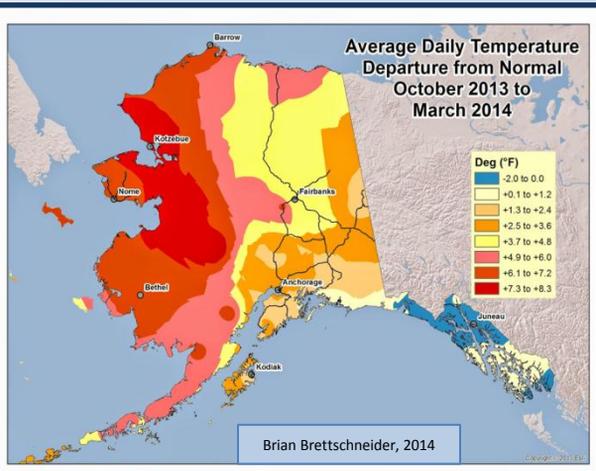
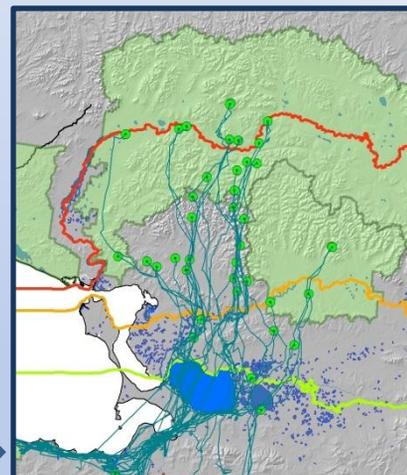




Warm Winter & Early Caribou Migration



← Warmer than normal winter temperatures depicted in reds and oranges over western Alaska. Caribou locations (green circles) and tracks (blue-green lines) from April 18 - May 7 heading to the calving grounds. Lime green line represents Selawik River, orange the Kobuk and red the Noatak. →



After Warm Winter, Caribou Spring into Migration Early

Western Alaska experienced an incredibly warm winter (December 2013 - March 2014), with temperatures 6-8° F warmer than average. Warm and dry conditions continue into spring; coupled with low winter snowfall and rain events, these conditions led to many areas of the winter range of Western Arctic Herd having little or no snow. The herd calves in the Utukok Uplands, north of the Brooks Range, in early June. Right now, the herd's spring migration to the calving grounds is much earlier (1-3 weeks) than other years the NPS has been tracking its timing. Investigations into whether warm springs trigger early migration are ongoing.

Photos: Caribou on their northward spring migration (above) and using largely snow-free areas (below) . K. Joly, NPS.

Migration Timing

Selawik River		Kobuk River		Noatak River	
Year	Date	Year	Date	Year	Date
2011	May 9	2011	May 15	2011	May 18
2012	May 26	2012	May 29	2012	June 7
2013	May 21	2013	May 26	2013	May 31
2014	TBD	2014	TBD	2014	TBD



Average dates that collared caribou crossed rivers on their spring migration.