

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE RUT  
UPON CARIBOU MEAT PALATABILITY

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During the 1961 caribou hunting season a study was conducted to ascertain the influence of the rut upon caribou meat palatability. Information was gathered on hunter-killed male caribou from the Nelchina herd between August 20 and November 13, 1961. Hunters with bull caribou were interviewed in the field and their animals grossly examined in order to obtain information on physical factors of kill, care of carcass, condition of meat, and indices of rutting activity. Additional data on meat aging, processing, and palatability were collected by a post-season survey of these same hunters.

Of the 565 animals examined, hunters classed 28% as excellent in palatability, 69% good-fair, and 3 % poor. Fifty, of the total 565, were classed as rutting, but only five rated as poor in palatability. Thirteen non-rutting animals were rated as poor. It is obvious that factors other than rutting exert an important influence upon palatability of meat; for example, physiological state of the animal, handling of meat prior to cooking, and prejudice of hunters evaluating palatability. Although it is definitely known that some rutting animals become strong flavored or unpalatable during the rutting period, the results of this study indicate that most animals are not so affected. Only 3 % (7) of the total of 213 bulls shot during the rutting period, September 20 to October 19, were rated poor (3 were known to be rutting).

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Note

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