

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME  
Policy #81-29-GB

Finding and Policy for  
Future Management of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd

1. The management goal of the Game Board's resolution #1, September 21, 1976, was to rebuild the Western Arctic Caribou Herd to 100,000 breeding age animals. This goal will in all probability be attained during summer 1981.
2. This herd is a principal source of food for residents living within the range of the herd. Other Alaska residents and some nonresidents utilize a small portion of the herd, of which the harvest has been severely restricted since fall 1976.
3. The recent rapid rate of recovery of the herd at approximately 14 percent annually is in part a result of unusually low natural mortality due to the recent mild winters, possible reduced rates of wolf predation, and the herd conservation concerns of the residents also the herd's range in conjunction with harvest restriction.
4. At the present population level of approximately 140,000 animals there are portions of the herd's range which remain underutilized by the herd--notably the Koyukuk valley.
5. Assessment of the habitat's capabilities and condition can be determined by evaluations at varying population levels and consistent or nonconsistent migration patterns arising from development of access corridors or other human activities.

THEREFORE, future management of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd should be to:

1. Provide a greater proportion of the annual increment to those users most dependent on the herd for sustenance;
2. Allow a gradual increase in herd size for expansion into traditional ranges;
3. Maintain a portion of the annual increment for periods of increased natural mortality; and
4. Maintain periodic assessments of the habitat to determine long-term carrying capacities.

ADOPTED: Anchorage, Alaska  
April 5, 1981

VOTE: 6-0 (Bennett absent)

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Dr. Samuel J. Harbo, Jr.  
Chairman, Alaska Board of Game