



Advisory Announcement

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Division of Wildlife Conservation Seeks Input on Proposed Nelchina Tier Hunt

(Glennallen) – The 2026 Nelchina caribou herd population survey has revealed continued encouraging numbers, with over 17,800 caribou counted—more than 13,400 of which are adults. This represents a notable increase in herd size compared to the 2025 summer count, and the 2026 Rivest population model projects the population may surpass 19,000 caribou.

Recruitment data from 2025 and early calf survival in 2026 suggest robust ratios exceeding 40 calves per 100 cows and 40 bulls per 100 cows this fall. The cessation of hunting since RY2023, coupled with relatively mild winters, has contributed to high adult survival and strong calf recruitment, leading to an increase in abundance with an improved bull-to-cow ratio. A harvestable surplus of bulls is now available to be offered in the fall of 2027.

To ensure sustainable management and prevent overharvest, ADF&G is preparing a conservative harvest approach for state hunters, and we recommend the federal hunt administrators do the same for RY2027. The approach would allow the harvest of up to 335 bulls, representing 2.5% of the minimum adult count from 2026. Federal harvest in Unit 13 is expected to remain below 185 animals, leaving 150 bulls available for Tier II state hunters during RY2027. As such, a Tier II hunt for Nelchina caribou (TC566) will be advertised as “*May be Announced*” in the upcoming subsistence hunt supplement.

The department is seeking public comments on the implementation of a Tier II hunt through the advisory committee (AC) process. Advisory committees with specific interest in Nelchina caribou have been contacted and this topic is being added to upcoming agendas. Contact and meeting information for your local AC can be found here: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=process.advisory> or through the QR code on the bottom.

An overview for the status and management of the Nelchina caribou herd was made available on our YouTube channel this winter (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-JdITyQepc>); stay tuned for a published newsletter with additional information this winter following October fall composition survey and management captures.



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