



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:
July 26, 2023

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Federal Subsistence Board Closes Fall Caribou Season in Unit 13

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) approved WSA23-01/03 to close the Federal caribou season in Unit 13 from August 1–September 30, 2023.

Emergency Wildlife Special Actions WSA23-01, submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and WSA23-03, submitted by the Bureau of Land Management and the Ahtna Intertribal Resources Commission, request that the fall caribou season in Unit 13 be closed due to a dramatic decline in the Nelchina caribou herd population.

The Board approved WSA23-01/03 recognizing that conservation concerns warrant a closure to all users for the fall 2023 season. The most recent population information shows the Nelchina Caribou Herd in serious decline. The fall 2022 estimate was 17,433 animals, a reduction in 50% from the fall 2021 estimate and well below the State management objective of 35,000–40,000 caribou. Additionally, composition metrics for the herd are concerning, with a calf:cow ratio of 16:100 and a bull:cow ratio of 26:100, both of which are well below the management objective of 40:100 for each. ADF&G has closed all State caribou seasons throughout Unit 13, and it is prudent that Federal lands be closed in unison to protect the viability of the herd. Such a closure is consistent with ANILCA Section 816(b) and is needed for conservation of the Nelchina Caribou Herd and to provide for the continuation of subsistence uses of the caribou resource in the long-term.

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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