

CURRENT STATUS OF ALASKA'S WESTERN ARCTIC CARIBOU HERD. D. D. James, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 686, Kotzebue, Alaska, U.S.A. and D. A. Anderson, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 1148, Nome, Alaska, U.S.A.

Alaska's Western Arctic Caribou Herd exceeded 200,000 animals by July 1985. Results of surveys in 1976, '78, '80 and '82 indicated a linear arithmetic increase ($r=.99$) from 75,000 to 172,000 suggesting a decreasing growth rate. Simple arithmetic modeling of population data suggested a mortality rate increasing from 0.6% in 1978 to 17.6% in 1982. Annual mortality among radio-collared animals was 26-29% for males and 10-12% for females. Productivity and recruitment appeared to remain relatively high through spring 1984. Surveys in June and July 1984, however, suggested a substantial decline in productivity. Hunter-induced mortality is believed to have gradually increased from 1976 to perhaps as high as 10,000 by 1984. Wolf populations have been low-to-moderate since the late 1970's, and wolf predation is not currently excessive. Caribou expanded their range southwest onto the Seward Peninsula and south into portions of the Koyukuk and Yukon Rivers drainages during the winters of 1982-1984.

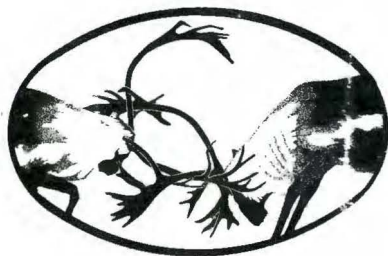
ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS AND POSTERS

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