



National Park Service Update
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
Western Interior Regional Advisory Council Meeting
February 16-17, 2022

Subsistence

The Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) met on November 16, 2021 via teleconference. The SRC received updates on the Ambler Mining District Road project as well as management and wildlife updates from park staff. The SRC will be sending a letter to Secretary Debra Haaland requesting that the SRC Charter be revised. The SRC has submitted a comment letter to the Board of Game on proposals affecting the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area. The next SRC meeting is scheduled for either April 20-21 or May 5-6, 2022 via teleconference.

For more information, contact Marcy Okada: marcy_okada@nps.gov and (907) 455-0639

Western Arctic Caribou Herd

- ADF&G conducted a photocensus of the Western Arctic Herd in summer of 2021 and found the herd has declined to 181,000. For the next GPS collar deployment, biologists are planning to deploy collars in the spring of 2022 from helicopter based out of Dahl Creek.
- NPS and ADF&G biologists collaborated to analyze 10 years of Western Arctic Herd GPS data to better understand the seasonal patterns of range use of the herd. Besides using the calving ground every year, they found that the herd consistently uses the same area for insect harassment. Winter areas changed from year to year, and fall migration was more variable than spring migration. There are many more interesting aspects of how the herd uses its range, and you can find them at: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/bouseasonalfidelity.htm>.
- NPS biologists collaborated on two studies to develop new tools to better understand how potential development may impact the herd. The first looked at how proposed roads may impact caribou migrations and the second measured how much different proposed EIS alternatives might impact a range of species in the NPR-A. Find more information on both of these studies here: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/toolstoassessimpacts.htm>.
- In a summary article, NPS and ADF&G biologists discussed how methods to detect calving in caribou were found to work beyond just the Western Arctic Herd, for which these methods were validated earlier. These findings highlight that these methods may be more broadly applicable to other caribou herds around the state. More information can be found at: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/aps-20-1-9.htm>.
- NPS biologists are collaborating on the Global Initiative on Ungulate Migration, which will work to document the movements of migratory ungulates in a global atlas. The goals are to address conservation needs of species and their habitats globally, find out more at: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/migrationmapping.htm>.

For more information, contact Kyle Joly: kyle_joly@nps.gov.



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Moose

NPS is planning to conduct a moose survey in and around Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve in late March of 2022. The last survey was conducted in 2015. The survey will be based out of Bettles and we expect it to take less than a week.

For more information, contact Matt Cameron: matthew_cameron@nps.gov or 907-455-0626.

Dall's Sheep

The NPS, in partnership with the BLM, conducted distance sampling surveys for Dall's sheep from July 8-14, 2021 in Gates of the Arctic Park and Preserve (Gates) and BLM lands surrounding the Dalton Highway. Surveys have been conducted annually in the Itkillik area of northeast Gates since 2009 and since 2015 in the area surrounding Anaktuvuk Pass (except for no survey in 2020 due to Covid-19). In addition, we flew transect surveys in SE Gates of the Arctic Park (Between the Dalton Highway and the John River) and in BLM lands east and west of the Dalton Highway, both of which were last surveyed in 2015.

Full results from the 2021 survey are not yet available, however, our initial assessment suggests the sheep populations in the Anaktuvuk and Itkillik areas are stable when compared to the last few years. An initial assessment of data from SE Gates and the BLM study area suggests there have been significant declines in sheep abundance in both areas since the last survey in 2015. More information, including the full results of population models, will be available at your spring meeting.

For more information, contact Will Deacy: william_deacy@nps.gov or 907-455-0684

Map of 2021 Survey areas. Note: the Anaktuvuk and Itkillik study areas overlap in the tan region east of Anaktuvuk Pass.

