

SMITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPACT OF HUNTING ON MOVEMENTS OF WESTERN ARCTIC
HERD CARIBOU ON THE SEWARD PENINSULA, ALASKA

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Abstract: Caribou have not occupied the western Seward Peninsula since 1880 although the viability of reindeer herds ranged there since 1892 demonstrates the suitability of the habitat. The winter movements of Western Arctic Herd caribou have extended into eastern portions of the Seward Peninsula at least since 1981. From 1982 to 1987, movements of Western Arctic Herd caribou on the Seward Peninsula were monitored by aerial observation and radiotelemetry. Caribou failed to extend movements beyond where they encountered intense hunting pressure. Hunters generally used snowmachines for travel in winter caribou hunting and pursuit of animals was often extended. Avoidance of this disturbance by caribou may inhibit future range expansion in the vicinity of human population centers.

Key Words: Alaska, caribou, disturbance, Seward Peninsula, Western Arctic Herd.

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