

**Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199  
Phone: (907) 787-3888, Fax: (907) 786-3898  
Toll Free: 1-800-478-1456

In Reply Refer To:  
OSM.R26049

MAY 06 2026

Douglas Vincent-Lang  
Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

Dear Commissioner Vincent-Lang

I write to you on behalf of the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) to request the Alaska Department of Fish and Game issue an emergency order to close the cow caribou hunt during the upcoming 2026-2027 season in Units 22, 23, and southwest portions of 26A.

The Council represents subsistence harvesters of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands and waters in the Northwest Arctic Region. It was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter establishes the Council's authority to initiate, review, and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region. The Council also reviews resource management actions occurring outside their regions that may impact subsistence resources critical to communities served by the Council. The Council provides a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations regarding any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.

During the Council's public meeting held March 31st–April 1st in Kotzebue, members received updates on current population estimates for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH) and reviewed three Wildlife Special Actions (WSAs) submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding the continued decline in WACH numbers. WSA26-01 requests reducing the harvest limit for the WACH to four caribou, only one of which may be a cow for the 2026/27 regulatory year. The Council voted to support WSA26-01 with modification to also eliminate cow harvest in response to increasing concerns about the herd's declining population and the importance of preserving this resource. The Council emphasized the necessity of proactive measures to ensure the sustainability of caribou for subsequent generations.

The Council respectfully requests that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game issue an emergency order to also close the take of cows for the 2026-2027 season in Game Management Units 22, 23, and 26A west of the Colville River drainage upstream from the Nuka River and drainages of the Chukchi Sea, south and west of and including the Kuk and Kugrua River drainages. The Council considers coordinated management actions in the conservation of the WACH to be imperative to its conservation and continued harvest into the future.

To this end, the Council also voted to submit proposals to the Alaska Board of Game requesting action on intensive management for predators to support the recovery of the WACH, closure of caribou hunting to non-residents in Unit 23 with the thought that this is a shared conservation burden between residents and nonresidents, and a reduction of the caribou harvest limit to four bulls and no cows in Unit 23 for residents for consideration at the January 2027 Western Arctic/Western Region meeting. The Council is confident that both State and Federal closures to cow caribou harvest will help slow the ongoing WACH population decline and support the reversal of this downward trend.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions or would like to follow up, please contact me through our Subsistence Council Coordinator Nissa Pilcher at (907) 891-9054 or [nissa\\_pilcher@ios.doi.gov](mailto:nissa_pilcher@ios.doi.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'TB', is placed over a light blue rectangular background.

Thomas Baker  
Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Aaron Poetter, Fish & Game Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Alex Hansen, Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Carmen Daggett, Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Sara Henslee, Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Administrative Record