



Federal Subsistence Board News Release



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

Forest Service

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Federal Subsistence Board takes action on five Wildlife Special Action Requests WSA20-01 (Unit 13 caribou), WSA20-02 (Units 11, 12, 13 moose and caribou), WSA20-03 (Unit 13 caribou), WSA20-04 (Mulchatna Caribou) and WSA20-05 (Unit 18 moose)

In a July 16, 2020 teleconference, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) discussed and took action on five Wildlife Special Action Requests. The Board approved or approved with modification all requests.

The Board approved WSA20-01 with modification. WSA20-01 requested an additional caribou season in Unit 13 from Oct. 1-20, and that the harvest limit in Unit 13 remainder be changed from two bulls to two caribou for the 2020-2022 regulatory cycle. The Board approved the change in harvest limit to provide additional subsistence opportunity but did not approve the continuous season due to concern over harvesting bulls during the rut when they are likely unpalatable. This action is also consistent with the recommendation of both the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

The Board approved WSA20-02 with modification. WSA20-02 requested the development of a community harvest system, which would be administered by the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC), for moose and caribou in Units 11, 12, and 13 for the eight Ahtna traditional communities for the 2020/21 regulatory year. The modification 1) named individual communities authorized to participate in the community harvest system on Federal public lands in Units 11, 12, and 13, specifically Cantwell, Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake, and Tazlina; 2) defined the geographic boundaries of eligible communities as the most recent Census Designated Places established by the United States Census Bureau; 3) extended this action through the end of the wildlife regulatory cycle, June 30, 2022; 4) specified that harvest reporting will take the form of reports collected from hunters by AITRC and submitted directly to the land managers and the Office of Subsistence Management, and 5) set the harvest quota for the species and units authorized in the community harvest system as the sum of individual harvest limits for those opting to participate in the system. The Board supported the community hunt to allow communities to engage in traditional hunting practices with their members and to manage hunting opportunities within traditional hunting areas. The Board extended the request to the 2021/22 regulatory years because a regulatory proposal would not become effective until July 1, 2022.

The Board approved WSA20-03 with modification. WSA20-03 requested that the Board close Federal public lands in Unit 13 to the hunting of moose and caribou by non-Federally qualified users for the 2020/21 season. The Board approved a closure in Units 13A and 13B only for the 2020-2022 regulatory cycle due to its necessity for reasons of public safety and continuation of subsistence uses. The Board limited the closure to Units 13A and 13B because this is the area where most overcrowding, disruption of hunts, and serious safety concerns have occurred. The Board extended the request to the 2021/22 regulatory year because a regulatory proposal would not become effective until July 1, 2022 and to reduce the administrative burden associated with processing additional requests.

The Board approved WSA20-04 with modification. WSA20-04 requested that the Federal in-season manager be delegated authority to open and close seasons, announce harvest limits, and set sex restrictions for caribou in all or portions of Units 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A, and 19B for the 2020-2022 regulatory cycle. The modification clarified regulatory language and delegated authority to the in-season manager via a delegation of authority letter. The Board approved this request because of conservation concerns for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd due to substantial declines in its population, stating that delegating authority to an in-season manager provides the management flexibility needed to respond quickly to changing conditions. This action is consistent with the recommendations of the Bristol Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

The Board approved WSA20-05. WSA20-05 requested that the moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 be extended from Sept. 1-30 to Sept. 1-Oct. 7 for the 2020/21 regulatory year. The Board approved this request to provide additional subsistence opportunity as quotas are not being met and to reduce regulatory complexity by aligning with State regulations.

Additional information on 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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