

2010 Cape Thompson Muskoxen Minimum Counts

ADFG staff completed a minimum count of muskoxen in the standard ADFG census area of the Cape Thompson population from January 27-February 9. Eric Sieh with USFWS flew ADFG staff on February 17, the last day of the survey when the weather was good in the Lisburne Hills.

Survey conditions were less than ideal, with high winds most days but light was generally good. We attempted to compensate by increasing search intensity. Our efforts revealed a minimum count of 296 muskoxen in the “core area.” It is important to note that there are many groups that fall outside of this sample area including a group of 4 bulls that

occurred within 3 miles of the boundary, a group of 8 in the Kelly River Drainage (14 miles outside the boundary), a group of 14 in the Kugururok drainage (40 miles outside the boundary), and a group of 15 near Akulik creek. Additionally, during June and July 2009 ADFG staff conducted reconnaissance flights in western Unit 26A and discovered 108 muskoxen.

Marci Johnson with NPS provided collar data for 2/18 that was compared with our locations. While it is always possible to miss groups, the collar data did not suggest that we obviously missed anything except the groups in the Kelly and the Kugururok which we gave only a cursory look since they are not in the census area.

