

Proposal 30

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

Modify the hunt areas for caribou in Unit 22B and 22D as follows:

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

The new “May Be Announced” hunt areas for resident and nonresident caribou hunt areas in Unit 22B and 22D would be:

Unit 22(B), that portion west of Golovin Bay, and west of a line along the west bank of the Fish and Niukluk Rivers to the mouth of the Libby River, and excluding all portions of the Niukluk River drainage upstream from and including the Libby River drainage [22B, that portion west of the Kwiktalik Mountains and including all drainages flowing into Kachavik River, west of the Etchepuk River including Cache Creek, west of the Pargon River, and including the Niukluk River below the mouth of the Libby River]

- (May be announced)

Unit 22(D), that portion in the Kuzitrin River drainage (excluding the Pilgrim River drainage) [and east of the American River and including that portion of the American River and all drainages flowing into the American River above and including Budd Creek]

- (May be announced)

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

This proposal will improve regulatory and legal confusion around caribou open seasons and reindeer herd (“May Be Announced”) boundaries in Unit 22 by aligning reindeer grazing permit regions with existing “May Be Announced” regions to reduce instances of reindeer theft in areas with open caribou seasons without reducing caribou hunting opportunities. Many existing reindeer thefts come from areas within reindeer grazing permits where there are no caribou, but hunters are mistakenly led to shoot private reindeer under the auspices of a caribou registration hunt.

RHA developed this proposal in consultation with Unit 22 ADFG biologists to ensure that there are no caribou in the small regions that would be reclassified into the boundaries of existing MBA seasons, ensuring that caribou hunters benefit from reduced confusion that brings the potential for theft or poaching charges, and still retain full access to existing caribou hunts in Unit 22 as before. The clarity of this realignment of boundaries will support both caribou hunters and reindeer herders.

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

Yes, the RHA Program Director worked with ADF&G Unit 22 Management Staff to develop this proposal. Discussions between ADF&G and RHA occurred at the 2025 Annual Meeting in Nome with the reindeer herders from across the Seward Peninsula, where this proposal was supported. Of note in support of clarifying boundaries for the benefit of subsistence caribou users and reindeer herders alike were reindeer herders from Brevig Mission, Wales, White Mountain, Nome and Teller.