

Proposal 19

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

Limit the WACH bag limit in Unit 22 and 23 to four caribou total, with the same season dates currently in the subunits as follows:

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

Limit the WACH bag limit in Unit 22 and 23 to four caribou total. Keep the same season dates we currently have in the various subunits.

Caribou

Resident

Unit 22 & Unit 23

4 caribou total

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

Declining Western Arctic Caribou Herd and Continued High Bag Limits

With further decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, it's time to reconsider a 15 caribou bag limit, one of which may be a cow.

During the last board cycle, there were several proposals to lower the WACH bag limit in Unit 23 from 5 per day to 4 caribou total, one of which may be a cow. RHAK supported that lower bag limit, though we had concerns about taking any cows with the herd in steep decline.

The board heard from rural stakeholders who felt that the proposed lower bag limit went too far, and the board amended Proposal 36 to lower the bag limit to 15 caribou total, one of which may be a cow, and included Unit 22 in that bag limit. We did not agree with such a high bag limit when the herd was in such decline, and we do not agree with it now.

RHAK testified in support of a Wildlife Special Action WSA 26-03 at a hearing on April 9, 2026 to lower the bag limit in Unit 23 to 4 caribou total, one of which may be a cow. However, after talking to biologists, with the herd in such drastic decline we don't believe any cows should be allowed to be taken. Those are the animals we need for recruitment and we just can't afford to take any at this time.

We understand that when caribou are available from mid-October to mid-November that larger bulls may be in rut and the meat is no good, and during that time period it is preferred to take cows. If the board doesn't agree to eliminate all cow harvests, another option may be to just allow the opportunity to take one cow during the time period when bulls are in rut.

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

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska (OI-F26-097)
