



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



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MULCHATNA CARIBOU SEASONS CLOSED ON FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS THROUGHOUT RANGE OF THE MULCHATNA CARIBOU HERD

The Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager is closing the 2023-2024 caribou season on federal lands throughout the range of the Mulchatna Caribou herd due to biological concerns with concurrence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The closure will remain in effect in the following areas:

Units 9A, 9B, 9C (that portion within the Alagnak River drainage), 9C (that portion draining into the Naknek River from the north, and Graveyard Creek and Coffee Creek), 17A (all drainages west of Right Hand Point), 17B and 17C (that portion of 17C east of the Wood River and Wood River Lakes), 18 (that portion to the east and south of the Kuskokwim River), 18 remainder, 19A and 19B (excluding rural Alaska residents of Lime Village).

Justification:

The summer 2023 population estimate of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd is approximately 12,507 which is similar to estimates since 2019 and well below the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's minimum population objective of 30,000. As a result of this decline, conservation measures were implemented during the past several seasons including closures of seasons by both State and Federal managers. To provide timely and flexible management decisions, the Federal Subsistence Board delegated in-season management authority to the Togiak Refuge Manager for the 2020-2022 hunting seasons. Since receiving management authority, the Togiak Refuge staff, working with staff from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, determined there is no harvestable surplus that would allow herd growth. Thus, in the interest of allowing herd recovery, no harvest is warranted this season. The federal in-season manager consulted with and has concurrence from affected Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and other federal land managers.

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