

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release August 31, 1979

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## PUBLIC MEETING SET TO DISCUSS IMPACT STATEMENT ON PROPOSED U.S.-CANADA AGREEMENT TO PROTECT CARIBOU

The environmental impacts of a proposed agreement between the United States and Canada for conserving caribou--the continent's largest migratory land animal--will be discussed September 11 at a public meeting hosted by the Departments of State and Interior.

All interested persons and organizations are invited to participate in the meeting in Room 7000-A, Department of the Interior, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to discuss preparation of an environmental impact statement. The discussion will focus on the scope of the EIS and the significant issues that should be analyzed in depth.

Two primary caribou herds--the Porcupine and the Steese-Forty Mile--migrate regularly between Alaska and the Yukon Territory and frequently into the Northwest Territories. The herds crisscross the international boundaries, spending summer and fall in Alaska raising their young and then migrating to their wintering areas in Canada. Caribou populations in Alaska and western Canada have declined substantially during the past quarter century. The Porcupine herd, now numbering around 100,000 animals, and named for Alaska's Porcupine River, is the largest migratory herd remaining in the Nation.

Canadian and U.S. wildlife officials have agreed in principle that joint protection, study, and management of the caribou herds are essential to insure their conservation and that this can best be implemented by an international agreement.

These officials have consulted with their respective local governments, Native groups, and other interested organizations to determine their views on the matters that should be included in the proposed agreement.

The Departments of State and Interior believe that any agreement should establish a comprehensive management scheme. Possible alternatives to be discussed in the EIS include, among others, a reduction in scope of habitat protection standards; utilization of the animals by citizens of both countries for subsistence and sport hunting; or no formal international agreement.

Additional information may be obtained from Charles Kaiser, Department of the Interior, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240; 202/343-2172.

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INT 6077-79  
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