

# Unit 23 Working Group

A Cooperative Process to Address  
Fall Hunting Use Conflicts in  
Game Management Unit 23

Northwest Alaska



**May 14-15, 2015**

**Unit 23 Working Group**  
**May 14-15, 2015**  
**Meeting Binder**

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## **Unit 23 Working Group May 14-15, 2015**

Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers  
163 Lagoon Street, Kotzebue, Alaska

Thursday, May 14  
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday, May 15  
9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

***Public radio station KOTZ will broadcast the meeting on  
Wednesday, May 14, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm and  
Thursday, May 15, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm  
Tune to 89.9 FM or AM 720, or listen via the web at [www.kotz.org](http://www.kotz.org)***

### AGENDA

#### **Meeting Topics**

- Update on Western Arctic herd population, movement, and harvest data.
- Report on March 2015 Board of Game meeting, changes to caribou harvest regulations. Update on Federal Subsistence Board consideration of regulation changes.
- Discuss 2014 hunting season & preparation for 2015 season
- Education efforts (general public, pilots, youth)
- Federal and state agency planning, permitting, management, and enforcement topics related to reducing hunting conflicts in Unit 23
- Research reports
- Public comment session – By phone or at Assembly Chambers  
Thursday, May 14, 2:00-3:00 p.m.  
Dial 1-800-268-5851
- Discussion of additional topics and recommendations raised by Working Group members

## Thursday, May 14

9:30 a.m. Coffee/Refreshments

**10:00 a.m. Welcome, Moment of Silence, Introductions – Review Agenda / Revise if necessary**

- List of Unit 23 Working Group members
- Summary of recommendations made by the Working Group at past meetings (*reached by group consensus*)

**10:15 a.m. Unit 23 Big Game Population, Hunter & Harvest Information**  
Brandon Saito, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)

**11:00 a.m. Unit 23 Caribou Harvest – Regulation Changes**

- State Regulation Changes affecting Western Arctic Herd harvest, adopted March 2015 by Alaska Board of Game  
Jim Dau, ADF&G
- Federal Subsistence Program – Regulatory proposals received in spring 2015 regarding Western Arctic Herd  
Chris McKee, US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Office of Subsistence Management
- Working Group questions & comments

**12:00 p.m. Lunch**

**1:15 p.m. Working Group Discussion** (*more discussion time on Day 2*)

- 1) Discussion of 2014 hunting season and preparation for 2015
- 2) What changes in user conflicts might there be, with the herd population decline and hunt regulation changes?
- 3) Recommendations regarding ways to prepare for and reduce conflicts?

**2:00 p.m. Public Comment Opportunity regarding user conflicts related to hunting in Unit 23 – Call-In & In-person Comments**

Comments by phone, dial 1-800-268-5851

To participate in Kotzebue, please come to the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers. Time per comment may be limited, to ensure opportunity for those who want to speak.

**3:00 p.m. Break**



Thursday, May 14, continued

**3:20 p.m. Education Update** – Update on Unit 23 education initiatives (general public, youth, pilot education, work with Federal Aviation Administration)

Meghan Nedwick, ADF&G

**3:50 p.m. State & Federal Agency Management** – Agency presentations and Working Group comments/discussion

- Selawik National Wildlife Refuge  
Susan Georgette, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management – Squirrel River Management  
Alan Bittner, Bureau of Land Management
- State of Alaska – Permitting of guides/transporters & status of Guide Concession Program  
Valerie Baxter, Department of Natural Resources

**5:00 p.m. Adjourn for the day**

## **Friday, May 15**

*8:30 a.m. Coffee/Refreshments*

**9:00 a.m. Welcome**

**9:10 a.m. Federal Agency Management – Agency presentations and Working Group discussion**

- Noatak National Preserve  
Stephanie Stephens, National Park Service (NPS)
- Research Reports
  - Non-subsistence hunting in Noatak Preserve  
Andrew Ackerman, NPS

**10:20 a.m. Break**

**10:40 a.m. Continue research reports**

- Noatak Traditional Knowledge Project  
Gabriela Halas, University of Alaska Fairbanks  
(*teleconference*)

Friday, May 15, continued

**11:00 a.m. Working Group Discussion & Action**

- Topics raised by Working Group members
- Follow-up on presentations or public comments
- Working Group Recommendations / Actions
- Future of Unit 23 Working Group – meet again in 2016?

**12:15 p.m. Assignments / Wrap up**

**12:30 p.m. Adjourn**

Additional information about the Unit 23 Working Group can be found at the project web site:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=plans.unit23>

## Unit 23 Working Group Membership

May 2015

Name	Affiliation
<b>Public members</b>	
Phil Driver	Alaska Professional Hunting Association Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
Cyrus Harris	Maniilaq Association Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group Kotzebue Advisory Committee
Stosh Hoffman	Alaska Board of Game
Victor Karmun	Kotzebue Advisory Committee
Melvin Lee	Upper Kobuk Advisory Committee
Enoch Mitchell	Noatak/Kivalina Advisory Committee Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Ron Moto, Sr.	North Seward Peninsula Advisory Committee Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
Fred Smith	Northwest Arctic Borough, Planning Department
Julie Owen	Transporter representative
Pete Schaeffer	Kotzebue Advisory Committee
Joe Schuster	Alaska Professional Hunting Association
Raymond Stoney	Lower Kobuk Advisory Committee Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council
Nate Turner	Alaska Board of Game
Alex Whiting	Native Village of Kotzebue Kotzebue Advisory Committee
<b>Agency representatives</b>	
Alan Bittner	Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage Field Office
Valerie Baxter	Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water
Jim Dau	Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation
Stephanie Stephens (Acting Superintendent)	National Park Service, Western Arctic National Parklands
Chris McKee	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management
Susan Georgette	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge

# Unit 23 Working Group

Summary of Process and Advisory Recommendations  
Made to Date by the Working Group  
May 2015

## Working Group Charter - 2008

- Mission: Find solutions to hunting conflicts in Unit 23 that will preserve the Inupiaq values of the region, including opportunities for local hunters to take caribou needed, while also providing reasonable opportunities for Alaska resident personal use and non-resident harvest.
- Advisory recommendations / proposals, developed with group consensus.

## Working Group meetings

- 10<sup>th</sup> meeting in Kotzebue
- Members of group met in Kiana and Noatak in 2008, and in Shungnak in 2009
- Since 2010 have been meeting once a year, to keep sharing information and to provide opportunity for public comments to the working group

## Recommendations

- Noatak Controlled Use Area – Regulatory
  - Proposal approved by Board Game to extend dates to Aug. 15-Sept. 30. In effect 2010.
- Mandatory one-time online orientation of pilots flying in Unit 23 – Regulatory / Education
  - Proposal approved by Board of Game. In effect 2010. As of 2014, 307 pilots took & passed test.
  - Worked with Federal Aviation Administration on pilot education through FAA events.

## Recommendations

- Improved Communication – between local communities, management agencies, guides & transporters
  - Letters sent to guides and transporters recommending ways to reduce conflicts (most recently, in 2013 to operators in Wulik and Kivalina Rivers area)
  - Annual pre-season meeting with NWAB, local communities, management agencies
  - More complete information provided by permitting agencies to guides, transporters, visiting hunters – including land status maps updated yearly

## Recommendations

- Authorities to manage guides and transporters
  - Supported State's Guide Concession Program and requested it be expanded to include management of transporters (bill has not been passed by Legislature)
  - Supported legislation in 2010 to expand authority of Big Game Commercial Services Board to regulate transporters (bill was not passed by Legislature)



## Recommendations

- Agency Coordination
  - Law enforcement – Expansion & coordination of efforts, including working with NANA Trespass program
  - Contract investigator from Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development, focused on transporter activity in 2010-2013 (no longer funded by State)
  - Federal management plans & permitting affecting guiding/transporting – Involvement of NWAB and local communities in planning
  - Federal permit stipulations and reporting – Consistent requirements for guides & transporters, focusing on ways to reduce conflicts

## Recommendations

- Other actions
  - Keeping informed of proposed developments in northwest Alaska that may affect the herd, the availability of the herd for hunting, or the potential for conflicts between local and nonlocal hunters (such as proposed Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road).

# **Unit 23 Planning Process**

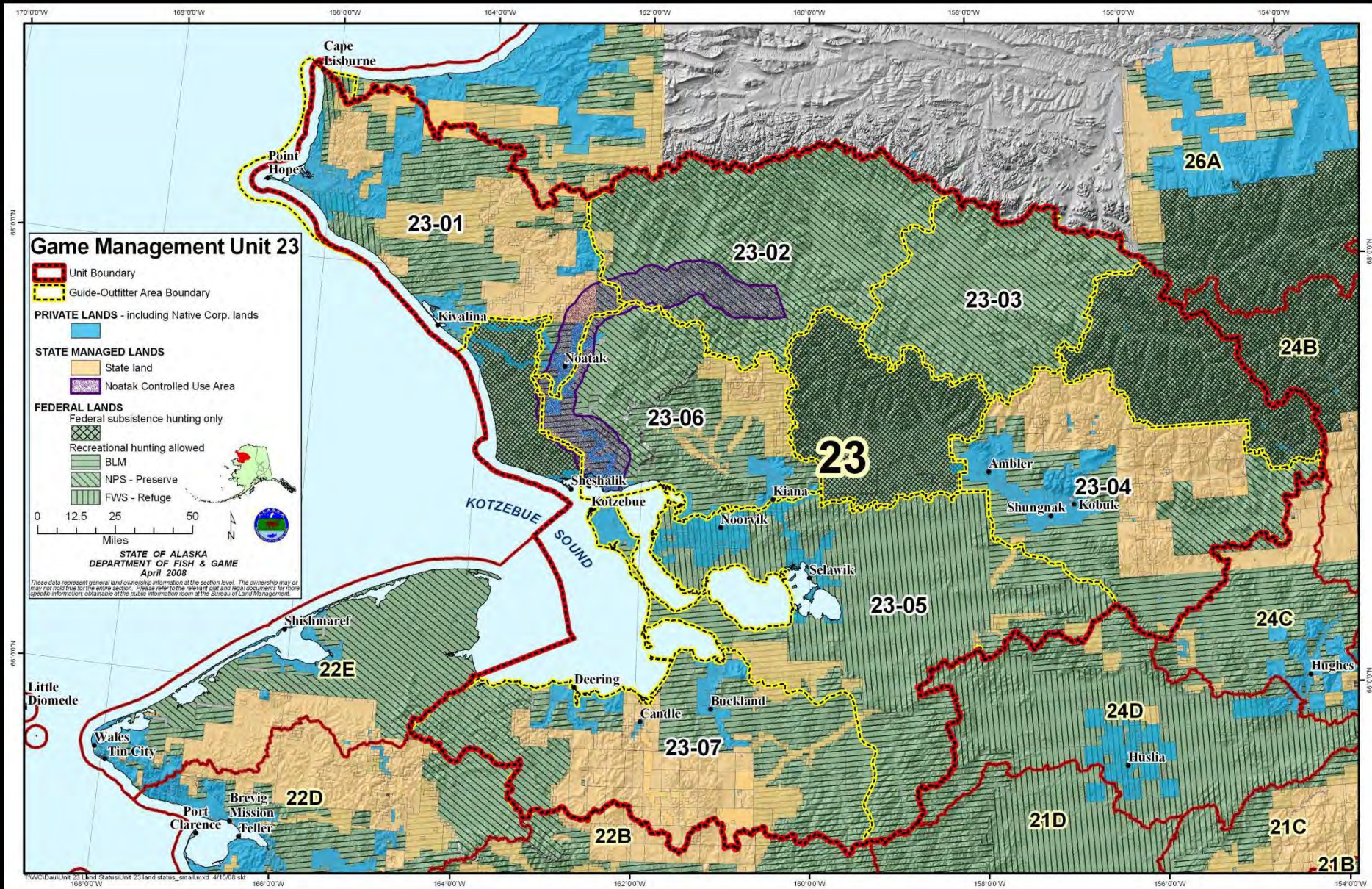
**May 14-15, 2015**

**Background Information**

**Brandon Saito**



# Unit 23: Land Ownership & G-O Areas



(map prepared by Sally Timp, ADF&G)



# This Presentation

## *Harvest Data:*

- **Hunters by species hunted**
- **Residence of visiting hunters**
- **Timing of nonlocal hunting effort**
- **Distribution of hunters among Guide-Outfitter areas**
- **Hunters by commercial services used**

## **Why spend so much time on WAH biology & management for a working group that is charged with minimizing conflicts among users in Unit 23?**

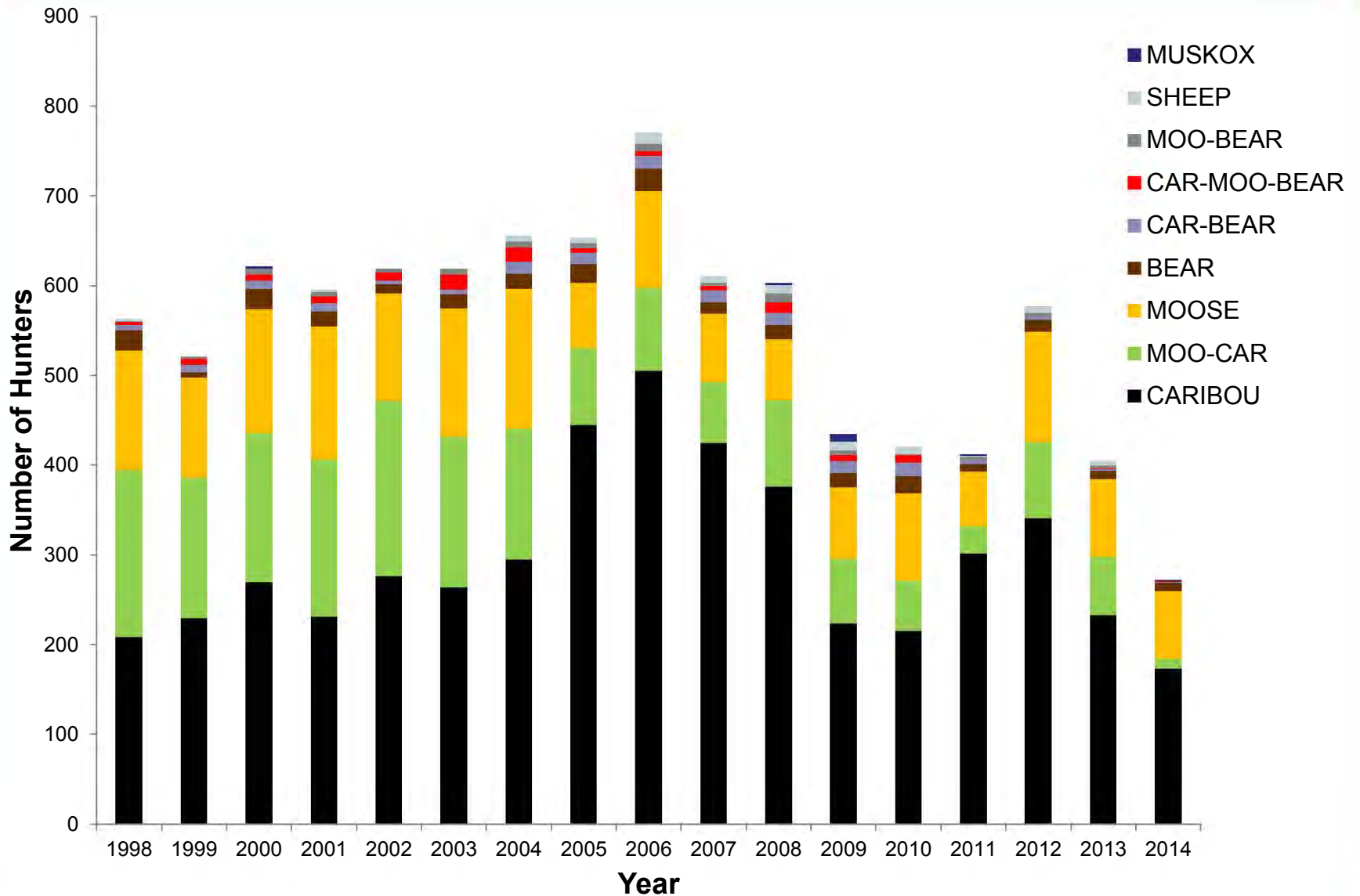
- Sensitivities regarding competition and/or disturbance increase among all users, including local residents, visiting hunters and commercial operators, when caribou are not readily available.
- The overall decline in WAH abundance combined with a disproportionate decline of bulls will make it more difficult for people to harvest caribou in the near future (this, along with delayed timing of fall migrations, is probably already affecting some villages, e.g. Noatak).
- Increased sensitivities attributable to social factors may be offset somewhat if reduced availability of caribou (and moose) or regulatory restrictions cause fewer nonlocal hunters to come to Unit 23.
- However, even with reductions in wildlife, over the short term Unit 23 will still probably provide better hunting opportunities than most other parts of Alaska: the WAH is still one of the largest caribou herds in North America.

# Harvest Data: All Species

- **Data from harvest ticket, registration & drawing permit systems**
- **Data is only for hunters who live outside Unit 23**
  - **Nonresidents (including alien hunters)**
  - **Residents of Alaska who live outside Unit 23**
- **1 Record per hunter: caribou, moose, brown bear & sheep hunters combined**
- **Data from Fall 1998 through Fall 2014**
  - **August 1-October 31**



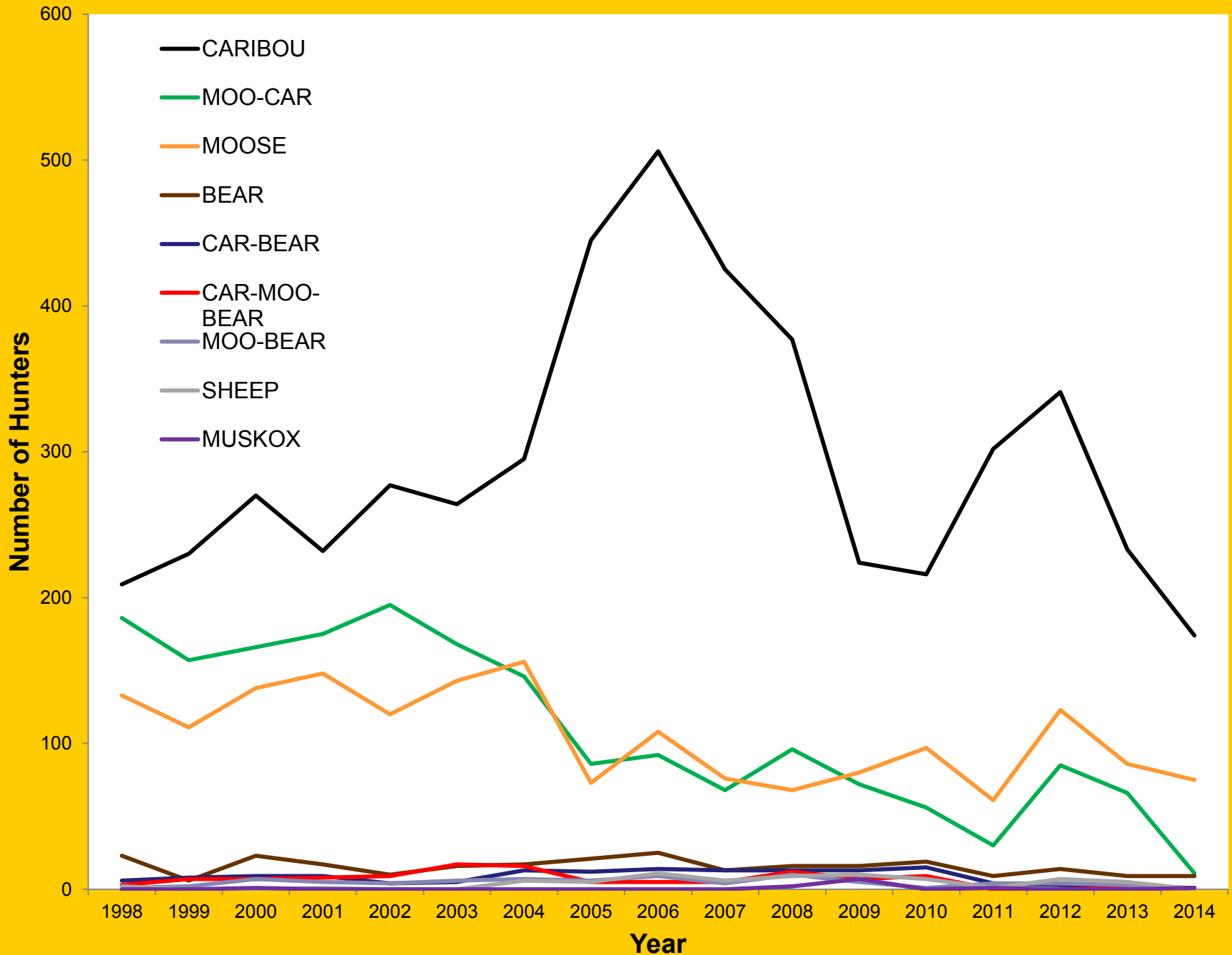
# Numbers of Nonlocal Hunters by Species & Year (Fall 1998-2014)



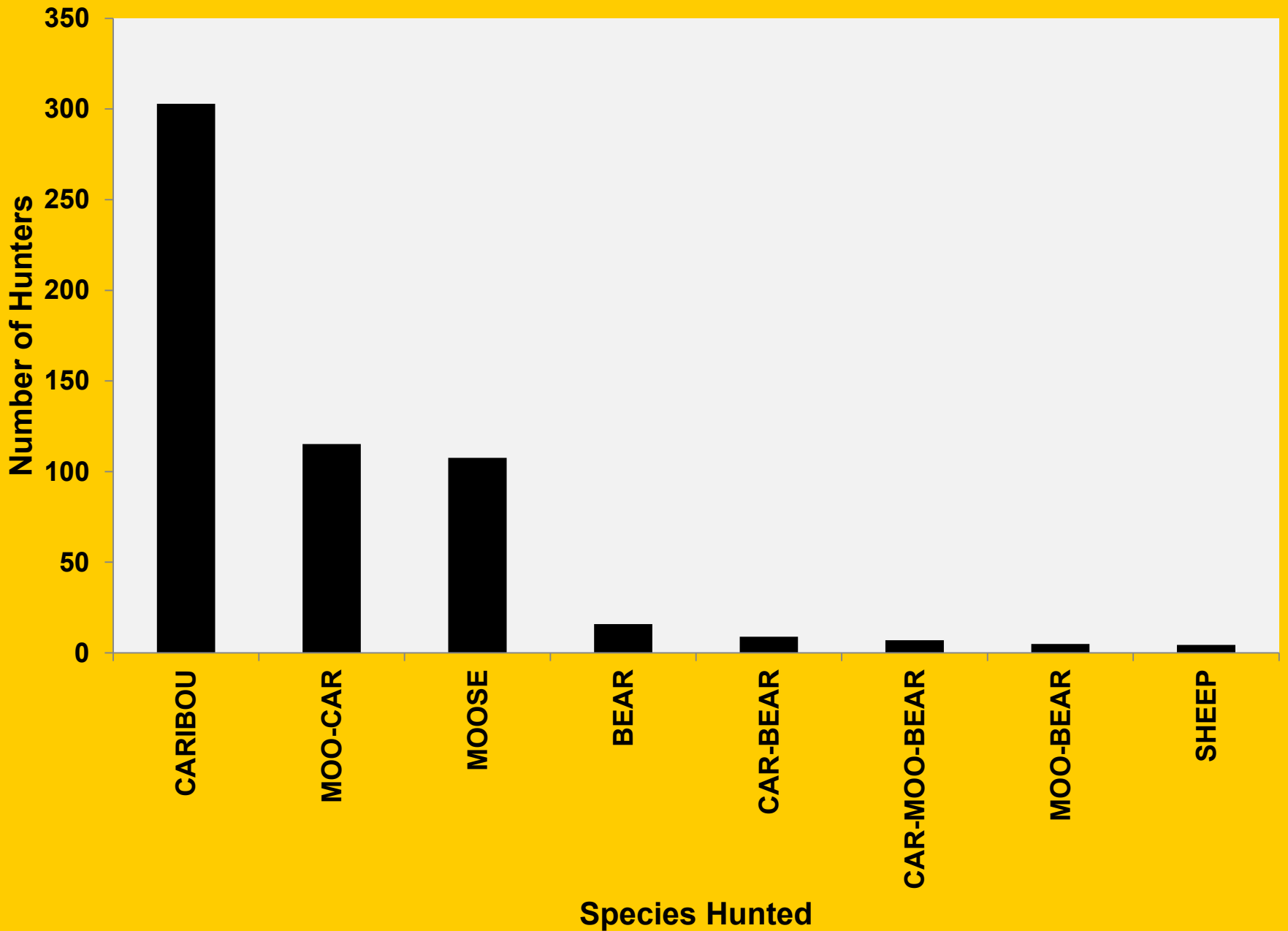
**Categories are mutually exclusive; each hunter counted only once even if hunted >1 species**

# Annual Numbers of Nonlocal Hunters by Species & Year

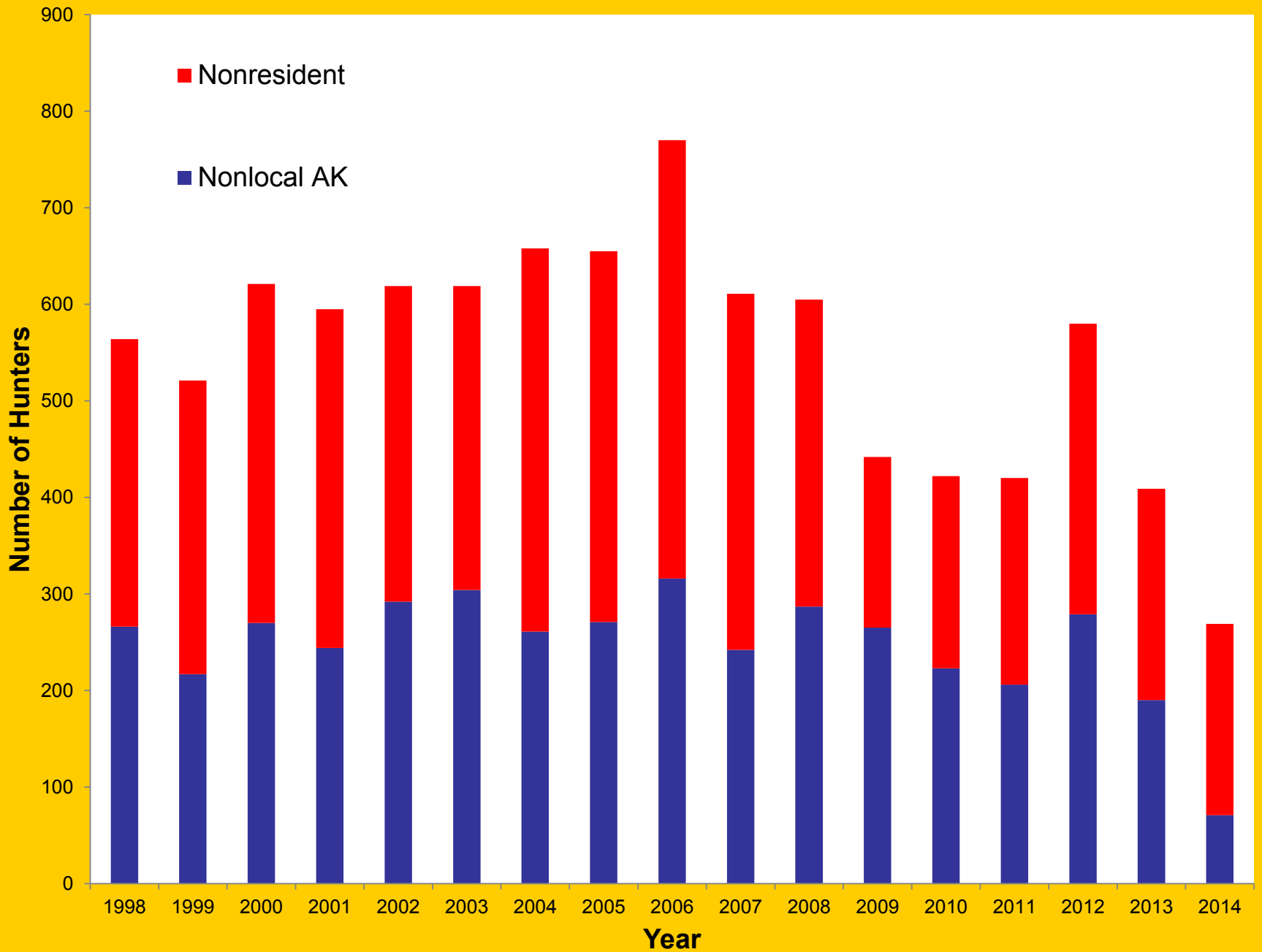
(Fall 1998-2014)



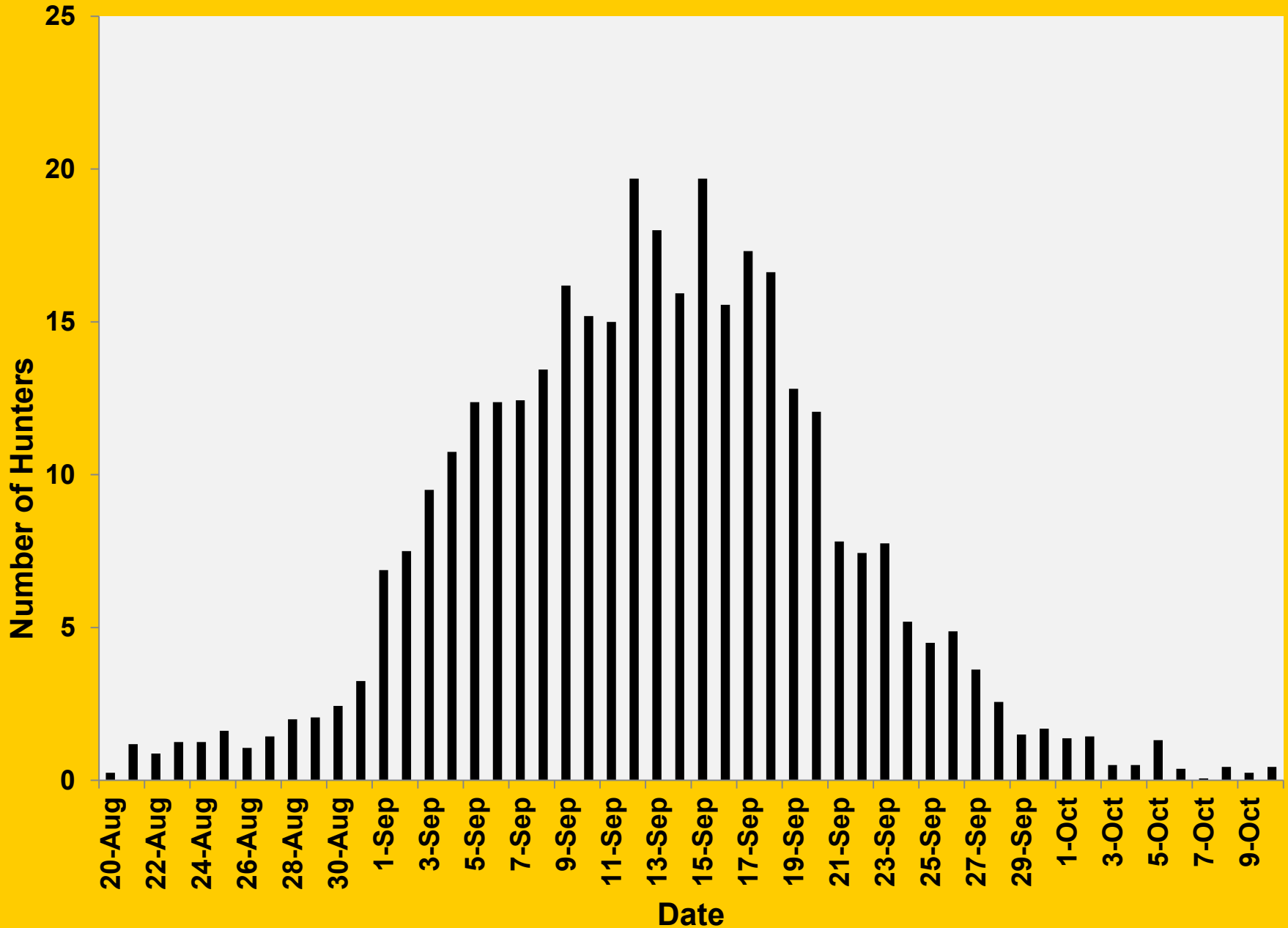
# Average Annual Number of Nonlocal Hunters by Species (Fall 1998 thru 2014 combined)



# Numbers of Nonresident & Nonlocal Alaskan Resident Hunters

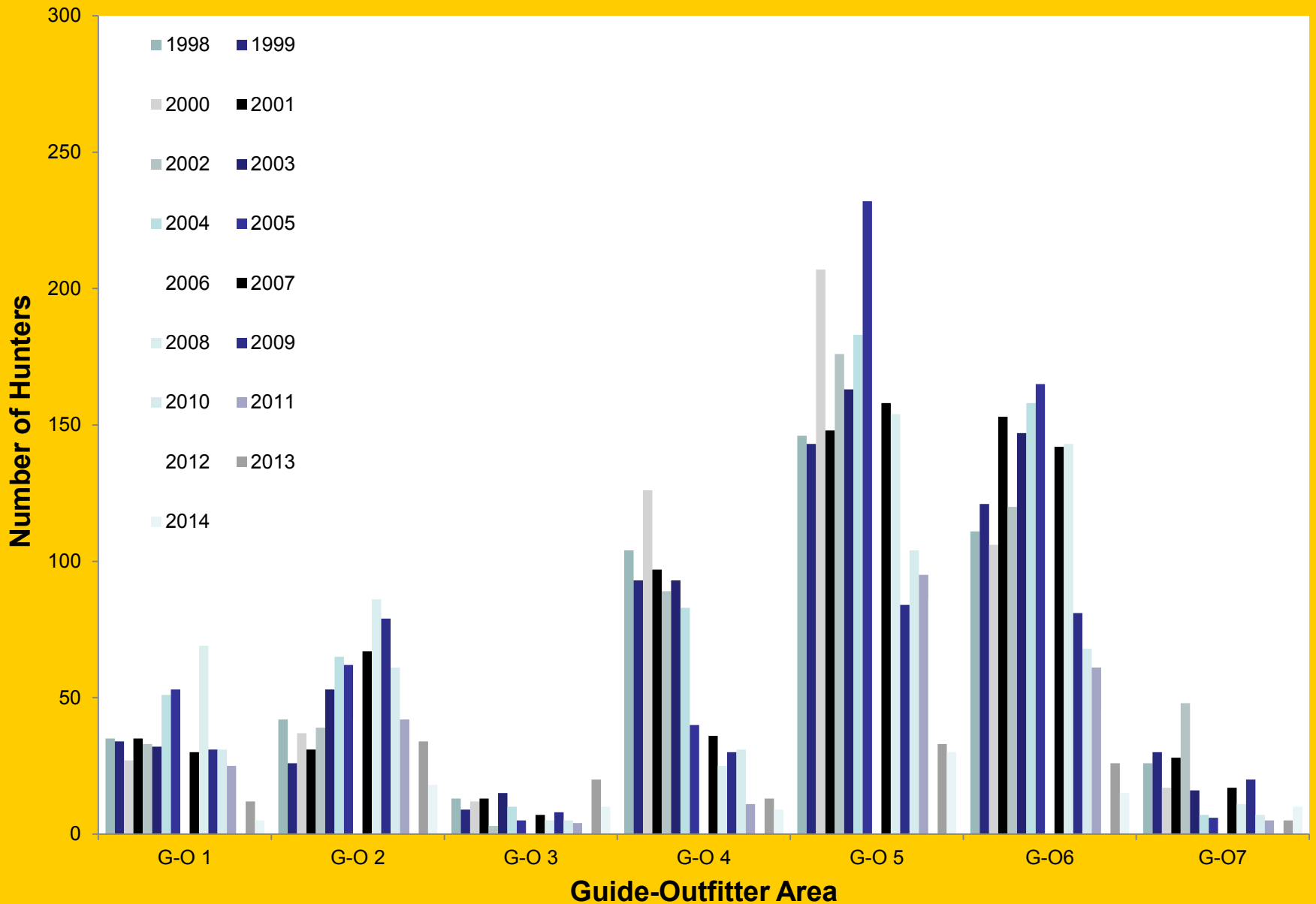


# Average Nonlocal Hunter Effort by Day, Aug. 20-Oct. 10 (1998 thru 2014)



**‘Date of kill’ used to track chronology of effort; when >1 species taken, midpoint date was calculated.**

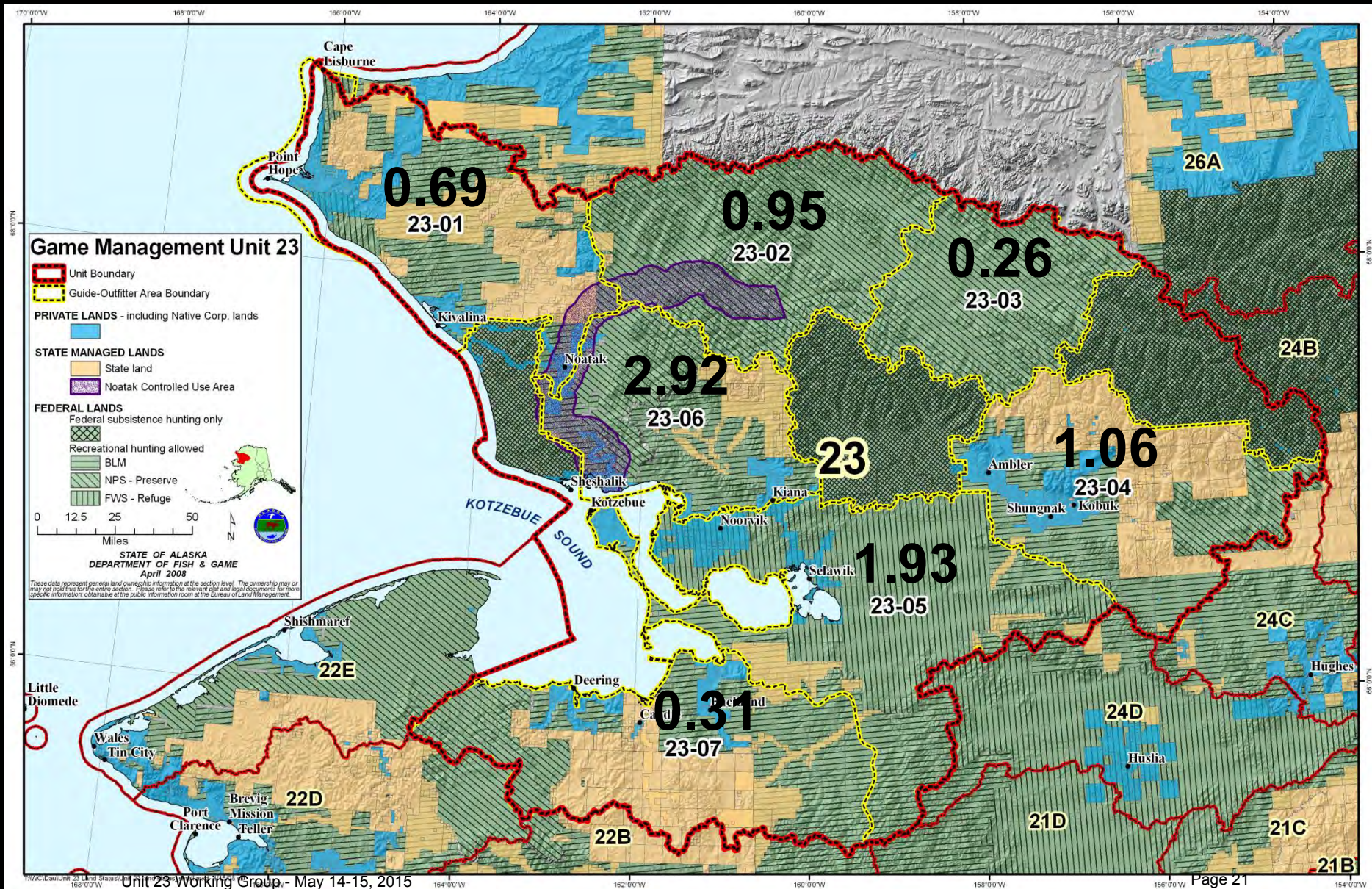
# Nonlocal Fall Hunters by Guide-Outfitter Area & Year (1998 through 2014)



**Note: In recent years, an increasingly high proportion of hunters did not report the specific location where they hunted (2011-30%; 2012-51%; 2013-54%).**

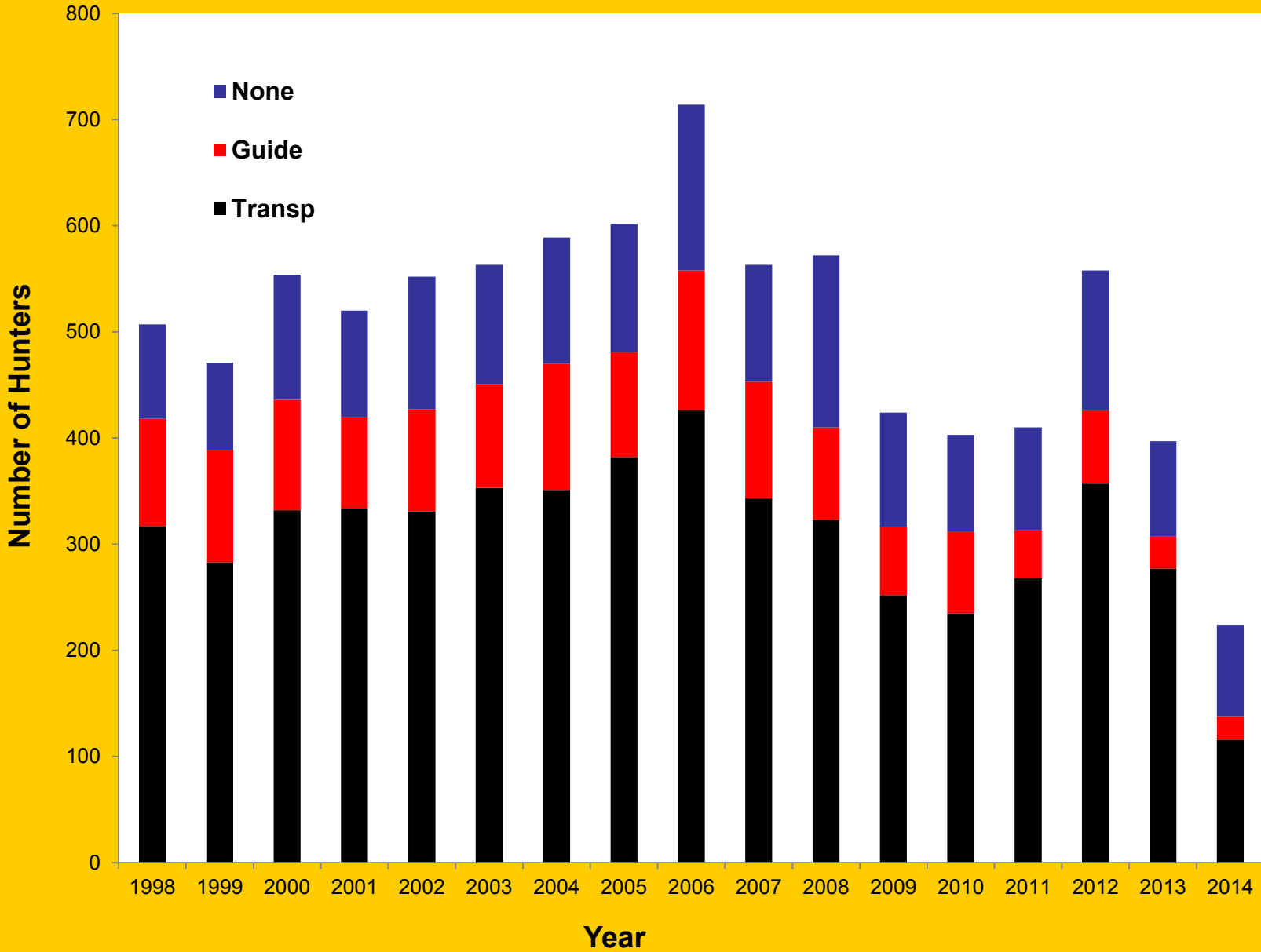


# Average Annual Nonlocal Hunter Density (#/100 mi<sup>2</sup>) By G-O Area (Fall 1998-2014)

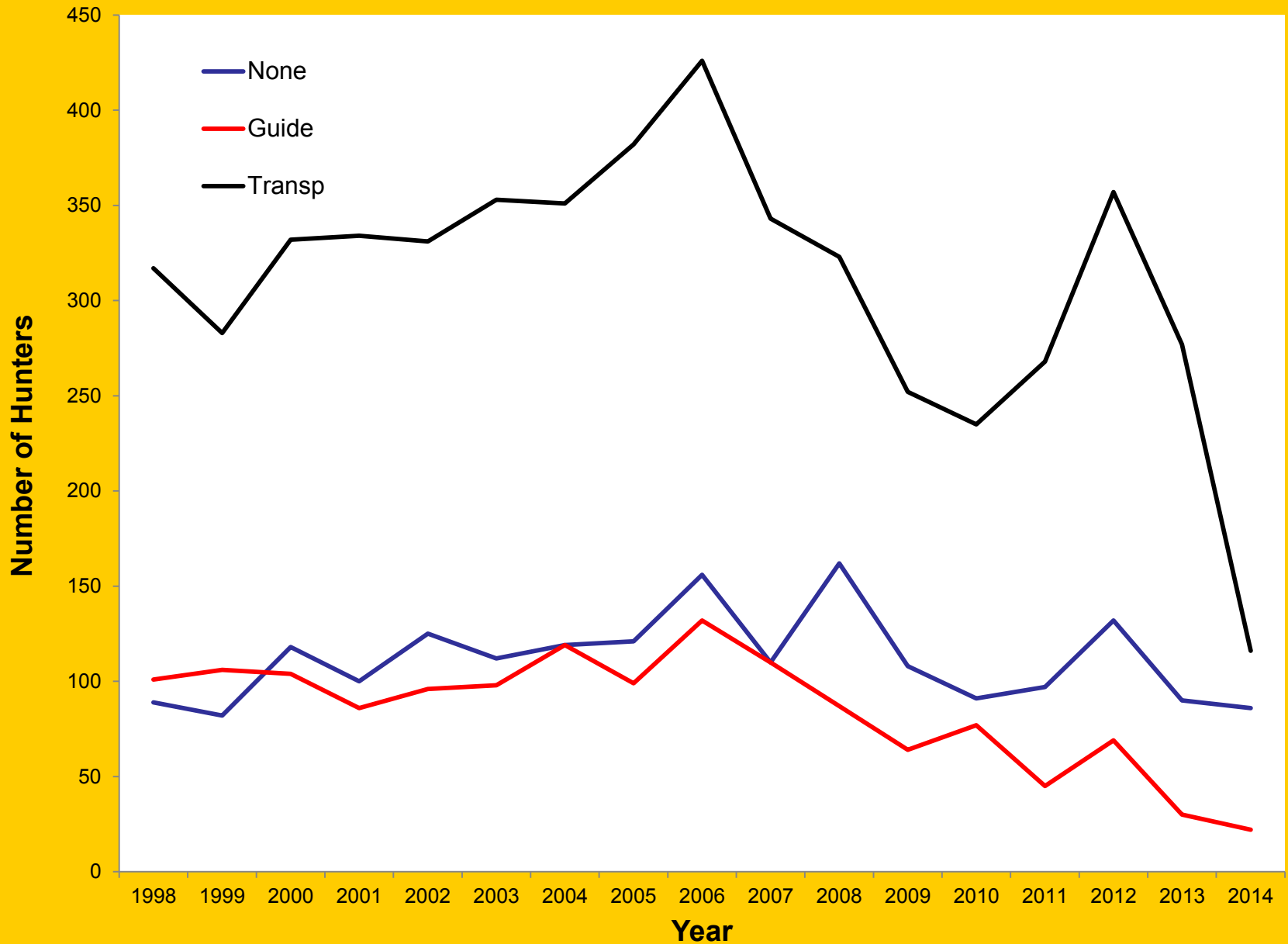




# Number of Fall Nonlocal Hunters by Commercial Services & Year

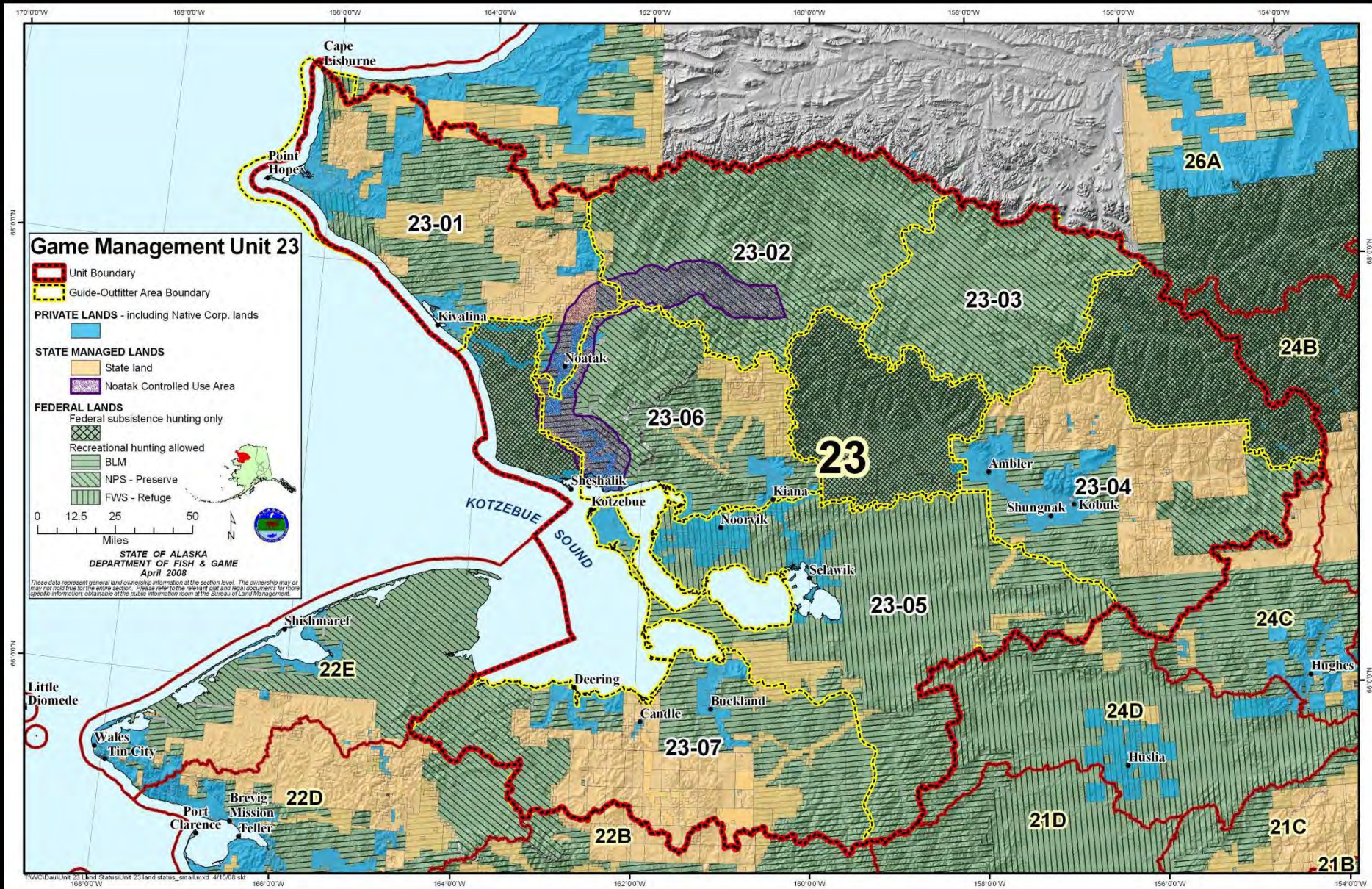


# Number of Nonlocal Hunters by Commercial Services Through Time





# Questions?





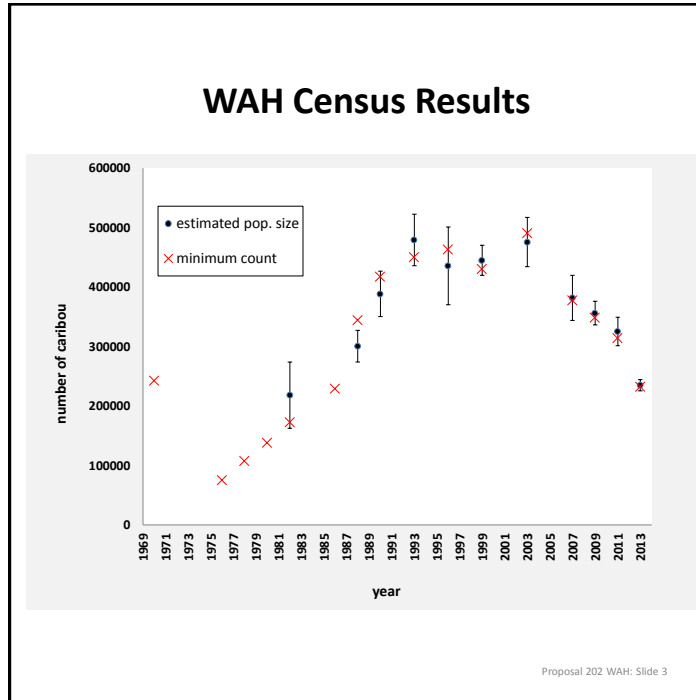
## New Caribou Hunting Regulations for Unit 23

Jim Dau



### This presentation:

- Background information that describes why we had to change caribou hunting regulations for the WAH
- WAH Working Group Cooperative Management Plan
- Proposal 202
- Amendments to Proposal 202 suggested by AC's and other organizations
- Summarize the caribou hunting regulations for Unit 23 that will go into effect 1 July 2015

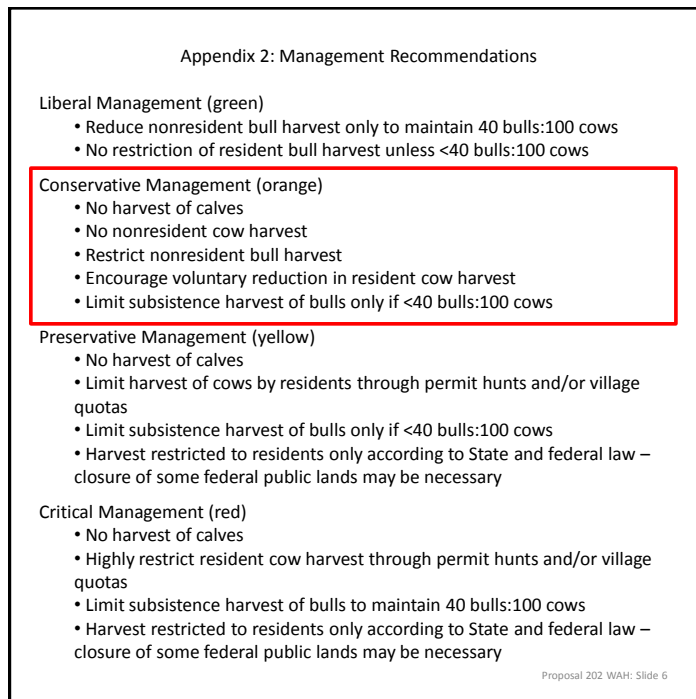
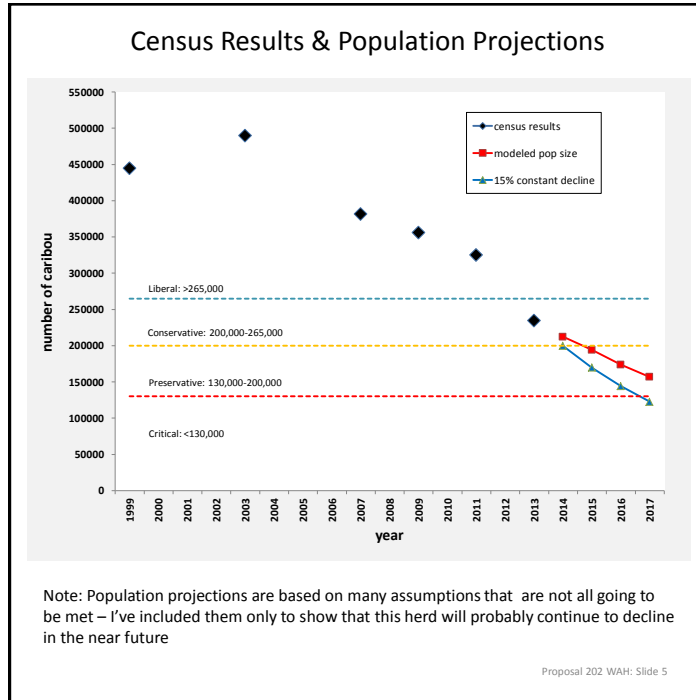


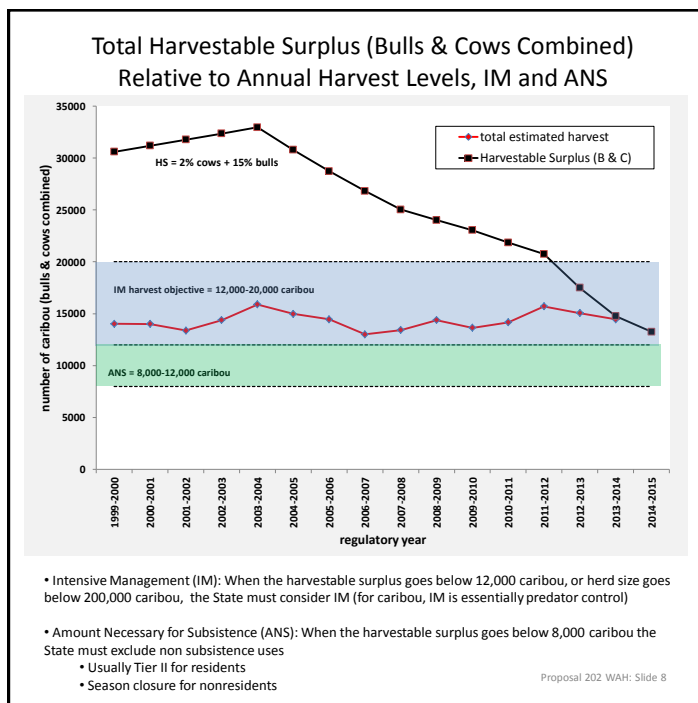
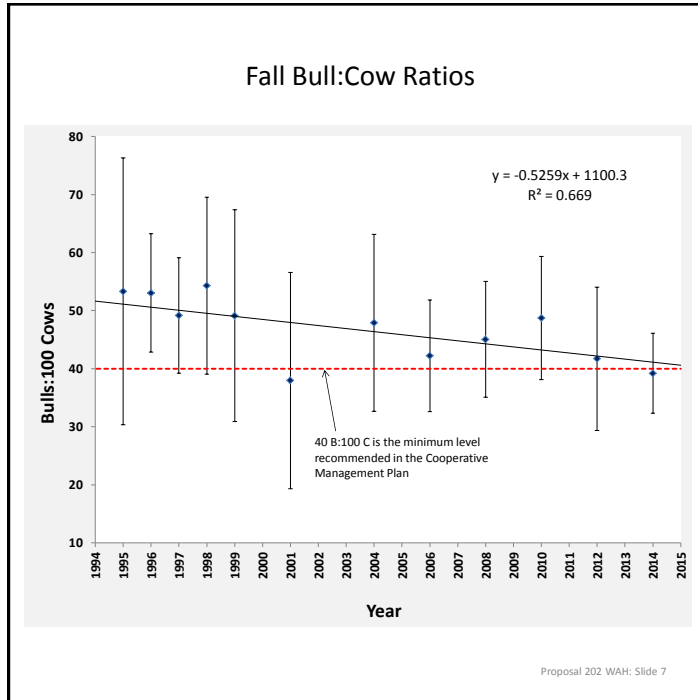
### Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan (last revised 2011)

- Table 1 in the Plan identifies 4 management levels for this herd based on population size & trend
- Appendix II provides recommendations to the Board of Game & to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding caribou harvests for each of these 4 management levels

Alaska Dept. Fish & Game WAH Overview: Slide 4



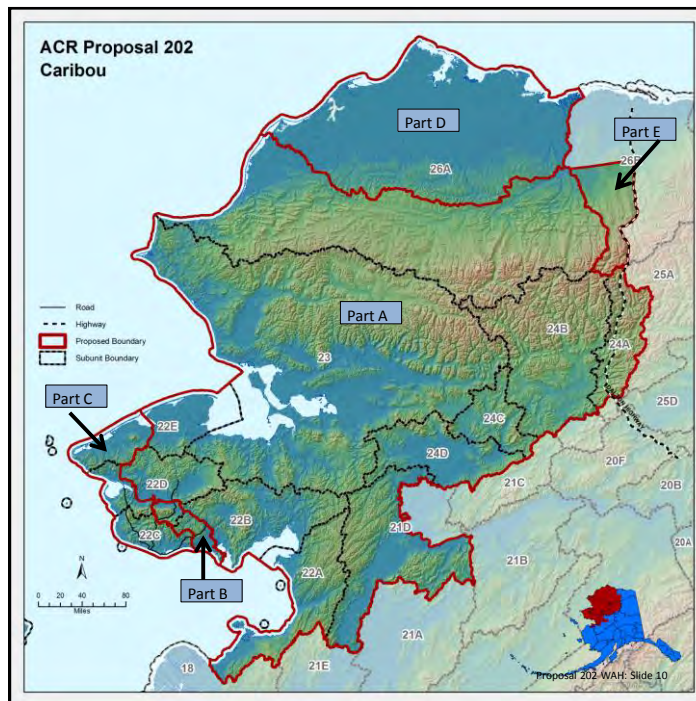




## Western Arctic Herd: Proposal 202

- Four of the 5 components of the original proposal followed the recommendations in the Cooperative Management Plan:
  1. Change the nonresident bag limit to 1 bull/year throughout the range of the WAH
  2. Prohibit the harvest of cows by nonresident hunters
  3. Reduce the nonresident caribou season to 1 Aug. – 30 Sept. (in some areas a nonresident season may be announced within this period)
  4. Prohibit the harvest of calves by all hunters
  5. Eliminate the SDA caribou hunt in Unit 22 (this was the only part of the proposal that did not come from the Plan)
- This proposal covered the ranges of the WAH as well as the TCH: this was roughly 25% of the entire state of Alaska

Proposal 202 WAH: Slide 9

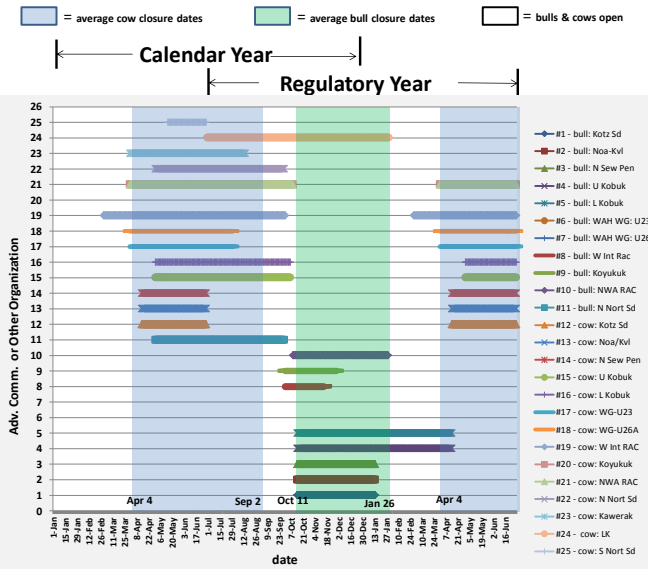


### Western Arctic Herd: Proposal 202

- The original version of Proposal 202 would have had little effect on WAH harvests because:
  1. Although 25% of nonresident hunters have taken >1 bull/year since 1998-1999, nonresidents have historically taken <3% of the total harvest each year
  2. Nonresident hunters take very few cows
  3. Most nonresident hunters come here between 1 August and 30 September
  4. Hunters take few calves (~7% of the WAH jaws turned in by hunters have been calves)
  5. Few caribou have been taken during the SDA caribou hunt in Unit 22
- AC members quickly realized Proposal 202, as submitted, was a 'creampuff' proposal – they began developing amendments to the proposal that would actually reduce harvests

Proposal 202 WAH: Slide 11

Summary of recommended amendments to Proposal 202 by AC's and other organizations



Proposal 202 WAH: Slide 12

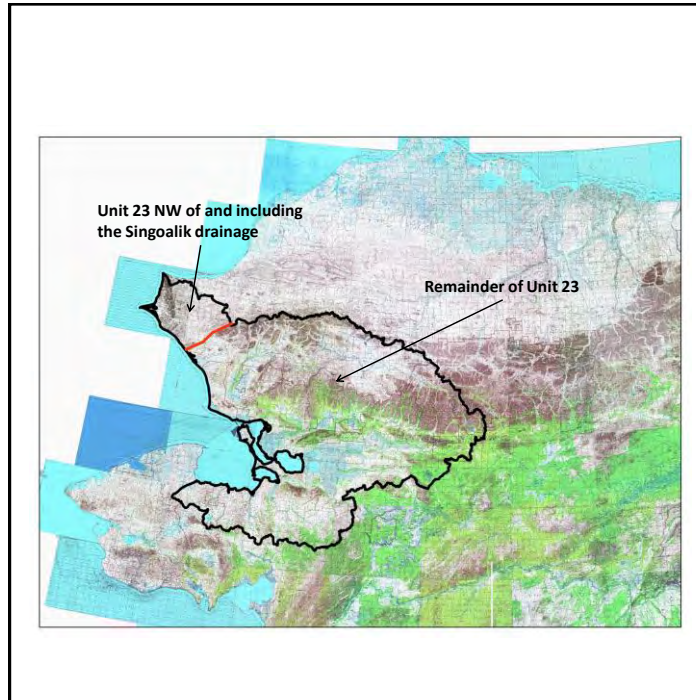
- The evening before Proposal 202 was scheduled to be considered by the Board of Game, 19 AC members from the North Slope, Kotzebue Sound and Norton Sound that were in Anchorage to testify on the proposal met to try to develop a single amendment to present to the Board
- The group eventually agreed to
  - Close the season for bulls during and after rut
  - Close the season for cows before, during and after calving
  - Season dates varied among GMU's because of the variability in when caribou are available based on their movements
- The next day, the Board passed the proposal with little change to the AC's amendment
  - The Board slightly changed the average season closure dates to make them easier to remember

### Caribou Hunting Regulations for Unit 23

Unit 23: that portion northwest of and including the Singoalik drainage

- Resident hunters
  - 5 caribou/day
  - No harvest of calves
  - Bulls: February 1-October 14 (closed 10/15-1/31)
  - Cows: July 15-April 30 (closed 5/1-7/14)
  - There is no time of year when caribou hunting is completely closed
- Nonresident hunters
  - 1 bull/regulatory year
  - No harvest of calves
  - No harvest of cows
  - August 1-September 30 (closed 10/1-7/31)





### Caribou Hunting Regulations for Unit 23 (cont.)

#### Unit 23: Remainder

- Resident hunters
  - 5 caribou/day
  - No harvest of calves
  - Bulls: February 1-October 14 (closed 10/15-1/31)
  - Cows: September 1-March 31 (closed 4/1-8/31)
  - There is no time of year when caribou hunting is completely closed
- Nonresident hunters
  - 1 bull/regulatory year
  - No harvest of calves
  - No harvest of cows
  - August 1-September 30 (closed 10/1-7/31)

These changes will go into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

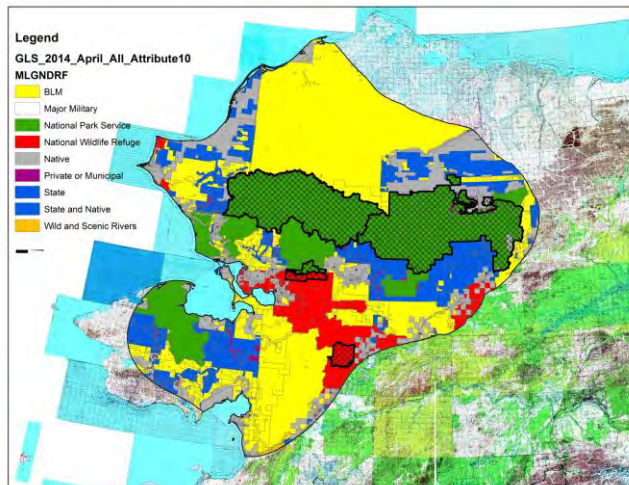
### Intensive Management

- Over the past year ADF&G presented caribou population information in most of the communities within the range of the WAH
- We also spoke with many other organizations as well: AC's, RAC's, the Red Dog subsistence resource council, and others
- A comment we heard at every meeting was that numbers of wolves and brown bears are currently very high within WAH range, and that the state cannot simply restrict hunters without also doing something to reduce predator numbers

### Intensive Management

- There are several major barriers to implementing predator control for this herd:
  - It's expensive and the State is experiencing declining revenue from oil production
  - The range of the WAH is huge: it may not be possible to reduce predators in large enough areas to have a measureable impact on caribou numbers
  - The NPS and FWS are both in the process of reaffirming their long-held policies of prohibiting predator control on their lands
  - This will reduce the effectiveness of predator control no matter where it is conducted

### Land Status Within WAH Range



Proposal 202 WAH: Slide 19

### Questions?





## **PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release: March 19, 2015*

### **CONTACTS:**

**Jim Dau, Kotzebue,  
(907) 442-1711**

**Lincoln Parrett, Fairbanks,  
(907) 459-7366**

### **Cooperative Effort Places Harvest Restrictions on Northern Alaska Caribou Herds for First Time in Decades**

(Anchorage) – For the first time in more than 30 years, new harvest restrictions will be placed on the troubled Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds. The Alaska Board of Game, meeting in Anchorage this week, voted unanimously to adopt the restrictions crafted in a cooperative effort by the board, department and residents of communities spanning northern Alaska.

“I would like to recognize the sense of cooperation involved in this decision,” Kotzebue wildlife biologist Jim Dau told the board.

“All these villages and advisory committees are willing to restrict themselves, willing to take a hit to conserve caribou,” said Dau, who has studied and managed the Western Arctic herd (WAH) for more than 25 years. “It’s really amazing given the importance of caribou to subsistence users, and I would have to say working with the villages and the advisory committees on this is one of the highlights of my career.”

The new regulations, which will affect resident and nonresident hunters by lowering bag limits and reducing hunting season lengths, will go into effect on July 1, 2015.

In presentations to the board, Dau and colleague Lincoln Parrett, a Fairbanks-based wildlife biologist who closely tracks the Teshekpuk caribou herd (TCH), which ranges immediately east of the WAH, each traced the herds’ declines. The WAH, Alaska’s largest caribou herd, numbered about 235,000 animals in July 2013, Dau said. That’s a decrease from 325,000 caribou estimated in 2011, and far below the peak of 490,000 animals in 2003.

Parrett described a similarly alarming pattern in the TCH, tracing the herd’s decline from 55,000 animals in 2011, to 32,000 in 2013, to fewer than 25,000 projected in 2015.

“Caribou numbers fluctuate naturally,” said Dau, who believes weather and predation have affected WAH numbers in recent years. “Disease does not appear to be a factor, caribou have generally been in good body condition throughout this decline, and we don’t think harvests initiated it. But, if harvests remain stable, they will increasingly affect the population trend as herd size goes down.”

Parrett believes calf survival is a factor in the TCH decline. "Annual calf survival is 30 percent," he said. He added that, unlike the WAH, nutritional stress seems to be driving the decline in TCH caribou. Winter weather, insect harassment, and range degradation all appear to play a role in decreased body condition.

"Predation is a further aggravating factor," said Parrett, "and the risk of predation may even be exacerbated by poor body condition."

Both caribou herds are critical to thousands of northern Alaska residents, providing the primary year-round source of red meat in a region where commercially sold beef is consistently expensive and sometimes not an option. A large contingent of area residents traveled to Anchorage from Kaktovik, Kivalina, Barrow, Buckland, Wainwright, Nome, Nuiqsut, Point Hope, Kiana, Unalakleet, Kotzebue, Kobuk, Noatak and beyond to share with the board their growing concerns and ideas about maintaining these caribou herds.

###



**This is a summary of changes adopted by the Alaska Board of Game for regulatory year 2015-2016. This is not a comprehensive list of all the detailed changes. It is your responsibility to read the Alaska Hunting Regulations carefully for complete information.**

*These regulations do not become effective until July 1, 2015 so do not affect hunting or trapping seasons that are currently open or that open prior to July 1, 2015 unless specified (such as spring bear seasons and bear baiting).*

## CARIBOU

**Western Arctic and Teshekpuk Caribou Herds: Units 21D remainder, 22A north, 22B remainder, 22D Kuzitrin, 22E east, 23 remainder, 24C and 24D**, change the resident bag limit and season to 5 caribou per day with no harvest of calves, bulls are open from Feb. 1 - Oct. 14 and cows are open from Sept. 1 - Mar. 31; change the nonresident season to Aug. 1 - Sept. 30 with a bag limit of one bull; **Units 22B west and 22D Pilgrim River drainage**, a season may be announced from May 1 - Sept. 30, if a season is announced the resident bag limit and season will be 5 caribou per day with no harvest of calves, bulls are open Feb. 1 - Oct. 14 and cows are open from Oct. 1 - Mar. 31; if a season is announced, the nonresident bag limit and season will be 1 bull from Aug. 1 - Sept. 30; **Unit 22 remainder**, a season may be announced by emergency order, if a season is announced the resident bag limit and season to 5 caribou per day with no harvest of calves, bulls will be open from Feb. 1 - Oct. 14 and cows will be open from Sept. 1 - Mar. 31, if a season is announced the nonresident bag limit and season will be 1 bull from Aug. 1 - Sept. 30; **Units 23NW, 24A remainder, and 24B remainder**, change the resident bag limit and season to 5 caribou per day with no harvest of calves, bulls are open from Feb. 1 - Oct. 14 and cows are open from July 15 - Apr. 30, change the nonresident bag limit and season to 1 bull from Aug. 1 - Sept. 30; **26A that portion of the Colville River drainage upstream from the Anakutvuk River and drainages of the Chuckchi Sea south and west of and including the Utukok River drainage**, change the resident bag limit and season to 5 caribou per day with no harvest of calves, bulls are open from Feb. 1 - Oct. 14 and cows are open from July 15 - Apr. 30, the nonresident bag limit and season are 1 bull from July 15 - Sept. 30; **26A remainder**, change the resident bag limit and season to 5 caribou per day, no more than 3 cows per day, and no calves may be taken from July 1 to June 30, however, bulls may not be taken from Oct. 16-Dec 31, cows may not be taken Mar. 16- July 15, and cows with calves may not be taken July 16-Dec. 31, nonresident bag limit and season are one bull from July 15 - Sept. 30; **Unit 26B south of 69 30' N. lat and west of the Dalton Hwy**, change the resident and nonresident bag limits and seasons to 5 caribou from May 16 - June 30, however cows may only be taken from July 1 - Oct. 10.

## Proposals to Federal Subsistence Board – Game Management Unit 23

WP	FILE	SPECIES	UNIT	SUMMARY	NOTES/COMMENTS
WP 16-48	Alex Whiting, Unit 23	Caribou wolf wolverine	23	Allow use of snowmachines to position animals	
WP 16-49	NWARAC, Unit 23	Caribou	23	Change harvest limits and bull and cow seasons	Combine Proposal with Upper & Lower AC, Unit 23, Caribou <b>Crossover with SP, WI, NS</b>
WP 16-50	NWARAC, Unit 23	Muskox	23	Change in resident zone community eligibility.	See WCR14-27
WP 16-51	NWARAC, Unit 23	Muskox	23	Establish a season in a portion of Unit 23	
WP 16-52	Upper & Lower Kobuk Advisory Committee, Unit 23	Caribou	23	Change harvest limits	Combine Proposal with NWARAC, Unit 23, Caribou <b>Will be WP16-49/52 Crossover with SP, WI, NS</b>
WP 16-53	Western Arctic National Parklands Baird and Delong, Unit 23	Sheep	23	Area name change, and delegated authority request	Delegation letter for quota and season and a “to be announced season” instead of a “no open season” <b>Crossover with NS</b>
WP 16-54	Western Arctic National Parklands, Unit 23	Sheep	23 remainder	Change hunt area descriptor and delegated authority request	Delegation letter for quota and season and a “to be announced season” instead of a “no open season” <b>Crossover with NS</b>

Unit 23 User Conflict Meeting  
May 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game- Education Report

1. Pilot Orientation- Status Information (attachment A)
2. Work with FAA and Lisa Aspelin and provided information for their safety seminars in Anchorage and Fairbanks.
  - Hunter/guide meeting, received no pushback and hunter/guides were receptive, shared materials at the outdoor show. Any further feedback or materials that come from this group she is happy to share at the meeting each fall.
3. Unit 23 Land status maps and app. Thanks to the map supported provided by BLM we were able to the GMU 23 maps on land status 'geo-referenced'. Instructions for download are available (Attachment B).
4. Hunt Legal/ Hunt Smart reprint- reprint, available soon (Attachment C).
5. Meat salvage requirement rack card- Finished August 1, 2014 (Attachment D).
6. Caribou regulation and ID guide (Attachment E).
7. Hunter Education- Adding more classes and villages each year to the region.
  - Kiana May 2014
  - Kotzebue September 2014
  - Buckland- hunter education outreach (not full class) March 2015
  - Kobuk- hunter education outreach (not full class) April 2015
  - Kotzebue- Youth leaders group May 2015

Attachment A

Pilot Orientation Test

Total Number of Quiz Takers

-----  
345

Year                      NumberOfQuizTakers

-----  
2010                      137  
2011                      57  
2012                      50  
2013                      50  
2014                      45  
2015                      6

Number Of Alaskans

-----  
287

Number of Non-Alaskans

-----  
58

State    NumberOfQuizTakers

-----  
AK        287  
CA        8  
CO        7  
MT        5  
TX        4  
WA        4  
OR        4  
PA        3  
AZ        3  
MN        3  
MS        2  
FL        2  
SD        2  
WI        2  
ND        2  
MI        2  
NV        1  
TN        1  
ID        1  
IL        1  
IN        1

Alaskans By Town

-----  
Anchorage                      72  
Fairbanks                      36

kotzebue	28
Wasilla	24
North Pole	12
Palmer	11
Eagle River	10
chugiak	9
Nome	9
Soldotna	7
Willow	5
Big lake	5
Kodiak	5
Kenai	5
Kiana	4
Salcha	4
Galena	3
Juneau	2
Kasilof	2
nikiski	2
Ester	2
Delta Junction	2
Bettles	2
Tok	2
Trapper Creek	1
Valdez	1
Test	1
Bettles Field	1
abchorage	1
anc.	1
Anchor Point	1
anchorge	1
Auke Bay	1
Bethel	1
Dillingham	1
COPPER CENTER	1
delta jct	1
Eagleriver	1
Manley Hot Springs	1
ketchikak	1
ketchikan	1
kake	1
Farbanks	1
Fort Wainwright	1
Girdwood	1
Homer	1
huslia	1
JBER	1

Non-Alaskans By Town

Redding	3
Livermore	3
Walla Walla	2
West Melbourne	1
Williston	1
reno	1
ridgeland	1
Roanoke	1

SAN CLEMENTE	1
Sidney	1
Solvang	1
stevensville	1
Thompson Falls	1
Umatilla	1
Lock Haven	1
Los Gatos	1
Loveland	1
Lule&#xe5;	1
mansfield	1
Miles City	1
milton freewater	1
Minot	1
Molt	1
Monroe	1
Nome	1
Nutriosio	1
oregon city	1
palocedro	1
pilot rock	1
Pittsburgh	1
prescott valley	1
BRAINERD	1
Brookhaven	1
Bryan	1
Canon City	1
canton	1
Casa Grande	1
Chelan	1
Chicago	1
coldwater	1
College Station	1
COLORADO SPRINGS	1
Deephaven	1
Doylestown	1
Ely	1
Erie	1
Escondido	1
Fort Wayne	1
Hayden	1
Independence	1
Kaukauna	1
Lebanon	1
Lisbon	1

YearOfBirth	NumberOfQuizTakers
1968	20
1958	15
1964	15
1957	13
1960	12
1965	12
1961	11
1956	11
1973	11

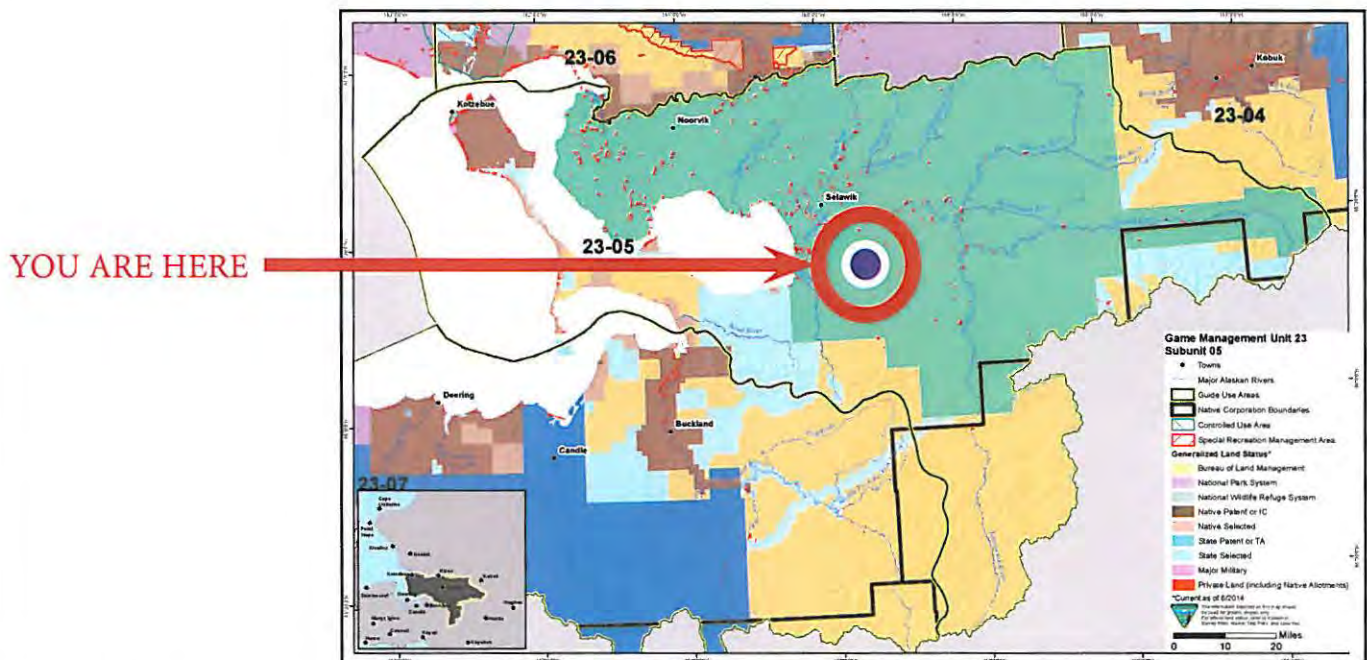


1974	10
1950	10
1953	10
1966	9
1959	9
1980	9
1982	9
1972	8
1969	8
1952	8
1962	8
1963	7
1955	7
1951	7
1971	7
1976	7
1975	6
1943	6
1967	6
1970	5
1944	5
1947	5
1978	5
1979	5
1983	4
1981	4
1948	4
1949	4
1954	4
1945	4
1987	3
1992	3
1977	3
1986	2
1988	2
1946	2
1939	2
1942	2
1927	1
1933	1
1935	1
1936	1
1989	1
1985	1

# Land ownership in GMU 23 can be confusing!

If you have a mobile device with GPS capabilities, we can help.

Simply follow the instructions below to download land status maps on your mobile device, your phone's GPS will let you know where you are, even if you are not on a wireless or cellular network.



## Instructions:

1. Download an interactive PDF Maps App.
2. Visit the ADF&G website on the same mobile device. Find maps under Unit 23 maps (land status) or under the pilot orientation (land status)  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=unit23pilot.lands>
3. Click on each of the 7 PDF maps one at a time. An option will appear "Open in PDF Maps", click on this.
4. Maps will automatically download in the App.
5. You **DO** need to be on a wireless network to download the maps. Once they are on your device, you do **NOT** need to be on a wireless network to use them.
6. Make sure each of the 7 maps have been added to the application.
7. Once in the field, open your App. and it will notify you which map you are on and will show your location as a blue dot (see example above).
8. Land status changes, be sure to download new maps as they are available.

Questions? Call ADF&G 907-442-3420



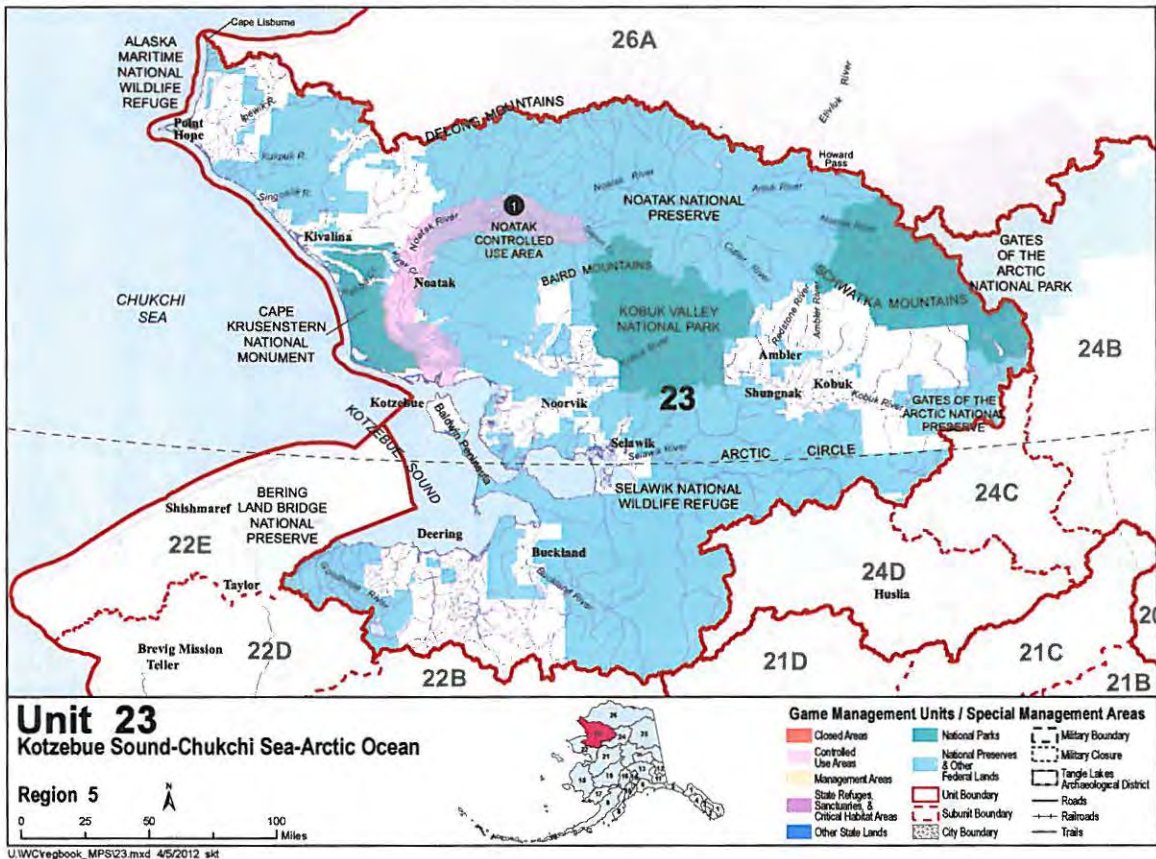


# Hunting Legal - Hunting Smart in GMU 23, Northwest Alaska

**A guide for hunters  
on what the law requires.**



Prepared by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, 3<sup>rd</sup> Revision 2015



**GMU 23** Lands within black line are **Game Management Unit 23**. This includes the Northwest Arctic Borough and Point Hope area.



**Alaska Department of Fish & Game**  
 PO Box 689, Kotzebue AK 99752  
 Tel (907) 442-3420  
**Toll-free within Alaska 1-800-478-3420**  
 Fax (907) 442-2420  
 www.adfg.alaska.gov

Photos: Courtesy of Jim Dau

March 2015

## Important notes to readers

*“Our elders and folks, they always told us not to get what we don’t need. We select what we need and not over shoot what we don’t need. You don’t kill them and leave them. You must get only what you need.”*

—A Selawik elder

Some people hunt for meat, some people hunt for trophy antlers, and some hunt for both, but the law about caring for the meat is the same for everyone. Native elders speak about the importance of selecting the right animal carefully, and then keeping and using everything you kill. This unwritten traditional ‘law’ is much like the western-style laws, and also applies equally to all hunters.

The information in this booklet comes largely from the nonlocal hunter orientation material for Game Management Unit (GMU) 23 (northwest Alaska) posted on the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game (ADF&G) website. The information was originally intended for hunters living outside of northwest Alaska who planned to hunt within GMU 23.

However, we also want to encourage residents of GMU 23 to review this booklet as it offers valuable information on the amount of meat the law requires people to salvage, and how to bring that meat home in the best condition possible.

**So please, read this booklet and hunt legal—hunt smart.**

All information in this booklet is also available at:

**<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=unit23.main>**

### **Planning for you and caribou**

The fall hunting season is a very busy time in GMU 23. It is a critical time for local subsistence hunters and their families to harvest meat. It is also a very popular time for non-local hunters to visit and hunt. The information in this booklet will help minimize conflicts during this busy season.

A cooperative planning process is underway to find ways to reduce conflicts, protect subsistence uses, and provide opportunities for other hunters. For more information on the planning process and its recommendations from the GMU 23 Working Group, go to:

**<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=plans.unit23>**

Or go to: **[www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)**

Under **Home > Management and Research**

Click on **Plans**

Under **Species Plans**

Scroll to **Caribou**

Click on **Game Management Unit 23**



# Begin with the basics

The ADF&G Wildlife Conservation website—[www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)—has a wealth of valuable information for hunters, whether it's your first hunt, or has been a lifelong activity. The **Hunting** page has links to pages that will help you have a more successful and enjoyable hunt, and that your actions and meat care are within the requirements of the law:

**Begin at  
[www.hunt.alaska.gov](http://www.hunt.alaska.gov)**

**Alaska Hunting & Trapping Information: [www.hunt.alaska.gov](http://www.hunt.alaska.gov)**

**Follow the links or go directly to:**

## **Big Game Hunting**

<http://www.hunt.alaska.gov>

## **The Hunt Alaska booklet**

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/home/library/pdfs/wildlife/booklets\\_books/hunt\\_alaska\\_2012.pdf](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/home/library/pdfs/wildlife/booklets_books/hunt_alaska_2012.pdf)

## **Meat Care**

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunting.meatcare>

## **Planning Your Hunt**

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunting.workbook>

## **Alaska Hunting Regulations**

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=regulations.main>

## **Low Impact Camping**

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunting.lowimpact>

## **Hunter Education**

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=huntered.main>

## **Pilot Orientation Test (required for pilots transporting parts of big game in GMU 23)**

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=quiz.overview&quiz\\_id=6](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=quiz.overview&quiz_id=6)

There are additional links to license purchase, game management unit maps, emergency orders, bear safety, and wildlife management reports.

## **Video on field care of big game**

**Field Care of Big Game instructional video:** If you have never field dressed a moose or any other large-bodied game animal you should purchase a copy of ADF&G's Field Care of Big Game instructional DVD. This DVD will show you a step-by-step method to field dress a moose, no matter how or where the animal has fallen. It comes paired with a second video, *Is This Moose Legal?* They are available together on the ADF&G website at [http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=multimedia.main\\_howto](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=multimedia.main_howto) or if you would prefer a DVD please call the Anchorage ADF&G wildlife information office at (907) 267-2137 or (907) 267-2344.



## Know the law about salvaging meat

It is *your* responsibility to know the big game hunting regulations. Review them online or request the printed booklet by contacting any Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game office. Following are some regulations with particular relevance to Unit 23.

1. Alaska Law requires that all moose and caribou meat be salvaged for human consumption. This includes the meat of the ribs, neck, brisket (chest), front quarters as far as the knee, hindquarters as far as the hock, and meat along the backbone between the front and hind quarters (backstrap).
2. In GMU 23 you are required to leave the meat on the ribs, front quarters and hindquarters of moose and caribou prior to October 1st, until it is brought out of the field, to help prevent spoilage. Meat may be de-boned once it has been transported to a state-maintained airport.
3. Antlers may not be removed from the kill site until all the meat has been packed out. Also antlers may not be flown back to town until all of the meat has been brought in.
4. You cannot hunt or help someone else take big game until 3:00 a.m. the day following the day you have flown. This does not apply if you have flown on a regularly scheduled commercial or commuter flight.

## Know the penalties for wasting meat

Failure to properly salvage all the required meat of a big game animal is charged as a class A misdemeanor offense. This carries a maximum fine of \$10,000 fine and/or a year in jail. For the most serious cases, a person may be charged with 'wanton waste'. This charge carries a mandatory minimum fine of \$2500, a mandatory minimum jail sentence of seven days, and a potential for the loss of hunting privileges for 5 years.

### **We can help you prevent wasted meat**

Most hunters try to salvage all of their meat because they want it for themselves and because they are law-abiding citizens. However, hunters who have never taken an animal as large as a moose or hunted in such a remote area will find some new challenges in caring for meat in the field, especially considering that there are no commercial facilities, such as a cooler, freezer or meat plant, in Kotzebue. As a result, there have been instances where Kotzebue residents have found large quantities of meat in the landfill, in dumpsters around town, discarded into the lagoon or sea, and hidden in bushes alongside roads. This has led to the local perception that many nonlocal hunters only want trophies and don't care about the meat.

To enjoy both a successful and legal hunt, please thoroughly review the web pages listed at the start of this booklet. The regulation booklet also includes a section on meat care. In addition, you will find the following tips especially useful for bringing game meat out of GMU 23 in good condition.

## **Good meat care begins before you leave home**

**It is always the hunter's responsibility to care for their game meat, and many of the items you will need will not be available in GMU 23 communities. You will need to plan ahead.**

### **Game Bags are a good idea**

Purchase these cloth or mesh-like bags in advance! They are popular and local stores may be out of supplies. Make sure you purchase *big game* bags. Plan on 4-5 bags for one bull caribou, and 5-10 bags for one bull moose. Pillow cases are an alternative but are not as breathable. Do not use plastic bags for your meat in the field. Bring large plastic bags only for preparing your meat for shipment.

### **Bring tape and shipping boxes**

You cannot count on the airlines or airfreight services to provide shipping materials for your meat and antlers. Your guide or transporter may have boxes for purchase, however it is important to check in advanced- as supplies may be limited or non-existent in GMU 23 stores. Airlines will NOT accept meat that might leak blood, and will require meat be wrapped in multiple plastic bags and boxed securely. If you are planning to ship meat out on a wooden pallet, you will need to provide a new tarp and have your meat bagged in plastic. The only time meat should be wrapped in plastic is when it is being shipped on an airline—never out in the field.

### **Plan ahead to ship meat and antlers**

Some airlines sell waterproof 'wetlock' boxes, but they may run out when demand is high. Coolers are also a good option for shipping meat. Alaska Airlines requires all antlers, regardless of size, to be shipped in an antler box. Check with your guide or transporter to clarify if they will provide them, or to see if they can store these items while you are out in the field. Plan ahead for how you will get your meat home and arrive in Kotzebue prepared.

### **Contact shipping agents in advance**

If you are planning to ship antlers out you will need to bring your own material and tape to protect antler tips. You also need to be sure that your trophy is fully cleaned of meat, blood and hair before shipping. It is very important to contact the air cargo carriers **in advance** of your trip for their advice on how to properly prepare.

## **Schedule time for meat preparation**

There are several different carriers who can ship your meat, so ask your guide or transporter for suggestions, or research air freight or air cargo carriers for the area where you plan to hunt. Regardless of which carrier you choose, call their local office as they know the on-the-ground situation the best.

Be sure to check on days and hours of operation for freight carriers before scheduling your personal flight home, as they may not be open on Sundays or evenings.

One of the biggest mistakes hunters make is to expect to fly home right after they get in from the field. You need to leave enough time to process and pack your meat for shipping—and this is not a small task. There are no local meat processing facilities. Knowing what the shipping agents require, and arriving before you begin your hunt with everything you need, will make it easier. It is against the law to discard your meat just because your scheduled flight is departing.

While you need to schedule enough time to prepare your meat for shipping, you also need to know there are not likely any freezers or refrigeration facilities for your meat should you want to stay longer to sightsee or fish for a few days. The alternative would be to pack and airfreight your meat out as soon as you arrive from the field.

## **Meat care in the field**

**The nature of your hunting trip changes dramatically once you shoot an animal. Good meat care is hard work, but it is the essence of hunting—and it's the law.**

### **Don't shoot it if you can't pack it all out.**

A small (3-yr old) bull moose will produce more than 500 lbs of meat, which is required to be left on the bone in GMU 23. For most adults in good shape that means at least five round trips between camp and the kill site to salvage all of the meat from a moose. Add another trip if you plan to salvage the antlers.

### **Think before you shoot.**

Before you shoot that moose in a pond remember that knee-deep water on a moose may be waist-deep water on a person. Many hunters will not shoot a moose standing in water because of the difficulties that can result. You are still required to salvage all of the meat regardless of the challenges of your kill site.

**Be wary of warm weather.**

Be mindful of temperatures. The Arctic is indeed experiencing warmer autumns. You need to be prepared to remove meat from the field, and process and preserve it as quickly as possible in order to prevent spoilage. In weather over 60°F some hunters actually place freshly caught meat in a creek, river or lake for 30–45 minutes to cool it. This is the only time your game meat should go into a plastic bag! If this is necessary, make sure the meat is thoroughly dry afterwards.

**Keep your meat cool, clean, dry and on the bone**

Keep it cool, keep it clean, keep it dry, keep it on the bone, and keep it in breathable cloth bags! Heat is the greatest threat to good meat. To cool the meat, remove the hide as quickly as possible, and get the meat away from the internal organs. Once back at camp hang your meat with a tarp suspended above it to keep it dry while it develops a hard crust. Then keep it clean by placing it in breathable cloth bags for transport. Stir the meat in your ‘hamburger bag’ regularly so that each individual piece forms a crust.

**A raft is not a refrigerator!**

Keep meat high and dry—and hang it at night. People mistakenly think that the water temperature will keep meat contained in a raft cool. Not true! When hunting with a raft or canoe rig a low rack to keep the meat off the floor of the boat. Put your meat in cloth game bags to keep it clean, and arrange it to allow for air circulation. Suspend a tarp over the meat to provide shade. And most importantly—remove all of the meat every night and hang it to let it cool and dry.

**Avoid feeding bears**

The longer you have your meat in the field, the greater the chance you will be visited by a bear intent on getting a meal. You cannot legally shoot a bear in defense of life and property that is feeding on your game unless it is threatening your *personal* safety.

**Avoid feeding birds**

Another threat to good meat comes from Gray Jays, dubbed ‘camp robbers’ for good reason. These small birds often find kills literally within minutes of the animal’s death. They can strip a large amount of fat and meat from a carcass in just hours and, while doing so, often defecate on the meat. Similarly, ravens can also quickly strip the fat from meat left at a kill site. Keep your meat covered with a breathable cloth, or bagged in breathable cloth game bags.

**Avoid feeding insects**

Although much of GMU 23 is above the Arctic Circle, flies and other insects can be active well into September. Flies lay their eggs on fresh meat, especially where it has been cut and is bloody. Inspect your meat and remove these eggs daily. Keeping your meat in a cloth game bag provides protection from insects, as does letting the meat develop a hard crust.



## **Avoid Bacterial Growth**

Spraying your meat with a citric acid mixture can help slow bacterial growth, and can also help form a dark outer crust on the meat. Food-grade citric acid can be purchased at most pharmacies or feed stores, although it may not be available in local stores. Mix two ounces of citric acid to one quart of water, and spray the meat until the mixture runs off. The mixture should dry quickly and will help prevent bacterial growth.

## **Plan ahead carefully**

Plan carefully with your pilot-transporter—a delayed pick-up is not an excuse for letting meat spoil.

Bad weather can cause delays in getting picked up at camp, but caring for your meat and getting it back to Kotzebue in good condition is still your responsibility. Some hunters who plan to be in the field more than four or five days arrange to have their pilot check on them part way through their hunt. If you have already taken an animal it would be advisable for you to fly out with the meat, package it and ship it out as quickly as possible. Meat sent to Kotzebue and left unattended is subject to dust, dogs, flies and warm temperatures—and is still your legal responsibility.

## **Protect yourself**

If you turn your game meat over to someone else to handle, you are required to complete a 'transfer of possession form' (discussed on the next page) to protect yourself against legal liability. When selecting a guide or transporter, consider asking if they provide freezer or refrigeration space for your meat in Kotzebue as there are no commercial freezers, coolers or meat processing facilities there.

## **Donating meat locally**

**Please be aware that not everyone welcomes the offer of meat—even if it has been well cared for and is in good condition—as the practice of hunting for antlers is not always viewed favorably by locals. Should you be unable to donate your meat you are still legally responsible for keeping it from spoiling, and should be prepared to take it home with you.**

## **Consider keeping the meat for yourself!**

There is no finer meat than wild-grown organic Alaska game meat! When compared with the cost of shipping your trophy—as well as the cost of high quality meat in the store—the price for getting your own game shipped home is quite reasonable. Besides, the satisfaction and pride that comes from being personally responsible for the meat you put on your own table? Priceless!

## **Make local contacts in advance**

If you are passing through a village consider making arrangements in advance for donating meat locally before you go out to camp. It is an opportunity to build positive personal relationships.



## **Don't give—or accept— bad meat**

Don't give questionable meat away. Nobody wants it—and it's against the law. If you give away—or **accept**—spoiled meat you may both be cited for waste.

## **Who to contact for meat donations**

The Wildlife Trooper maintains a list of individuals and organizations who want to receive or donate meat in good condition. Any unclaimed meat remains the hunter's responsibility. Your guide or transporter may also have a means of getting your meat donated, but you must still complete the 'Transfer of Possession' form (discussed below) when you transfer your meat to your guide, transporter or local recipient. This protects you should your meat spoil after it has left your possession.

## **Who to contact in the villages**

In the smaller villages you could try asking at the tribal or city office, village store or the post office for suggestions on who to contact. Again, everyone may not respond positively to the offer of meat. You must still complete the meat transfer form.

## **Meat transfer forms must be completed**

Hunters are required to complete a simple form whenever they donate or transfer their game meat to someone else. This also applies if you are giving your meat to someone else, like a guide or air taxi service, to transport for you—even if you intend to reclaim the meat. Law enforcement agents may ask you to produce this form to prove that you have legally transferred your meat and not wasted it. This protects you!

For your convenience the form is printed in duplicate on the inside of the back page of the regulations booklet, and is available at any ADF&G office or online at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/wildliferegulations/pdfs/transfer.pdf> One copy is for the hunter to keep and one copy is for the recipient of the meat to keep. **If you don't have this form you can write out your own statement—and make a duplicate for the recipient. Include:**

- your name, address and phone number
- your hunting license number
- the species of animal
- the specific parts transferred
- the date and location of kill
- the recipients name, address and phone number
- the recipient's signature—*very important!*
- a statement if the transfer is permanent or if the meat will be returned to you.

Keep one copy and the recipient is to keep the duplicate copy. This demonstrates that you have properly transferred ownership and responsibility of the meat. Protect yourself!

## **Meat cannot be sold**

Remember—wild game meat cannot be legally sold!

## **What if you can't help it and your meat spoils?**

If you return from the field with questionable or spoiled meat, contact the State Troopers to determine how to proceed, call toll-free, 1-800-789-3222.

## **Please respect your neighbors**

While the wilderness of northwestern Alaska may feel vast and empty, it has been the homeland of the local Inupiaq Eskimos for thousands of years. Each bluff, ridgeline, mountain, and bend in the river likely carries an ancient name and has seen thousands of years of seasonal use. Some of these lands are now privately owned by individuals, or local and regional Native corporations—and they have the right to control the use of these lands. Please respect the rights of private landowners and don't trespass on private lands or subsistence camps, even if they do not appear to be in use.

## **Be informed about land ownership boundaries**

Land ownership in GMU 23 is a mix of private, Native corporation, state and federal ownership. Some public-use lands are open only to subsistence hunting by local residents, while others are open to all hunters.

You can follow this link and instructions to download GPS interactive land status maps for GMU 23 to your mobile device <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=unit23pilot.lands>

You can also contact the ADF&G office (907) 442-3420, NANA Regional Corporation (907) 442-3301; the Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation (KIC) (907) 442-3165; the Northwest Arctic Borough (907) 442-2500, the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge at (907) 442-3799 or 800-492-8848 or Western Arctic National Parklands office (907) 442-3809 in Kotzebue and they all have information on land ownership and are happy to assist you. In Fairbanks you can reach the Bureau of Land Management at (907) 474-2200 or 800-437-7021, and Alaska Department of Natural Resources at (907) 451-2705.

## **The fall subsistence harvest is critical**

Autumn is a critical time for local subsistence hunters and their families to harvest meat. They hunt using boats along major rivers and tributaries. In contrast, most visiting hunters charter airplanes to access hunting sites. Ask your pilot-transporter not to locate you near areas used by subsistence hunters, and to avoid flying low over all hunting camps.



## **Maintaining traditional caribou migration patterns is critical**

Also be aware there is growing concern by local people that the increasing frequency of small planes passing overhead, and the increasing number of hunter camps may be altering the traditional migration patterns of the caribou. The location of villages and subsistence campsites have been chosen based on these historic routes and people fear that any unnatural influences on the herd's routes may affect local hunters' ability to harvest their yearly meat. Once again, asking your pilot-transporter or guide to place you away from other hunters and local subsistence camps will help ease tensions.

## **The value of traditional knowledge**

**Traditional hunting practices have evolved over time to allow for the harvest of caribou without displacing their historic migration routes. Respecting these local practices makes good sense—and is good for hunter relations.**

### **Avoid disturbing the migration**

If hunting along rivers crossed by migrating caribou, camp and hunt on the opposite side from which the caribou enter the water. This helps prevent disruption of their normal movements, and keeps you from deflecting animals away from other hunters.

### **Meat Quality**

The best trophy bulls don't always produce the best—or even edible—meat, but all hunters are still required to salvage all of the meat regardless of its quality.

#### **Caribou**

**Caribou:** As caribou bulls go into rut hormonal changes give their meat a strong odor and flavor. This occurs in early October. At that time subsistence hunters shift from taking bulls, especially large bulls, to cows or small bulls. It would be considered offensive and disrespectful to offer local people meat from a rutty bull caribou.

Caribou numbers in northwest Alaska have substantially declined since 2003 and caribou hunting regulations, for resident and nonresident hunters, were recently changed. Consult the regulation book for current caribou hunting regulations.

#### **Moose**

**Moose:** Although the rut does not affect the flavor or odor of meat from bull moose, large bulls almost stop eating at this time and quickly utilize their fat reserves. At the same time, fighting and antler thrashing makes their meat tough. Additionally, moose dig rutting pits in which they urinate and wallow, and their hair becomes saturated with urine. It is difficult to avoid transferring the urine on the hair to the meat while butchering a rutty bull. For these reasons most Inupiaq hunters do not harvest bull moose during the rut, and as with bull caribou, it would be considered offensive and disrespectful to offer local people meat from a rutty bull moose.

### **Consider sharing bear fat and meat**

Meat and fat from both brown and black bears is prized by some residents of the inland villages within GMU 23. The law requires that only the hide and skull be salvaged from brown bears taken under general season or drawing hunts, although you must salvage the meat if hunting under the brown bear subsistence registration hunt RB700. From June 1 through Dec. 31, either the hide or the meat of black bears must be salvaged and removed from the field. However, there are local residents who consider it disrespectful and wasteful to leave bear meat in the field.

### **Who to contact**

If you think you might take a bear during your hunt but will not want the meat, consider inquiring locally before going out to camp to see if anyone would like to receive bear meat should you happen to take one. It would be an appreciated gesture. In the smaller villages check at the city Office, village store or the post office for suggestions on who to contact.

### **And don't forget...**

Nonresidents must have a guide to hunt brown/grizzly bears in Alaska.

## **Making room for solitude—and other hunters**

**Most hunters who come to northwest Alaska are seeking the remoteness of a wilderness hunt. They generally fall into one of two categories: guided hunters and 'drop-off' hunters.**

### **Guided hunts**

Hunters who employ a guide pay a premium price for personal and experienced guidance on where and how to hunt, and how to care for their meat and trophy. Long-time guides typically have established areas that they place their hunters in.

### **Drop-off hunts**

'Drop off' hunters have arranged and paid only for transportation and possible gear rental, and have the option of requesting where they would like to be dropped off. Please be aware that as more air and boat transporters have entered the drop-off market in GMU 23, long-established guides are feeling the impact of increasing numbers of hunters. Although drop-off hunters have just as much right to use an area as guides and their clients, the success and quality of everyone's wilderness hunt will be improved if you urge your pilot-transporter to locate you far from all other hunters. Five miles is the recommended separation between camps.

### **Meat care is always the hunter's responsibility**

It is also important to remember that regardless of the meat care a guide or transporter advertises or offers, the legal responsibility for meat care is always the hunter's—at least until a transfer of possession form is completed and signed by the recipient (discussed in earlier section.)

## Practice 'low impact' camping

GMU 23 has public lands under federal and state management which provide opportunities for anyone to hunt, camp, fish and recreate—but you are still expected to do so legally and respectfully. You are neither the first nor the last hunter to come to northwest Alaska for a remote wilderness hunt. There are established camps used year after year by local families, but all temporary camps should be left as if no one had ever been there before—even if it means cleaning up someone else's mess. So please...

Leave a clean camp.

Remove all garbage.

Burn toilet paper.

Don't leave 'extra' plastic tarps in the field. They are shredded by animals and wind, and their residue clings to bushes for years.

Don't collect old antlers at your camp and then leave the sawed-up residue behind.

Dismantle fire rings, field tables and all site modifications.

Try to 'leave no trace' of your campsite. Thank you!

## One last reminder...

**It is always the hunter's responsibility to know and follow what the law requires. Be informed. Hunt safe—Hunt smart—Hunt legal.**

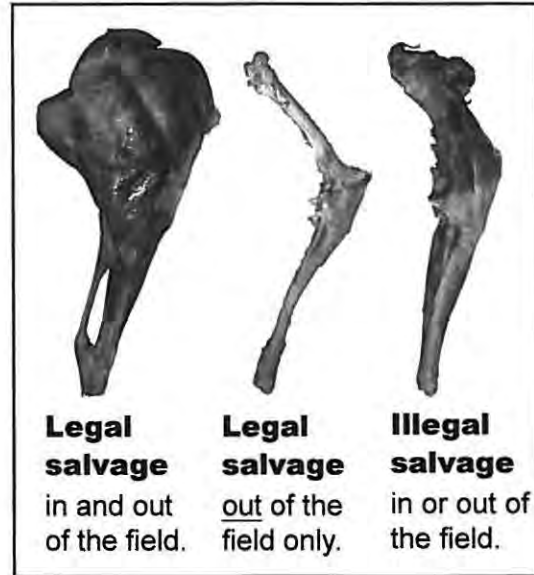




# Do you know how much meat the law requires you to take in GMU 23?

**If you shoot a moose, caribou, sheep or muskox you must salvage:**

- all of the neck meat
- all of the chest meat (brisket)
- all of the meat of the ribs
- the front quarters to the knee
- the hindquarters to the hock
- all of the meat along the backbone (backstrap) between the front and hindquarters

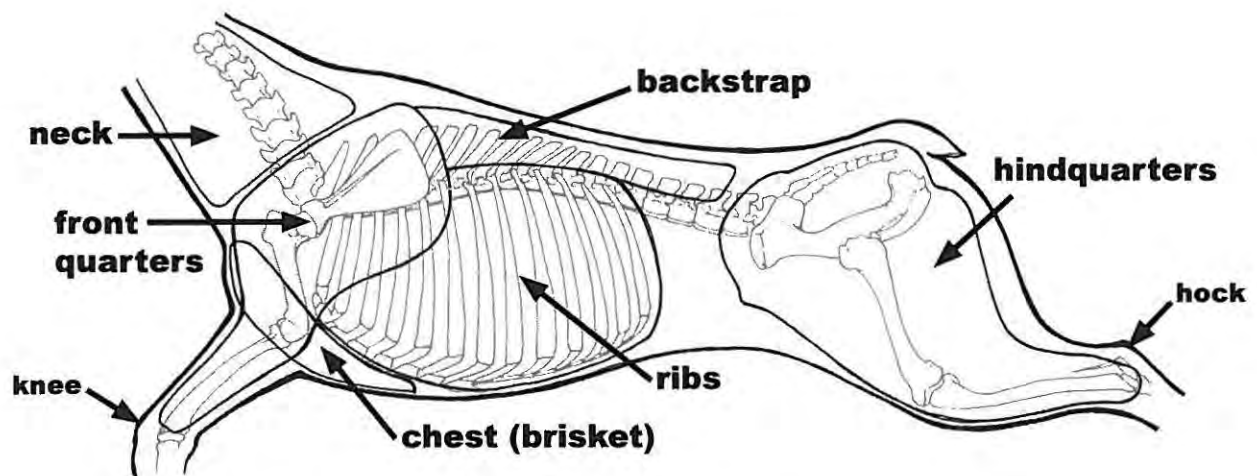


## Before Oct 1st in GMU 23:

The meat of the front quarters, hindquarters, and ribs, of moose and caribou must be left naturally attached to the bone until brought out of the field.

**All meat must be suitable for human consumption.**

**To report violations please call the Alaska State Troopers: Kotzebue 442-3222 or toll free 1-800-478-3377**



**Hunt safe – Hunt smart – Hunt legal**

# Attention Hunters!

Proper salvage and meat care are the most important parts of hunting.

## Keep Meat Cool, Clean, and Dry

Heat is the greatest threat to game meat. Keep your meat cool, clean, and dry to prevent bacterial growth. Game bags keep meat cool and clean while allowing the meat to dry and preventing flies from laying eggs in meat. In many GMUs, meat must also be left on the bone when transported out of the field.



## Take Full Responsibility for Meat Care

It is your responsibility to keep your meat in good condition. Work carefully with your guide or transporter to make a plan for transporting meat before hunting.

## Plan before you Hunt

Most rural areas do not have meat processing facilities. If you wish to send meat home, you will need to make arrangements for packaging containers or coolers and have a shipping plan in place. Most air carriers in Alaska have specific instructions regarding shipping meat on their website.

## Use or Consider Donating your Meat



Some communities are interested in receiving donated meat, however meat must be kept in the best possible condition. For information on how to donate meat, contact your guide, transporter, or the state wildlife trooper in the area. Be sure to fill out the transfer of possession form, which can be found in the back of the hunting regulations or on the ADF&G website.



Search "meat care" on our website:  
[www.wildlife.alaska.gov](http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov)

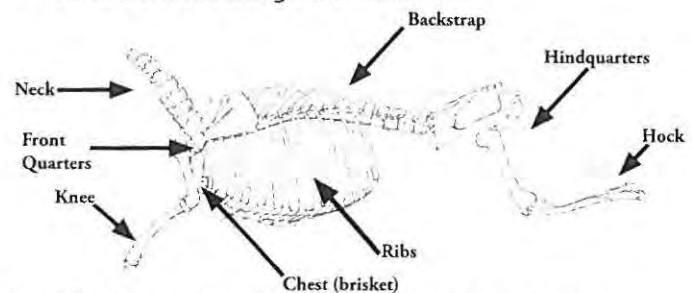
# Meat Salvage Requirements

Salvage of meat means to transport the edible meat to the location where it will be processed for human consumption. Successful hunters must validate the harvest ticket or permit immediately upon taking game. Once the harvest is validated, meat salvage can begin. Edible meat in all cases must be salvaged. Specific requirements vary by hunt area, so be sure to check the current Alaska Hunting Regulations for specifics in each hunt area.

## Know Salvage Requirements

It's not just four quarters...If you shoot a moose, caribou, sheep, mountain goat, wild reindeer, deer, elk, bison, or muskox, you must salvage:

- All of the neck meat
- All of the chest meat (brisket)
- All of the meat of the ribs
- Front quarters to the knee
- Hindquarters to the hock
- All of the meat along the backbone



## Learn about meat care before you hunt

In many Game Management Units (GMUs) statewide, meat must remain on the bone until out of the field prior to October 1st. Specific requirements for each hunt area and how-to meat care instructions are available on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) website and in the hunting regulations booklet. Information on the website also includes step-by-step field care and video instruction.



## Salvage Meat First!

Alaska Hunting Regulations state that the horn or antlers may be taken out of the field only after the meat is packed out and properly cared for.



# New Caribou Regulations and Identification Tips



Western Arctic and Teshekpuk caribou herds have new hunting regulations. Whether you choose to harvest a bull or cow caribou for your own personal reasons, or the regulations, knowing how to determine the sex of a caribou is critical. Male and female caribou, as well as calves have antlers and there is significant overlap in the characteristics of young bulls and adult cows. It is impossible to consistently tell young bulls from cows by looking only at their antlers.

## State Regulations Effective July 1st, 2015- June 30, 2016

### GMU 23 Northwest

- Residents- 5 caribou per day with no harvest of calves
- o Bulls are open from July 1 - Oct. 14 & Feb. 1 - June 30
  - o Cows are open from July 15 - Apr. 30

- Nonresidents- 1 bull with no harvest of calves
- o Bulls are open from Aug. 1 - Sept. 30

### GMU 23 Remainder

- Residents- 5 caribou per day with no harvest of calves
- o Bulls are open from July 1 - Oct. 14 & Feb. 1 - June 30
  - o Cows are open from Sept. 1 - Mar. 31

- Nonresidents- 1 bull with no harvest of calves
- o Bulls are open from Aug. 1 - Sept. 30

\*It is your responsibility to read the regulations and understand the hunt areas and requirements. Regulations are available at ADF&G offices or online at [www.hunt.alaska.gov](http://www.hunt.alaska.gov)

## Bull and Cow Caribou Have Antlers! Used alone, antlers are not a reliable clue.

### Bulls



- Bull caribou have antlers from May through part of the winter. The oldest bulls drop antlers first, as early as November, while young bulls (yearlings and 2-year-olds) may not drop their antlers until April.

- For bulls, the presence of a penis sheath, or a forward direction of urination should be used for positive identification.

- Bulls have large antlers relative to body size.

- Young bulls typically have smaller antlers with relatively small brow tines/shovels, and often cannot be distinguished from cows by the antlers alone.

- Young bulls (1-3 yrs) the sex organs are less apparent.

### Cows



- Most cow caribou have antlers from June through April of the following year.

- For cows, the presence of a vulva patch and rearward direction of urination should be used for positive identification.

- Cows have small antlers relative to body size.

- The vaginal opening is apparent when carefully viewed from the rear. The white rump patch is wider on cows than bulls.

- The antlers of cows are smaller than those of most bulls

- Many yearling bulls and a small percentage of 2-year-old bulls can look like cows.



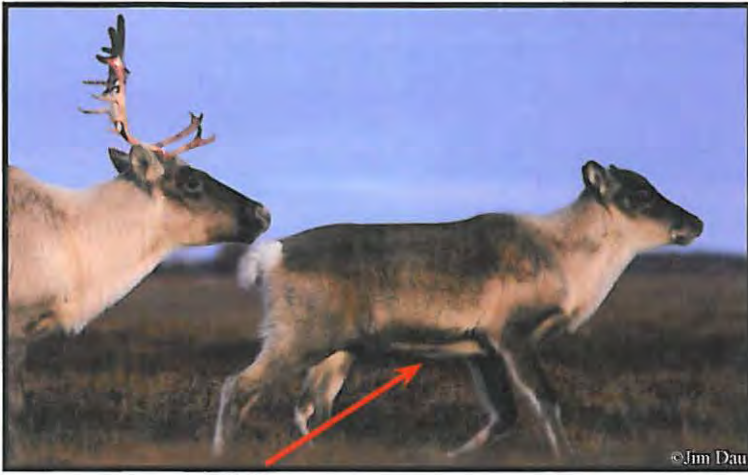
Testicles



Vulva patch



# Caribou Gender Identification Tips for Legal Harvest



**Calf**

Don't shoot! Harvesting calves is illegal. Any caribou under 1 year of age is a calf. They are small in body, have no antlers or small spike antlers and may or may not be accompanied by a cow.



**Calf Cow Bull**

Remember it is illegal to shoot calves. On the cow in the center you can see the vulva patch. The young bull could be confused with a cow. Be sure to get a better view to determine sex prior to shooting.



**Bull Bull**

Two antlerless mature bulls. You can just see the penis sheath in each of these photos.



**Bull Cow Bull Cow**

There is no reliable way to distinguish young male from female caribou just by their antlers. Pregnant cows can retain antlers until after calving in early June. You must look at the sex organs or see caribou urinate to tell for certain.



**? Cow**

Likely a bull, but wait for better view to accurately determine sex before shooting.

Cow. Sometimes the vulva patch is not as dark as you would expect.



**? Cow & Calf**

Likely a cow, but wait for better view of vulva (under tail) to accurately determine sex before shooting.

Cow has dark vulva patch. Also notice the calf behind the cow! Don't shoot!

**Not sure? Don't shoot until you can make a positive identification.**





# SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

## U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

GMU 23 WORKING GROUP  
MAY 14-15, 2015





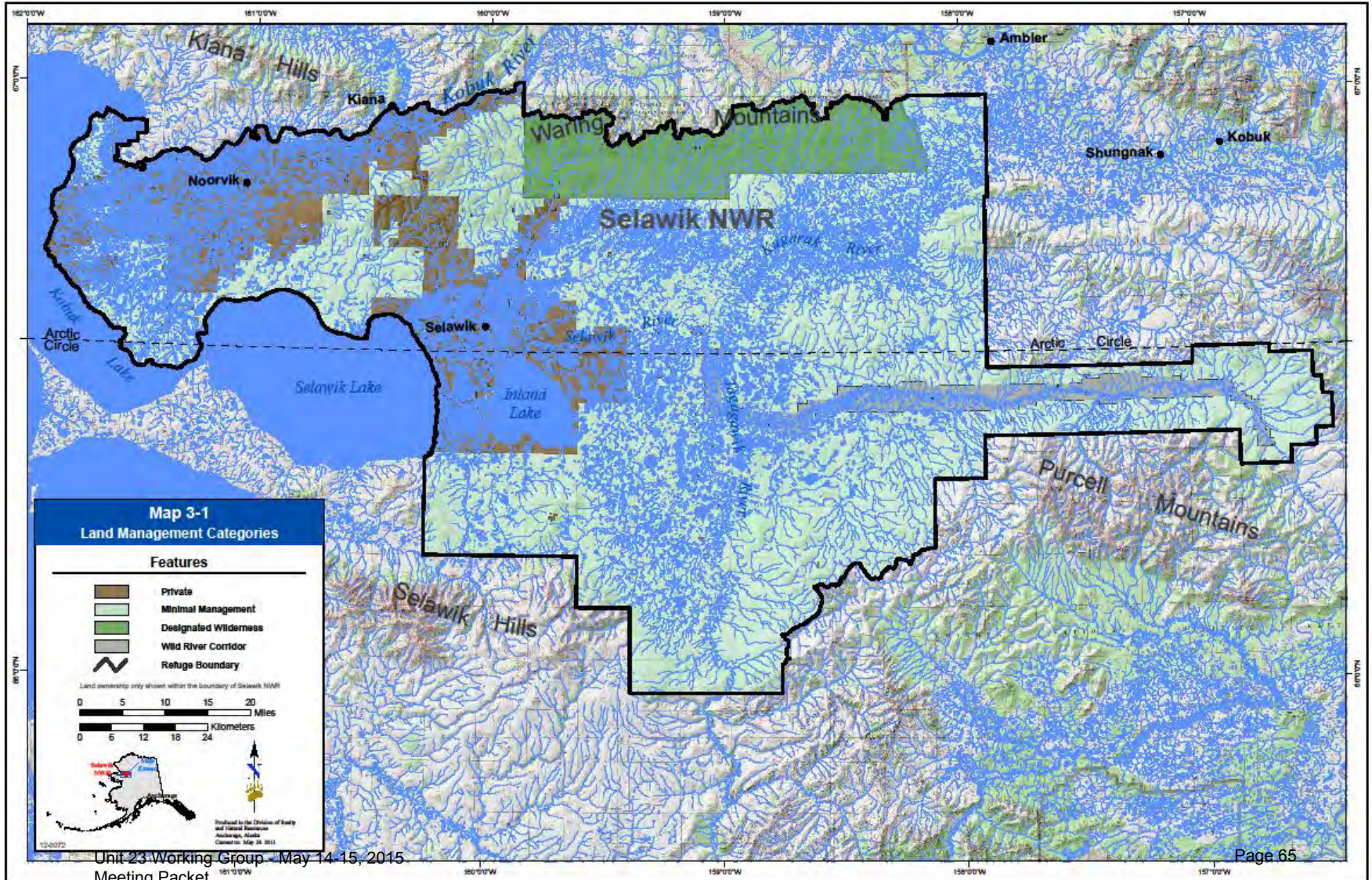
# OUR STAFF



- Susan Georgette, *Refuge Manager*
- David Zabriskie, *Deputy Manager*
- Brittany Sweeney, *Outreach Specialist*
- Bill Carter, *Fish Biologist*
- Chester Ballot, *Administrative Officer*
- Nichole Hanshaw, *Refuge Technician (Selawik)*
- Shawn Nelson, *Maintenance*
- Frank Berry, Jr., *Maintenance (Selawik)*



# Map of Selawik National Wildlife Refuge





# PERMITTED GUIDES AND TRANSPORTERS, 2015

## SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

- **1 Guide:**

- Joe Schuster



- **4 Transporters:**

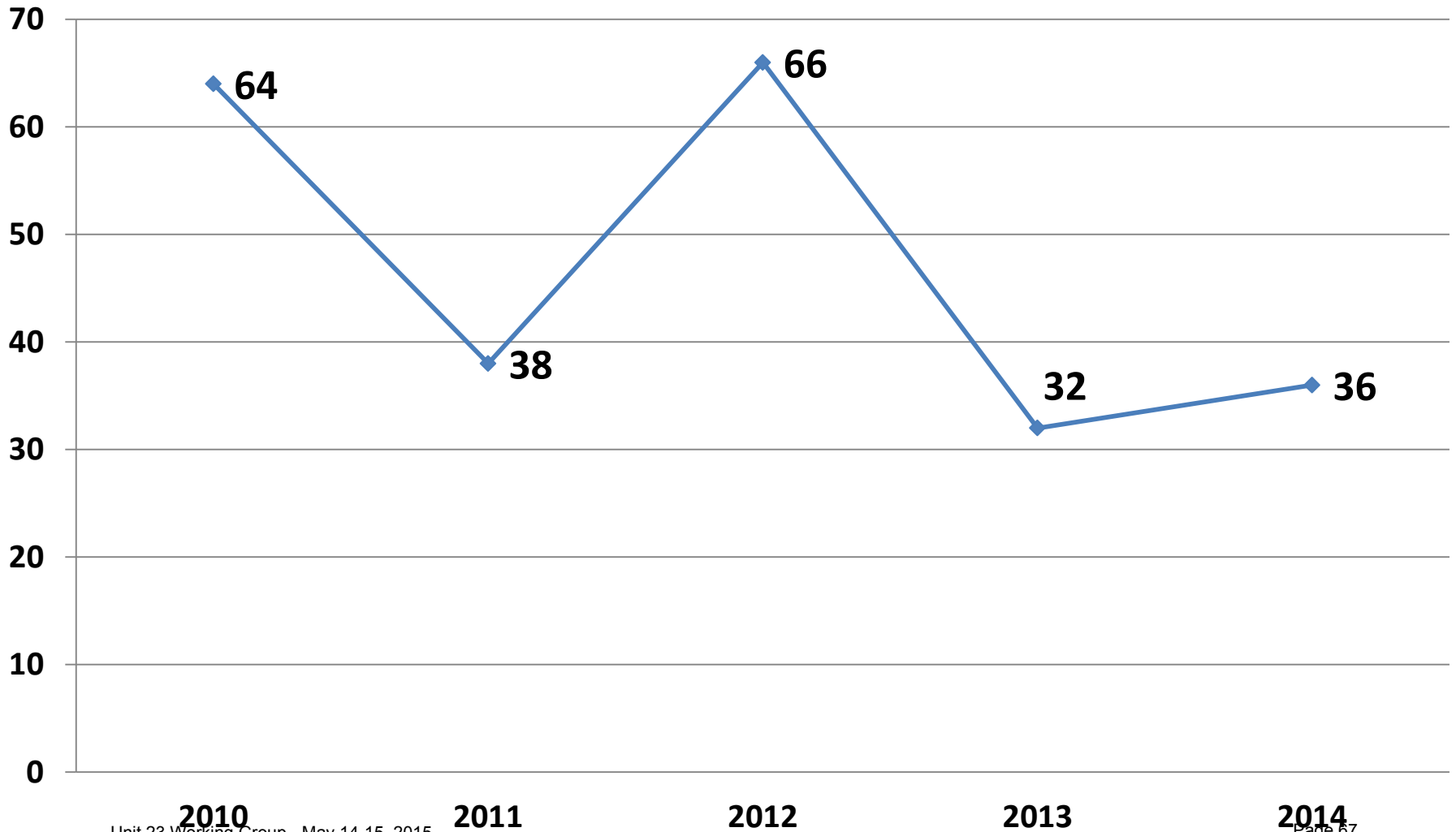
- Arctic Backcountry Flying Service

- Golden Eagle Outfitters

- Northwestern Aviation

- Air Juneau

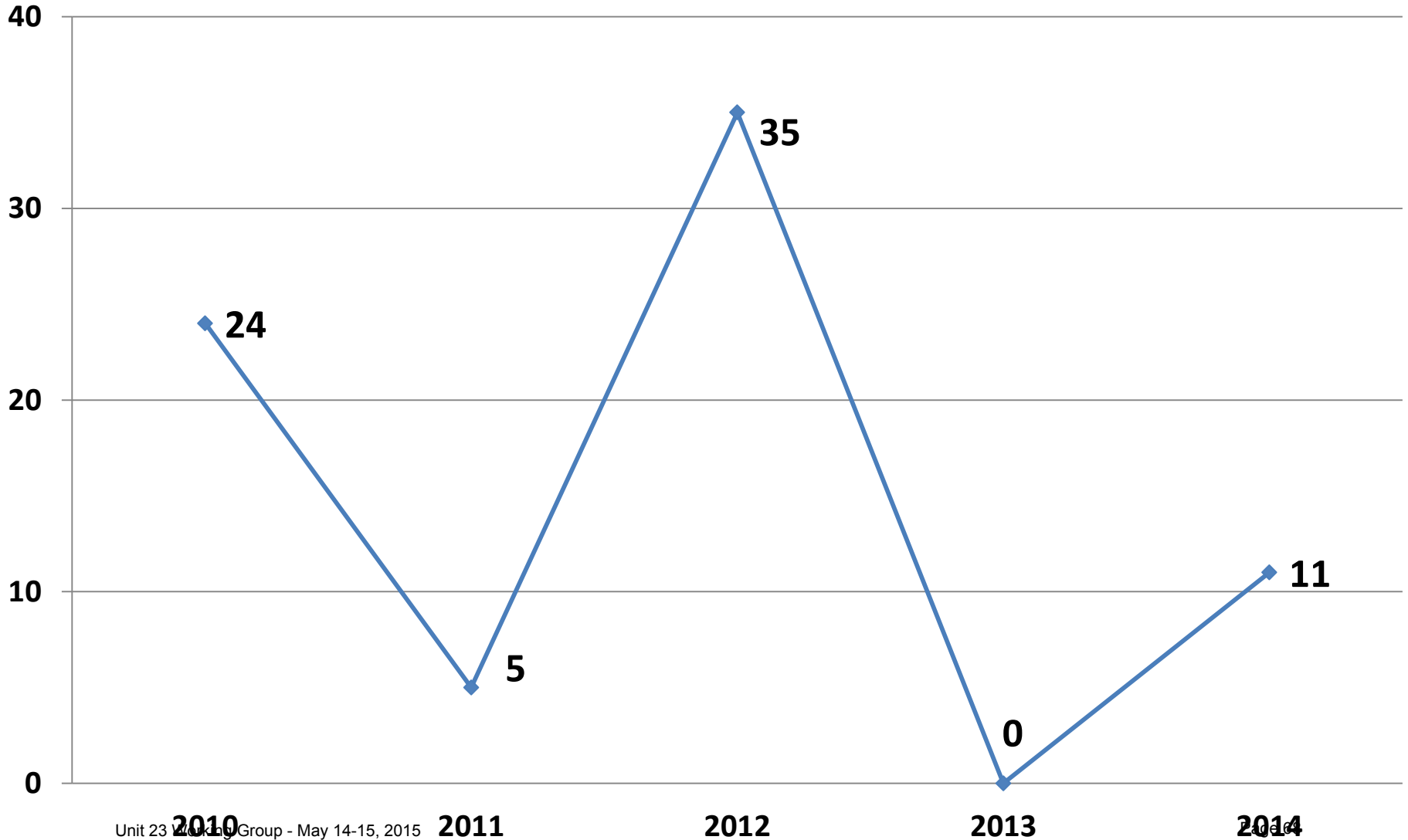
# NUMBER OF GUIDED AND TRANSPORTED HUNTERS 2010-2014 SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE





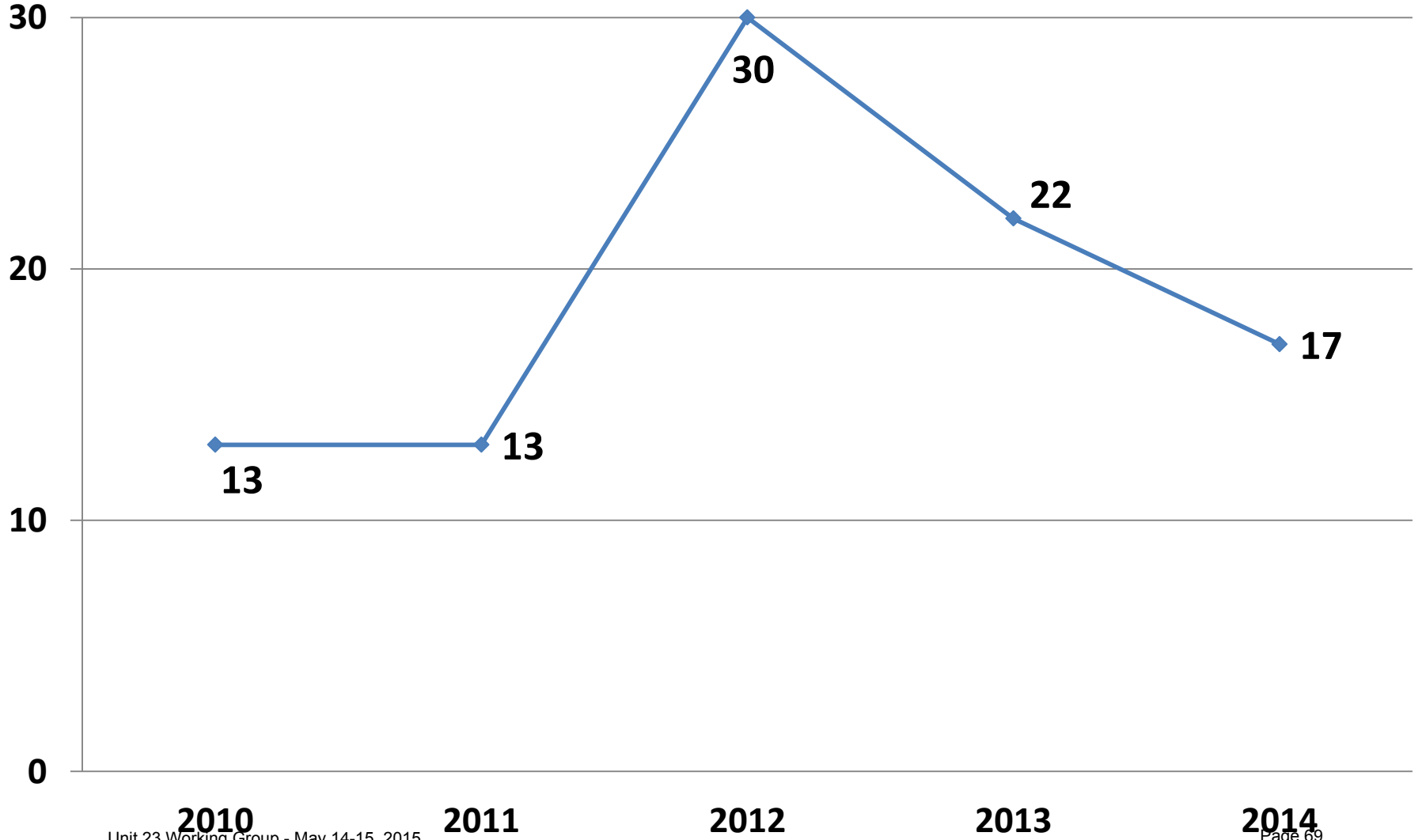
# NUMBER OF CARIBOU HARVESTED BY GUIDED/TRANSPORTED HUNTERS 2010-2014

## SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



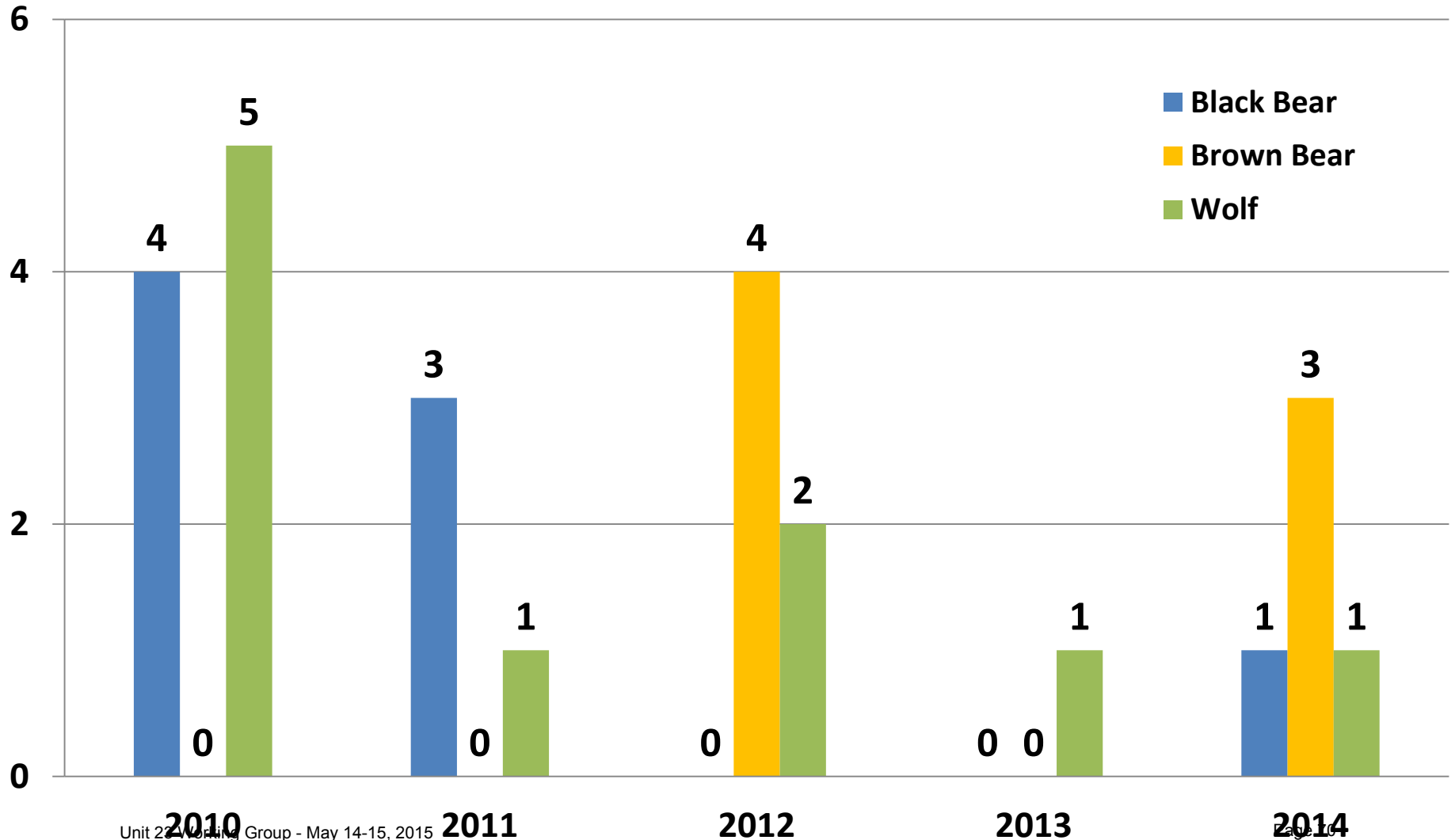
**NUMBER OF MOOSE HARVESTED BY GUIDED/TRANSPORTED HUNTERS  
2010-2014**

**SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

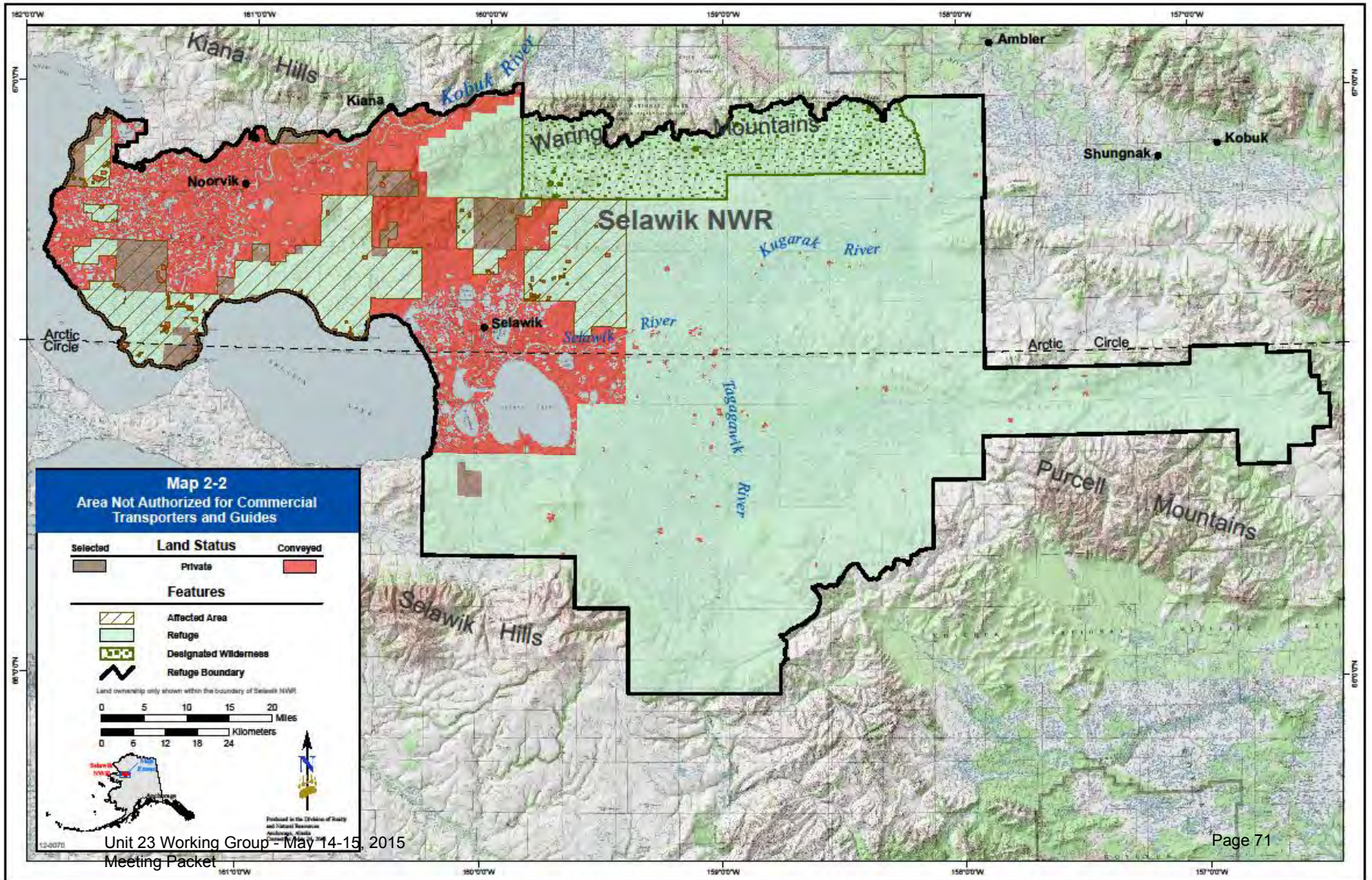


# NUMBER OF BEARS AND WOLVES HARVESTED BY GUIDED/TRANSPORTED HUNTERS 2010-2014

## SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



# AREA NOT AUTHORIZED FOR COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTERS AND GUIDES





# LOCATIONS OF GUIDED AND TRANSPORTED HUNTERS SELAWIK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, 2014





# THANK YOU!

Susan Georgette

(907) 442-3799

[susan\\_georgette@fws.gov](mailto:susan_georgette@fws.gov)



## **Bureau of Land Management Anchorage Field Office**

### **GMU Unit 23 Working Group Report**

#### 1) Change in BLM District Boundaries

On January 9, 2015, the BLM Deputy Director of Operations in Washington D.C. Steven Ellis approved a change in the District Boundaries of the Anchorage Field Office and the Fairbanks District office. Nearly all of GMU 23 is now in the Anchorage Field Office. This year of 2015 will be a transition year for the Anchorage Field Office. We will be taking over all permitting and authorization functions formerly done by the Fairbanks District Office. Contacts for the Anchorage Field Office are:

Bureau of Land Management  
Anchorage Field Office  
4700 BLM Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507  
Phone 907-267-1246

Alan Bittner, Field Manager 907-267-1285 (the Authorized Officer for Field Office)  
Doug Ballou, Resource Branch Manager 907-267-1206  
Thomas Sparks, BLM Nome Field Station 907-443-2177

#### 2) Kotzebue Field Station

Currently the position in Kotzebue is vacant. At this time the Anchorage Field Office is evaluating the need of this remote station considering work load and budget constraints. We have an informal agreement with the NPS concerning use of the BLM bunkhouse and BLM will keep the BLM Office operational in 2015 but hours and staffing levels are unknown at this time. Residents of Kotzebue may contact the Nome Field Station for questions on land status, BLM authorizations and activities or the Anchorage Field Office.

#### 3) Special Recreation Permits (Commercial Guides and Transporters)

In 2014, the Fairbanks District authorized 10 Guides in Unit 23 and 4 transporters. The Anchorage Field Office will reauthorize any of the 10 Guides currently permitted in 2015 unless violations of permit conditions exist or where permits have been terminated/or withdrawn by the applicants. Below is a list of Special Recreation Permits Authorized by BLM:

- 1) Arctic Rivers Guide Service/James Jacobson
- 2) Kobuk Guiding & Outfitting/Wayne Taylor
- 3) Caribou Unlimited/Ron Aldridge
- 4) Northern Air Trophy/Matt Owen
- 5) Brush Creek Outfitters/Preston Kelly

- 6) Bob Eubank Guide Service/Bob Eubank
- 7) Alaska Wilderness Charters and Guiding/Brad Saalsaa
- 8) Arctic Alaska Safaris/John Walker
- 9) Peace of Selby/Art Mortvedt
- 10) Sportsman's Guide & Air Service/Joe Schuster

No new Guide applications will be processed in the Squirrel River even if any of the above applicant's permits are not renewed. For the Anchorage Field office rationale see discussion on Squirrel River Special Recreation Management Plan below.

The 4 transporters will be reauthorized in 2015, again unless violations of permit conditions exist or where permits have been terminated /or withdrawn by applicants. BLM Anchorage Field office will cap the transporters to four until the Squirrel River Plan is completed. Below is a list of transporters in 2014:

- 1) Golden Eagle Outfitter - Jared Cummings
- 2) Northwestern Aviation - James Kinkade,
- 3) Trans Mountain Aviation - Matt Owen, and
- 4) Air Juneau - Sheila Spisak

Guides seeking permits outside of the Squirrel River area will be accepted and processed by BLM.

#### 4) Squirrel River Special Recreation Management Plan

The BLM Central Yukon Field office was tasked with completing the Squirrel River Special Recreation Management Plan. The Plan has not been completed to date. The Anchorage Field Office will gather information from the Central Yukon Field Office and work towards completion of the plan. Until completion, the Anchorage Field Office will not process any new Guides in the Squirrel River even if an existing guide loses his/her permit. We will also cap the transporter level to 4, the level in 2014. Once a plan is completed, it will address the allocation of Special Recreation Permits in the Squirrel River Special Recreation Management Area.

I would be happy to answer any questions at this time and I appreciate the opportunity to provide a brief summary of what I believe are important issues facing the GMU Unit 23 Working Group and residents of the region.



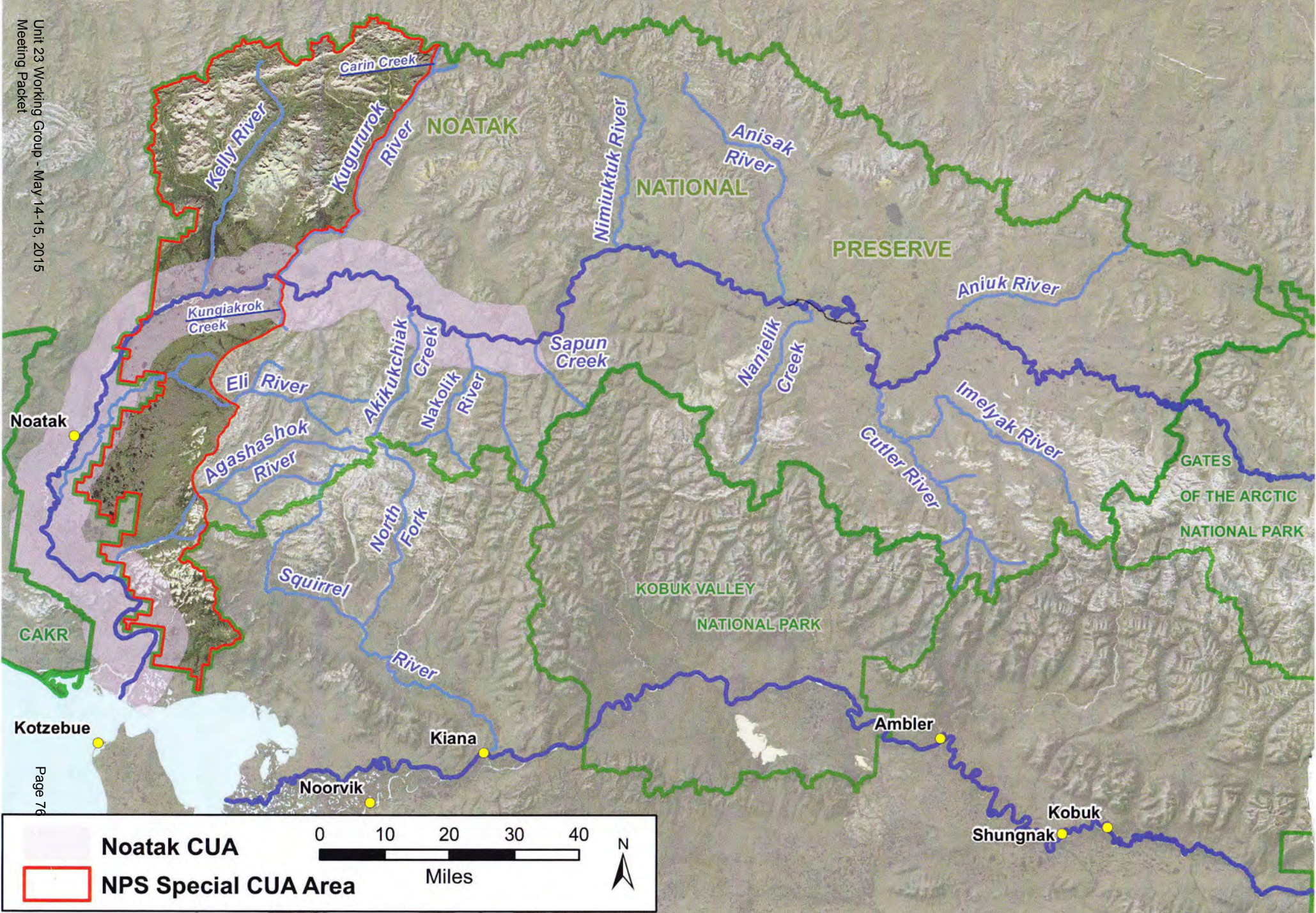
# Noatak National Preserve

Special Commercial Use Authorization Area

Alaska Region  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Unit 23 Working Group - May 14-15, 2015  
Meeting Packet



Noatak

Kotzebue

Noorvik

Kiana

Ambler

Shungnak

Kobuk

CAKR

NOATAK

NATIONAL

PRESERVE

GATES  
OF THE ARCTIC  
NATIONAL PARK

KOBUK VALLEY  
NATIONAL PARK

Noatak CUA

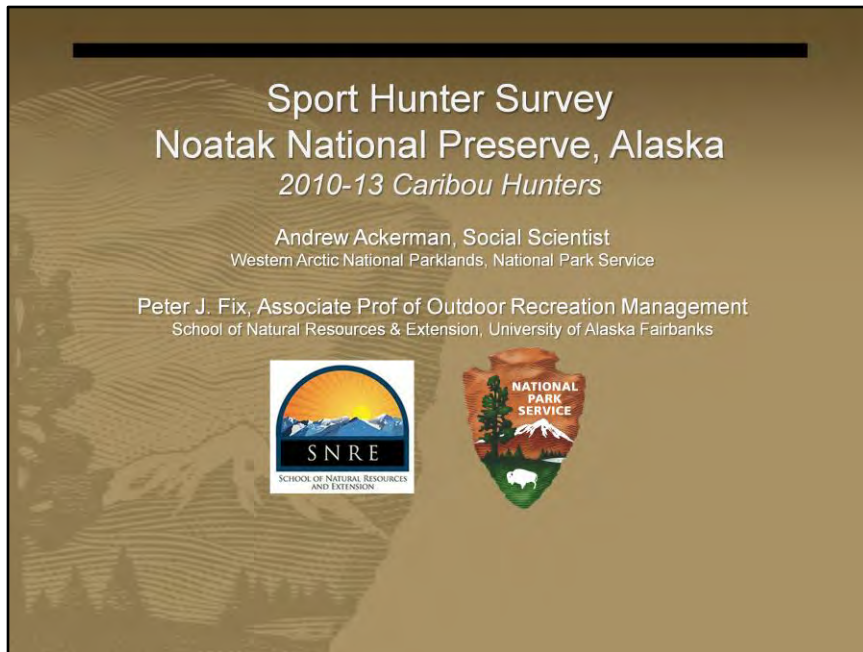
NPS Special CUA Area

0 10 20 30 40

Miles

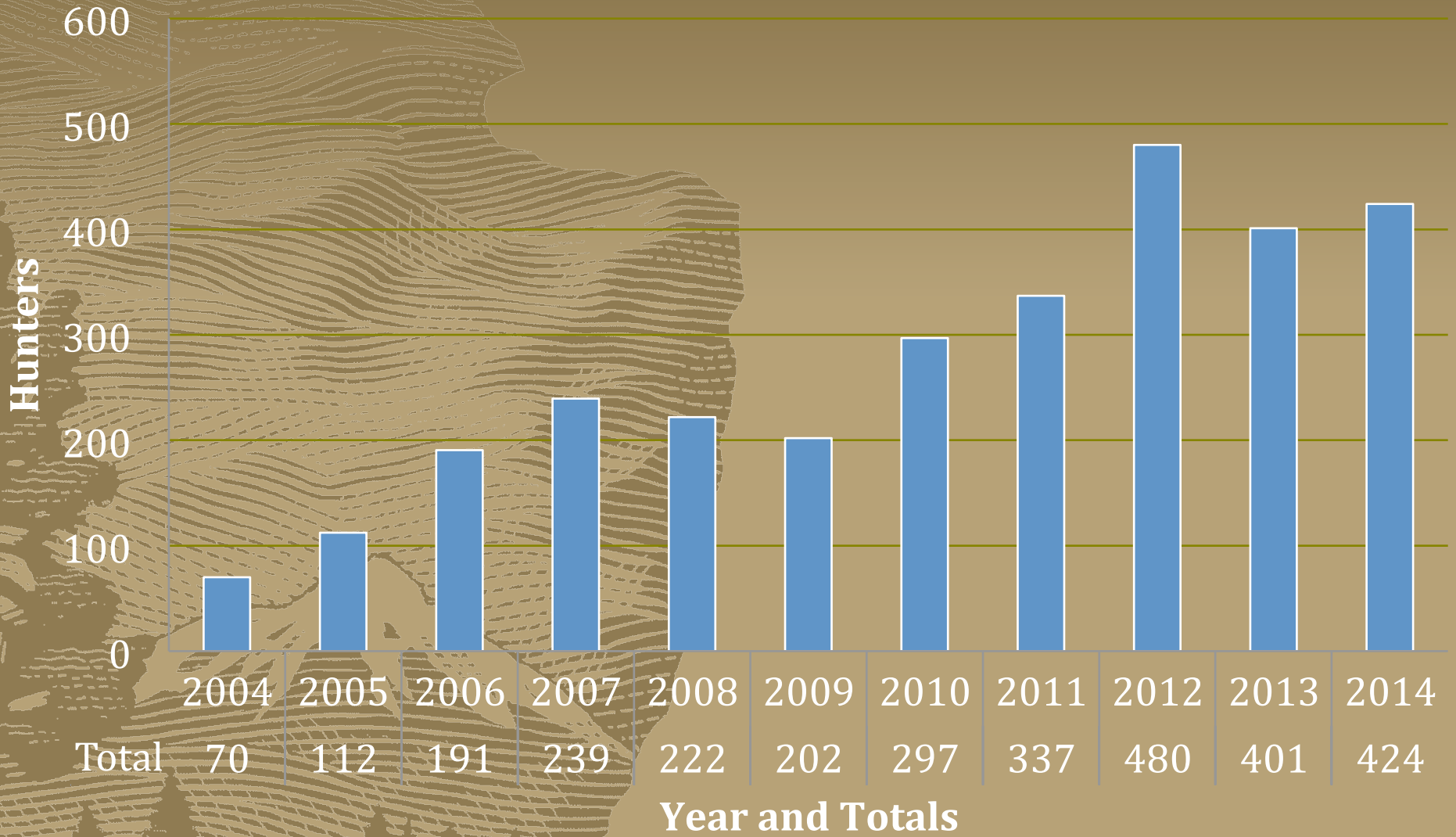






Pete and I developed and piloted the survey instrument together. The data collection was managed by NPS and the data QC and analysis was largely handled by UAF. Graphs and charts in this ppt were developed by me and any errors are my responsibility.

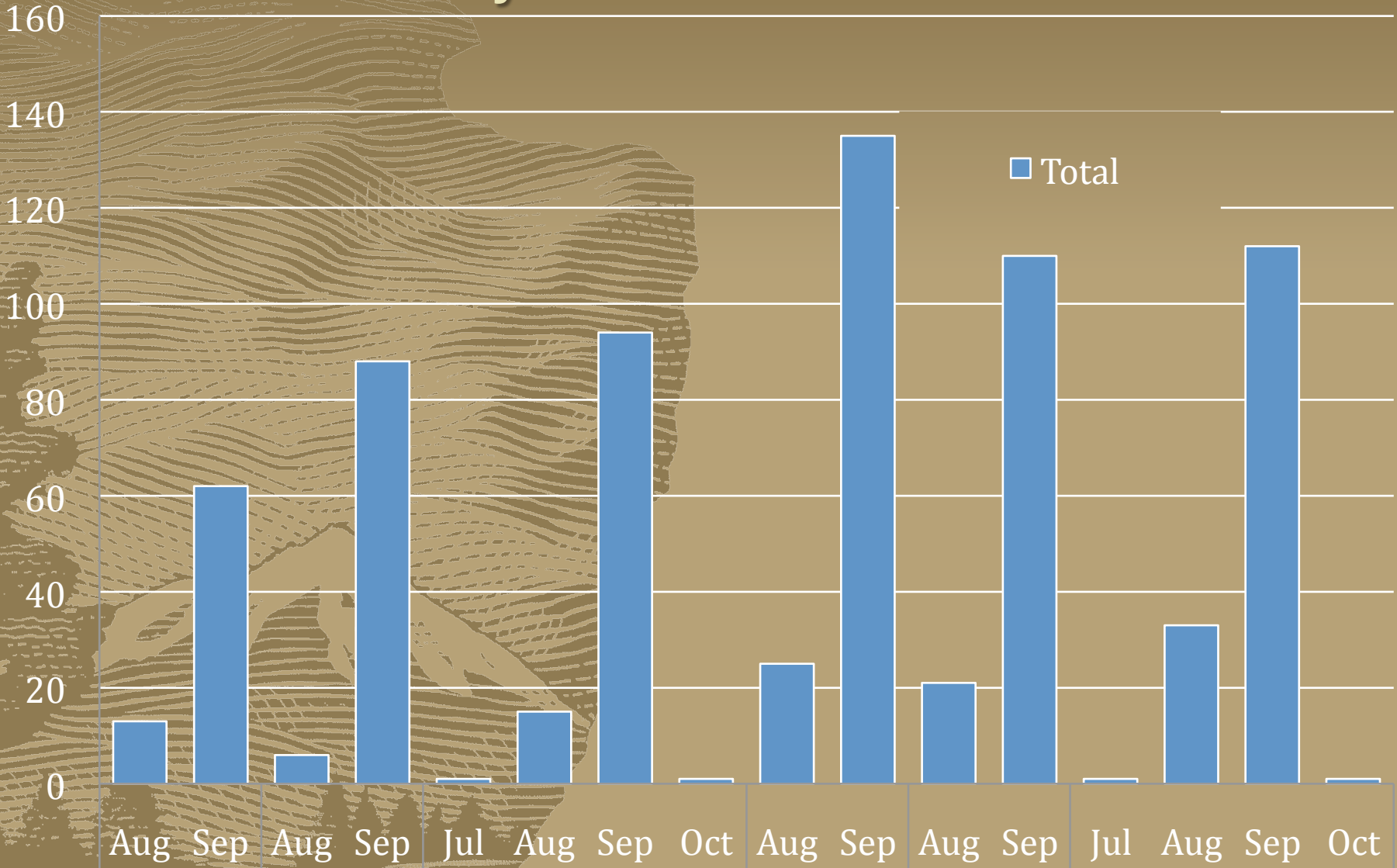
# Annual Noatak Transported Hunters: 2004-2014



\*Best available data (underestimate)

BGCSB Transporter Activity Reports & CUA

# Transport Drops/Hunting Groups Monthly Totals: 2009-2014





## What did we measure?

- Trip and hunter characteristics
- Hunter motivations
- Hunt-specific events and observed impacts
- Hunter evaluations of experience
- Hunter evaluations of management options
  
- Map exercise to understand movement around and between camps and general use patterns

Trip characteristics included things like what services they used (transport, meat care, etc), their primary sources of info, info they rec'd or (became educated) while planning trip. Q5 assessed reasons for choosing Noatak over other AK hunting areas and Q6 ask



## Hunter Response

- ▣ 384 complete surveys of 1,127 sampled=34% RR.  
222 hunting groups in sample.
  - ▣ 249 (65% of respondents) completed a map; 228 with specific days/locations
  
- ▣ Respondents closely match NR; no sample bias when comparing group size and residency
  
- ▣ Response data closely matched transporter client data on key characteristics of the hunters (e.g. group size, residency, harvest success, etc)

## Sample representation

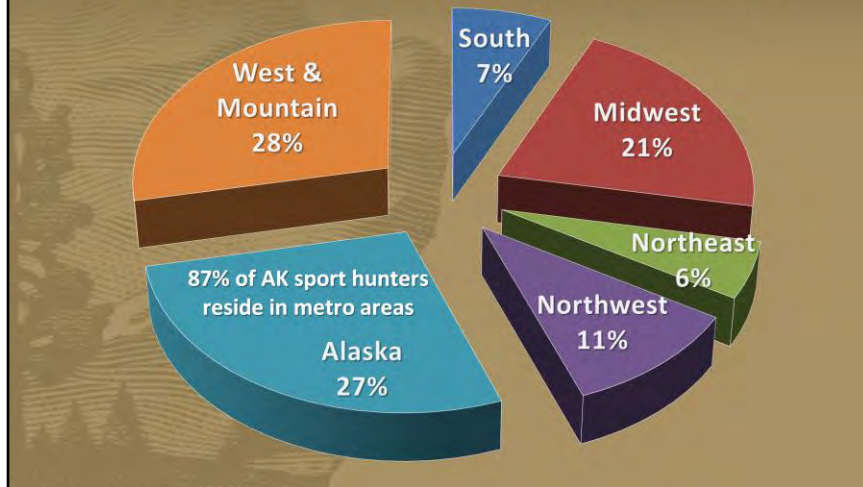
The sample distribution of hunters within each group size (1-6) matches the population in the Transporter db

Most of our results are presented at the individual hunter level, except for Q13 where we present data at the group level by averaging or counting individual responses get a group 'score'



## Noatak Sporthunters--Residency

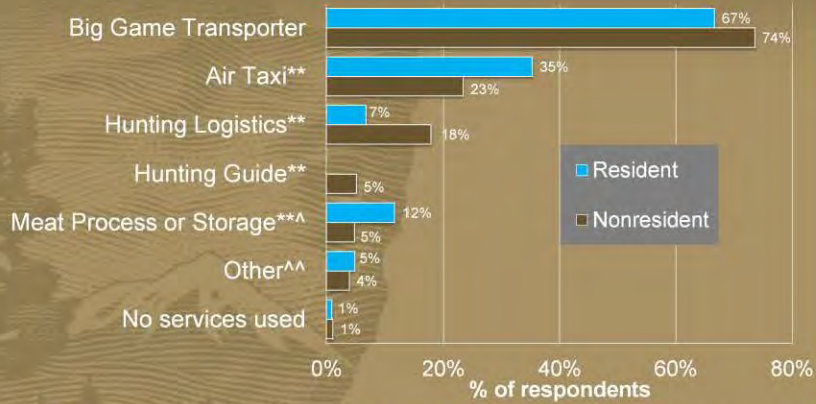
73% of all hunters are from Lower 48 states & territories



This breakdown of the states of residency has no surprises. It shows that sport hunters are making significant travel investments when coming to Noatak. Also, it may be valuable in targeting effort re: Noatak relative to certain areas of the country (e.g. more effort to western and midwest states? The Alaska component is of particular interest in that 7/8 of the AK hunters come from metro areas.

# Results—Hunt Services Used

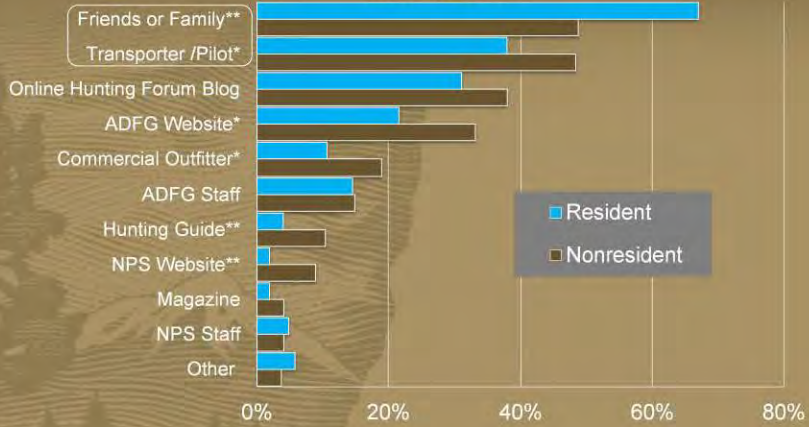
## Commercial Services Used



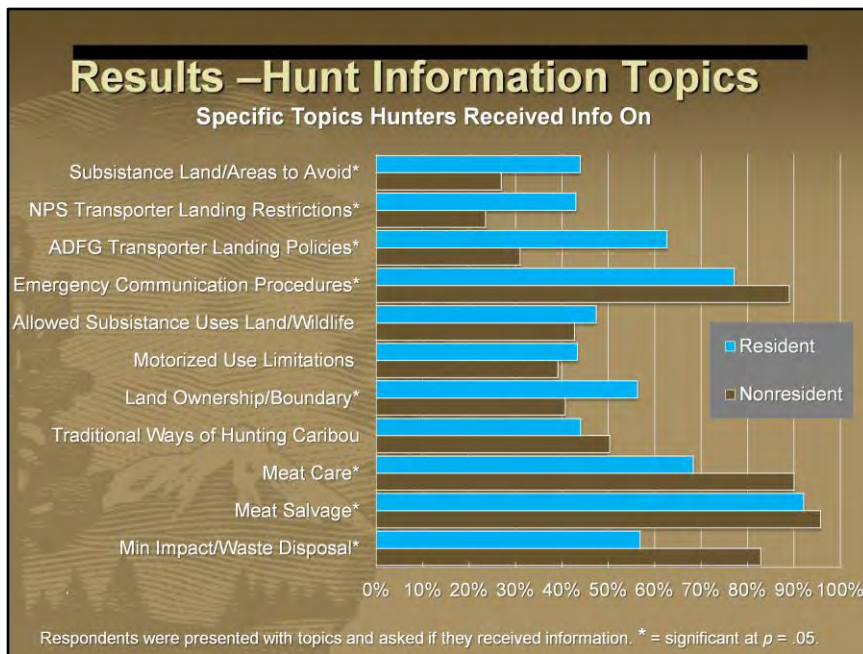
Respondents were presented with a list of services and asked to check those they used. The bars represent the percent of respondents who checked each service. Residents n = 101, nonresidents n = 268, except: ^ = 267, ^^ = 266. \*\*significant at  $p = .05$ .

## Results – Information

### Primary Information Sources about hunting and camping in Noatak NP



Residents n = 102, nonresidents n = 268. \*significant at  $p = .10$ ; \*\*significant at  $p = .05$ .

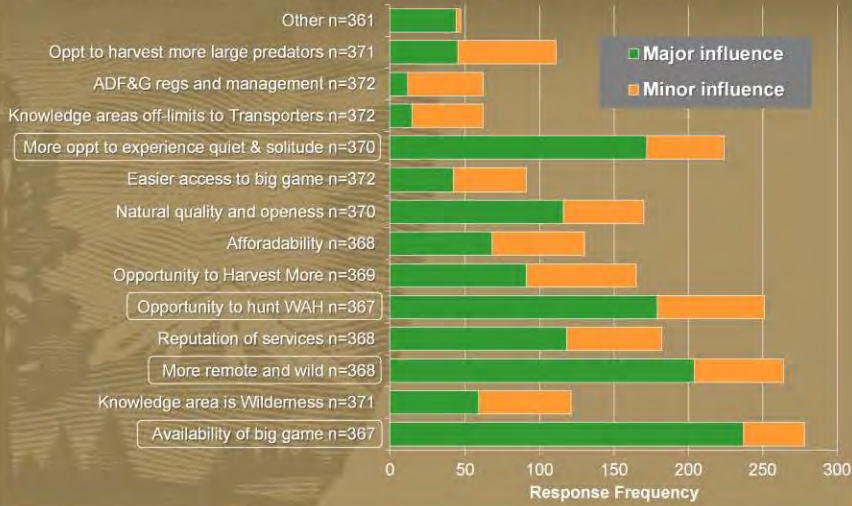


Some significant diff's here. Positive finding that the meat salvage and care is well covered—esp for nonresidents. Residents likely already have some of this knowledge (meat care and LNT is significantly *lower* for residents) but the Transporters should be informing them anyway. Land Ownership/Boundaries needs improvement. The nonres are not receiving info on landing restrictions or subsistence areas to avoid.



# Results—Why hunt in Noatak?

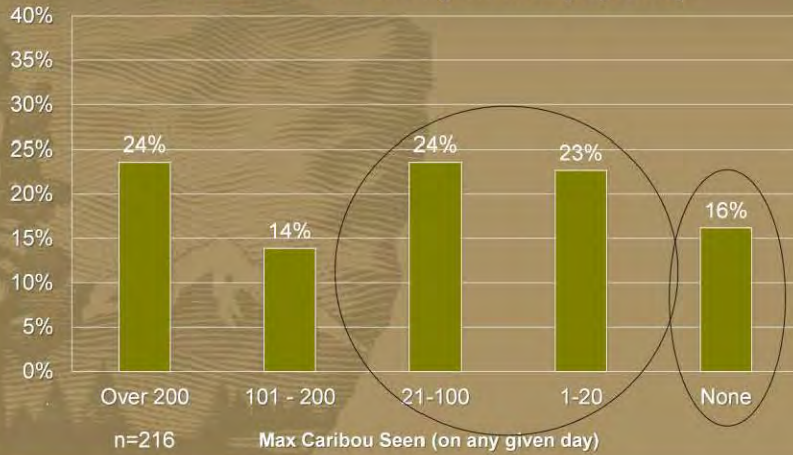
Reasons for choosing Noatak for your caribou hunt

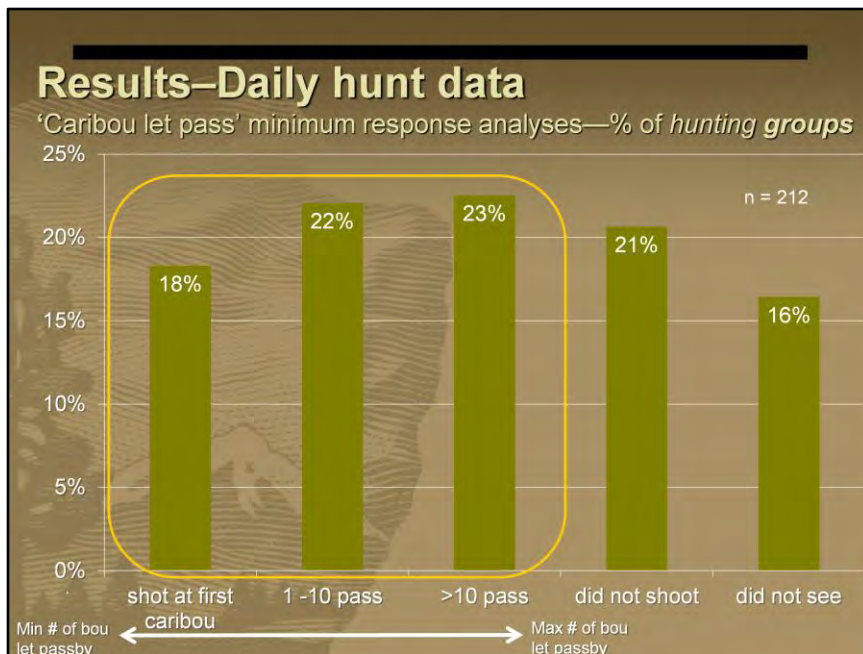


## Results—Daily hunt data

'Most caribou seen, any day of trip'—*groups*

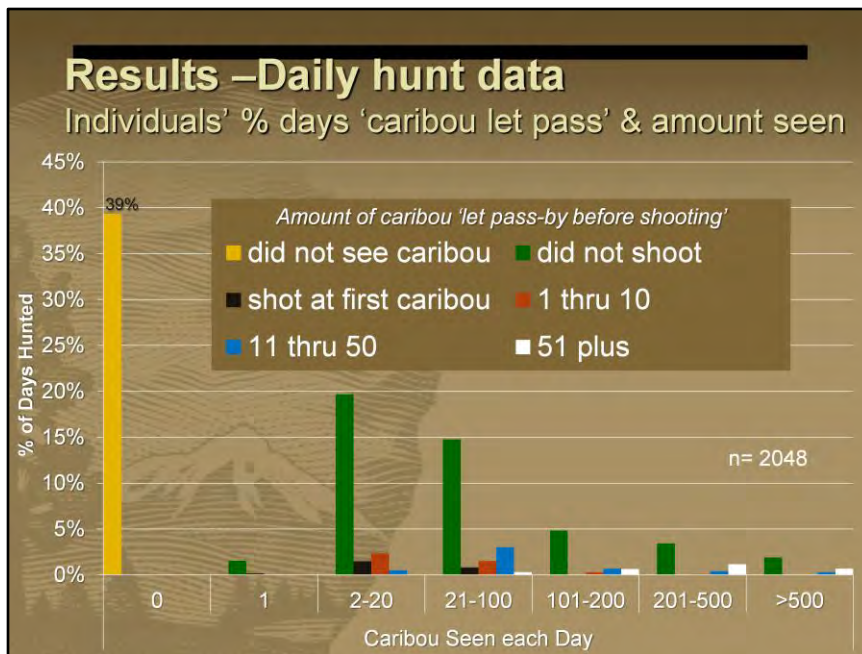
Most Caribou Seen on Any Given Day by Group





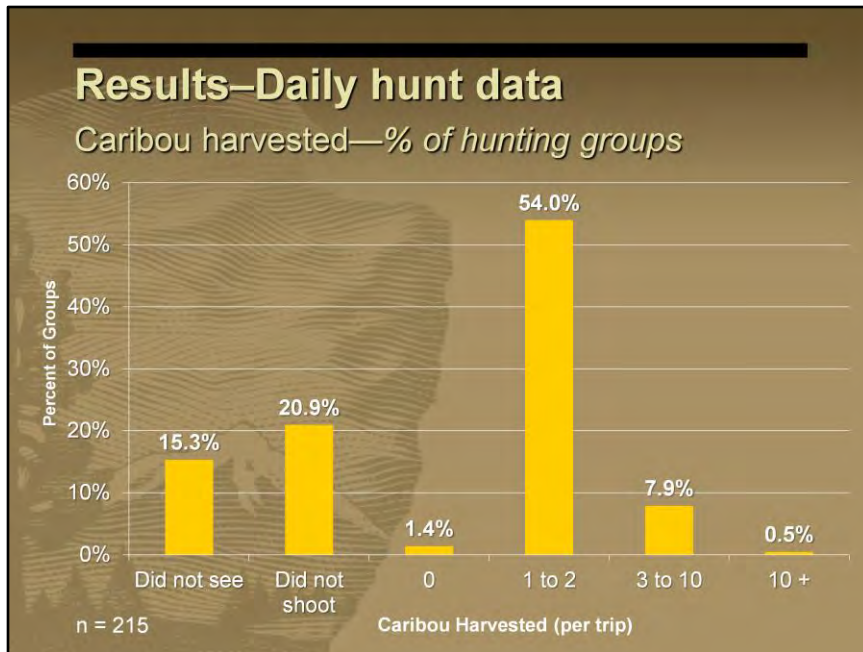
Our method was to analyze every response from every day and assign the min response category to hunting days of the trip. We then looked across hunting days of all group members and assigned the min daily response (behavior X, Y, or Z) to get a single group trip response value (n=213). This analysis represents the distribution of the most “aggressive” hunting strategy by a group (e.g., shoot at the first bou on any given day). It does not represent the number or % of days individuals shoot at the first bou (which is much lower).

**Minimum response:** For expl, if four hunters were in a group, all responded, and only one said he shot at first bou while three said they let >10 pass, the score for the whole group would be ‘shot at first bou,’ even if on other days of the trip none of the hunters shot a first bou.

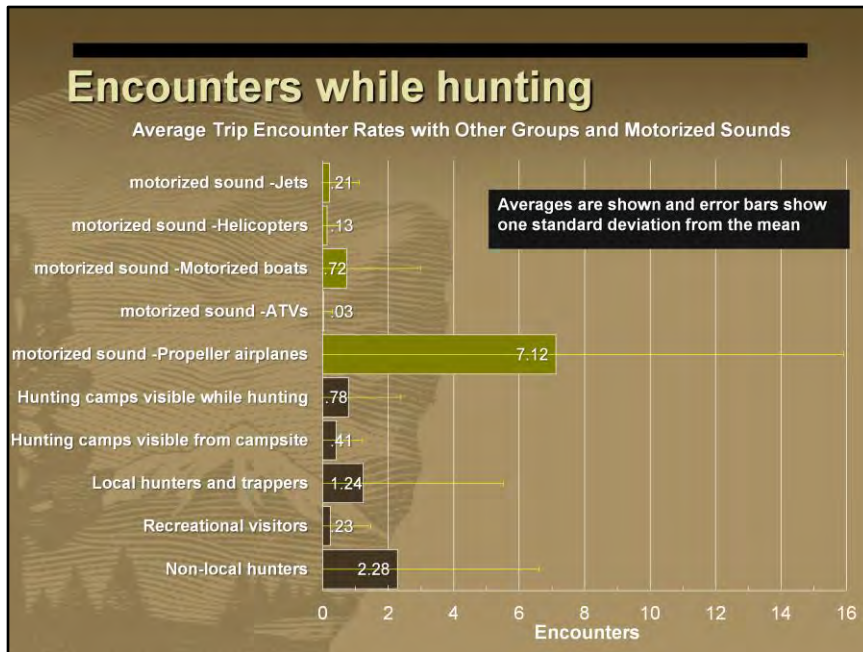


This reflects the relative amount of days out of all days of the hunting trip in which individual hunters had these experiences. 39% (>1/3 of the time) of days no caribou were seen and approx 47% of the days no shot was taken but bou were seen (but were too far away, too early, etc?). The 'shot at first bou' only occurs with 1, 2-20, or 21-100 categories of bou seen. On days when hunters see larger groupings (>100) of bou they are not shooting at the first bou they see and may be more selective. Also as #bou seen increases, 'no shot' decreases until only 2% of 'no shot' days occurred when >500 bou were seen, whereas 20% of 'no shot' days occurred when only 2-20 bou were seen. In other words on days when the prob of not getting off a good shot increases, the likelihood of shooting at first bou also increases.

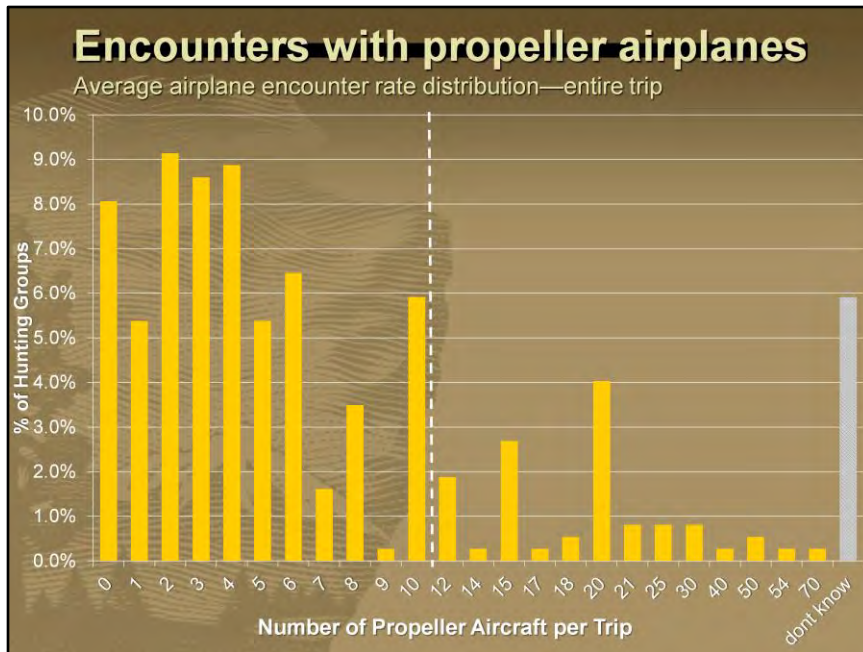




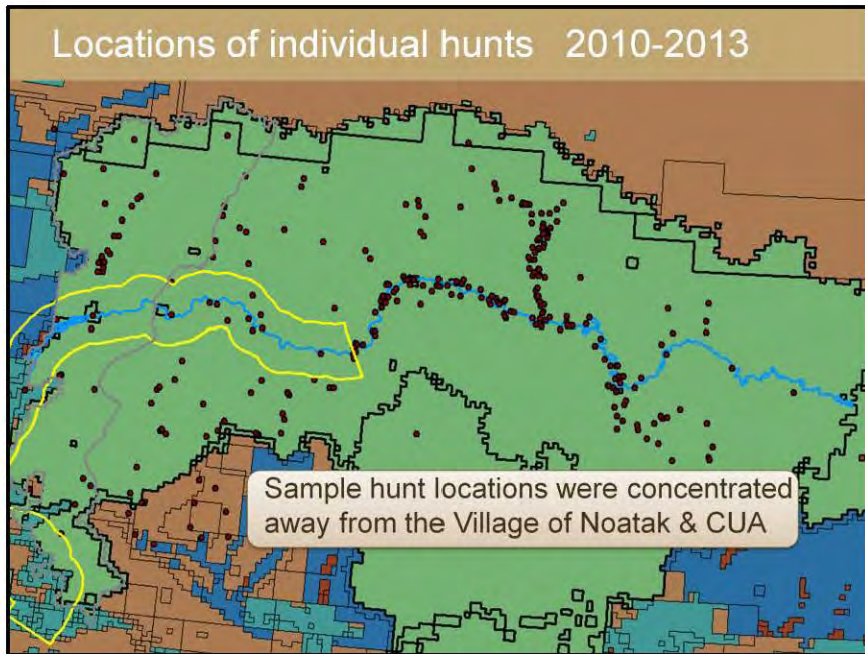
Over half the groups are harvesting only 1-2 bou per trip. 63% of groups are successfully harvesting 1 or more bou. The 36% that *did not harvest* bou is spread over the four years, but analysis of Transporter db going back to 2009 shows this number is increasing. We did not to an inter annual analyses on survey responses.



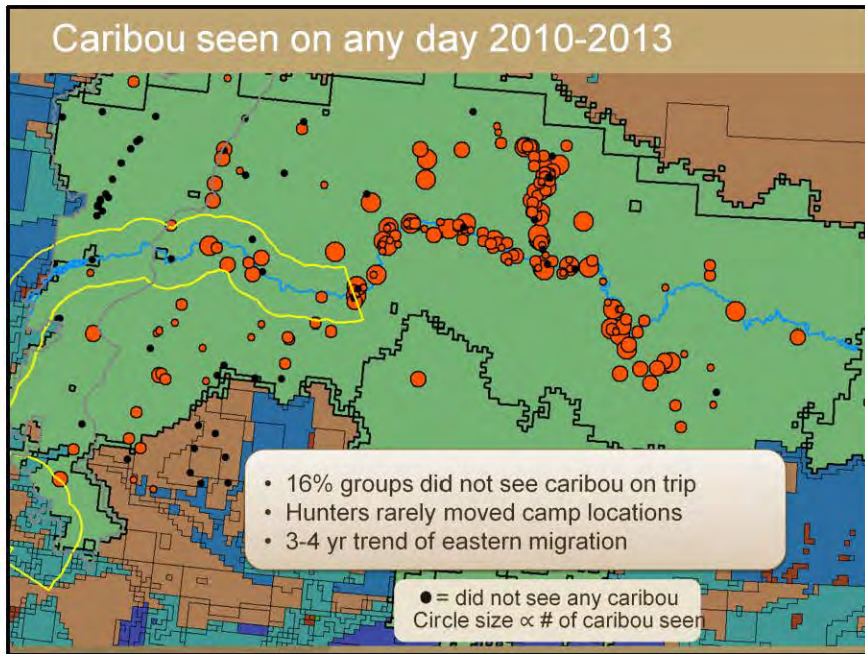
The Noatak is not near major commercial jet routes or military overflight areas. Additionally, most of it is designated wilderness and no motorized uses are allowed by the public in the summer/fall other than prop aircraft and motorboats. Researchers and LE on occasion use helicopters. Therefore, we expected to see mostly prop airplanes. The range is a little surprising. The other nonlocal hunter encounters is a little high with the upper range of the stand dev. at close to seven. On average most sporthunters are only seeing about one local hunters/trapper party per trip. This still may be too high.



Rather than relying just on the mean of 7, the distribution better informs us how common different encounter frequencies are with aircraft are on NOAT hunting trips. 55.2% of groups had between 1 and 10 encounters with airplanes while hunting. Another 7-8% had between 15-20 encounters and <5% had >20 and 8% *had no encounters with props.*







## Discussion

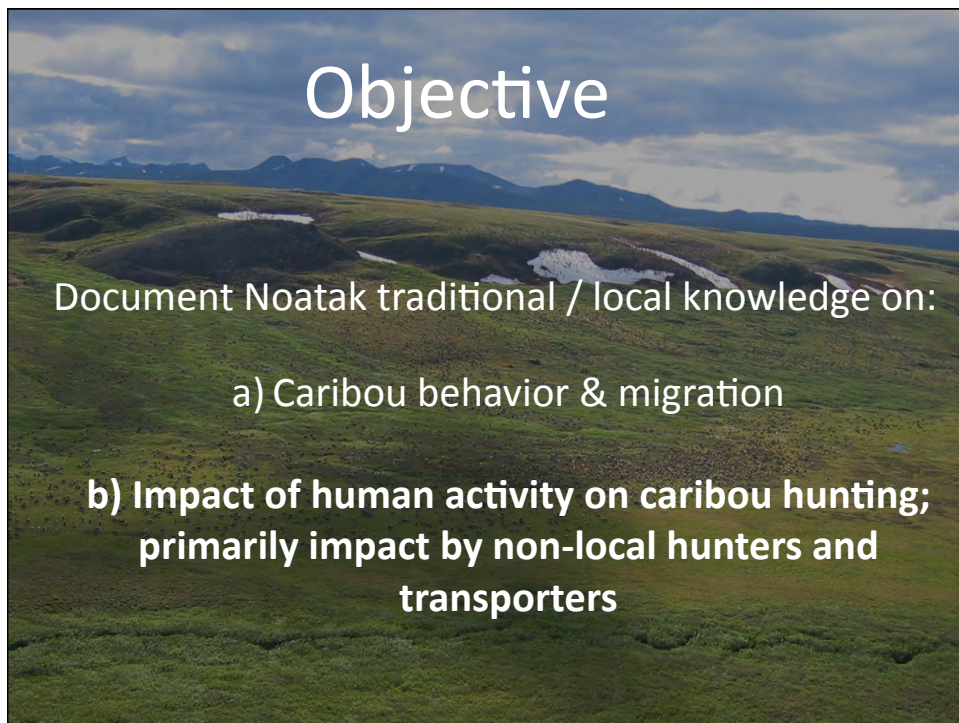
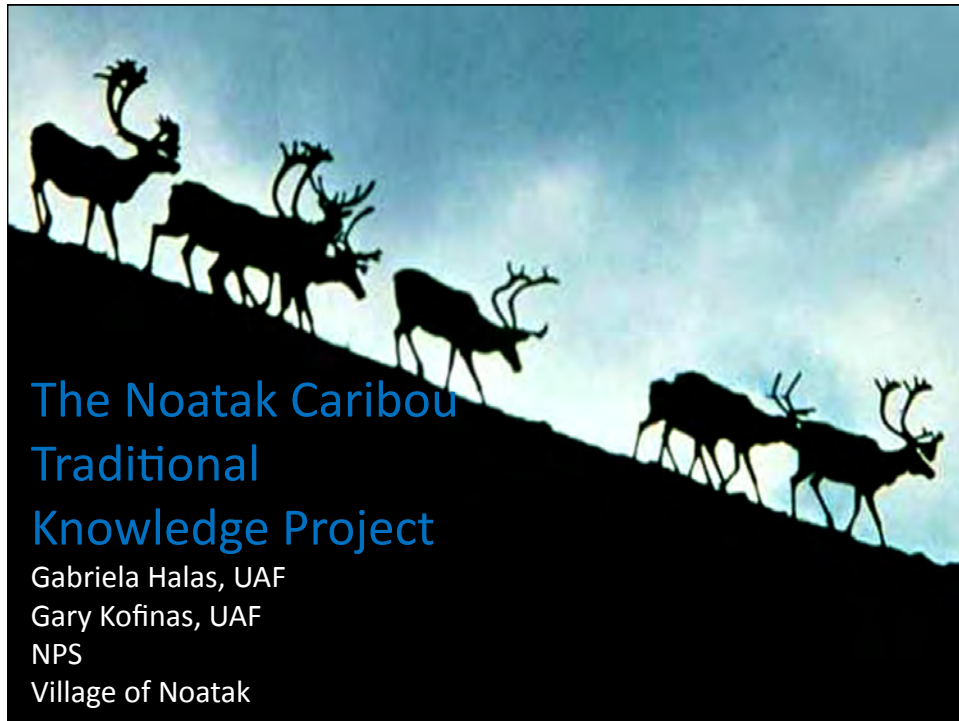
Caribou location key to impacts to subsistence hunters

- What factors impact migration?

Known # of flights: manage for subsistence impacts

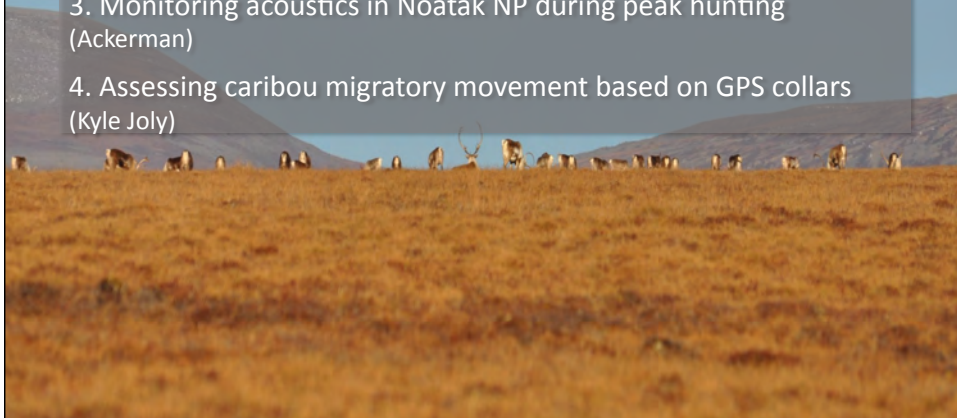
Impacts to sporthunters is low, but sensitive

- Currently not a concentration of impacts
- Regulations that restrict areas of preserve, likely to push impacts over threshold
- Develop indicators & standards?



## 4-part NPS study on human impacts to caribou

1. Traditional knowledge of caribou and user interactions between local and non-local hunters
2. Survey of non-local hunters in Noatak NP (Pete Fix & Andrew Ackerman)
3. Monitoring acoustics in Noatak NP during peak hunting (Ackerman)
4. Assessing caribou migratory movement based on GPS collars (Kyle Joly)



## How did we do this?

- Worked with 3-person local advisory committee in Noatak to assist with the project
- Two kinds of interviews:

### Active Hunter Survey

- 62 surveys
- 52 men, 10 women
- 19-78 years old

### Mapping with Local Experts

- 20 interviews
- 17 men, 3 women
- Active hunters and Elders (some non-active)
- Created maps with hunters

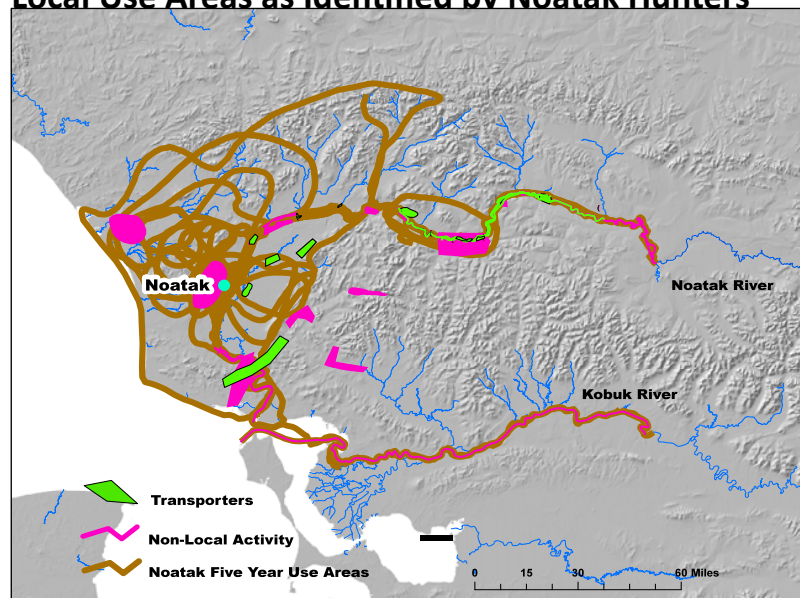


## Research Question

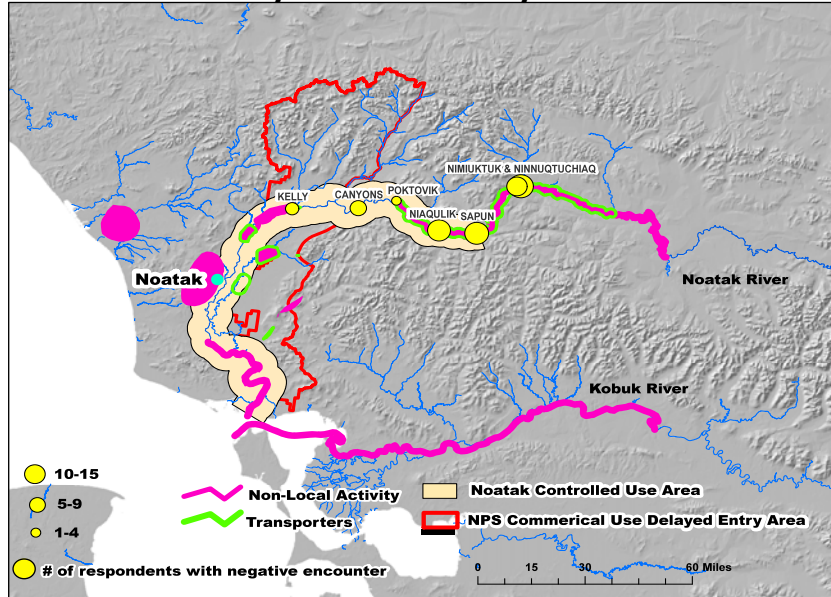
How do Noatak hunters perceive and experience interactions with other user groups?

- Spatial locations and overlap of local and non-local users
- Local hunters' encounters with others
- Implications to local hunters

### Noatak Five-Year Use Areas for Caribou & Non-Local Use Areas as Identified by Noatak Hunters



### Overlap Areas of Use between Noatak Hunters and Non-Local Activity as Identified by Noatak Hunters



## Key Finding

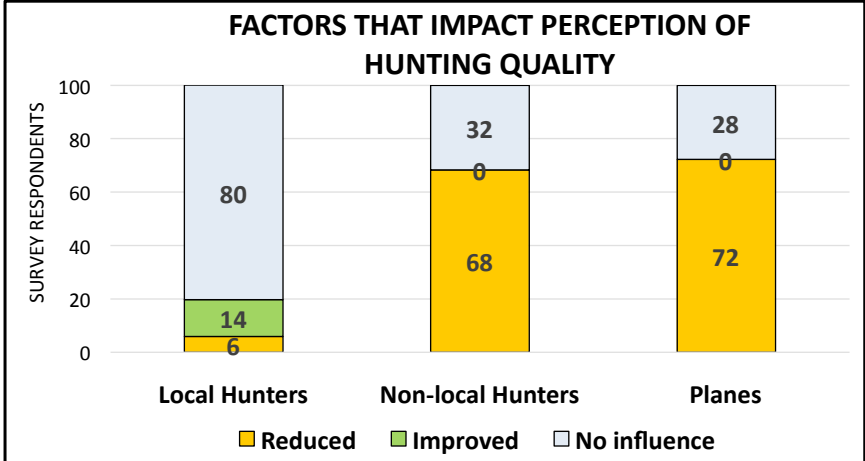
- Noatak respondents encounter different amounts of users

Number of Encounters with Others by Noatak Hunters; Fall 2013					
	Other locals from Noatak	Hunters from regional villages	Non-locals from outside the NW	Planes	Non-motorized boats
Mean # of encounters by individual	13	1	5	8	3
Max # encountered by individual	45	4	24	62	15

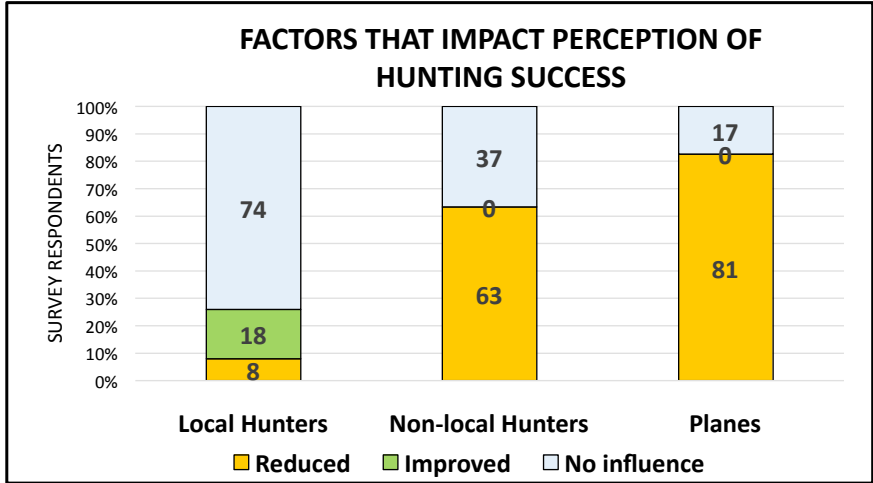
# Key Finding

- Most Noatak respondents report their *quality and success of hunting is reduced* by non-local hunters and airplane activity
  - Quality – experience of hunting
  - Success – harvest of caribou
- Respondents also report a *difference between impacts by non-locals and aircraft*

# Reduced quality



# Reduced success



# Key Finding

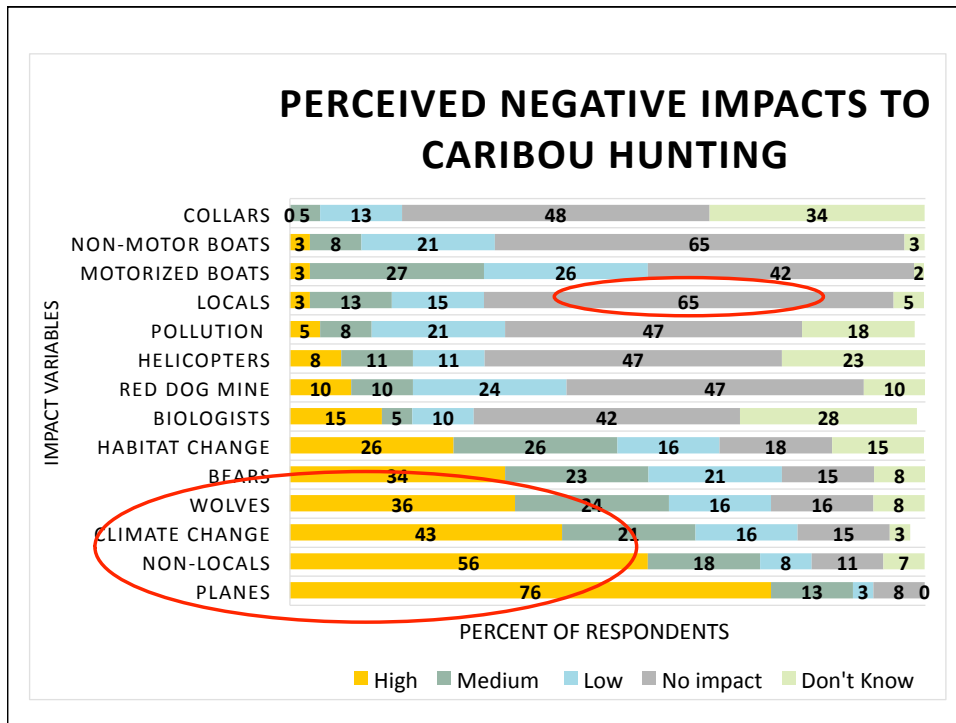
- Noatak is reporting some significant changes to caribou hunting in the last 5 years



<b>CHANGES TO CARIBOU HUNTING IN THE LAST 5 YEARS</b>			
<b>% of total respondents</b>			
	Fewer	More	No Change
<b># OF TRIPS TAKEN</b>	26%	37%	36%
	Shorter	Longer	N/C
<b>LENGTH OF TRIPS</b>	15%	52%	34%
	Earlier	Later	N/C
<b>FALL TIMING OF TRIPS</b>	11%	47%	42%
	Fewer	More	N/C
<b># OF TOTAL DAYS CARIBOU HUNTING</b>	19%	40%	40%
	Fewer	More	N/C
<b># OF PEOPLE SEEN WHILE HUNTING</b>	13%	54%	31%
	Fewer	More	N/C
<b># OF CARIBOU HARVESTED</b>	73%	8%	19%

## Key Finding

- **A variety of ecological factors and human activities are reported to affect caribou hunting**
- Planes & non-local hunters are viewed as the main impacts to **caribou hunting**
- Followed by climate change, wolves, bears



## Observations and Consequences Identified by Respondents

### Observations :

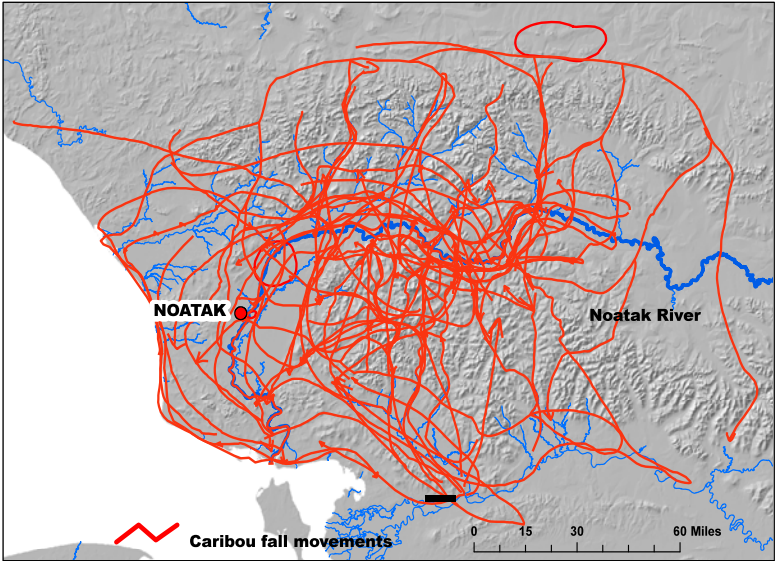
- Low-flying, 'buzzing' aircraft
- Noise from aircraft
- Transporters moving non-local hunters multiple times
- Dropping hunters on the side of the River caribou are migrating towards
- Non-local camps too close together, too many in some locations
- Non-locals shoot caribou leaders

### Consequences to Caribou :

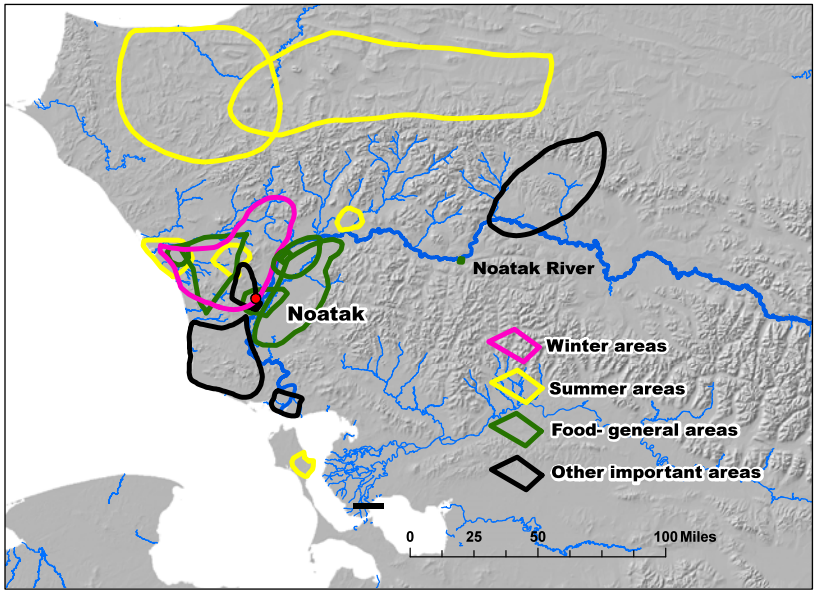
- Diverting caribou off typical routes
- Diverting caribou away from crossing the River
- Caribou group change migration if leaders shot

# Caribou movements and locations

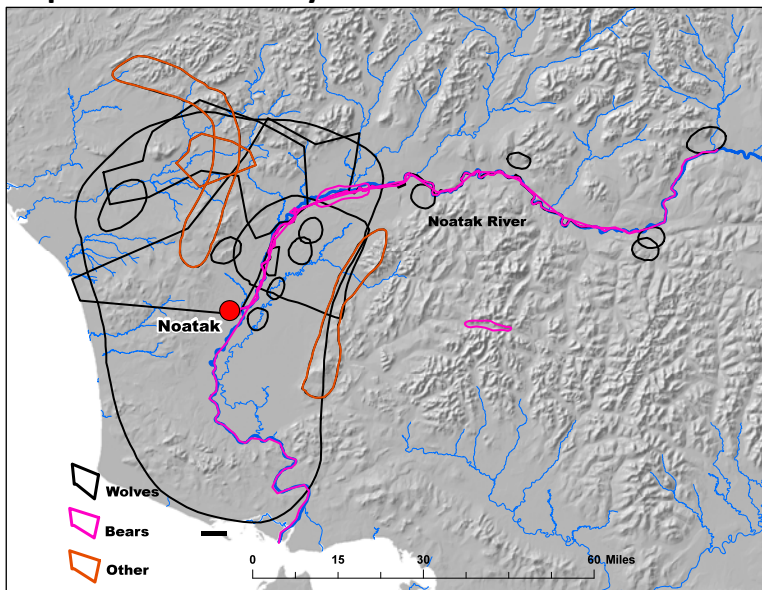
## Respondents Identify Caribou Fall Movements



## Respondents Identify Important Caribou Habitat Areas



### Respondents Identify Areas of Predator Use



## Summary of Findings

1. Noatak hunters identified impacts to hunting as a result of:
  - Aircraft, non-locals, predation, climate
2. Hunters are experiencing changes to hunting:
  - Harvesting less, more & longer trips, more people seen
3. Overlap of use in/out of zoned areas
4. User groups are seen differently:
  - Perceived impact to quality & success of hunt
  - Aircraft more problematic
5. Noatak respondents have a wealth of knowledge on spatially explicit caribou movements and use areas



## Additional info & what's next?

- Present findings to Noatak residents for feedback
- Create “community report” for Noatak residents
- Finalize thesis writing

“We should try to keep the traditional ideas alive about hunting caribou.”

*(Respondent # 33)*

Any Questions?  
Thank you!

Gabriela Halas - [ghalas@alaska.edu](mailto:ghalas@alaska.edu)

Gary Kofinas – [gary.kofinas@alaska.edu](mailto:gary.kofinas@alaska.edu)

## Game Management Unit 23 Working Group

114 S. Franklin Street, Ste. 205  
Juneau, AK 99801

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July 17, 2014

Alaska Big Game Commercial Services Board  
c/o Cindy Hansen, Licensing Examiner  
Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development  
Division of Corporations, Business & Professional Licensing  
P.O. Box 110806  
Juneau, AK 99811-0806

SUBJECT: Requesting DCCED Investigator in Game Management Unit 23 in Fall 2014

Dear Big Game Commercial Services Board Members:

The Game Management Unit (GMU) 23 Working Group is writing to request that the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) continue to assign one of its investigators to provide services in GMU 23 during the 2014 fall hunting season.<sup>1</sup>

The Unit 23 Working Group appreciates the work done by state and federal agency staff who are in the field each hunting season to talk with hunters, guides, transporters, and local residents, and to ensure compliance with regulations. Their presence in the region and this active communication is very effective in preventing conflicts between hunters in northwest Alaska.

In 2010-2013, DCCED provided the services of an investigator (most recently Lee Strout) to work in GMU 23 with the other agencies for part of each fall hunting season. These agencies, including the Alaska Wildlife Troopers, highly value Mr. Strout's work in contacting big game guides and transporters in the field and in Kotzebue.

DCCED has let us know that the Big Game Commercial Services Board's budget for these services is limited. Because this work is so important to preventing user conflicts in Unit 23, the agencies represented on the Working Group are offering to contribute travel to/from the region, air travel in the field, and bunkhouse lodging in Kotzebue for a

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<sup>1</sup> The Unit 23 Working Group was formed in 2008 to address fall hunting conflicts between local hunters, nonlocal hunters and commercial operators in Unit 23 in northwest Alaska. The stakeholder / interagency group works collaboratively to find ways to reduce fall hunting conflicts in GMU 23, protect subsistence uses, and provide opportunities for other hunters. The Working Group includes representatives from the regional and tribal governments and organizations, guides and transporters, local Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, the Alaska Board of Game, and State and federal land and wildlife management agencies. Unit 23 project web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=plans.unit23>

DCCED investigator. The department would only need to cover the usual salary for this staff position and cost of meals.

We ask that the Board accept this offer of financial and in-kind support, and direct DCCED to send an investigator to work in GMU 23 during the 2014 fall hunting season, as it has since 2010. Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

For additional information about this request or the Unit 23 Working Group, please contact the group's facilitator, Jan Caulfield at (907) 523-4610 in Juneau.

Regards,

Unit 23 Working Group

Unit 23 Working Group Members (2014)

Phil Driver, Alaska Professional Hunters Association, Western Arctic Caribou Working Group

Cyrus Harris, Maniilaq Association

Stosh Hoffman, Alaska Board of Game

Victor Karmun, Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Kotzebue Sound  
Advisory Committee

Melvin Lee, Upper Kobuk Advisory Committee

Enoch Mitchell, Noatak/Kivalina Advisory Committee

Ron Moto, Sr., North Seward Peninsula Advisory Committee

Noah Naylor, Northwest Arctic Borough

Pete Schaeffer, Kotzebue Sound Advisory Committee

Joe Schuster, Alaska Professional Hunters Association

Ted Spraker, Chair, Alaska Board of Game

Julie Owen, Transporter representative

Raymond Stoney, Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Lower Kobuk  
Advisory Committee

Alex Whiting, Kotzebue IRA

Jim Dau, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Valerie Baxter, Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Tina Moran, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Frank Hays, National Park Service

Shelly Jacobson, Bureau of Land Management

cc: Susan Bell, Commissioner, DCCED

Sara Chambers, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing,  
DCCED

Quinten Warren, Investigator, DCCED

Lee Strout, Investigator, DCCED

The Honorable Reggie Joule, Mayor, Northwest Arctic Borough

Senator Donald Olson, Alaska State Legislature

Representative Benjamin Nageak, Alaska State Legislature

John Moller, Senior Rural Affairs Advisor, Governor's Office