

Division of Wildlife Conservation
Doug Vincent-Lang, Director
Region IV, Palmer Area Office
1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 4
Palmer, AK 99645-6736



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Cora Campbell, Commissioner
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Frank Robbins
Glennallen Area Biologist
Phone: (907) 822-3461
frank.robbs@alaska.gov

Winter Nelchina Caribou Hunts Open October 21, 2014

(Glennallen) – The Nelchina caribou winter hunts in Game Management Unit 13 (CC001, RC566, and DC480-483) will open on October 21, with a winter quota of 600 caribou (300 bulls and 300 cows). The new quota represents an increase in the number of bulls that can be taken under the state’s hunting season.

The decision to increase in the bull quota was based on a survey conducted last week, which found that the herd was still above the objective for bulls after the fall hunting season closed and a large proportion of calves had survived to the fall.

“The herd is in really good shape right now,” said Frank Robbins, the state’s wildlife biologist who manages the Nelchina caribou herd. “We have a lot of bulls out there and a lot of calves, and they all appear to be in really good condition.”

This is good news because results of last year’s survey suggested the number of bulls in the herd was much lower, leading biologists to set a more conservative harvest quota for bulls this fall. After the fall bull quota was reached, many questions remained about whether or not the winter hunt would occur this year. On Friday, October 10, the Nelchina hotline recording included a message that the winter hunt would not occur. While the error was quickly corrected, some hunters received the wrong information.

The winter hunt is open to all Unit 13 caribou hunt permit holders (CC001, RC566, and DC480-483) who did not take a caribou this fall. Hunters who turned in their permit report without taking a caribou can pick up a duplicate permit at their nearest Fish and Game office to participate in the winter hunt.

It is anticipated that the state winter quota will be reached prior to the end of the regularly scheduled caribou hunting season (March 31). Nelchina caribou hunters are encouraged to check the Nelchina caribou hotline (267-2304) or Community Harvest hotline (822-6789) prior to hunting for updates on the reported harvest and any additional emergency closures.

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