



United States Department of Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve
4175 Geist Road
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709



Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council Meeting March 8-9, 2022

- **Eagle Subsistence Working Group:** NPS staff met with members of the working group via teleconference on October 25, 2021. Items discussed were: moose and wolf studies, the Preserve compendium, outreach and interpretation, the community hunter liaison position, Preserve staffing, and updates on Preserve public use cabins. The next working group meeting is scheduled for late April 2022 either in-person or via teleconference. For more information, contact Marcy Okada, marcy_okada@nps.gov or 907-455-0639.
- **Moose Studies:** We are currently monitoring 32 collared adult cows in the Preserve as part of a 5-year study to understand moose survival and recruitment across the Upper Yukon. Last spring, we observed lower calving (66%) and twinning rates (19%) than compared to the spring of 2020 (2020 calving rate: 95%; 2020 twinning rate: 41%). However, the calf survival rate for summer of 2021 is essentially the same as 2020, which was 42%. For spring of 2022, we plan to survey collared moose to estimate overwinter survival of calves, deploy 3 additional collars, and estimate spring calving and twinning rates in May and June. We are also planning a fall moose survey in the Preserve for November. For more information, contact Matt Cameron at matthew_cameron@nps.gov or 907-455-0626.
- **Fortymile Caribou Collaboration:** Researchers from the University of Montana partnered with wildlife biologists from the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the National Park Service on a study analyzing the summer (May-September) diets of caribou from the Fortymile Caribou Herd, in east-central Alaska. The data was collected while watching over 18,000 videos recorded using camera collars the caribou wore. Caribou spent the most time (44% of their day) eating. Lichens were consumed more than any other food item May, August, and September, when green vegetation is limited, but shrubs were used the most in June and July. The leaves of shrubs contain much more protein than lichens and are selected preferentially during the short, green, Alaskan summer so the caribou can grow, gain weight, and meet the demands of raising their calves that were born in May. The researchers showed that despite the strong urge to spend as much time foraging on shrubs during the summer, insects harass caribou enough during the warm summer months that their intake is reduced when harassment is high (often when it is warm and the winds calm). As the herd is declining, understanding its foraging ecology is particularly important

for management decisions. An article weblink can be found here
<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/foragingchanges.htm>
For more information, contact Kyle Joly, kyle_joly@nps.gov

- **Wolf Project:** We are currently monitoring 9 packs within the Preserve. Over the summer, 5 of the packs had pups and/or grew. The fall pack count averaged 6.4 wolves, which was lower than the 28-year long-term average (7.2 wolves). Over the 2020 biological year (May 2020-May 2021) we tracked 25 GPS-collared wolves across 9 packs totaling 65 wolves. Of the 25 collared wolves, 8 died and 2 dispersed outside of the Preserve. We are working on studies evaluating how wolf deaths in the pack affects pack structure and productivity and identifying pup-rearing sites. For more information, contact Mat Sorum, mathew_sorum@nps.gov or (907) 455-0676.
- **Dall's Sheep:** NPS plans to conduct a sheep survey within Yukon-Charley Rivers Preserve in summer 2022. The last survey was conducted in 2018. For more information, contact Mat Sorum, mat_sorum@nps.gov or (907) 455-0676.