

## **Alaska Board of Game Interior/ NE Arctic Region February 17-25, 2016 Jack Reakoff comments on Proposals 104 and 105 caribou.**

### **Proposal 104 -do not adopt**

### **Proposal 105- amend and adopt**

I am personally very concerned about the rapid decline of the Central Arctic Caribou herd since 2010. I have been in contact with the Area Biologist, Beth Lenart to ascertain the actions of the DFG. I feel the current actions that will be presented in the RC and A&R are the minimum to reduce detrimental harvest of cows;

**NW 26B, residents** (this remains the same as current seasons and bag limits: 5 caribou/day, July 1-June 30; however, cow caribou may be taken, July 1-May 15.

**Remainder of Unit 26B**, residents: 2 caribou, Aug. 1-Apr 30, however cow caribou may only be taken Nov. 1-Apr. 30

**Unit 26B, nonresidents: 1 bull, Aug 1-Sept 15.**

I will agree with the Department these actions are imperative to stabilize this decline, or at least reduce human additive to the decline.

I would like to see additional measures taken at this time to grow the herd back to a level that promotes larger range use. Larger herds cover more area, thus more use by people of a wider area.

**At this time adopt the DFG A&R and RC amended language for proposal 105.**

**In addition direct the DFG to EO cow caribou hunting in 26B remainder, after March 1, 2017 until November 1, 2017.**

Caribou have about half the reproductive capacity of moose. Caribou never have twins and are subject to winter hardships because they are grazers, which do not affect moose.

Snow greater than 3 feet, ice events, and or late springs over stress and reduce fecundity of cow caribou.

If a moose population had more than a 50% population decline there would be a complete closure of any cow harvest.

Caribou hunting has a higher incidental *harvest mortality factor* (wound-loss) than singular species like moose. Wound rates for caribou should be between minimums of 15-30%.

The preliminary reported harvest for this regulatory year 2016/17 of 176 cows in GMU26B is a **minimum** human mortality. The 2016/17 regulatory year harvests has been 45% cows, so far. This is a very high cow harvest proportion.

With over a cumulative 200-cow human caused mortality during this season there is a great need to **Emergency Order** closure of cow harvest in GMU26B remainder after March 1, 2017. There are increasing numbers of hunters using dog teams from the Dalton highway the last two years. If no more than 75 cow harvest should be taken in the analysis, this current seasons harvest has exceeded that threshold by 250%.

Cows lead the main migrations. Killing lead cows most of the time can deflect herd movements. Experienced lead cows have range knowledge, and are more adept at predator avoidance. Protection of cows especially in the fall hunt is extremely important.

The Western Arctic, Teshekpuk, and now Central Arctic caribou herds are in need of reduced cow harvest.

All three herds should have uniform harvest regulations in GMU 22,23,24, 25A west, and 26 A&B.

Cow harvest season should be October 1 to February 1. Bull caribou harvest should be February 1 to October 10. Protecting bulls when they are low grade. These seasons would allow caribou harvest through out the year wherever they are on their ranges, but would eliminate cow harvest when they are predominantly migrating and when calving. That is a future proposal to look at.

**At this time adopt the DFG A&R and RC amended language for proposal 105.**

**In addition direct the DFG to EO cow caribou hunting in 26B remainder, after March 1, 2017 until November 1, 2017.**

I appreciate your consideration of these comments,

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