

## **Fall 2022 Update for Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge**

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*Photo credit:USFWS*

**August 2022**

Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge  
PO Box 779, Tok, AK 99780



## **BIOLOGY PROJECTS**

### **Moose Twinning Survey**

Biological staff and contractors conducted a second year of moose calf surveys focused on determining the frequency of twinning. Twinning rates are correlated with nutritional status of cow moose and thus provide an index to moose habitat conditions. Biologists and contractors flew for four days this spring. Preliminary results are similar to that observed in 2021. Last year we located 31 cow moose with at least one calf. Of these cows, 6 had twins yielding a twinning rate of about 19%. In 2022, we observed 37 total cows with calves and 7 with twins. The observed twinning rate was again roughly 19%. We observed good overall moose numbers again this spring and tallied 107 bulls and 116 total cows.

### **Moose population surveys**

Staff will be conducting 2022 fall moose population surveys in November in coordination with ADF&G biologists in Tok.

### **Duck Banding**

Efforts continue on Tetlin NWR to monitor the migration and harvest of waterfowl. Refuge staff operated banding stations on multiple lakes last fall, and banded nearly 600 ducks for the season. Banding efforts for 2022 concluded last week. Waterfowl populations in the Pacific Flyway overall are healthy but the distribution of birds varies annually at banding sites. We encountered lower numbers of ducks available at banding sites this year and finished the season with 379 banded, 75% of which were mallards.

### **Northwest Boreal Lynx Project**

Our observations suggest that hare numbers are beginning to slowly increase around the Refuge. Annual hare population monitoring work is currently under way. Lynx populations will lag behind hare numbers as production of lynx kittens slowly increases. Tetlin staff deployed 3 new collars in February-March 2022 bringing the total to 103 gps collars since 2015 (Table 1). Seven radio-marked lynx are still alive with 6 of those on Tetlin NWR. Staff expect to conduct limited and focused lynx capture efforts in winter of 2022-2023 to replace old collars and capture lynx new to the area. The 10-year project is slated to run through 2024.

Table 1. Numbers of Canada lynx radio collared 2015 – 2022 and fate of radio-collared individuals.

Year	Collars Deployed	On Refuge Alive	Off Refuge Alive	Dead	Collars Replaced	Collars Offline
2015	6	0	0	3	2	1
2016	18	0	0	7	5	6
2017	20	0	0	2	9	9
2018	20	0	0	12	3	5
2019	26	3	1	19	2	1
2020	9	0	0	7	2	0
2021	1	0	0	0	1	0
2022	3	3	0	0	0	0
Totals	103	6	1	50	24	22

### Wood Bison Habitat

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game continues to examine wood bison restoration in suitable areas around the state. Tetlin NWR staff worked with ADF&G wood bison biologist Tom Seaton to assess the availability of winter forage for wood bison on the north half of Tetlin NWR. Preliminary results show water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*), an important forage species, is common throughout the area. More results will be available in late fall as Tetlin NWR staff and ADF&G complete data analysis and reports.

### SUBSISTENCE HARVEST

Deep snow presented difficult travel conditions and likely limited hunter participation in 2021-2022. Nelchina caribou did not winter in significant numbers within Tetlin NWR in 2021-2022. These factors resulted in fewer harvested caribou during the FC1202 caribou hunt compared the previous year, but closer to the long term average. Tetlin NWR issued 125 permits, and 61 permit holders hunted and reported a total harvest of 28 caribou. Tetlin NWR issued 73 winter moose permits for the 2021-2022 season. Thirty-four permit holders reported hunting but no moose were harvested. This was the first year since 2010 that no moose were reported harvested in the FM1203 hunt.