

PROPOSAL 154

5 AAC 85.025 Hunting seasons and bag limit for caribou.

Change the bag limit for caribou in the Remainder of Unit 26B as follows:

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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Remainder of Unit 26(B)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

<u>5 caribou</u> [4 BULLS]	July 1–Apr. 30
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NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

<u>2 bulls</u> [1 BULL]	Aug. 1-Sept. 15
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What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Central Arctic caribou herd (CAH) grew throughout the early 2000s from an estimated 29,5019 (95% C.I. = 26,504–32,533) in 2000 to a high of 68,442 (95% C.I. = 54,571–82,312) in 2010 then declined precipitously by 2016 to 22,630 (95% C.I. = 20,074–25,186). Since 2016 the herd has slowly grown to an estimated population size of 34,642 (95% C.I. = 32,419–36,866). The management objective for CAH is 28,000–32,000 caribou and the current estimate is above the objective. In the past, harvest has shown to have little effect on this population but harvesting a few cows could help slow the growth of this herd. Regardless of the herd growth concerns, there is currently a harvestable surplus of cow caribou available. This proposed regulation change would allow the opportunity to harvest those surplus animals and provide some ability to slow the growth of this herd. Allowing the small number of nonresidents that harvest caribou in this area to take an additional bull would have negligible impact on the herd and would align the nonresident bag limit with Units 26C, 25A, 25B, and 25D.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-051)
