



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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NEWS

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Plans to Take Proactive Approach to Invasive Caribou
Releases Draft Environmental Assessment of Caribou Control on Kagalaska Island

Homer, Alaska — The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is seeking public comments on its recently completed Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) of Caribou Control on Kagalaska Island, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. This Assessment analyzes the consequences of two alternatives: the proposed action to control invasive caribou on Kagalaska Island to prevent damage to the native ecosystems and a no action alternative.

Kagalaska is a federally designated wilderness island within Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, adjacent to Adak. Both islands were historically free of caribou, but the U.S. had a military base on Adak and caribou were introduced there, in part, to provide recreational opportunities for military personnel. In 1997, the base was closed and the human population dwindled to 325, but the caribou remain.

Today, Adak has liberal caribou hunting regulations with no closed season, and over the last five years, an average of 278 caribou have been harvested annually. With no other natural predators on Adak, the caribou population has grown to several thousand animals. Caribou from Adak's large population have begun invading new territory, swimming across the narrow strait to Kagalaska Island.

Beginning in 2015, under the proposed action, refuge staff, volunteers or contractors would periodically visit Kagalaska Island to eliminate any caribou seen on the island to prevent a new herd from forming. If caribou were to become established, they could alter vegetation, cause erosion, harm the wilderness character of the island, and threaten the native wildlife. In addition, the caribou could disperse to other refuge islands east of Kagalaska and removal could become very expensive or nearly impossible. The Service believes that caribou control would help to maintain the natural character of the island.

The DEA describes and evaluates the project and the associated environmental impacts of each alternative considered. The DEA also identifies the authorities under which the Service may take action to control caribou on the island. The Service is accepting comments on the DEA until October 29, 2014. The full text of the DEA is available at:
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/alaska_maritime/KagalaskaEA.html

You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

Email: FW7_Kagalaska@fws.gov

U.S. Mail or hand delivery:
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