

~~July 16, 1996~~

Memorandum

To: Mentasta Caribou File, WRST

From: Neil Barten, Wildlife Biologist, WRST

Subject: Mentasta Caribou Herd, total count

On June 21, 1996, we surveyed the Mentasta Caribou Herd for a total caribou count. We used 3 super cubs, each with a pilot and an observer. Harley McMahon and Neil Barten counted the area from West Glacier to Boulder Creek. Jerry Lee and Jeff Selinger counted the area from Boulder Creek to the Sanford River. Lynn Ellis and Bob Tobey counted the area from the Sanford River to the Dadina River, and around Mt. Drum.

The weather was clear, sunny, and calm, making it a good day for the count, as all areas were accessible. The survey began at 0630 hrs. and each team worked approximately 4 hours to count their area. Contours of .5 mile increments were flown from 3500ft. to 7000ft. in elevation, approximately 500ft. AGL.

We counted 638 caribou, with 569 adults, and 69 calves (10.8%).

Neil Barten

cc: Craig Gardner (ADF&G - Tok)
Bob Tobey (ADF&G - Glennallen)
Pat Valkenburg (ADF&G - Fairbanks)
Bruce Dale (ADF&G - Fairbanks)
Layne Adams (NBS - Anchorage)
Kurt Jenkins (NBS - Olympic)

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Memorandum

To: Mentasta Caribou File, WRST

From: Neil Barten, Wildlife Biologist, WRST

Subject: Mentasta Caribou Herd, summer composition survey

On June 22, 1996, Chris Soloy of Soloy Helicopters and I conducted the annual Spring composition survey of the Mentasta Caribou Herd, using a Hughes 500 helicopter equipped with side mounted h-antennas for radio tracking. We attempted to fly approximately the same area that was covered during the total herd count on June 21, 1996. This consisted of the area above 3500 ft, up to 7000 ft., and defined by the range of our radio collared cows. The area was searched by flying contours at .5 mile increments at 500ft. AGL. All caribou sighted were classified as cows, bulls, or calves. We monitored 39 radio frequencies during these flights and radio tracked in on signals we encountered.

The weather was clear and sunny with calm winds, allowing us to cover the area thoroughly. We classified 501 caribou, with 419 being cows, 65 calves, and 17 bulls (only 1 adult). This comes to 84% cows, 3% bulls, and 13% calves (15.5 calves/100 cows).

Neil Barten

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