley National Park, “resident zone communities” include all communities within the NANA region. For Gates of the Arctic National Park, “resident zone communities” include Ambler, Kobuk, Shungnak, Anaktuvuk Pass, Nuiqsut, Wiseman, Bettles/Evansville, Alatna, Allakaket, and Hughes.

Federal Subsistence Board Regulation Changes (cont.)

Who is a “federally qualified user” for caribou in GMU 23?

“Federally qualified users” are rural residents whose communities have been determined by the Federal Subsistence Board to have a customary and traditional use of caribou in GMU 23. You must have your primary, permanent place of residence in one of the following areas or communities to be a “federally qualified user” eligible to hunt caribou on federal public lands in GMU 23:

Eligible Game Management Units	Eligible Communities
Unit 21D (west of the Koyukuk and Yukon Rivers and Galena)	Galena, Kaltag, Koyukuk, and Nulato
Unit 22	Brevig Mission, Council, Elim, Gambell, Golovin, Koyuk, Nome, Saint Michael, Savoonga, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales, and White Mountain, Little Diomedede
Unit 23	Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Point Hope, Selawik, and Shungnak
Unit 24 (including residents of Wiseman but not including other residents of the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area)	Alatna, Allakaket, Bettles, Evansville, Hughes, Huslia, Wiseman, Anaktuvuk Pass
Unit 26A	Atkasuk, Barrow, Nuiqsut, Point Lay, and Wainwright

Anyone permanently residing in a Game Management Unit NOT on this list, including areas, such as, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su Valley, Kenai Peninsula, Juneau, etc., is a “non-federally qualified user” and is NOT eligible to hunt caribou on federal public lands in GMU 23 beginning July 1, 2016. This includes former residents of the communities in the table above (both Alaska Natives and non-Natives), even if they grew up there, if they no longer permanently reside in one of these communities.

Where can I get more information on this closure?

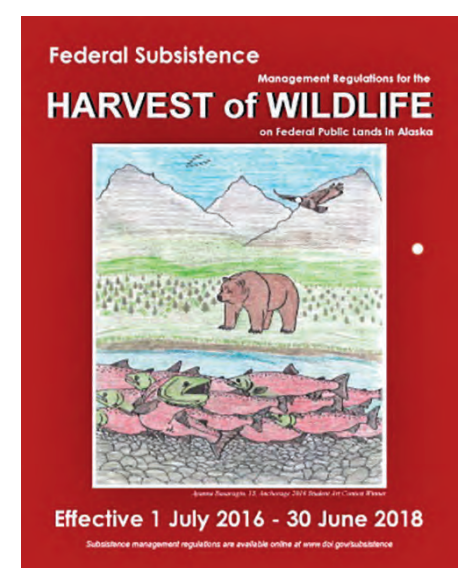
Federal agencies in Unit 23 are developing a fact sheet with more detailed information on this closure. Contact one of these representatives to get a copy of that fact sheet or ask questions:

National Park Service Lois Dalle-Molle <i>Acting Superintendent</i> (907) 442-8301 lois_dalle-molle@nps.gov	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Susan Georgette <i>Refuge Manager</i> (907) 442-3799 susan_georgette@fws.gov	Bureau of Land Management Bruce Seppi <i>Biologist</i> (907) 267-1282 bseppi@blm.gov
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Changes in Harvest Regulations:

Federal Subsistence harvest regulations on bag limits, seasons, and hunt areas for caribou have also been updated across the range of the Western Arctic caribou herd. Working with Regional Advisory Councils, regulations were revised to reflect the current population levels and conservation efforts. Last year, some of these measures were put in to place in certain units with one-year special actions, but now regulations for all units have been revised and adopted.

Take of calves is prohibited in almost all units, and bag limits have been reduced to a maximum of 5 caribou per day in all units. Several units have additional conservation measures in place, including closure of harvesting cows with calves in the fall and shorter bull and cow seasons. Please consult the Federal Subsistence wildlife regulations booklet (pictured) for full details and hunt area maps and descriptions. You can find these booklets at federal agency offices, hunting license vendors, or online at www.doi.gov/subsistence (click on “statewide” then “wildlife regulations”).



ADF&G News

State Asks Federal Subsistence Board to Reconsider GMU 23 Caribou Hunt Closure

In a letter dated May 25, 2016, Commissioner Sam Cotten of ADF&G requested that the board reconsider their decision because it is not consistent with management strategies recommended in the Western Arctic Herd Working Group Management Plan, which was endorsed by the Federal Subsistence Board. Because the herd size is above 200,000, hunting restrictions, such as those imposed by the Board, are not considered necessary until the herd size drops into the 130,000 – 200,000 range. As of this printing, the Federal Subsistence Board has not yet ruled on the Department’s request.

Listening to our Elders

Ikaaqa Roland Booth, Sr. Speaks at the Working Group Meeting

NANA Regional Corporation - Elder Advisor

Ikaaqa Roland Booth, Sr. is the Elder Advisor for NANA Regional Corporation, Inc. and 2015's honored guest speaker at the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meeting (WAHWG). An attentive audience smiled as he shared caribou stories from his time growing up in the village of Noatak.

Changing Times

In my 76 years of life, pushing 77 now, it has been interesting as far as subsistence with caribou is concerned. This, out of all those years that I've been home [from high school, trade school, and service] since 1967, is the first time that I missed out on fall caribou hunting, for the very simple reason - the caribou herd did not migrate right through my village. So, for the first time in all the years that I've been out there, I never got myself a bull caribou. Not that I didn't get to eat some, because in a Native community like mine, we got sharing folks that shared their catches.

You hear a lot about climate change. For those of us that live here, you don't have to add two and two to make something else. We know the changes that are occurring. It doesn't have to be what scientists might be telling you are the reasons for climate change. It could be something else. Everyone wants to know what is the reasoning for it.

Just a few years ago, for the first time I saw some wolves that were chasing caribou in fall time. Wolves that are hunting, they're predators but I've never seen them hunting during fall season. Maybe they do it somewhere else, but for the area that I'm talking about it's the first time I've seen them doing that.

The Many Uses of Caribou

Clothing

The issue that concerns me, as far as this Working Group is concerned, is caribou. It's because they have so many uses that we have become accustomed to, not only for our sustenance, as far as food is concerned, but for those that were in the past, those who were before me, it was their major source of clothing. And you know if you've ever lived in our region, for those of us that live in the north, it is cold. And from what I know it's still cold like what it was when I was growing up - but I tell you, you never get used to cold. It still freezes you if you are not prepared to do what you got to do to survive. It's still that kind of cold. So for that reason our folks were accustomed to gathering the hides of caribou for their clothing.

Mattress

Not only was it good for clothing but, I tell you, you cannot find any mattress that is as warm, that cold doesn't permeate through, you can't find any better mattress than caribou hide. Whatever

properties that are on it keeps the cold from passing right through the fur. You tell me, maybe you know the, scientific reasons why it does that but I tell you, you can't find any better mattress than a caribou hide.

Boots & Socks

Beyond the skin, the legs were also used. You don't see those very much anymore. We've kind of got accustomed to the bunny boots and all the Sorels that are downtown in the shops. And we've kind of gotten accustomed to wearing those kinds of clothing rather than mukluks that I grew up with for the cold weather. [The mukluks] were made for different seasons - some for summer use, some for winter, some for cold weather use. So, there were differences in the making of each one of those mukluks that I was accustomed to seeing when I was growing up.

Not only that, but they make good socks. I've never seen any kind of socks that are still being made today that compare anywhere close to the caribou pair of socks that would keep you from freezing your feet. You can get them wet and still be able to survive in cold weather. Lot of the socks you find anymore, you get them wet and a few minutes later you are frozen. And they've got no heat properties as far as keeping you warm. But a pair of caribou socks, you get them wet, you take them off and flip them over, you turn them inside out, wipe them on snow and they will dry out. That's totally against the thinking of the mind, right? You get socks wet and you rub them on snow and they are supposed to dry out? But surprise, a guy does that, he flips his socks inside out, rub on the snow, flip the snow off, put the socks back inside out, put them on, and go on with your life. You can't find any better socks. I don't see them anymore. If you know who makes them let me know, I'd like to have a pair.



The Subsistence Way of Life

Caribou in the Western Arctic caribou herd are a major source of food to people of Northwestern Alaska. For more than thirty years, the Division of Subsistence has documented the continued reliance upon wild foods — and caribou, in particular — in communities from Stebbins to Anaktuvak Pass through harvest surveys. Since 1999, the division has administered short, caribou-focused surveys (called “big game surveys”) in Game Management Units 22 and 23. This area roughly corresponds to the Bering Strait and NANA regions. Survey results demonstrate the importance of caribou in local diets.

The Division conducts survey research in rural Alaskan communities according to ethical guidelines:

- Community approval of research, most commonly, by tribal governments
- Involving local residents in data collection by hiring and training local research assistants
- Voluntary participation in the survey; even if the local governments say ‘yes’ to the project, households still exercise their right to say “no”
- Confidentiality of individual responses, protected by using random numbers instead of names on survey forms
- Results are reported as a community level. We generate a community level estimate of harvests.
- Results are not published until they have been through community review.

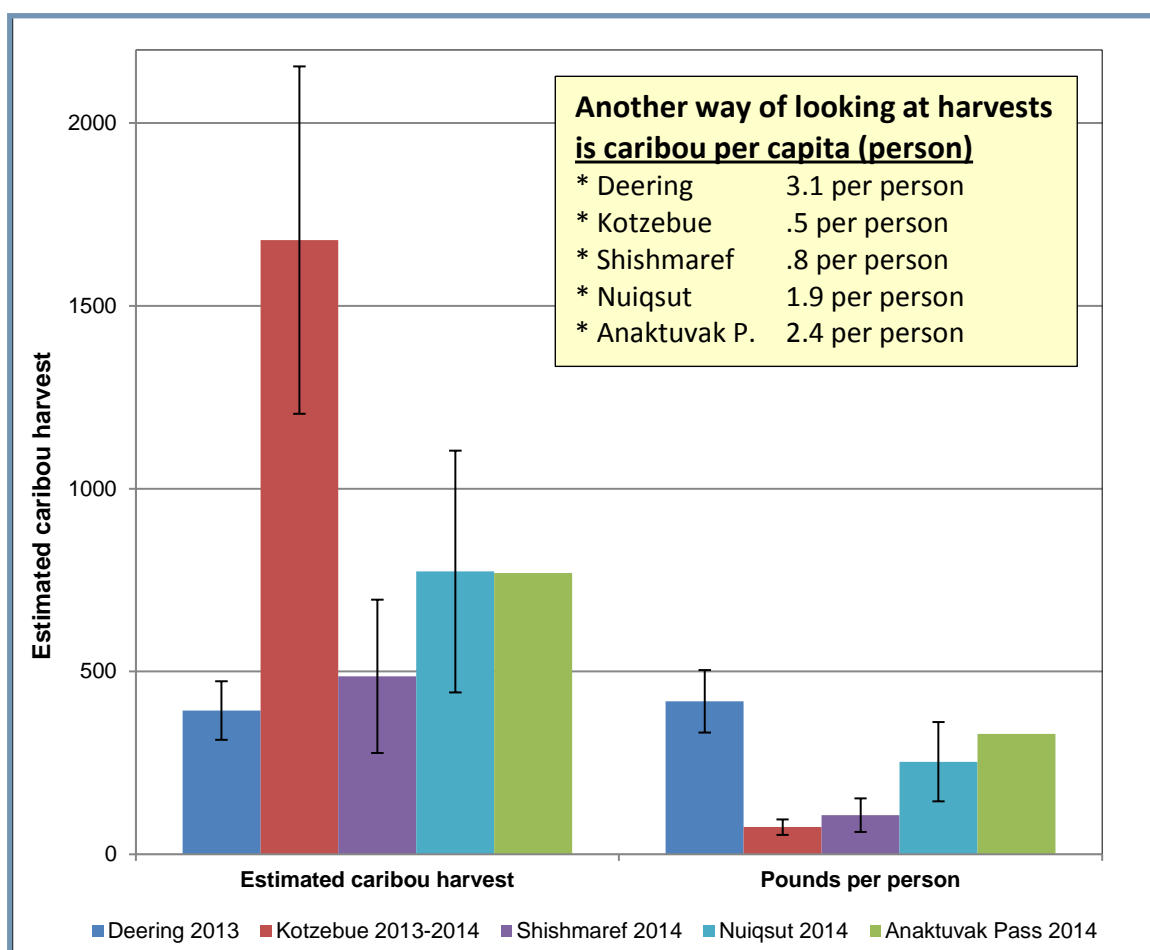
“Big game” survey questions ask how much game a household harvested in a 12-month period, the sex of the animal(s), where they were harvested and when, and sharing of subsistence resources. Species included on the survey include caribou, moose, brown bear, black bear, Dall sheep, and muskox, as well as several furbearers.

In 2014 and 2015, Division staff, with help from locally hired research assistants, conducted big game and comprehensive harvest surveys in Deering, Diomed, Stebbins, Kotzebue, Point Hope, Shishmaref, Barrow, Nuiqsut, and Anaktuvak Pass. Community review of draft data is not complete, but has occurred for some communities, making *preliminary* results available.

Total annual harvests varied, often because of community size but also because of local abundance in survey years and community specific subsistence patterns. These ranged from 393 caribou (Deering 2013) to 1,680 caribou (Kotzebue 2013-2014). Taking human population sizes into account, per capita harvests ranged from .5 caribou per person in Kotzebue to 3.1 per person in Deering. Caribou were widely shared in all communities, for example, 34% of Deering households harvested caribou but 72% said they had received it from another household – the result being that 97% of households used caribou.

Quyana and taiku to our local research assistants and community members who participate in these research efforts. Thanks also to

the USFWS Selawik Refuge and BLM Kotzebue field office for use of their facilities during fieldwork. Household surveys were accomplished with funding from ADF&G’s Divisions of Subsistence and Wildlife Conservation, the Coastal Impact Assistance Program and the Alaska Pipeline Coordinators Office.



Another way of looking at harvests is caribou per capita (person)

- * Deering 3.1 per person
- * Kotzebue .5 per person
- * Shishmaref .8 per person
- * Nuiqsut 1.9 per person
- * Anaktuvak P. 2.4 per person

Electronic copies of these reports and other Subsistence Division publications can be found at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>

Community Subsistence Information System (CSIS):

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sb/CSIS/>

Western Arctic Herd Harvest Patterns

Although we have only half as many caribou in the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) today as we had 10 years ago, total caribou harvests by communities in the range of the herd have remained about the same, about 13,000 caribou a year. What does that mean for the herd and Alaskans who depend on it?

When the caribou population was almost 500,000 animals, hunting didn't have much impact on the size of the herd. But with 201,000 caribou, hunting does have an impact. If the herd continues to decline, killing fewer caribou may be the best way to help the herd recover quickly. If we need to kill fewer caribou, it helps to understand how many caribou are being killed, and where. It is also important to understand how caribou are shared after they are killed.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conducts subsistence harvest surveys to better understand caribou harvests by villages in the range of the WAH, and patterns of caribou harvest in a typical village.

Average Harvest by Village

With about 23,000 people in the surveyed communities, 13,000 caribou works out to be about one caribou for every two people, on average. Averages do not tell the whole story, because almost no village, and almost no household in any village, is average. But, averages are a good way to see the big picture. Averages allow us to compare harvests in large and small communities.

Table 1 shows the average number of caribou harvested each year by various communities in the range of the WAH. The red bar in the table shows the total number of caribou killed by all hunters in the village. The blue bar shows the average number of caribou killed per person in the village.

At the top of the table are the three large communities: Kotzebue, Barrow and Nome. Hunters from Kotzebue and Barrow took about 2,000 caribou a year, or about one caribou for every two people. Hunters from Nome took only about 100 caribou, on average. In some years when the herd is close, Nome hunters kill many more than 100 caribou.

The rest of the table includes 34 smaller communities, sorted by the average number of caribou killed per person per year (the blue bar). Deering had the highest average harvest, 2.2 caribou per person per year, because the caribou wintered close to Deering in the years Deering was surveyed. But Deering is a small village, so the average total harvest is relatively small, less than 300 caribou a year.

Selawik is a larger village, about 800 people. On average, Selawik hunters kill about 1.2 caribou per person per year. Selawik's average total harvest is almost 1,000 a year.

Communities with high average harvests per person – places like Ambler and Shungnak – are more dependent on caribou. This is especially true of Anaktuvuk Pass, where a 2011 survey found that caribou were almost 80% of the total subsistence harvest, by weight. Restricting harvests will have a much bigger impact in these communities than in communities with low harvests per person. Most of the villages with high harvests per person are in the Northwest Arctic Borough.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED CARIBOU HARVESTS FROM COMMUNITY SURVEYS IN THE RANGE OF THE WESTERN ARCTIC HERD, 1989-2013 (N=146)

N	Community	Average population	Oldest survey	Newest survey	Average number of caribou killed per year...	
					...by community (13,381)	...per person (0.6)
5	Kotzebue	3,137	2002	2013	1,889	0.6
6	Barrow	4,121	1989	2001	2,024	0.5
3	Nome*	3,468	2009	2011	92	0.0
3	Deering	126	2007	2013	271	2.2
3	Ambler	270	2003	2012	489	1.8
4	Shungnak	261	1998	2012	444	1.7
10	Anaktuvuk Pass	296	1990	2011	493	1.7
4	Wainwright	528	1989	2009	889	1.7
2	Buckland	421	2003	2009	599	1.4
3	Noorvik	662	2002	2012	869	1.3
2	Point Lay	223	2002	2012	255	1.1
3	Selawik	813	1999	2011	969	1.2
3	Kobuk	133	2004	2012	154	1.2
8	Atkasuk	229	1994	2006	255	1.1
9	Nuiqsut	428	1993	2006	465	1.1
3	Kiana	390	1999	2009	411	1.1
4	Koyuk	336	1998	2010	327	1.0
5	Noatak	479	1999	2011	392	0.8
5	Shishmaref	549	1989	2009	402	0.7
4	Shaktoolik	224	1998	2009	156	0.7
3	Unalakleet	728	2002	2006	481	0.7
3	Elim	310	1999	2010	153	0.5
4	Huslia	258	1997	2002	120	0.5
2	Kivalina	386	2007	2010	177	0.5
3	White Mountain	204	1999	2008	81	0.4
3	Golovin	156	2001	2012	62	0.4
3	Point Hope	719	1992	2000	266	0.4
6	Allakaket	168	1997	2011	46	0.3
1	Wiseman	16	2011	2011	4	0.3
3	Brevig Mission	329	2000	2011	55	0.2
2	St Michael	430	2003	2006	33	0.1
2	Teller	249	2000	2011	19	0.1
2	Wales	148	1993	2006	6	0.04
7	Galena	529	1996	2010	15	0.03
6	Kaltag	237	1996	2002	5	0.02
2	Stebbins	600	2002	2006	11	0.02
5	Nulato	339	1996	2010	4	0.01

* Nome is not often surveyed, and caribou harvests vary widely from year to year based on availability.

SOURCE: Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 12/15/2015

Western Arctic Herd Harvest Patterns (cont.)

To summarize, people living in the range of the Western Arctic Herd have been meeting their needs with about 13,000 caribou annually, even though more were available to harvest. Overall, harvests appear to have been stable during the last 25 years. Looking forward, we may not have 13,000 caribou a year to harvest if caribou populations continue to go down.

Caribou Sharing Patterns

There really is no such thing as an “average” hunter. Some hunters take many more caribou than others. Some hunters – for a variety of reasons: age, health, work — may not take any caribou. The only time you have a lot of “average” hunters is when regulations limit hunters to, for example, one moose per year.

The average harvest per household in communities in the range of the WAH is about 3.7 caribou per year. Some households do not harvest any caribou, while others harvest 20, 30, or 50 caribou a year, and share them with people who don’t hunt. In fact, the data show that just four percent of households harvest one-third of all caribou taken by local communities in the range of the Western Arctic herd (Figure 1). We call these “super-households.” These households – and the households they share with – would be hardest hit if a low bag limit for caribou was imposed.

Why, you might ask, do the super-households take so many caribou? The answer to this, as many of you know, is that people share a lot. Figure 2 – these are actual data from a survey in 2011 – shows a hunter in Wainwright who provided caribou to 21 other households. This is not unusual. It’s a matter of efficiency. Especially if they have to travel long distances to find caribou, it’s more efficient to have the most skilled caribou hunters harvest most of the caribou, to fill their sleds or their boats before coming home. In management, our first goal is to conserve caribou. But, our second goal should be to provide for customary and traditional hunting patterns that evolved over time because they were both efficient and productive. Understanding patterns of subsistence harvests over the past 25 years may help as we deal with fewer caribou in the Western Arctic Herd.

Almost a third of all caribou... ...were killed by 4% of households

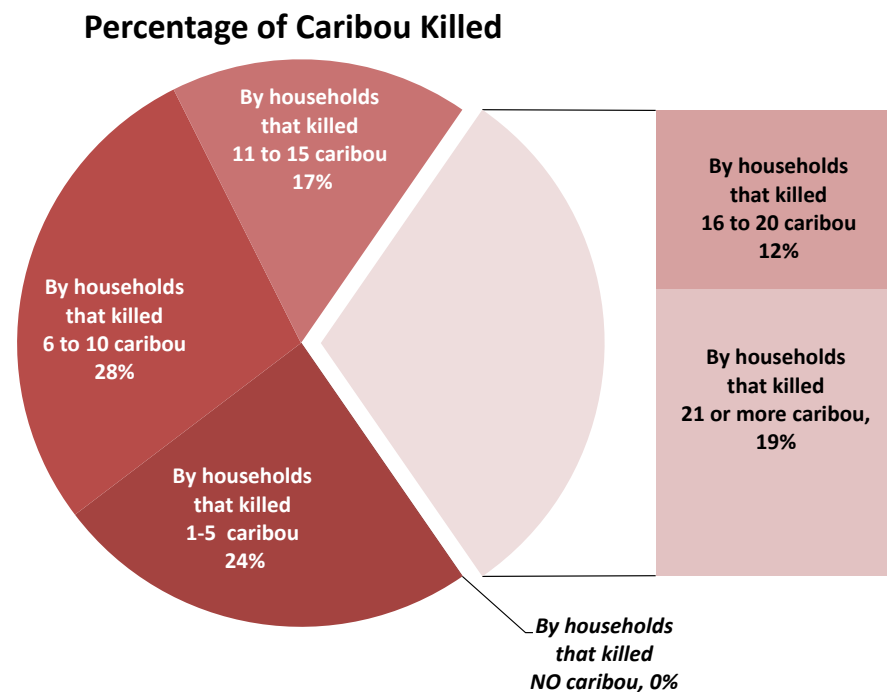


FIGURE 1.

A super-hunter’s caribou sharing

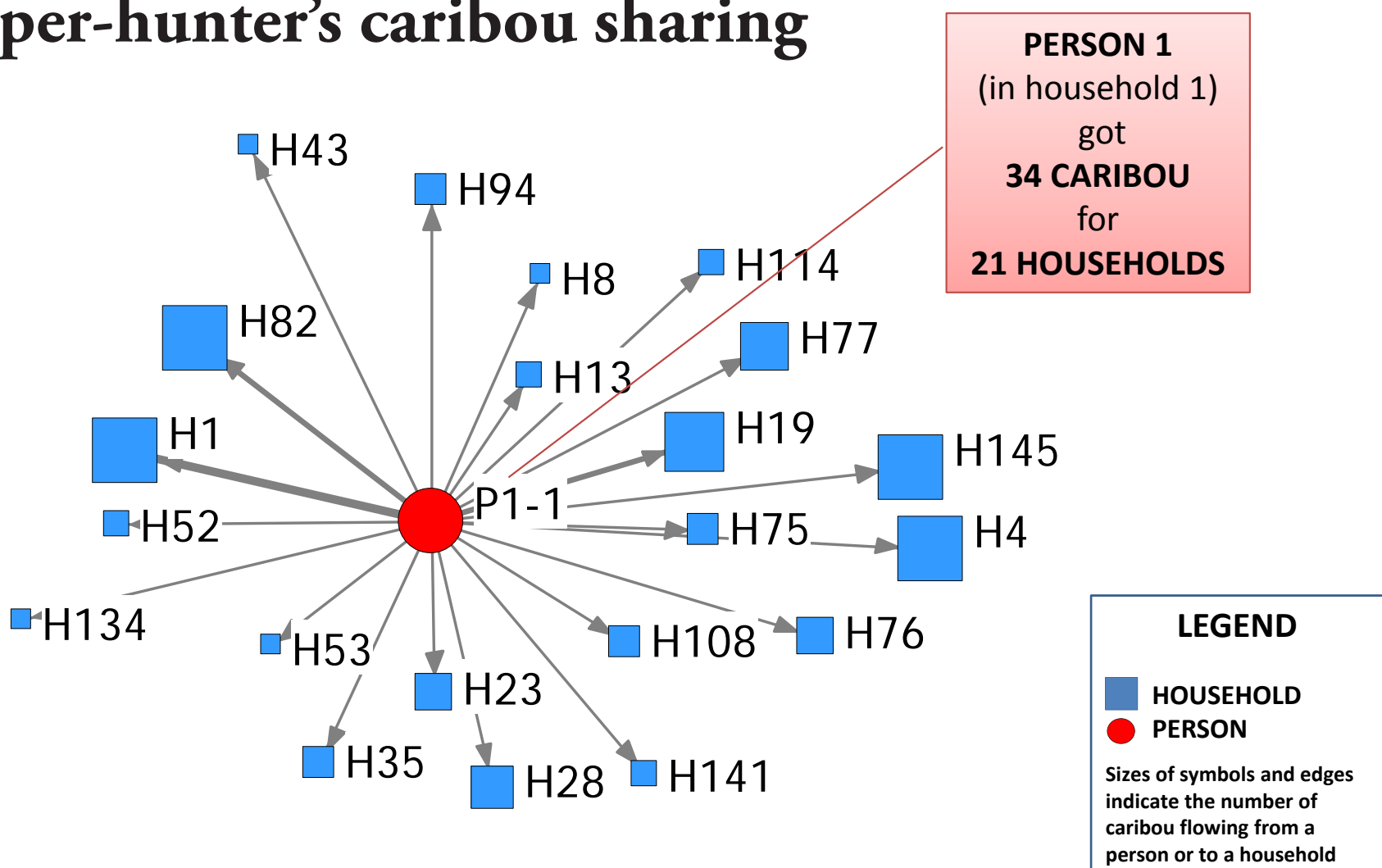


FIGURE 2.

Caribou Roundtable: Reports from Caribou Country

Observations of caribou, habitat, and hunting reports are shared at each WAH Working Group meeting during the “Caribou Round Table”. The group reported region-by-region, with some common themes (below) reported by all for 2015.

- ☞ Unusual late freeze-up: Water started to freeze and then warmed up again before ice was safe to travel on. Reports also indicated that winter rains were common.
- ☞ Caribou migration was later in the fall. Spring break-up was later in early 2015 as well.
- ☞ Hunters reported harvested caribou were healthy and in good condition. No reports of parasites or disease concerns for caribou.
- ☞ In 2015 a very active fire season, with smoke and haze observed in many places.
- ☞ Other wildlife – members said that many wolves and bears were seen in most places. Comments included that wolf populations seem to remain high.
- ☞ In addition to food the use of caribou hides is widespread. Hides are valued as winter mattresses that “last a long time if you take care of them.”



NANA Region

Weather is different than normal-dry summer, then fall consisted of cold to warm to cold spells, which contributed to the ice not packing very thick in places. The caribou arrived later in the year, with some coming along the coastal route. Most communities were able to harvest caribou and many observed the caribou in good health.

Seward Peninsula

Caribou are using this area differently than in past decades; less use of the Nulato Hills and more caribou seen farther west, with many wintering around the Nome road areas. Again, this region saw little snow and more winter rains.



North Slope Region

For the first time in about a decade, caribou wintered near and around Point Hope. This year saw a rainy summer and fall with freeze up continuing to occur later in the year than past years. Another topic addressed included teaching younger hunters “the old ways,” both by giving away their first caribou harvested, and in letting the lead groups of caribou pass by.

Koyukuk & Middle Yukon Region

Working Group members noted that there are not many caribou using this area. Typically, the villages of Huslia and Hughes harvest, and the caribou from woodland areas are more preferred than caribou taken from the tundra.



Join the conversation! Have you seen something you think others need to know about? The Working Group values your input. You can connect with a Working Group member or agency representative in your region directly – all names are listed on the back of this newsletter. You can attend the Working Group’s annual meeting advertised on the website at: www.westernarcticcaribou.net. You can also participate through “social media” such as, the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge’s and ADF&G Facebook pages. Please report wanton waste and other actions that disrespect our laws and values to the Alaska Wildlife Trooper hotline at 1-800-478-3377. Law enforcement is more effective if information is gathered right away including: the date, time, location, activity observed, aircraft tail numbers (if applicable), and photos or videos.

GMU 22 State Hunting Regulation Changes

Changes for Alaska Residents, Effective July 1

In 2015, regulations implemented to incrementally reduce harvest were made in accordance with recommendations from the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. In March 2016, the Board of Game adopted new regulations in response to suggestions from local Advisory Committees and are intended to better suit local harvest patterns. They also include a regulatory framework needed to monitor caribou harvest and reduce the overall harvest in GMU 22, for the conservation of the herd. The new GMU 22 regulations take effect July 1, 2016.

Under the new regulations, GMU 22 caribou hunt areas and Alaska resident hunting season dates are as follows:

Unit 22A, north of Golsovia River drainage; remainder of 22B; 22D, in the Kuzitrin River drainage (excluding the Pilgrim River drainage) and the Agiapuk River drainages; and 22E, east of and including Sanaguich River drainage:

- Bulls, July 1 – June 30;
- Cows, July 1 – March 31.

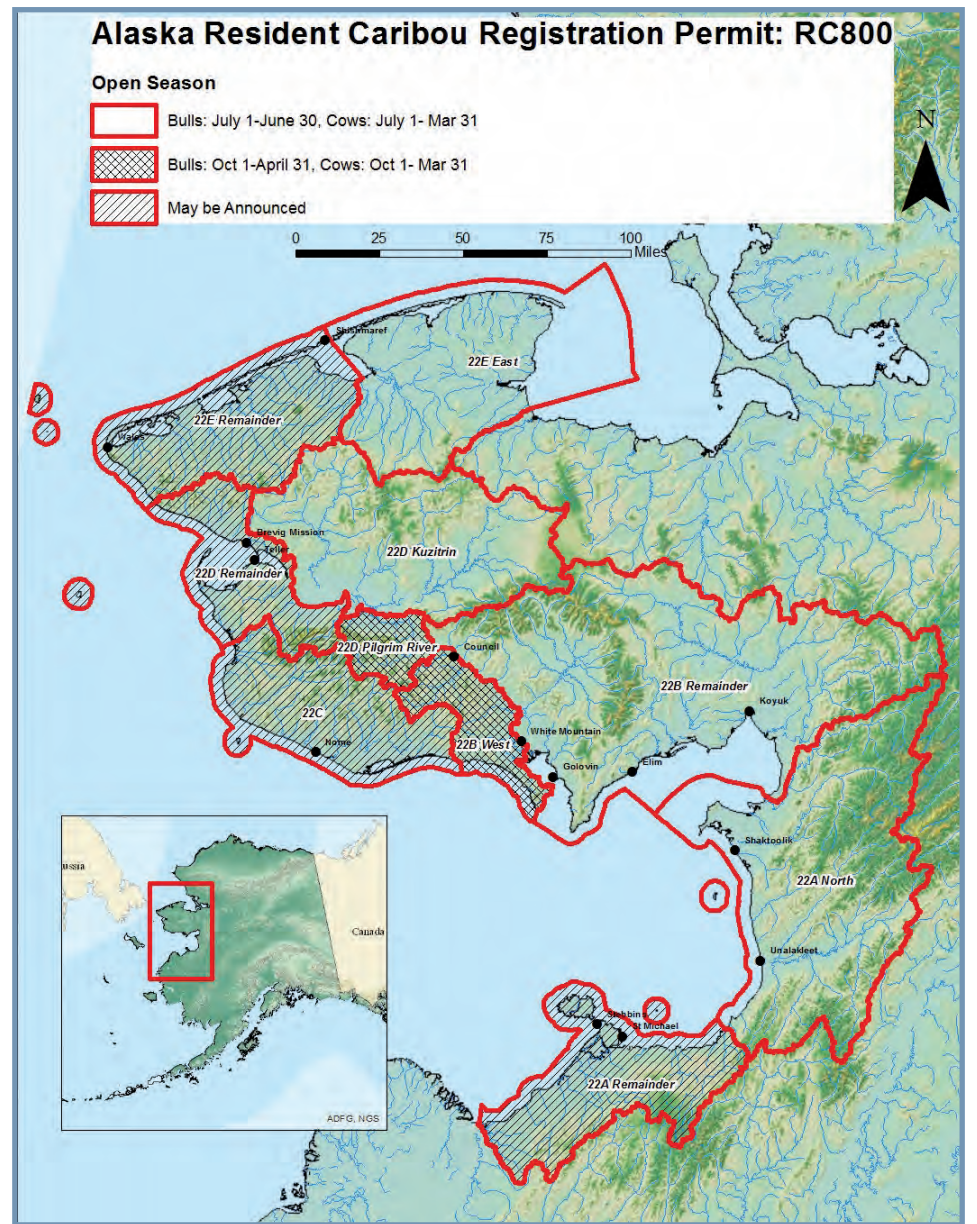
Unit 22B, west of Golovnin Bay, west of the west banks of Fish and Niukluk rivers below the Libby River, and excluding the Niukluk River drainage above, and including the Libby River drainage; 22D,

Pilgrim River drainage:

- Bulls, October 1 – April 30;
- Cows, October 1 – March 31.

Remainder of 22A, 22C, remainder of 22D, and remainder of 22E:

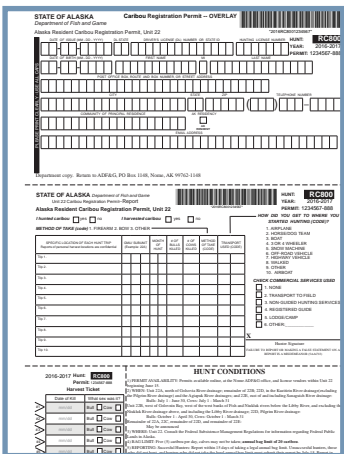
Seasons and bag limits may be announced.



A few reminders for your Unit 22 caribou hunt:

- Residents must possess caribou registration permit RC800 when hunting caribou in GMU 22;
- Bag limit: five caribou per day, calves may not be taken; annual bag limit of 20 caribou;
- Submit a hunt report within 15 days of taking the legal bag limit or within 15 days the close of the season;
- Evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to part of a rear quarter.

See 2016-2017 Alaska Hunting Regulations for more information



Registration Hunt Permit, RC800

Another major change is the requirement that residents hunting caribou in GMU 22 possess registration caribou permit, RC800. The new regulations, which apply to Alaska resident hunters only, also eliminate a bull harvest closure, establish an annual bag limit of 20 caribou (five caribou per day, calves may not be taken), and require RC800 permit holders to submit hunt reports within 15 days of taking the legal bag limit or within 15 days of the close of the season. No changes have been made to GMU 22 non-resident caribou hunting seasons or bag limits. Non-resident caribou hunters are required to have in possession a valid Alaska big-game hunting license, metal locking tag, and general season harvest ticket.

Statewide License Price Changes

Governor Bill Walker signed into law the State's first hunting, fishing and trapping license fee increase in more than 20 years. The additional revenue from the 2017 license and fee increases is estimated to generate for the Department of Fish and Game more than \$9 million in annual revenue, \$5 to \$6 million of that will go to the Division of Wildlife Conservation. This revenue will also provide leverage for federal funds. See ADF&G website for new prices on licenses, stamps, and tags.

State of Alaska License Prices: Caribou

Resident	Hunting License	Old price \$25	New* price \$45
Non-resident	Big Game Tag: Caribou	Old price \$325	New* price \$650
Non-resident Alien	Big Game Tag: Caribou	Old price \$425	New* price \$850

The cost of a low-income sport fishing, hunting and trapping license will remain \$5.

Proxy Hunt: A resident holding a valid resident big game hunting license may take game on behalf of a person who is blind, a person with physical or *developmental* disabilities, or a person who is 65 years of age or older.

*The increase goes into effect January 2017

Noorvik Students Collar Caribou at Onion Portage



Kane Hoffman



Herbert Nazuruk, Leonard Brown, Mae Howarth, Marie Howarth



Luke Brown



Herbert Nazuruk and Leonard Brown



Quyanna- Taiku- Bassee'-Thank You



Peter Bente has worked tirelessly for ADF&G in a career spanning over 25 years. He has been essential in promoting the health and well-being of wildlife in Northwestern Alaska. Peter spent his time with the Western Arctic Herd Working Group facilitating the annual meetings and reporting new information for the WAHWG members to consider as they faced decisions on the future of the herd.

Peter has been the ultimate team player. He was always willing to work hard and was absolutely prepared to assume a role required for the success of any project. "The long-term significant role Peter has played in the supportive capacity to our work is very impressive to me," said new Management Coordinator, Tony Gorn, "...he is the reason for the success of almost everything we've accomplished in Region V.

His contributions have been crucial and without his dedication and support many projects wouldn't be successful." The Working Group wishes Peter the best of luck in his new phase of life and, of course a very happy retirement!



Jim Dau retired after more than 28 years of service with the Kotzebue Fish and Game office. During this time he worked with the Western Arctic caribou herd, Alaska's largest caribou herd, as the lead caribou biologist for Region V. He has conducted research on caribou migration, calving, seasonal range use, and techniques for aging caribou through the use of caribou jaws.

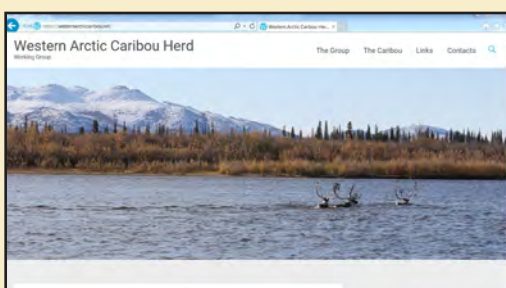
He promoted understanding of the herd by involving local students in collaring caribou at Onion Portage each year. Fish and Wildlife Service Outreach Coordinator Brittany Sweeney said, "Jim got to know local people, listened to and learned from Elders, and shared his knowledge through (probably thousands of) meetings, radio announcements, and village visits."

Congratulations to Jim on his retirement; his contributions to and hard work for the people of the state and its wildlife will be long lasting and fondly remembered.



Robin Gage

www.westernarcticcaribou.net



Looking for more information regarding the Western Arctic Herd or the Working Group? Visit us at our website! On the site you can find information regarding the herd, users, meeting updates, digital copies of Caribou Trails and much more.

New website is under construction. Check for more details.



Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group



Working for you and Caribou!

Contact your local Working Group representative or one of the agencies to share comments, concerns or to get involved.

Voting Chairs

Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee
Buckland, Deering, Selawik
Anaktuvuk Pass & Nuiqsut
Elim, Golovin, White Mountain
Fairbanks Hunters
Hunting Guides
Kivalina & Noatak
Kotzebue
Koyukuk River (Huslia, Hughes, Allakaket, Bettles, Wiseman)
Lower Kobuk River (Noorvik & Kiana)
Middle Yukon River (Galena, Koyukuk, Nulato, Kaltag)
Point Hope & Point Lay
Nome
Conservationists
N. Seward Peninsula (Teller, Brevig, Wales, Shishmaref)
Reindeer Herders Association
S. Seward Peninsula (Koyuk, Shaktoolik, Unalakleet, Stebbins, St. Michael, Kotlik)
Transporters
Upper Kobuk River (Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk)
Atkasuk, Barrow & Wainwright

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Run on Down to the Next Caribou Meeting:

December 14 & 15, 2016

Anchorage Downtown Marriott
Anchorage, AK

Check the website soon for details!

www.westernarcticcaribou.net

