



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SELKIRK CARIBOU POPULATION ADDED TO ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

The southern Selkirk Mountain herd of the woodland caribou, considered the Nation's most critically endangered large mammal, has been listed as an endangered species by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The action became effective on March 30, 1984.

The herd, now estimated to number only about 30 individuals, twice was granted endangered status under emergency provisions of the Endangered Species Act; formal listing will now extend the protections of the act to the species permanently.

The Selkirk Mountain herd is the only caribou population that is found in the lower 48 States, occurring in northern Idaho and northeastern Washington as well as southern British Columbia. Critical habitat for the species has not been designated because the Fish and Wildlife Service feels such a precise description could lead to illegal take of the few remaining animals.

The woodland caribou was once found throughout the northern tier of States that border Canada; by the 1950's the last remaining population had dropped to an estimated 100 animals in the Pacific Northwest. Reasons for the species' decline include once-legal hunting, poaching, habitat degradation, low calf survival, and the absence of immigration from other herds in Canada.