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PRESS RELEASE

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Nelchina Caribou Hunting Season Extended

September hunting seasons for Nelchina caribou in Game Management Unit 13 have been extended by emergency order. Scheduled by regulation to end September 20, the early fall season for caribou hunts RC566, CC001, and DC485 will now remain open through September 30. The extension is intended to provide added opportunity for permitted hunters who have not yet harvested a caribou.

Early fall caribou harvests in Unit 13 remain below quota and a portion of the herd has already left Unit 13. The early fall hunting season extension aims to maximize harvest while a large portion of the herd remains in Unit 13.

A series of mild winters and relatively low predation have combined to boost Nelchina caribou herd numbers above the fall management objective of 35,000 to 40,000 animals. Recent analysis of herd productivity, mortality, and recruitment places the 2017 population estimate near last year's estimate of 49,550. To prevent further herd growth, hunters are encouraged to harvest cows. Later in the hunting season, as caribou bulls enter the rut and meat develops a strong and gamy taste, hunters often prefer to harvest cows.

For more information, call the Nelchina Caribou Hotline at (907) 267-2304 or contact Todd Rinaldi at (907) 861-2105, or todd.rinaldi@alaska.gov

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