



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park / Preserve

P.O. Box 29

Glennallen, Alaska 99588

IN REPLY REFER TO:

N2215(WRST-RM)

August 10, 1992

MEMO

To: Russell Galipeau, Chief of Resource Management

From: Kurt Jenkins, Research Wildlife Biologist

Subject: Mentasta Caribou Population Estimation Survey

On June 26, 1992, observers from Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/ Preserve (WRST) and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) attempted a total count of the Mentasta Caribou Herd. The survey was conducted simultaneously in three count areas that together comprise the Mentasta post-calving range. Patti Happe (WRST), piloted by Jerry Lee, counted caribou from Sanford River South to the Dadina River. Jim Woolington (ADFG), piloted by Ken Lewis, counted from Sanford River north to Boulder Creek. Bob Tobey (ADF&G), piloted by Harley McMahon, counted from Boulder Creek north and east to Drop Creek. Weather was 20% overcast, with a high ceiling, and peak winds 10-15 mph.

In total, 1303 caribou were observed; 160 from Sanford to Dadina Rivers, 1054 from Sanford River to Boulder Creek, and 89 from Boulder to Drop Creeks. The total count of 1303 caribou represents a 24% decline from the count of 1728 caribou obtained in 1991. However, confidence intervals of the estimates and significance of that difference are not known. The data suggest that the recent decline in the Mentasta population has continued to the present.

6/26/92

Patti/Jerry Mt. Dorem 160
Jim W./K. Lewis Mt. Sanford 1054
Tobey/McMahon Upper Copper 89