

Proposal 15

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

For all non-local, non-subsistence hunters participating under RC907 registration permits and general hunt conditions, restrict methods and means to bow and arrow only as follows:

What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

Amend regulations for caribou hunting in Units 22 and 23 as follows:

For all non-local, non-subsistence hunters participating under RC907 registration permits and general hunt (HT) conditions, restrict methods and means to taking caribou by bow and arrow only.

This restriction applies only to non-local, non-subsistence hunters and does not alter existing subsistence or local hunting regulations.

This change is intended to reduce overall harvest by decreasing harvest efficiency while maintaining opportunity for participation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

The Western Arctic Caribou Herd is experiencing a substantial population decline. This decline is occurring in Arctic regions where environmental changes are occurring rapidly and at a larger magnitude than in other parts of North America.

While the causes of the decline are multifactorial, it is widely accepted that reducing harvest during a period of population contraction is an appropriate management response. At present, non-local, non-subsistence harvest in Units 22 and 23 remains relatively efficient due to the use of modern firearms.

Recent federal actions have restricted non-local caribou hunting on federal public lands in this region. As a result, current regulations differ between federal and state lands, creating inconsistency in management and hunter expectations.

If no changes are made at the state level, harvest opportunity and pressure may become unevenly distributed, potentially concentrating effort on state lands while federal lands remain closed. This may reduce the effectiveness of conservation measures intended to protect the herd.

At the same time, non-local hunting provides economic benefit to communities in the region. Eliminating hunting opportunity entirely would reduce these benefits and remove participation by a group that often contributes to conservation funding and advocacy.

This proposal addresses the need to reduce harvest pressure while maintaining hunting opportunity, improving consistency across land designations, and supporting continued economic activity.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

This proposal was developed independently. Input from local advisory committees and Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff would be valuable during the review process.

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