

Request to create a caribou season on Cape Pierce in Unit 17A

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Organization: Traditional Village of Togiak

Describe the action you are requesting; reference the current regulations you wish to change: open federal public lands in a portion of Unit 17A and Unit 18, for caribou in the Cape Pierce area.

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 17A – Caribou

Up to 2 caribou by State registration permit

May be announced between Aug. 1 and Mar. 31

One caribou in Unit 17A west of Matogak River

April 1 – April 30

Unit 18 – Caribou

Up to 2 caribou by State registration permit

May be announced between Aug. 1 and Mar. 15

One caribou in Unit 17A west of south of Carter Bay drainage

April 1 – April 30

open to federally qualified resident of Togiak, Twin Hills, Goodnews, and Platinum

Justification:

The summer 2026 photo census on Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, west of Togiak and south of Kanektok indicated that the resident caribou herd exceeds 1,400 animals. There were ~270 caribou located on Cape Pierce, and ~600 caribou South Goodnews Bay and West of Togiak.

Table 1. Sex and age composition of Mulchatna caribou in southwest Unit 17A/south Unit 18, 4 October 2022.

					Small	Medium	Large			
	Total				bulls	bulls	bulls	Total	Composition	Estimate
Date	100 cows	100 cows	Calves (%)	Cows (%)	(% of bulls)	(% of bulls)	(% of bulls)	(%)	sample size	of herd size
4 Oct 2022	44.4	45.9	24.1	52.6	28.8	37.3	33.9	23.3	253	470

Caribou hunting has been closed since 2019 due to the low population of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH). Reopening the hunt will provide increased subsistence opportunities for residents

of Togiak, Twin Hills, Goodnews, and Platinum. Unlike the MCH, this resident herd does not migrate out of the Cape Pierce area, allowing for a sustainable harvest while supporting the traditional use of caribou as an essential food and cultural resource.

Traditional knowledge indicates that this herd remains in the area year-round. This was confirmed in March 2023 when staff from the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game collared caribou, further validating that this is a resident herd.