

Caribou Approach Wintering Areas

Western Arctic caribou began moving south towards their wintering grounds in early September. Many were fat and healthy at that time. Hunters in places like Kiana had no trouble finding all the good animals they wanted. Anaktuvuk Pass hunters also had good hunting in October.

By early November, large bulls had dropped their antlers, signaling an end to the breeding season that occurs during the fall migration. At that time, many caribou appeared to be near the places where they will spend the winter. Most caribou settle down for the winter by late November or early December.

When Kotzebue area biologist Jim Dau and his colleagues began their fall radio tracking efforts, they found at least 30,000 Western Arctic caribou had stayed on the North Slope between Umiat, Atkasuk and Wainwright. Approximately 165,000 more were scattered south of the Brooks Range from the headwaters of the Kobuk River to Kotzebue Sound. Another 120,000 caribou were on the Seward Peninsula and appeared to be moving somewhat further west than recent years. Not all the Western Arctic caribou have been located yet. Jim Dau will attempt to account for an additional 20% of radiocollared caribou this fall between Howard and Anaktuvuk Passes in the Brooks Range and in the Nulato Hills northeast of Norton Sound.

Most of these animals appear to have had a good spring and summer. Last spring (2002) most of the pregnant cows had calves on their normal calving grounds in the Delong Mountains of the Western Brooks Range. This past summer was a little unusual for the caribou: almost the entire herd stayed in the mountains as they traveled from the Point Hope/Kivalina area toward Anaktuvuk Pass. In most years, caribou move into the southern half of the North Slope as they move east. The weather was cool and wet in the mountains during early July, which favored the plants that caribou like to eat and reduced the harassment caused by mosquitos and bot flies.

The Western Arctic herd is the largest of 32 "official" caribou herds in Alaska.



No Census in 2002

Biologists were not able to do a photocensus of the Western Arctic herd in early July because of cool temperatures, wind and poor visibility.

On July 12, the herd was spread over 150 miles in the western Brooks Range and was no longer close enough together for a "family photograph."

Kotzebue biologist Jim Dau cancelled the census on July 13 and rescheduled it for 2003.

According to ADF&G Regional Supervisor John Coady, this was only the third time in over 20 years that the census was prevented by weather.

A photocensus is an attempt to

count the herd using aerial photography. Warm buggy days force the caribou into large groups of many thousands where they can be photographed.

A census is normally planned for every three years and provides essential information as to whether

the herd is growing, stable or declining in size. Recently, the herd appears to have stopped growing and may either be stable or slightly declining.

In 1996, 463,000 caribou were accounted for in the herd. In 1999 this number was 430,000. This difference may be due to counting errors, so more census information is still needed to better understand the size trend of the herd.

In 1996, there were 463,000 caribou in the herd. In 1999, this number was 430,000.

Caribou Are Radiocollared and Checked for Disease



Caribou have been crossing the Kobuk River at Onion Portage for thousands of years.
Photos by Peter Bente, ADF&G



As a caribou cow crosses the river, biologists move in with the motor boat to capture her.
Photos by Peter Bente, ADF&G



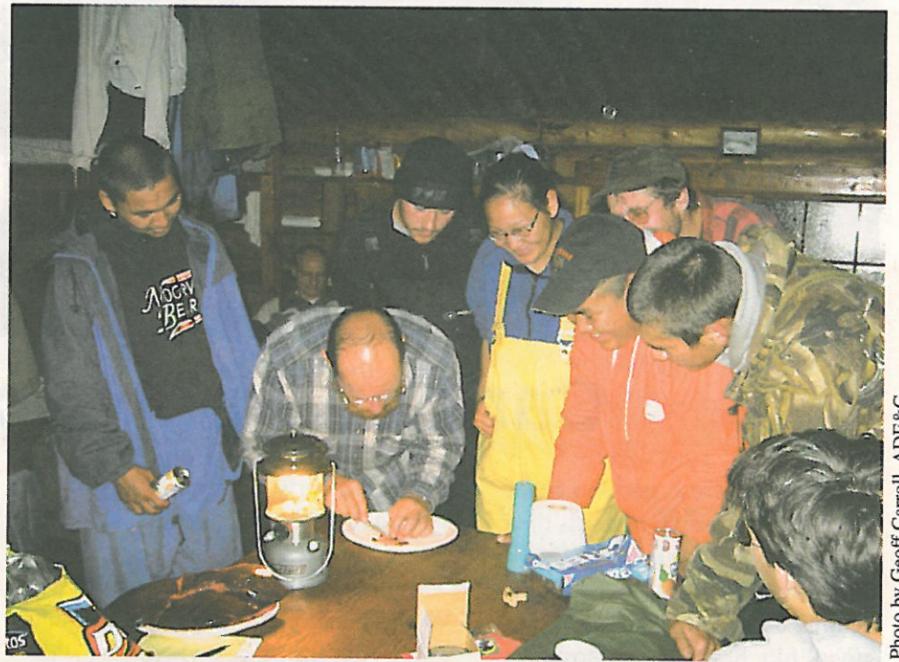
The caribou is fitted with a radiocollar and a blood sample is taken. No animals are injured or harmed by these handlings.
Photos by Peter Bente, ADF&G

In mid-September, biologists, assisted by students from Noorvik, caught and released almost 100 caribou crossing the Kobuk River below Ambler. Many thousands of caribou cross the river at Onion Portage every fall on their southward migration.

Altogether, 94 swimming caribou were caught with the use of river boats. Forty-one were fitted with radio collars, including 11 with satellite transmitters. On all the caribou, a small blood sample was taken from the neck. The blood is used for laboratory tests for disease.

Kotzebue biologist Jim Dau said the caribou they saw and caught this year were fat and in good shape. He called it an average fall migration with few low riders (very fat bulls) seen in the water. One caribou had a broken leg. One had a swollen joint which is a characteristic of brucellosis, and one yearling had been injured by a wolf or bear.

Biologists have been handling caribou in this way for many years. The radiocollars are used to follow animals through the year and provide important census information every three years. They are also used to estimate mortality (death) and recruitment (new animals added) rates in the herd. Blood tests have shown most animals to be healthy with low rates of a few diseases like brucellosis that are detected in the samples. Drugs are never used on caribou



From left to right: Jordan Snyder, Jim Dau, John Adams, Merna Barr, teacher Mike Zibell (behind), Alan Black, Darren Zibell, and Alvin Morris (facing away). Dau demonstrates how to look for tapeworm cysts in a caribou liver. Other Noorvik students also at Onion Portage but not shown were Travis Sheldon and Frances Smith. Adults who accompanied the students included Mike and Bill Zibell, Don Sheldon, and Elders Minnie and Lloyd Morris.

at Onion Portage. 2002 was a normal year in that no animals were killed or injured by the handlings. However the one animal that had been injured by bears or wolves was killed and necropsied—carefully cut up and examined to determine what had happened to it. In fact, a student actually performed the necropsy under the direction of Jim Dau. Noorvik students also examined the ‘spots in the liver’ of a caribou killed for camp meat and learned about parasites.

In addition to learning about

caribou from biologists, the Noorvik students also learned subsistence skills from Mike and Bill Zibell, Minnie Morris (a Noorvik elder), Lloyd Morris and Don Sheldon. They killed a caribou for camp meat, learned about boating in low water and constructed a clean and functional camp.

The catching crew was led by Jim Dau (ADF&G). Other crew members were Jeanie Cole (BLM), Mike Schnorr (NPS) and four others from ADF&G—John Coady, Roger Seavoy, Peter Bente and Geoff Carroll.

The Herd is Healthy: Incidence of Brucellosis is Low

Hunters are often interested in different diseases that could afflict a caribou, and wonder whether the meat is healthy or not. Most caribou in the Western Arctic herd are healthy and the meat is good to eat. However, if you shoot a caribou with a swollen leg joint, it is probably infected with brucellosis. You can still eat this caribou, but leave the skin on the bad leg and dispose of it (do not give it to your dogs). You can cook and eat the rest of the caribou.

Most caribou in the Western Arctic Herd are healthy and the meat is good to eat.

Data collected since the 1960s suggest brucellosis is less prevalent in the herd now than it was 40 years ago. It is important to note that

positive blood tests do not necessarily indicate an animal is actually infected with brucellosis; instead, they

show whether the caribou has developed some resistance to the disease from prior exposure to this bacteria (just as people have resistance to polio without actually having the disease). Blood tests

showing exposure to brucellosis probably reflect trends in the proportion of this herd that is actually infected by brucellosis bacteria.

Since 1992, when ADF&G began testing Western Arctic caribou annually for diseases, only 39 of 602 caribou tested (6%) had been exposed to brucellosis. If only 6% of Western Arctic caribou had even been exposed to this disease, the number actually infected was undoubtedly much lower.

Caribou exposure to brucellosis for individual years has ranged from 0% in 1997 to 12% in 1993 and 1995.

Continued on page 7



A swollen leg joint on a caribou may indicate brucellosis. Dispose of the leg and do not eat it.

A New Caribou Management Plan

By and For the People

In some ways, our Western Arctic caribou herd is a lot like the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. Both are incredibly valuable resources to us all. When the herd or the fund is large and healthy, more animals are available to us or there is more money to spend and we are happy. But when times are not so good and the fund shrinks or the herd does not come to us, there is uncertainty and we worry about harder times.

The people who have the most to gain or lose from the Western Arctic herd are those who depend upon it the most—including hunters, guides, pilots and wilderness travelers. Subsistence hunters often talk about “our caribou.” And so

they are—a valuable public resource that we need to keep healthy so we can all benefit.

management of the herd. Our Working Group includes representatives from many villages

legally responsible for managing wildlife. However, partnerships between the public and agencies, such as the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group and the Planning Committee, can be even more effective in determining how wildlife will be managed than agencies acting alone.

If you’ve not had a chance to look at the draft plan, please take a moment to do so. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group and the agencies are committed to managing this caribou herd for all Alaskans. Please let us hear from you.

by John Coady and John Trent
AK Department of Fish & Game

“THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN IS TO WORK TOGETHER TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM CONSERVATION OF THE WESTERN ARCTIC CARIBOU HERD AND THE ECOSYSTEM IT DEPENDS ON, FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL PEOPLE, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.”

The Caribou Planning Committee

For the past two years, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group has been developing a new plan to guide

throughout the range of the herd and others who care about management of the herd. The group is supported by state and federal resource management agencies.

The draft plan currently being circulated for public review was written by a Planning Committee appointed by the Working Group. Although the draft Plan reflects the diversity of Planning Committee members, it is based on a goal shared by everyone - that this vast caribou herd be protected and wisely used so that it will continue to provide subsistence, recreational, and economic benefits to future generations of all Alaskans.

This plan is truly a product of the people who use the herd. This has not always been the case. The first plan was written in 1976 by Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) biologists, and only reviewed at a few public meetings. The next plan, written in 1984 by ADF&G biologists, was circulated to several Native organizations and federal agencies in northwest Alaska. However, opportunity for review was limited.

By contrast, over 400 copies of the current draft Plan have been circulated for review to village residents and governments in northwest Alaska, to state and federal Advisory Committees, and to numerous other individuals and organizations.

Wildlife in Alaska is owned by the public, and should be managed by the public to the greatest extent possible. Admittedly, state and federal agencies, not the public, are

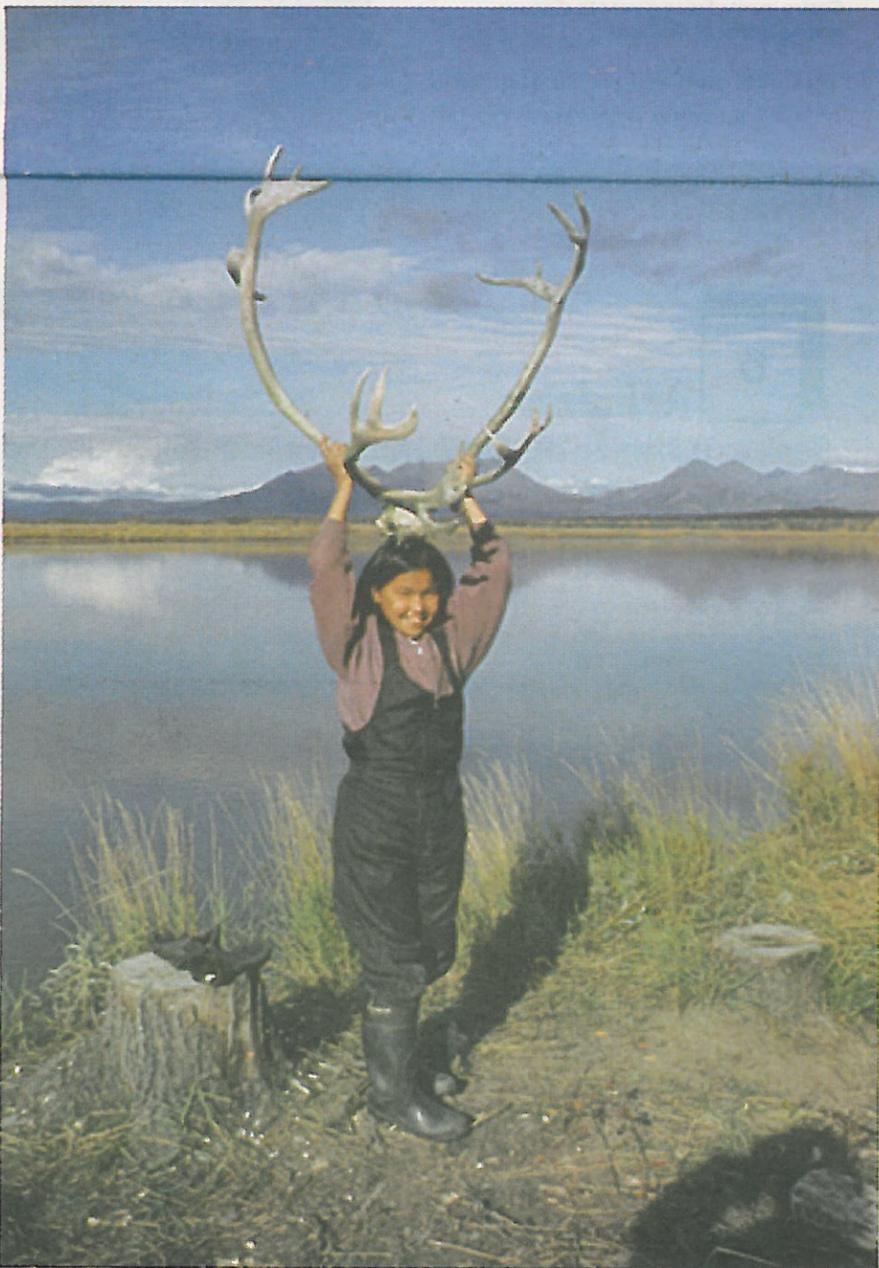


Photo by Lee Anne Ayres

Planning Committee

Member	Representing
Raymond Stoney Kiana	Subsistence Hunters
Benedict Jones Koyukuk	Subsistence Hunters
Elmer Seetot, Jr. Brevig Mission	Subsistence Hunters
John Schoen Chairman Anchorage	Conservationists
Don Frederick Anchorage	Sport Hunters
Phil Driver Anchorage	Guides
Pius Washington St. Michael	Reindeer Herders
Jeanie Cole	Bureau of Land Management
Lee Anne Ayres Kotzebue	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Dave Spirtes Kotzebue	National Park Service
John Trent Anchorage	AK Dept. of Fish & Game
Sverre Pedersen Anchorage	AK Dept. of Fish & Game

DRAFT WESTERN ARCTIC CARIBOU MANAGEMENT PLAN

WE WANT YOUR HELP!

Presented on this page is a basic summary of the draft Western Arctic Caribou Management Plan. These seven plan elements are at the heart of the plan. They are what we hope to accomplish. For each element there is a goal, one or more strategies for achieving the goal and then proposed management actions.



For a full copy of the Plan or for more information, contact:

John Trent
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518

1-866-467-2191 or
john_trent@fishgame.state.ak.us

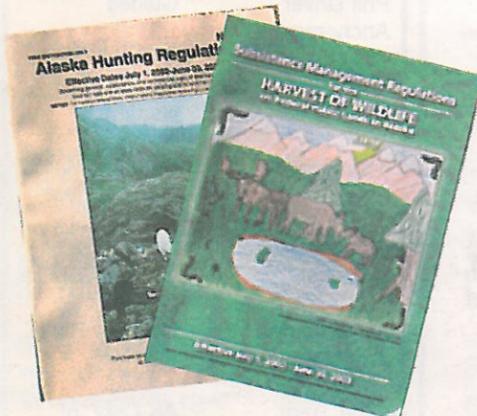
The full text is also reproduced on the Internet at:

www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/wildlife/geninfo/planning/wahplan.pdf

We still need your ideas to improve this plan!
The planning comment deadline is January 31, 2003

4 Regulations

Promote consistent, understandable and effective state and federal regulations for the conservation of the Western Arctic herd.



The Caribou Working Group is neither a regulation making nor an enforcement body, but it does recognize the need for having regulations that both protect the Western Arctic Herd and treat all people fairly.

There are four strategies for doing this:

1. Support the existing regulatory process of advisory committees and regional advisory councils, the Alaska Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board before decisions are made. Also work through existing state and federal processes to assure proposals and regulations are consistent with this plan.
2. Acknowledge and provide for both local caribou hunting as well as opportunities for other users.
3. Recommend hunting regulations.
4. Simplify caribou hunting regulations.

1

Cooperation

Encourage cooperative management of the herd and its habitats among state, federal and local entities and all users of the herd.



The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meets twice a year to discuss management of the herd.

It is important that the many different people who depend on the Western Arctic caribou cooperate to make sure "those caribou keep on coming."

This first plan element stresses the need for cooperation and information sharing among all who manage, use or value the herd. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group is the forum for doing this. The Working Group does not make regulations.

5

Reindeer

Seek to minimize conflict between reindeer herders and the Western Arctic herd.



Reindeer are a domesticated form of caribou that were introduced to Alaska more than 100 years ago when caribou populations were low. Reindeer are private property and cannot be legally hunted like caribou.

The Reindeer Goal in this plan seeks to minimize conflict between reindeer herders and people who use or value caribou by providing timely information and education materials.

The single strategy for meeting this goal is to use the Caribou Working Group and agencies to share information and find solutions to issues concerning caribou and reindeer.

MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

2 Population Management

Recognizing that caribou herds naturally fluctuate in numbers, manage for a healthy population using strategies adapted to population levels and trends.



Aircraft are used to help monitor herd population.

Since numbers and conditions in this herd normally change over time, management strategies must change with the changing conditions of the herd. Three population-tracking strategies are proposed. These

strategies are determined by the size, condition and trend of the herd. For example, when caribou populations are high, harvest recommendations will be liberal. When the population is low, harvest recommendations will be conservative.

High: 300,000 caribou. Herd is relatively stable or increasing.

Medium: 200,000-300,000 caribou. Herd is relatively stable or increasing.

Low: population less than 200,000. Herd is decreasing, stable or only slowly increasing.

3 Habitat

Assess and protect important habitats of the Western Arctic herd.



Caribou can cover hundreds of miles during their migration. Migration corridors and wintering grounds are essential for the caribou.

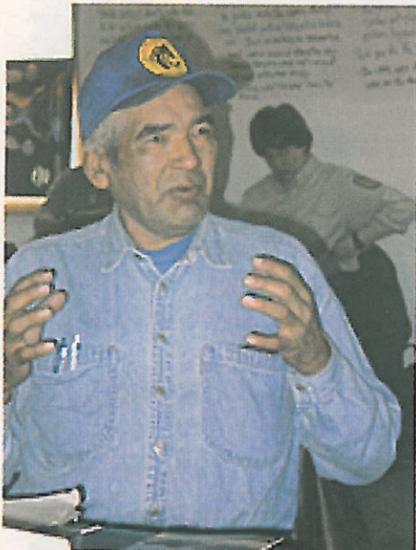
Identifying and conserving caribou habitat will require a high level of coordination between landowners, land management agencies and all who use or value the herd.

To meet this goal, the Caribou Working Group will encourage the resource management agencies to do three things:

- Identify and **describe habitats** used by the herd.
- Consider the habitat needs of the herd and inform managers about potential habitat impacts—**habitat protection**.
- Further understand how **wildfire affects range conditions** and thus the management of the herd.

6 Knowledge

Integrate scientific information, traditional ecological knowledge of Alaska Native users, and knowledge of all users into management of the Western Arctic herd.



Working Group member Pollock Simon, Sr. shares his knowledge.

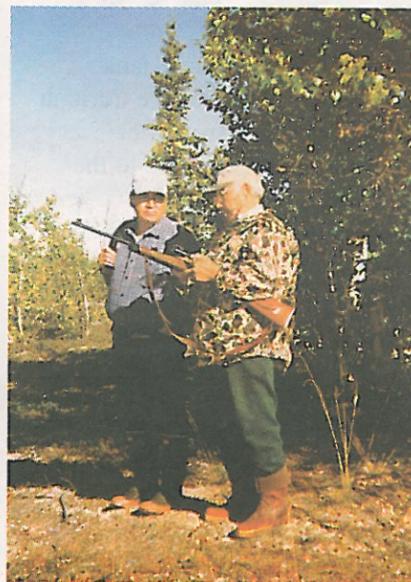
The plan clearly specifies that knowledge to manage the herd must come from all available sources.

One strategy is to identify information gaps and prioritize research needs. A second strategy is to seek out and preserve traditional ecological and local knowledge about caribou within the range of the herd.

The plan also identifies 13 scientific information needs. For example, there is a need to improve our understanding of the carrying capacity of the caribou herd's range.

7 Education

Increase understanding and appreciation of the Western Arctic herd through use of scientific information, traditional ecological knowledge of Alaska Native users, and knowledge of all other users.



Knowledge alone is insufficient for maintaining this great caribou herd and the various traditions of use or appreciation that are built around it. The plan identifies education programs as an essential activity for promoting an understanding and appreciation of the herd.

The strategy used to meet this goal is to develop information and education programs to share traditional ecological and scientific knowledge about the herd.

Photo on left: Enoch Stalker and Ralph Ramoth, Sr. helped create the video *Tuttunnaiq*, which documents proper Inupiaq caribou hunting techniques.

WORKING GROUP VOTING CHAIRS

City of Anaktuvuk Pass

Harry Hugo 661-3612
Earl Williams (alternate) 661-3612

Buckland, Deering, Selawik

Vacant

Elim, Golovin, White Mountain

Vacant

Kivalina, Noatak

Raymond Hawley 645-2164

Kiana, Noorvik

Raymond Stoney 475-2103
Vernon Cleveland (alt) 636-2144

Ambler, Kobuk, Shungnak

Henry Homer, Sr. 948-2115
Sally Custer (alternate) 437-2170

Kotzebue

Enoch Schiedt, Sr. 442-7690

Koyukuk River: Huslia, Hughes, Alatna/

Allakaket, Bettles, Wiseman
Pollock Simon, Sr. 968-2207

Nome

Roy Ashenfelter 443-5730
Ralph Anungazuk (alt) 664-3062

Northern Seward Peninsula:

Shishmaref, Wales, Brevig Mission,
Teller
Elmer Sectot, Jr. 642-4091

Southern Norton Sound: Koyuk,

Shaktoolik, Unalakleet, Stebbins,
St. Michael
Frank Kavairlook 963-3291

Native Village of Pt. Hope

Earl Kingik 368-2330

Middle Yukon River: Galena, Kaltag,

Koyukuk, Nulato
Benedict Jones 927-2205
Royce Purinton (alternate) 898-2225

Non-local Resident Hunters

Oliver E. "Bud" Burris 474-0437
(confirmation required)

Hunting Guides

Phil Driver 277-8829
Bob Hannon (alternate) 963-3222

Transporters

Colin Brown

Conservationists

John Schoen 276-7034
Paul Jackson (alternate) 276-3133

Anchorage Advisory Committee

Don Frederick 333-3640

Reindeer Herders Association

Pius Washington 923-2304

Wainwright

Enoch Oktollik 763-2115

"WE CAN NO LONGER TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT THESE CARIBOU WILL ALWAYS COME THROUGH OUR COMMUNITIES," SAYS JOSEPH BALLOT, A SUBSISTENCE HUNTER AND COMMUNITY LEADER IN SELAWIK.

Working Group Meeting Held in Fairbanks

The Western Arctic Caribou Working Group held its spring meeting in Fairbanks April 9-10 at the Fairbanks Regency Hotel.

Meeting highlights included the approval of the draft Cooperative Caribou Management Plan! Thanks to the hard work of the Planning Committee, we are now seeking public review and comment on the draft plan. (See pages three and four of this newsletter for a summary of the plan).

The Working Group also approved a new attendance policy for members. There is now a new Article IX in the Working Group Bylaws setting standards for attendance and behavior at Working Group meetings.

Distinguished scientist Robert White talked to us about caribou nutrition. Professor White told us about his work as a physiologist with the University of Alaska Fairbanks where he examined the connection between what caribou eat and the calves they produce.



The Caribou Working Group last met in Fairbanks. Other meeting locations have included Point Hope, Anaktuvuk Pass, and Kotzebue.

Alaska Board of Game member Julie Maier participated as a guest in both days of the meetings.

Benedict Jones (see story on back page) arranged a potlatch dinner at the new David Salmon Tribal Hall down by the Chena River. There was good country food and lots of Alaska Native dancing and singing. Sponsors were the Fairbanks Native Association and Tanana Chiefs Conference.

The next Caribou Working Group meeting will be in Anchorage Dec. 12-13, 2002.

Ballot Resigns, Stoney Takes Over

Raymond Stoney of Kiana became Acting Chair of the Caribou Working Group in April after Joseph Ballot resigned due to the press of other duties.

Mr. Ballot had been Chairman since January 2000. He is currently President of NANA Development Corporation and is Magistrate in his home community of Selawik.

In his resignation letter Joseph said, "The Western Arctic Herd is important to the villages within its range. I hope that the representative for Buckland, Deering and Selawik who replaces me is someone who is concerned with the herd and the environment that it lives in."



Raymond Stoney

The Caribou Working Group will select a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman at its next meeting on Dec. 12-13, 2002, in Anchorage.

Frequently Asked Questions*

What do caribou eat?

They eat lichens, especially in winter when other plants are not available. They also feed on the branches of dwarf willow and birch, and on grasses and sedges. In autumn, they eat fungi (mushrooms) as well.

Why do caribou migrate?

Theories to explain migration involve food, predation, insects, and weather. Migration opens up a larger and more variable food supply. It allows caribou to calve and raise their young away from most wolves that den near the forest-tundra border. It allows them to avoid some of the biting insects and parasites that have an insect stage in their cycle. Finally, it permits them to summer in a relatively cool location and to secure abundant lichens under snow in forested areas in winter.

How big are caribou?

In winter, adult females weigh an average of 176 - 198 lbs., depending on environmental conditions. Adult males average 240 lbs. in winter. However, just before the rut in October, adult males averaged 323 lbs. because of large stores of fat that are lost during the rut.

How many calves do cows usually have each year?

Usually only one.

How long do caribou live?

Females live as long as 16 years and males about 13 years.

*excerpted from the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board web page.



Caribou Bulletin Board



Caribou Season Temporarily Closed Near Nome

Beginning September 1, 2002, ADF&G closed a small part of Unit 22D upstream of the Pilgrim River Bridge to caribou hunting in order to protect privately owned reindeer. Six weeks later, when caribou began arriving in that area, the caribou hunting season was reopened on October 17th. For more details call ADF&G in Nome: 443-2271.

Caribou Climb to Escape the Bugs

While camping in the upper Noatak drainage during late July, Kotzebue area biologist Jim Dau saw caribou on top of Ouyukak Mountain at an elevation of about 7,300 feet.

This mountain is covered by one of the few year-round glaciers in this region and its sides are

incredibly steep, rugged and barren (sheep don't even go there!). It was windy up high and Jim was impressed at the effort caribou will make to escape the bugs.

"Red Dog" Caribou

In early August, Kotzebue Area Biologist Jim Dau shot a bull caribou that had spent most of July around the Red Dog Mine tailings impoundment. The bull was actually in the pond on several occasions.

Local people were concerned that its meat had been contaminated by heavy metals and wanted it removed from the population before a hunter killed it. Tissue samples from the bull will be analyzed for heavy metals. Red Dog mine staff were instructed on necropsy (animal autopsy) procedures.

Ten other caribou living near the Red Dog mine road were shot by Jim Dau to test their tissue. The laboratory has received those materials but results are not yet available.

Reindeer Herding in Russia

Leonid Baskin from the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow paid a visit to western Alaska in October. He spoke to the executive committee of the Kawerak Reindeer



Dr. Baskin and reindeer herders Fred Goodhope, Herman Toolie, Nathan Hadley and Merlin Henry. (Peter Bente photo)

Herders Association in Nome and then radio-tracked caribou out of Kotzebue.

Dr. Baskin has studied reindeer and reindeer herding in Russia for 40 years. As a young man, he managed a herd of 15,000 deer in Kamchatka.

There are no caribou in Russia, but recently there have been as many as one million wild reindeer and another two and a half million tame reindeer in herds. Although the decline of the Soviet system caused a decline in the tame reindeer industry in Russia, many Native people continue a traditional way of life with their reindeer herds.

We all enjoyed listening to Dr. Baskin's descriptions of the reindeer herding way of life that continues in Russia to this day.

Have you seen caribou do something interesting or unusual that you would like to share with readers of this newsletter? Call John Trent toll free at 1-866-467-2191 or write Caribou Trails newsletter c/o John Trent, ADF&G, 333 Raspberry Rd. Anchorage, AK 99518.

Continued from page 2

Facts About Brucellosis

(excerpted from "Common Wildlife Diseases and Parasites in Alaska." AK Department of Fish & Game. Anchorage, AK, Brett Elkin and RL Zarnke, 2001)

What causes brucellosis?

- Brucellosis is a highly contagious disease caused by bacteria in caribou and reindeer. It is spread in the afterbirth and fluids during calving.

Where does brucellosis occur?

- *Brucella suis* occurs naturally in caribou and reindeer and has also been seen in muskoxen and moose. It's most common in the four arctic caribou herds. Predators such as bears and wolves are exposed when they feed on infected caribou.

What are the signs of brucellosis?

- Animals may appear healthy and not show any signs of disease.
- It usually affects the reproductive organs and leg joints.
- Often, animals will have swollen leg joints causing limping or lameness (especially in the front legs).

- When butchering, you may find pus-filled swellings under the skin, in the meat or in the internal organs.
- The testicles or womb may be swollen.
- In people, brucellosis often causes a high fever that frequently comes and goes

How can I protect myself?

- You can get brucellosis through exposure to contaminated parts. The bacteria can enter through cuts or scratches in your skin or through your eyes, nose or mouth. You can also get brucellosis by eating infected meat that has not been fully cooked.
- Do not cut into diseased parts.
- Do not spill fluid from the womb onto the meat.
- Use extreme care when handling any fetal membranes or aborted tissues.
- Wash your hands, knives and clothes with hot soapy water after handling the animal.
- Report any animals suspected of

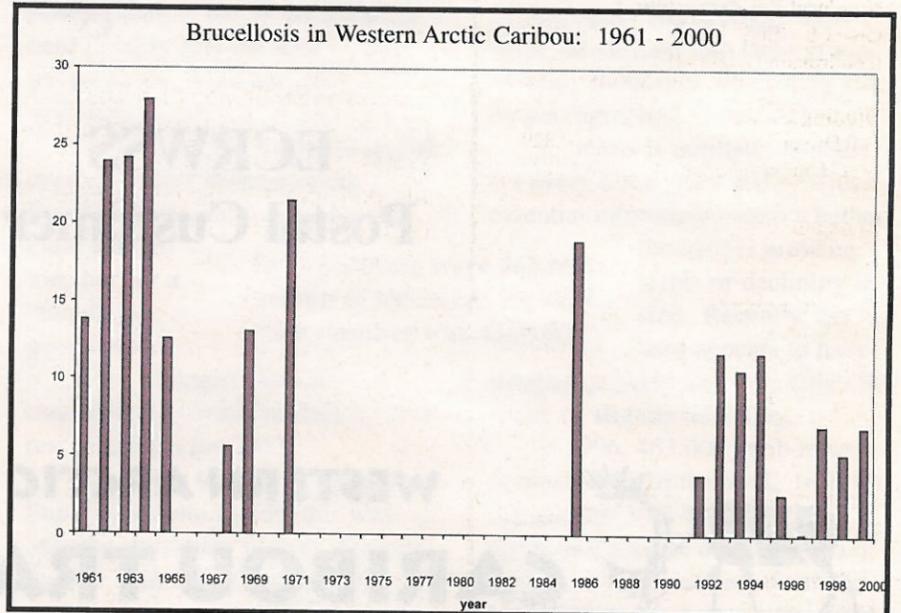
having brucellosis to your nearest ADF&G biologist.

pickling do not kill *Brucella*.

- Raw bone marrow from infected animals can contain the bacteria.

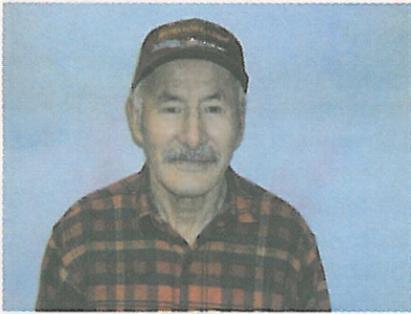
Can I eat the meat?

- Meat from animals with brucellosis should be thoroughly cooked.
- Freezing, smoking, drying and



The occurrence of brucellosis has decreased since data was first collected 40 years ago. Data was not collected in most of the years where there is no bar graph shown.

Village Viewpoint: Benedict Jones



Benedict Jones

Benedict Jones, a member of the Western Arctic Caribou Working Group, was born in Fish Camp on the Yukon River about 10 miles below Koyukuk. Benedict has been involved in subsistence hunting and trapping all his life and has a cabin about 140 miles up the Koyukuk River. Benedict's wife, Eliza, was a principle author of the dictionary of the Koyukon Athabascan language.

Benedict worked as a deckhand on the steamer Nenana in 1951-52 and made the trip on the Yukon all the way from Marshall to Whitehorse. He worked for a mining company on the Hog River for about 5 years and later worked for the Alaska Department of

Transportation in Fairbanks. He trained workers in villages to operate heavy equipment and helped to build the original roads in Nulato as well as many other communities.

Benedict recounted, "back in the '30s people mostly lived on caribou before moose migrated into the area.

People in the whole village of Koyukuk would get 1-2 moose a year but by the late '40s there

were more moose. There were few wolves then, mostly coyotes. The caribou herd wintered between Koyukuk and Huslia in 1942 but then were not seen again until 1985."

Benedict has worked extensively on behalf of Native people throughout his life. In 1961 he was one of the initial delegates to the convention that resulted in the formation of Tanana Chiefs Conference. He was actively involved in working for passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement

"The caribou herd wintered between Koyukuk and Huslia in 1942 but then were not seen again until 1985."

Act. Benedict fought against the Corps of Engineers proposal to construct Rampart Dam that would have flooded the Yukon Flats. Doyon, Inc. named Benedict Jones "Elder of the Year for 2002."

Benedict represents the Western Interior Regional Subsistence Council on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. He has also served on the Middle Yukon Fish and Game Advisory Committee since 1991. He was a member of the Koyukuk River Moose Hunters' Working Group that prepared a new management plan for moose in the Koyukuk River drainage.

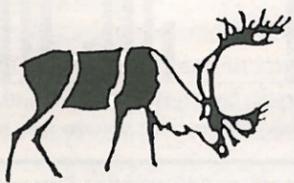
Benedict has been a dog musher for many years and has won first place in races at winter carnivals in Ruby, Koyukuk, Nulato, Kaltag and Huslia. He hopes the next generation will continue to be involved in dog mushing.

by Randy Rogers
AK Department of Fish & Game

Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
P.O. Box 689
Kotzebue, AK 99752

PRST STD.
ECRWSS
U.S. Postage Paid
Anchorage, AK 99518
Permit No. 145

ECRWSS
Postal Customer



WESTERN ARCTIC
CARIBOU TRAILS

A PUBLICATION BY THE WESTERN ARCTIC CARIBOU HERD WORKING GROUP

WORKING GROUP MISSION

"Develop an integrated grass roots process for sharing representation, responsibility and decision-making among stakeholders in management of the Western Arctic caribou herd."

Goals

- Ensure the conservation of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
- Safeguard the spiritual and cultural well being of Alaska Natives and the interests of all users of the herd
- Integrate indigenous knowledge and western science

Patty Christian, Editor
National Park Service

Caribou Trails is a publication of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. Its purpose is to involve and inform all the users of the Western Arctic caribou herd so that it may be effectively managed.

Fast Fact

Approximately 15,000 - 20,000 Western Arctic Caribou are harvested each year.

Approximately 500-1,000 of these are harvested by sport hunters.

Join Us at the
Next Meeting!
Anchorage

December 12-13, 2002