



Federal Subsistence Board News Release



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Forest Service

For Immediate Release:
March 31, 2022

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Federal Subsistence Board Work Session Results on Deferred Temporary Wildlife Special Action Request WSA21-01 (Units 23 and 26A Caribou and Moose)

In February 2021, the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council submitted a Wildlife Special Action Request WSA21-01 to close Federal public lands in Units 23 and 26A to the harvest of caribou and moose by non-Federally qualified users from August 1 through September 30, 2021. In June 2021, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) deferred this request to 2022, instructing the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) to seek additional input on concerns related to caribou. The Board also asked the OSM to include comparisons of moose harvest by survey area within Unit 23 in their analysis. Following deferral, the request was divided into WSA21-01a (caribou) and WSA21-01b (moose).

During the telephonic work session on March 30, 2022, the Board voted to approve WSA21-01a with modification to close Noatak National Preserve (including the Nigu River portion of the Preserve in Unit 26A) and BLM managed lands between the Noatak and Kobuk rivers in Unit 23 (**see Map below**) to caribou hunting by non-Federally qualified users (NFQUs) from August 1 through September 30 during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 regulatory years.

The Board stated this modification is a reasonable compromise that provides for the continuation of subsistence uses and the conservation of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH), while precluding unnecessary restrictions on non-Federally qualified users. The partial closure targets the areas of highest user conflicts and minimizes potential disruptions to caribou migration. The Board also expressed concern over the 24% WACH population decline over the past two years, which prompted the WACH Working Group to change the herd's management level to preservative declining. One management recommendation under this level is closure of some Federal lands. The Board also referenced support of the closure by affected Regional Advisory Councils.

The Board voted to approve WSA21-01b with modification to close moose hunting to non-Federally qualified subsistence users on Federal public lands in Unit 23 only from August 1 through September 30 during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 regulatory years.

The Board stated the closure in Unit 23 provides more subsistence harvest opportunity and is necessary to conserve the moose population, which has declined substantially; the harvestable surplus may also be exceeded. In contrast, moose harvest by non-Federally qualified users in Unit

26A is very low and unlikely to affect that moose population. The Board also referenced support of the closure by affected Regional Advisory Councils.

The Board approved both WSA21-01a (caribou) and WSA21-01b (moose) with modification for two regulatory years to assess the effectiveness of the closures and to reduce the administrative burden of processing special action requests.

Information about the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

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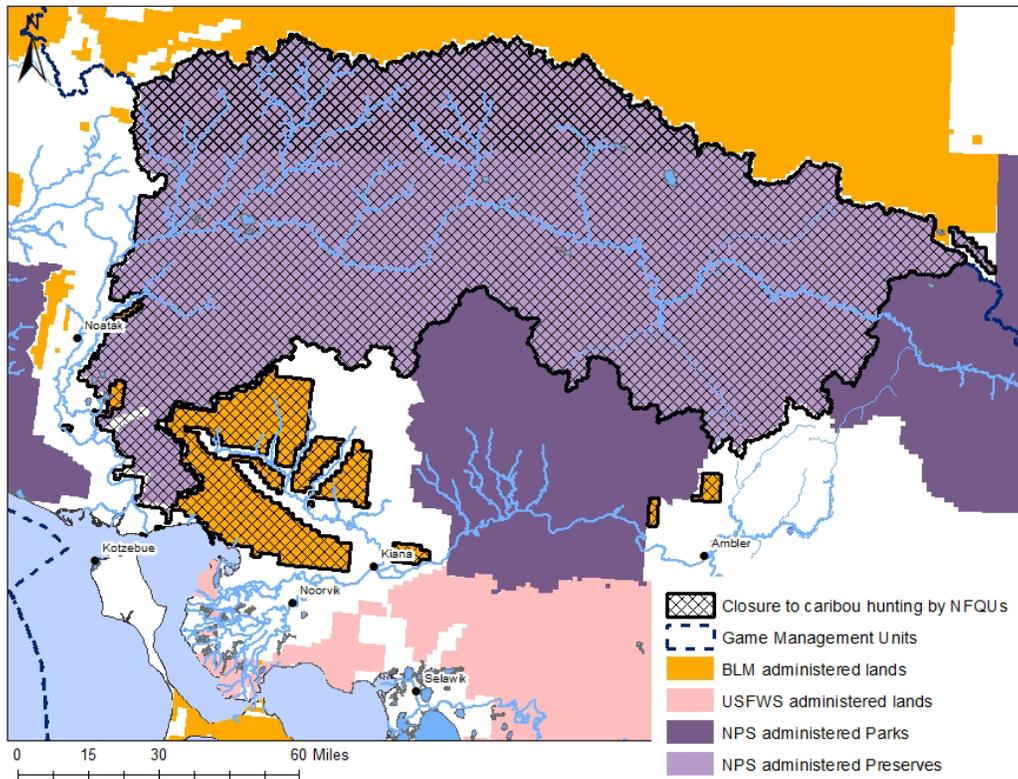


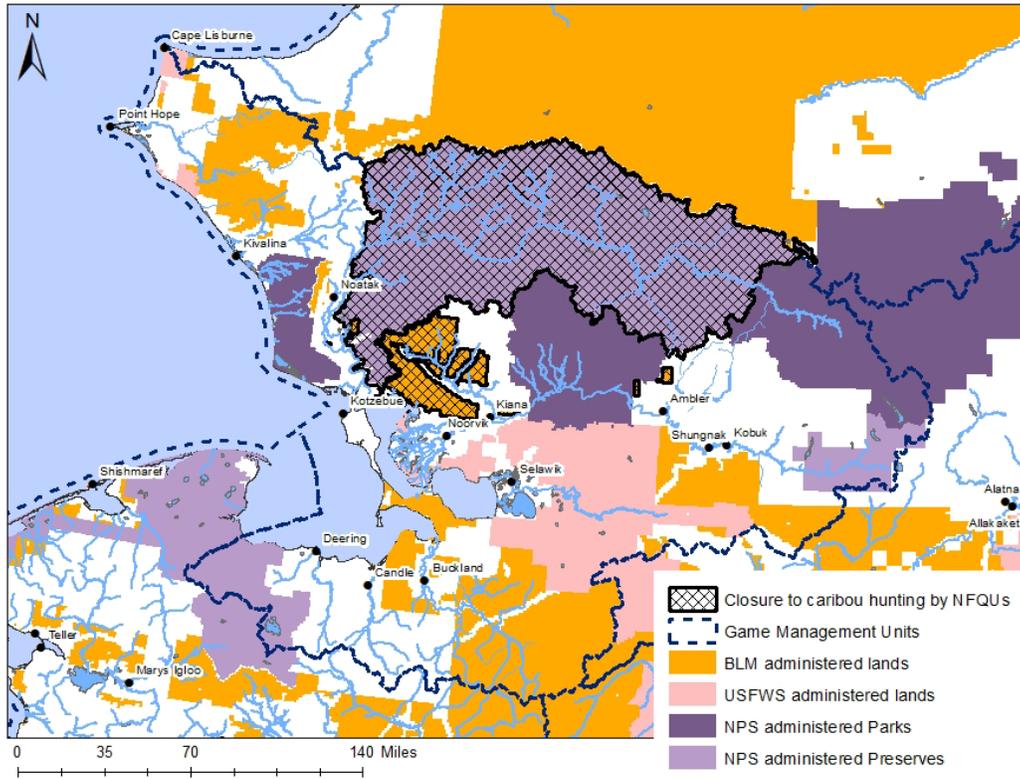
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