



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 Temporary Wildlife Special Action Requests WSA19-03 (Unit 13 moose and caribou), WSA19-05 (Unimak Island caribou), and WSA19-06 (Unit 20E, 25C, and 20F caribou)

In a July 19, 2019 teleconference, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) discussed and took action on three Temporary Wildlife Special Action Requests. The Board rejected WSA19-03, approved WSA19-05 with modification, and approved WSA19-06.

The Board rejected Temporary Wildlife Special Action Request WSA19-03, which requested that Federal public lands in Unit 13 be closed to the hunting of caribou and moose by non-Federally qualified users for the 2019-2020 season. The Board concluded that the closure was not necessary for the conservation of healthy caribou or moose populations in Unit 13, as these populations are routinely monitored and annual biological data is used to inform the management plans and to establish sustainable harvest guidelines. The closure was also shown not to be necessary to continue subsistence uses of those populations. Federally qualified subsistence users' annual harvest rates have remained fairly consistent in comparison to the annual harvest rates by non-Federally qualified users. Nevertheless, local hunters do experience an influx of non-local hunters and many feel displaced by this activity and alter their subsistence activities as a result. In addition, the Board believed the closure would not alleviate the public safety concerns expressed by the proponent, as non-Federally qualified users would still be able to cross Federal public lands to access State and private lands.

Temporary Special Action Request WSA19-05 requested that Federal public lands in Unit 10, Unimak Island, be opened for a limited bull caribou hunt by Federal registration permit for the fall 2019 season (August 15 – October 15) for residents of False Pass only. The Board approved this request, with modification, to allow for a total of up to four bull caribou to be harvested with season closure dates and quotas to be set by the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Manager. The Board concluded that a limited bull harvest would allow for the continuation of subsistence uses and not compromise the conservation of the Unimak Caribou Herd (UCH). Providing an opportunity to harvest a limited number of caribou would allow False Pass residents a chance to conduct a caribou hunt according to customary and traditional practices and pass cultural knowledge to the younger generation. The Board noted that harvest would need to be closely monitored so as not to exceed the four bull total harvest. If pre-hunt population data acquired prior to the start of the 2019 season indicates a decline in the UCH, then the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Manager, in coordination with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, could adjust the quota.

The Board unanimously approved Temporary Special Action Request WSA19-06, which requested alignment of Federal and State regulations for the Fortymile Caribou Herd and expanding the delegated authority of the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office manager for the 2019/2020 regulatory year. The Board

stated that the request provides management flexibility to local Federal managers, allowing in-season alignment of State and Federal regulations and timely responsiveness to the complex management of the Fortymile Caribou Herd. The Board also noted support by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the State. In addition, the Board noted that a companion Wildlife Proposal (WP20-48) was submitted for the upcoming 2020-2022 regulatory cycle which, if adopted, would implement these changes into permanent regulation.

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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