

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME

#90-49-6B

FINDINGS ON KWETHLUK EMERGENCY CARIBOU HUNT PETITION

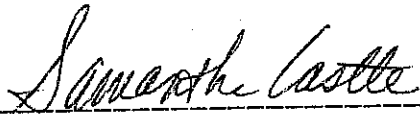
March 31, 1990

On March 16, 1990, after the Board of Game examined the petition of the Kwethluk IRA Council relating to the request for emergency regulation to allow a hunt of caribou in Game Management Unit 18, the Board determined that a harvestable surplus of caribou from the Kilbuck herd does not exist. The basis for that decision by the Board of Game was as follows:

- (1) Biological information relating to the status of the Kilbuck caribou herd is incomplete at this time, although the herd appears to be slowly recovering from a very low level in the mid-1980's. A formal management plan for the Kilbuck herd or a specific population objective has not been established by the Department of Fish and Game. Information which could serve to determine the specific population size or growth rate of this herd is not currently available because of limited survey data and intermixing with the Mulchatna caribou herd. The Kilbuck herd has been closed to hunting since 1985 because of the very low population size (less than an estimated 200 animals) and the desire of the Board to allow this population to grow. The Department of Fish and Game advised that it may be possible to harvest 100 animals and maintain the current size of the herd (estimated at 1,400 animals), but that harvest level would likely prohibit the herd from continuing to grow. A representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service testified that the Service agreed with the Department's recommendation. The policy decision made by the Board at the time of discussion of this petition was that it is not in the long-term best interests of the resource and users to maintain the herd at its current low population size. The Board determined that the result of harvesting the herd at this time could potentially result in zero-growth or negative growth of the herd.

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- (2) Approximately nineteen (19) communities are located adjacent to the geographic range of the Kilbuck caribou herd. The Department advised that any opening of a limited hunt on the Kilbuck caribou herd would likely lead to an excessive, and uncontrolled, harvest of caribou from that herd. The Board assumed that conditions similar to those described by the petitioners also exist in many other nearby communities. Accordingly, the control of the hunt for a specified level of harvest was considered to not be possible.

  
Samantha Castle, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game

ADOPTED: March 31, 1990  
Anchorage, Alaska

VOTE: 5 Favor    \_\_\_ Oppose    1 Abstain    1 Absent