

SUMMER RANGE FIDELITY OF RADIO-COLLARED CARIBOU IN ALASKA'S CENTRAL ARCTIC HERD. W. T. Smith, R. D. Cameron, and K. R. Whitten, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

Between June and August 1975-82, 61 female caribou >3 years old, radio-collared during the previous April or May, were tracked and located within the range of the Central Arctic Herd during the following summer (June-August). Relocation attempts were made on all individuals during the following 2 or 3 summers as a means of assessing subsequent range fidelity. Cumulative relocations of radio-collared females were equivalent to ca. 75% of maximum, on-the-air availability, based on a projected 3-year transmitter life. However, ca. 90% of the radio-collared females located during the summer after collaring were relocated 1 year later, indicating that much of the lower overall relocation success is attributable to transmitter malfunctions rather than emigration. These observations and related data on the chronology of relocation success, together with an inability to document movements to adjacent herds, suggest that summer range fidelity of females in this herd is a minimum of 90%. Results obtained specifically during the June calving period are discussed relative to the convention of designating herds on the basis of fidelity to calving areas.

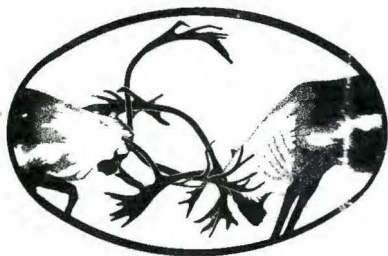
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