

WILDLIFE SPECIAL ACTION REQUEST

WSA26-01 Western Arctic Caribou

What is WSA26-01, Western Arctic Caribou?

The Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH) Working Group (WG) submitted a Special Action request (WSA26-01) to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) on January 29, 2026, requesting to reduce the harvest limit for caribou in Units 22, 23, and the southwestern portion of Unit 26A, to **four caribou per hunter per year**, only one of which may be a cow (see Map 1). The Board will consider this request in June.

Special Actions are temporary changes to Federal subsistence hunting or fishing regulations (requested and enacted at any point throughout the year), taken when unusual situations arise, such as a significant change in resource abundance. For temporary special actions, a public hearing is held for public comment, and the Board consults with the Chair(s) of affected Regional Advisory Council(s) and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. If issued, a Temporary Special Action may last more than 60 days and up to 2 years or until the end of the current relevant fish or wildlife regulatory cycle. More: <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/faqs>.

At its annual meeting, the WACH WG assigned the management level "Critical, Declining" to the herd based on the current census of 121,000 caribou and an adult cow survival rate of less than 80%. The WACH WG submitted WSA26-01 to address the current herd decline, assist in its recovery, and continue the subsistence uses of the WACH into the future.

Public Input

A public hearing to receive testimony on WSA26-01 is scheduled on April 9, 2026. Comments received during the public hearing will be forwarded to the Board for consideration when it meets on this request. Additional public input opportunities are listed to the right.



Caribou in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Caribou in Selawik National Wildlife Refuge.
Credit: Lisa Hupp/USFWS

Opportunities for Engagement

Provide Feedback to Regional Advisory Councils (winter 2026)

North Slope, February 24 - 25
Western Interior, February 24 - 25
Seward Peninsula, March 30 - 31
Northwest Arctic, March 31 - April 1

For more information visit:
www.doi.gov/subsistence/regions

Participate in a Public Hearing

April 9, 2026
4:00 - 6:00 pm
Via teleconference (toll-free):
(833) 436-1163;
Passcode 514 754 808#

Request a Tribal or ANCSA Consultation

Contact Orville Lind at
orville_lind@ios.doi.gov

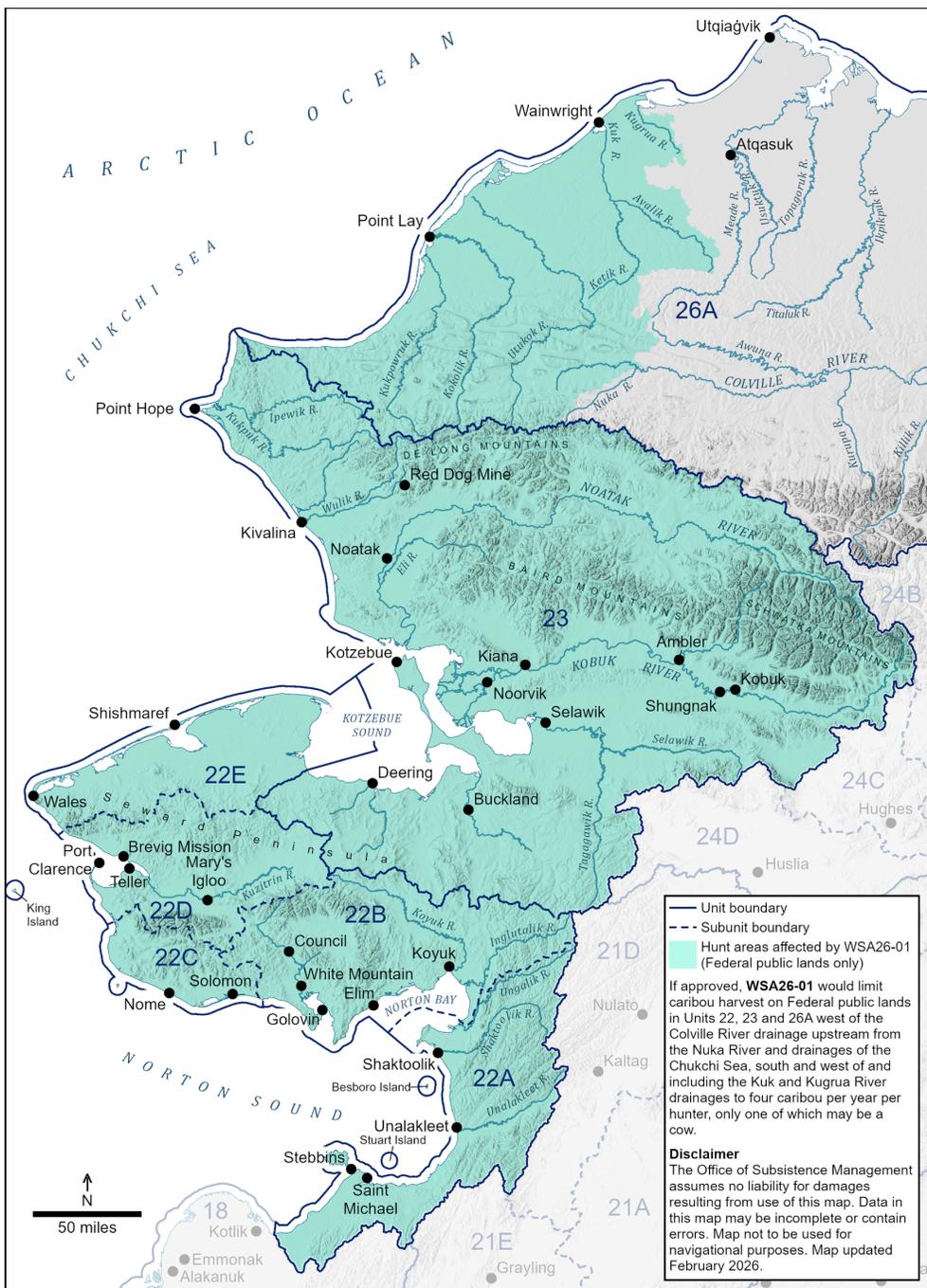
Provide Public Testimony to the Federal Subsistence Board

June 3, 2026
1:00 pm
Via teleconference (toll-free):
(833) 436-1163;
Passcode 239 255 934#

What happens next?

Office of Subsistence Management staff will write an analysis, incorporating the recommendations of the Regional Advisory Councils as well as summaries of comments received during the public hearing and any Tribal consultations. The final analysis will be available at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/upcoming-federal-subsistence-board-meetings>, at least one week prior to the Board meeting. The Board will take final action on this request on June 3, 2026. A press release will be issued communicating the Board's decision.

Temporary special actions do not impact Designated Hunter Permits, which allow a federally qualified subsistence user to designate another federally qualified subsistence user to hunt on their behalf. Information about Federal Designated Hunter Permits can be found at www.doi.gov/subsistence/faqs.



For more information

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www.doi.gov/subsistence
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Map 1. Units 22, 23, and the southwestern portion of Unit 26A are the hunt areas affected by WSA26-01 where the caribou harvest limit would be reduced.

