



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 24, 2020

Contact: Kenton Moos
(907) 842-1063
kenton_moos@fws.gov

2020 Fall Federal Mulchatna Caribou Season Opening

THIS ORDER IS VALID FOR FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS THROUGHOUT THE RANGE OF THE MULCHATNA CARIBOU HERD – LIMITED TO QUALIFIED RURAL RESIDENTS ONLY

The Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager, under authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, will open caribou hunting concurrently with the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Federal Hunt will run concurrently with the State of Alaska Caribou registration permit hunt **RC503** for Mulchatna caribou. Hunters must obtain an RC503 permit. Hunt opens at 12:00 am August 1 and closes 11:59 pm September 20, 2020 in the following Game Management Units:

Units 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A, and 19B. Hunters should review the RC503 permit conditions before heading afield, as some portions of the open units remain closed to caribou hunting.

The bag limit is **one bull** caribou across the entire hunt area with, a **5-day reporting requirement**. No winter season will be announced. **Federal lands within the hunt area will only be open to federally qualified rural residents.** Hunters should review the land status of their intended hunt area prior to heading afield.

State of Alaska Caribou Registration Permit RC501 (portions of Unit 17A /17C) is **closed**. Togiak National Wildlife Refuge will announce permit availability of the Federal Registration caribou hunt on the Nushagak Peninsula in the near future. Federal registration FC1702 occurs in portions of Unit 17A and 17C consisting of the Nushagak Peninsula south of the Igushik River, Tuklung River and Tuklung Hills, west to Tvativak Bay.

Justification:

The summer 2020 population estimate of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd is approximately 13,500 which is about half of the estimated herd size from the previous five years, and similar to the 2019 estimate. This is 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 2019-2020 season including an early closure of the season by both State and Federal managers. In anticipation of future management action for addressing timely management actions, 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 along with staff from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, determined there is a minimal number of bulls which can be harvested; **however**, all cow harvest must be avoided to allow for herd growth.

In order to assist in future decisions on management of Muchatna caribou on federal lands, the Togiak Refuge plans to work with the ADF&G and other interested parties on establishing a working group whose goal will be development of a management plan.

For additional information, contact Kenton Moos at (907) 842-1063.

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.

Missing out on the latest Federal subsistence issues? If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov.

-###-