



Arctic Network

Bering Land Bridge N Pres. • Cape Krusenstern NM
Gates of the Arctic NP & Pres. • Kobuk Valley NP • Noatak N Pres.

Caribou Resource Brief

March 2010, no. 19



Migrating caribou about to cross the Kobuk River in the fall, Kobuk Valley National Park.

Long-term Monitoring:

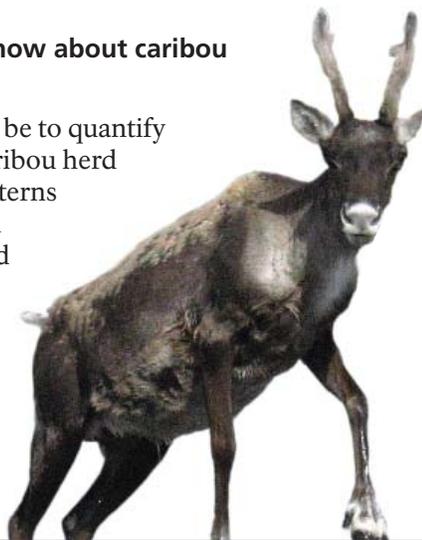
How will we monitor caribou in the Arctic Network?

Our goals are to monitor the movements, distribution and health of these caribou. The caribou use different Park units at different times of year. Further, the timing and spatial pattern of the herd's migration plays a critical role in the harvest of caribou by rural villagers. Changes to these patterns may affect these subsistence users. Herd productivity and health will be monitored using a variety of different indices.

Preliminary Objectives

What do we want to know about caribou in the Arctic Network?

The initial objectives will be to quantify the movements of the caribou herd and identify different patterns of seasonal use. Detailed patterns of the timing and location of migration will be mapped. Baseline data on the herd's health and productivity will be collected and expanded.



Management Applications

How can monitoring protect caribou in ARCNP?

Information gathered from this monitoring effort will be used to:

- Better manage the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
- Better manage subsistence hunting
- Identify factors that may alter patterns of habitat use and migration routes
- Identify changes in herd health or productivity



Caribou are being monitored in all five Arctic Network parks:



Importance

Why are caribou important in the Arctic Network?

Many residents of northwest Alaska are Natives that identify themselves as "caribou people." The caribou is ingrained in the history, traditions, and psyche of this region. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd has been one of the largest herds in the state, nearing 500,000 animals in 2003. The herd's ecological impact on the parks,

though great, is not fully appreciated. However, approximately 15,000 caribou are harvested annually from this herd from local rural residents; most of which still live a subsistence lifestyle.

