

PROPOSAL 5

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

Reduce the bag limit for caribou for RC907 resident hunters in Units 23 and 26A, and change the nonresident hunt to a registration permit with additional restrictions as follows:

Unit 23, that portion north of and including the Singoalik River drainage

RESIDENT HUNTERS: five caribou per **season, no more than one of which may be a cow,** [day, as follows: up to 5 bulls per July 1 - Oct. 14 day; however, calves Feb. 1 - June 30 may not be taken; up to five cows per day; Jul. 15 - Apr. 30 however, calves may not be taken]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS: one bull; however, calves Aug. 1 – Sept. 30 may not be taken;

Remainder of Unit 23

RESIDENT HUNTERS: 5 caribou per **season, no more than one of which may be a cow,** [day, as follows: up to five bulls per day; July 1 - Oct. 14 however, calves may not Feb. 1 - June 30 be taken; up to five cows per day; Sept. 1 - Mar. 31 however, calves may not be taken]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS: one bull; however, Aug. 1 - Sept. 30 calves may not be taken; . . .

Unit 26A, that portion of the Colville River drainage upstream from the Anaktuvuk River, and drainages of the Chukchi Sea south and west of, and including the Utukok River drainage

RESIDENT HUNTERS: five caribou per **season, no more than one of which may be a cow,** [day, as follows: up to 5 bulls per July 1 - Oct. 14 day; however, Feb. 1 - June 30 calves may not be taken; up to five cows per day; Jul. 15 - Apr. 30 however, calves may not be taken];

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS: one bull; however, July 15 - Sept. 30 calves may not be taken;

Remainder of Unit 26A

RESIDENT HUNTERS: five **caribou** [bulls] per **season, no more than one of which may be a cow,** [day: July 1 - July 15 however, calves may not be taken; five caribou per day; July 16 - Oct. 15 however, no more than three cows per day; cows accompanied by calves and calves may not be taken; three cows per day; Oct. 16 - Dec. 31 however, calves may not be taken; five caribou per day; Jan. 1 - Mar. 15 however, no more than three cows per day; calves may not be taken; five bulls per day; Mar. 16 - June 30 however, calves may not be taken;]

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS: one bull; however, July 15 - Sept. 30 calves may not be taken;

RESIDENT HUNTERS: season limits above would modify all hunts within RC907. NONRESIDENT HUNTERS in both Units would no longer harvest pursuant to a harvest ticket but instead a new registration hunt would be established with a quota to be determined by ADG&F as herd management objectives dictate but no less than 400 bulls.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal is to change the type of hunts (Harvest Ticket (HT) and Registration) and harvest limits for caribou in Units 23 and 26A that affect the Western Arctic caribou herd (WACH). Much concern has been raised in recent years by various stakeholders over the decline in numbers of the WACH. While the department has clearly determined that

the herd remains large enough for subsistence and non-local hunting, efforts to better monitor the annual harvest (through use of registration hunts) and control over season harvests (quotas) would allow the department to closely monitor and limit the effects of subsistence and non-local hunting if needed, while continuing to allow for hunting access to all users. This proposal reduces the extremely liberal harvest limits for residents within the WACH's range and makes nonresidents subject to a registration hunt. This proposal would hopefully eliminate the need for unnecessary closure of federal (or other) lands to hunting by any individuals and allow hunting access to the entirety of both units to all residents and nonresidents. The impact that the small percent of harvests by non-locals could have on the caribou herd pales in comparison to the impact of closing federal hunting opportunities in Units 23 and 26A for non-subsistence hunters. A far more reasonable protective measure (if any is needed) to help slow the decline of the WACH is to drastically reduce the harvest of cows and calves and narrow the limit on the annual harvest of bulls between subsistence and non-subsistence users. As non-subsistence users account for only a percent or two of the annual harvest, closing substantial portions of the units to this non-impactful group does nothing to promote the objective of protecting the WACH. This proposal is made as an effort to allow the department to better monitor and control the harvest of caribou by all users as needed to meet and maintain management objectives.

PROPOSED BY: Gary Colbath

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