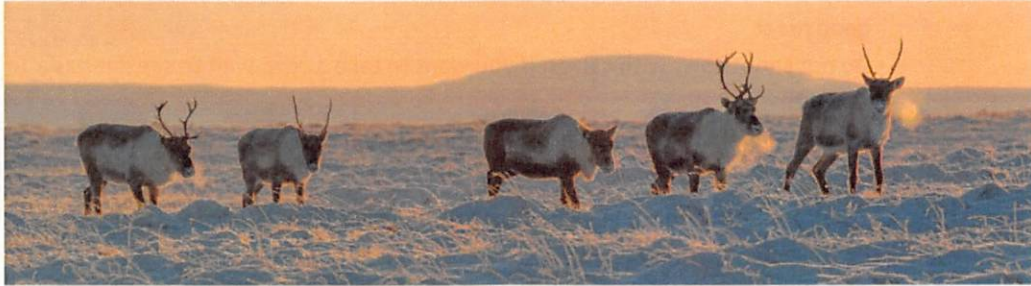


Submitted by Alex Hansen ADF&G

Iñupiat Iñitqusiāt Guidelines on Winter Caribou Hunting from the Native Village of Kotzebue



Caribou should be treated with respect. Tuttu are integral to our culture. We want to have these animals come back every year. We need to have respectful, responsible hunting.

In the past, local people had to work very hard to harvest caribou, traveling up toward the North Slope, Colville River, and Upper Noatak. Hunters were gone for weeks or months at a time. They didn't take caribou for granted, but developed a deep respect for the animals. Songs, dances and traditions developed around caribou to honor them. Without the knowledge of our parents and grandparents, and their conservation of the caribou, we wouldn't be where we are today. Today's hunters need to carry on this conservation and respect so we will have caribou for future generations.

How can you get your caribou without disrespecting them?

- Consider hunting with a partner or a group. You can work together and make a plan of how to get close to the caribou or move them toward another hunter's position. Through sharing and cooperation everyone will get a portion of the harvest.
- Take your time. Observe caribou groups before you approach.
- Pick out the animals you want to harvest.

- Look for animals that are fat and in good shape before you shoot. The shape of the back, the color/quality of the hide, and the upward curve of the tail can be clues to look for.
 - When mature bulls are in rut, younger bulls and barren cows can still provide good meat.
 - Do not shoot cows with calves. If you want to take a cow, wait to see if it has a calf with it.
 - Avoid pregnant cows when possible, they are the breeding stock of the herd.
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- Don't shoot aimlessly into a bunched up group of caribou. Wait until they separate, and target specific animals.

 - Chasing caribou and running them too much is bad for the health of the animals and results in poor quality meat. If you must chase, pick out one animal to harvest and move it away from the rest of the group.

 - Use the terrain: look for high ground, hills or cover, or deep snow. Caribou will often go to high ground if they are being approached. You can make a plan to take advantage of this. Or, you can try to move caribou toward deep snow, which will allow you to get closer to them.

 - Show respect for the caribou after it is harvested. You're responsible for the caribou you shoot. Take good care of the meat and all the parts. This is how we give thanks to the animal that gives itself to us.

 - Not only is waste of caribou disrespectful, it is illegal.

 - In the wintertime, an effective way to tenderize the meat is not to butcher the animal too soon. You may gut the animal out in the country, but keep the skin on and don't take the animal apart. Then, bury it in the snow for a few days. The hide will keep the meat from freezing, and the retained heat will tenderize your meat.