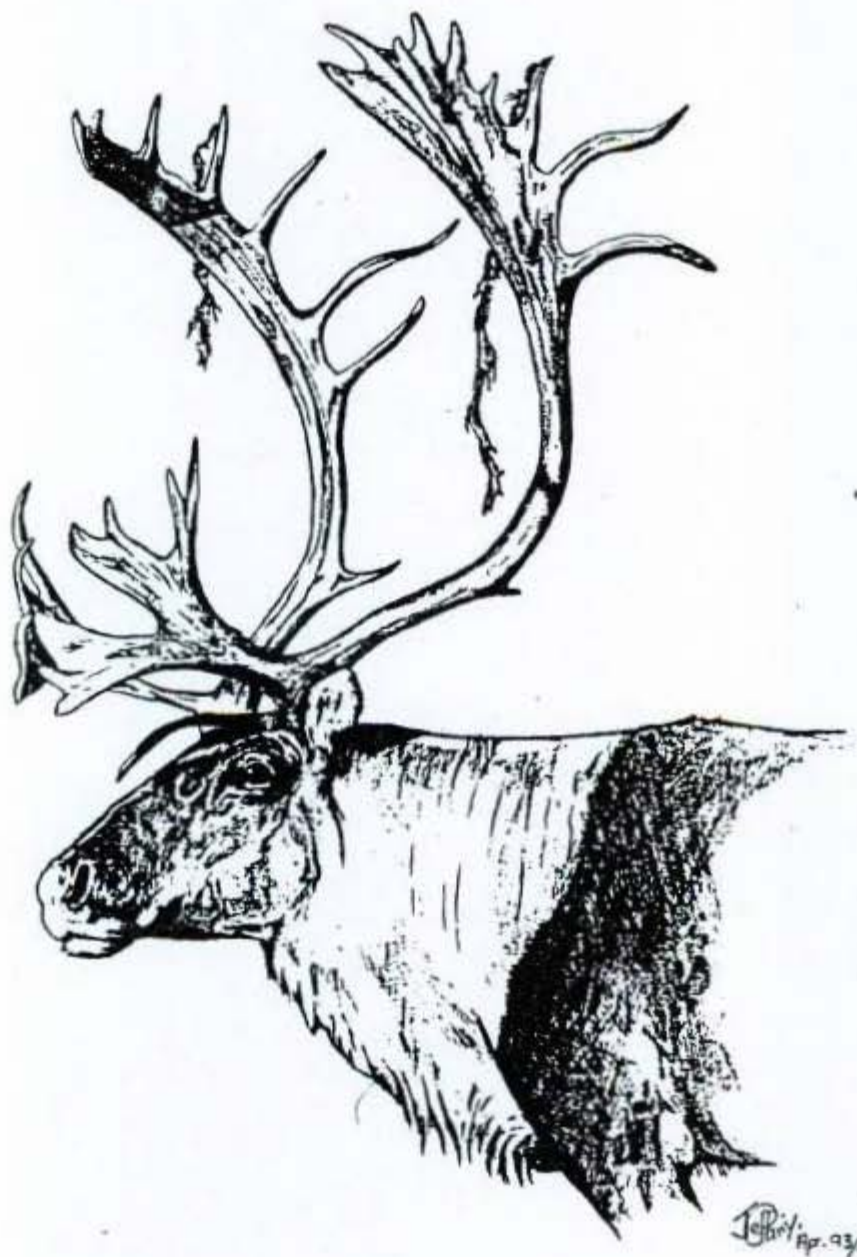


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MENTASTA CARIBOU HERD

COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN



Final
Revised June 1995
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
P.O. Box 29
Glennallen, Alaska 99588

MENTASTA CARIBOU HERD COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Mentasta caribou herd is located in southeast mainland Alaska and Western Yukon Territory. This small herd has declined from a high of approximately 3,100 animals in 1985 to less than 900 in 1994. During winter the Mentasta herd often intermingles with the larger Nelchina caribou herd which currently numbers about 45,000 animals and has ranged from 5,000 to 70,000 animals. In winter this combined herd may cross state, native, private, and federal conservation unit boundaries, as well as the international boundary with Canada.

This plan is a cooperative effort by The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), The U. S. National Park Service (NPS), and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to adopt management guidelines that reflect the varied federal and state policies and laws concerning management of the Mentasta caribou herd.

One of the overriding management concerns, and as a consequence a driving factor of this management plan, is the need to allow harvest by federally-eligible subsistence users when ever possible. Within a National Park, this harvest must be consistent with sound management principles and the conservation of natural and healthy populations of wildlife. A harvest strategy must be adopted that will seek to incorporate, rather than influence, natural fluctuations in caribou abundance, composition, and productivity. This is a realistic goal which reflects the NPS policy that natural processes be allowed to influence populations of wildlife to the greatest extent possible while still providing for subsistence and recreational harvest as directed by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

The agencies agree that the overall management goal for the Mentasta caribou herd is to allow for "natural" population fluctuations which are primarily the result of natural environmental factors. There will be a strong emphasis on nonconsumptive uses, and the priority consumptive use will be by federally-eligible subsistence users. State authorized hunting will be allowed when the available harvest quota exceeds the level needed to provide a reasonable opportunity to federal subsistence users.

A fall harvest quota for State Game Management Units (GMUs) 11 and 12 will be set annually. A fall harvest of between 15% and 20% of the 2-year mean calf recruitment will be allowed as long as such recruitment is at least 80 calves. At population levels exceeding 2,000 caribou the bag limit will be either sex. At population levels below 2,000 the hunt will be limited to bulls only and will be closed if the 2-year mean fall bull:cow ratio slips below 35 bulls:100 cows.

When this annual quota is greater than 70, both federally-qualified subsistence users and state authorized hunters will be allowed to hunt Mentasta caribou in fall. When quotas are 70 or fewer, only federally-qualified subsistence users will be allowed to harvest Mentasta caribou during the fall season. Further, when the quota drops below 30, permits will be allocated among federal subsistence users in accordance with a priority system based on: 1) customary and direct dependence upon the resources as the mainstay of one's livelihood; 2) local residency; and 3) availability of alternative resources.

Winter hunts, targeted primarily for the Nelchina caribou herd (and sometimes the Forty-mile), will continue to be managed so as to minimize the incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou. Minimum mixing ratios and aggregation behavior will be used to assure that the impact of cumulative incidental Mentasta harvest is insignificant. An agency proposing to open a winter hunt will be responsible for coordinating survey flights to determine mixing ratios and aggregation behavior of the herds. That agency will also be responsible for advising the cooperating agencies of the proposed hunt and the status of the mixed herd.

The agencies will cooperate to monitor the status and trends of the Mentasta caribou herd and a cooperative Inventory and Monitoring Plan will be developed to facilitate and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Copies of this plan are available from:

SUPERINTENDENT
WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
P.O. BOX 29
GLENNALLEN, ALASKA 99588

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The authors would like to acknowledge the ideas, hard work, and cooperative spirit of all agency staff and citizens who helped make this plan possible. R. Galipeau saw the need for this cooperative effort and oversaw the entire process. L. Adams, B. Dale, and K. Jenkins were part of the original team that discussed a harvest strategy based on caribou calves and it was L. Adams who proposed the idea. The above four, together with J. Jarvis, S. Matthews, K. Pitcher, B. Schultz, C. Smith, H. Timm, P. Valkenburg, L. Waller, and J. Wells provided constructive reviews and helped steer the plan through state and federal channels. Finally, we would all like to acknowledge the time, critical comments, patients, and ultimately the endorsement by more than 40 citizens who volunteered their time to participate in advisory groups to the cooperating agencies.

MENTASTA CARIBOU HERD COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Cooperating agencies: The Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Glennallen and Tok area offices; Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Glennallen; and Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, Tok.

Final: Revised June, 1995

INTRODUCTION:

The Mentasta caribou herd (MCH) is a small intermountain herd that has numbered between 800 and 3,100 animals in southeast mainland Alaska and western Yukon Territory (Fig. 1). Since 1987 the MCH has steadily declined to its current low of approximately 800 caribou. The initial cause of this decline is unknown. On-going field studies currently show that low survival of calves, primarily due to predation by wolves and brown bears, is the principal factor limiting herd growth (K. Jenkins, National Biological Service, unpublished data).

The herd has traditionally summered and calved along the western slopes of the Wrangell Mountains within GMU 11 and within the boundary of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST). During winter the Mentasta herd often intermingles with the larger Nelchina caribou herd (NCH) which currently numbers 45,000 but has ranged between 5,000 and 70,000 (Lieb 1991). The MCH may occasionally also mix with the Forty-mile and Chisana caribou herds. In winter this combined herd scatters in small bands over an area that in some years may exceed 45,000 km² (17,000 mi²). While on its expanded winter range, the combined herd may cross land owned or managed by the state, native corporations, private citizens, and federal land management agencies, as well as the international boundary with Canada.

Major land owners and agencies concerned with the MCH are: ADF&G, NPS, FWS, the National Biological Service (NBS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Ahtna Native Corporation, the Tetlin Indian Corporation, the Northway Native Corporation, and the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources (YDRR).

In Alaska, the agency field offices with primary responsibility for day-to-day management of the Mentasta herd are: the Glennallen and Tok area offices of ADF&G; WRST headquartered in

Glennallen; and Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) headquartered in Tok. These field offices have jointly prepared this plan and to the extent possible will cooperate in carrying it out.

YDRR has responsibility for day-to-day management of the Mentasta herd when/if it migrates in to Canada. The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board is currently developing its position on trans boundary caribou herds. YDRR will not be a signatory to this plan until they have completed this process.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MENTASTA HERD:

The MCH is an important component of the area's ecosystem. Together with moose, sheep, and smaller prey species they help support humans as well as a diverse mix of wild predators and scavengers including: wolves, brown bear, black bear, golden eagles, fox, and wolverines. All are important in a naturally functioning ecosystem in which customary and traditional human use is considered an integral component (U.S. Senate Report 96-413, page 171).

Mentasta caribou and the predators and scavengers they help support are important subsistence resources for local, rural residents. Many local residents obtain meat from wildlife, and caribou is a staple in many diets. Bears, wolves, wolverines and other animals supported by caribou are also harvested by local residents supplying them with pelts for personal use, barter, and customary trade.

Subsistence hunting of Mentasta caribou during the fall has been administered by both the state (rural preference - 1985 to 1989) and the federal government (federal subsistence program - 1990 to present). The two programs have differed in how and to whom permits have been allocated (Route and Mike 1992). The two agencies have issued an average of 121 (range 58 to 170) subsistence permits annually resulting in an average reported subsistence harvest of 31 (range 17 to 67) caribou per year. The subsistence hunting season on Mentasta caribou was closed in 1992 due to low population levels, poor recruitment, unknown incidental harvest, and because the larger NCH was available as an alternative resource. The season will re-open when the herd meets or exceeds the mutually agreed to objectives set forth in this plan.

In the past both Alaska resident and nonresident recreational hunters have been allowed to hunt the MCH on all lands open to general hunting. From 1974 to 1989 an average of 265 (range 0 to 422) permits for recreational hunting were issued annually,

resulting in an average reported harvest of 100 (range 45 to 236) caribou per year (ADF&G unpublished data). The state hunting season has been closed since 1989 due to low population levels and poor recruitment, but will re-open once the management objectives set forth in this plan are met.

MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

One of the overriding management concerns, and as a consequence a driving factor of this management plan, is the need to allow harvest by federally-eligible subsistence users when ever possible (ANILCA, Sec. 801). Within a National Park, this harvest must be consistent with sound management principles and the conservation of natural and healthy populations of wildlife (ANILCA, Sec. 815). A harvest strategy must be adopted to assure humans act as a "prudent predator" (Nudds 1987). This harvest strategy must seek to incorporate, rather than influence, natural fluctuations in caribou abundance, composition, and productivity (Peek 1986). This is a realistic goal which reflects the NPS policy that natural processes be allowed to influence populations of wildlife to the greatest extent possible (NPS 1988) while still providing for subsistence and recreational harvest as directed by ANILCA.

ADF&G, NPS, and FWS agree that the overall management goal for the MCH is to allow for "natural" population fluctuations which are primarily the result of natural environmental factors. For the purpose of managing this herd, the agencies agree to interpret "natural" to mean, in part, free from human manipulation for the express purpose of maximizing yield for humans. Rather, humans will be considered an integral component of the predator/prey system and will share with predators the naturally occurring production of caribou.

We agree that there will be a strong emphasis on nonconsumptive uses and that the priority consumptive use will be by federally-eligible subsistence users. State authorized hunting will be allowed when the available harvest quota exceeds the level needed to provide a reasonable opportunity to federal subsistence users.

To attain the above goals we set forth the following objectives:

- 1) To the extent possible, allow for human harvest that will have minimal affects on the production, composition and abundance of Mentasta caribou.
- 2) To provide harvest priority to federally-eligible subsistence users and to allow state authorized hunting to occur when ever possible.

- 3) To monitor the herd demographics and harvest such that all pertinent data on the health of the herd are collected and disseminated to all agencies and citizens concerned with their management.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES:

Guidelines for meeting objective #1:

Fall harvest season quota and bag limit:

Allow an annual fall harvest quota of between 15 and 20 percent of the previous 2-year mean calf recruitment as long as such recruitment is at least 80 calves. At population levels exceeding 2,000 caribou the bag limit will be "either sex". At population levels below 2,000 the bag limit will be limited to "bulls only" and will be closed if the 2-year mean bull:cow ratio drops below 35 bulls:100 cows. (See appendix for a decision flow chart for setting seasons and bag limits.)

Note: The 2-year mean calf recruitment and 2-year mean bull:cow ratio will be estimated by fall composition counts. The total population will be estimated by post-calving total counts. Methods for estimating these parameters will be fully addressed in a cooperative monitoring plan.

Rationale for fall harvest quota and bag limit

Two-year means will help guard against drastic changes in the harvest quota and will ensure that seasons are not closed or re-opened without substantial information.

A near constant harvest rate of between 15 and 20 percent of calf recruitment should have little affect on trends in the Mentasta herd and will allow for human harvest close to historic levels (Fig. 2). The 5% margin for setting harvest quotas (15 - 20%) is necessary to allow managers flexibility to compensate for variations in hunter success rates and incidental winter harvest. Setting a minimum recruitment level of 80 calves before allowing a harvest will protect the herd during years of poor recruitment.

Allowing an "either sex" harvest during years of higher herd numbers (>2000) and a "bulls only" harvest during periods of low herd numbers will help ensure the bull:cow ratio is not highly influenced by harvest. Based on historic harvest records, it is estimated that during "either sex" seasons approximately 25% of the harvest will be cows. This cow

harvest will occur during years of high harvest quotas and will thus reduce the chance of high bull harvests skewing the bull:cow ratio. The minimum bull:cow ratio will act as a cutoff only during "bulls only" seasons, when harvest has a high potential to influence the bull:cow ratio. This minimum ratio is not a management objective, rather it is a cutoff point below which harvest will not be permitted. The actual bull:cow ratio will be allowed to fluctuate since the harvest quota is based on recruitment of calves rather than surplus bulls. This strategy will allow for a near natural sex composition while providing for human harvest.

Winter incidental harvest:

Winter hunts, targeted primarily for the Nelchina and Forty-mile caribou herds, may result in incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou when they intermix in winter. These winter hunts should be managed so as to minimize the affect of incidental harvest on the Mentasta caribou herd.

The cooperating agencies will meet annually to discuss what constraints, if any, are necessary to assure that the cumulative incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou is biologically insignificant. Season opening dates, season length, bag limit, hunt area, and total harvest on the mixed herd in winter will depend on; 1) the current status of the Mentasta herd; 2) the mixing ratio of "other caribou" to Mentasta caribou in the hunt area; 3) the aggregation behavior of Mentasta caribou in relation to areas of potentially high harvest; and 4) management objectives for the other herds. Because of the variable nature of these winter hunts they should always be implemented by Emergency Order of ADF&G or the Federal Subsistence Board.

Minimum mixing ratios and aggregation behavior will be the primary methods of ensuring incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou is insignificant (methods for determining mixing ratios and aggregation behavior will be addressed in a cooperative monitoring plan). An agency proposing to open a winter hunt will be responsible for coordinating survey flights to determine mixing ratios and aggregation behavior of the herds. That agency will also be responsible for advising the cooperators of the proposed hunt and of the status of the mixed herd. Communication with managers from BLM (Tok area field office), NPS (Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve in Eagle), and YDRR will help foster cooperation and help keep incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou low if they migrate on to lands they manage.

Rationale for winter incidental harvest

During winter, the mixed herd may range over an extremely large area, including parts of the Copper River Basin, Upper Tanana River region, and east in to Canada. Thus, a number of winter hunts may affect the Mentasta herd.

It is unrealistic to close seasons directed at other larger caribou herds as long as incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou is biologically insignificant. This incidental harvest must be viewed as an unavoidable consequence of providing for use of other herds. However, managers must take into account the potential for high cumulative incidental harvest of the smaller Mentasta herd.

We are limited in our ability to accurately estimate the winter harvest on each herd. However, in recent years the agencies have increased the number of collared caribou in the Mentasta herd as well as increased the frequency of radio-location flights. Movement patterns and aggregation behavior of these collared caribou suggest that incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou is usually insignificant. The agencies agree that using collared caribou to estimate mixing ratios and aggregation behavior is at this time the only feasibly way of evaluating cumulative incidental harvest on the Mentasta herd. Minimum mixing ratios will be determined annually so that the highest possible harvest is allowed on other herds while keeping the impact of incidental harvest on the Mentasta herd insignificant.

Relatively few caribou (0 - 58) have been harvested in winter from the mixed herd by federally-qualified subsistence hunters on Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge. Refuge staff are committed to monitoring mixing ratios and aggregation behavior to minimize incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou. Under the guidelines of this plan this federal subsistence hunt would almost always occur.

Winter hunts under state regulations in GMUs 12 and 20E result in larger numbers of caribou being harvested from the mixed herd (max quota = 300), thus the potential for incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou is greater. However, state managers in Tok are also committed to monitoring mixing ratios and aggregation behavior to reduce the potential for incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou. During most years state managers can reduce this incidental harvest by: 1) adjusting season opening dates to coincide with the arrival of Nelchina caribou; 2) reducing the total harvest on the mixed herd; and 3) delimiting the hunt area

to exclude areas with significant numbers of Mentasta caribou present. Under the guidelines of this plan these state hunts would be able to occur in most years.

Mentasta caribou may be subjected to incidental harvest during other winter hunts, for example, if the herd ranges north to other federal public lands (BLM, NPS) or east in to Canada. The other federal agencies and the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources are committed to monitoring mixing ratios and aggregation behavior of the mixed herd. During most years managers can reduce incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou by: 1) adjusting season opening dates; 2) reducing their total harvest on the mixed herd; and/or 3) delimiting the hunt area to exclude areas where significant numbers of Mentasta caribou are thought to be present. Under the guidelines of this plan these hunts could often occur, but cumulative incidental harvest will need to be monitored closely.

Guidelines for meeting objective #2:

Harvest allocation should be reassessed as additional data becomes available. At the present, however, legal mandates and past harvest information suggests we should allocate harvest as follows:

Fall harvest season:

The fall harvest, intended for Mentasta caribou, will be within GMU 11 and that portion of GMU 12 west of the Nabesna River within the drainages of Jack Creek, Platinum Creek and Totschunda Creek. Hunting will be by permit only so that harvest can be readily tracked.

When the annual quota, as calculated under objective #1, is greater than 70 Mentasta caribou, hunting by both federally-qualified subsistence users and state authorized hunters will be allowed. State authorized hunting will occur under a limited entry system, for example Tier II, Drawing, or Registration, and federal subsistence users will be provided priority with a longer season. State and federal managers will work closely to assure harvest is kept within the annual quota.

When quotas are 70 or fewer Mentasta caribou, only federally-qualified subsistence users will be allowed to harvest Mentasta caribou during the fall season. Further, when the quota drops below 30, permits will be allocated among these federal subsistence users in accordance with a

priority system based on: 1) customary and direct dependence upon the resources as the mainstay of one's livelihood; 2) local residency; and 3) availability of alternative resources (ANILCA, Sec. 804). This prioritization is the responsibility of the Federal Subsistence Board and will be determined on a case by case basis as the situation arises.

Rationale

During the fall harvest season, the Mentasta caribou herd resides primarily within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. On lands managed by the NPS, ANILCA mandates that "...the taking on public lands of fish and wildlife for nonwasteful subsistence uses shall be accorded priority over the taking on such lands of fish and wildlife for other purposes." (ANILCA, Sec. 804).

During the fall seasons of 1990-91 and 1991-92 the Mentasta caribou harvest was limited to qualified federal subsistence users and as many as 123 people hunted under federal subsistence permits (Route and Mike 1992). Fewer than 30 Mentasta caribou were reported harvested during either season, yet depending on success rate, which has been as high as 58%, these data suggest that federally-qualified subsistence hunters could harvest at least 70 Mentasta caribou during a fall season ($123 \text{ hunters} \times 58\% \text{ success} = 71 \text{ caribou}$). It is premature to determine exactly how many caribou are needed for federally-qualified subsistence hunters in fall. Needs may change, but at present the Federal Subsistence Board should allocate at least 70 Mentasta caribou for qualified federal subsistence users. When quotas exceed 70 Mentasta caribou the state Board of Game could authorize additional harvest under a limited entry system.

Section 804 of ANILCA also states that "Whenever it is necessary to restrict the taking of populations of fish and wildlife on such lands for subsistence uses in order to protect the continued viability of such populations, or to continue such uses, such priority shall be implemented through appropriate limitations based on the application of the following criteria: 1) customary and direct dependence upon the populations as the mainstay of livelihood; 2) local residency; and 3) the availability of alternative resources." Based on the 1990-91 and 1991-92 seasons, when the harvest quota is below 30 Mentasta caribou, the Federal Subsistence Board should reduce the number of federal subsistence hunters by instituting this priority system.

Guideline for meeting objective #3:

The agencies will cooperate to monitor the status and trends of the Mentasta caribou herd. A cooperative Inventory and Monitoring Plan will be developed to facilitate and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each agency. An important component of this plan will be procedures for collecting data to determine whether the goals and objectives of this plan are being met. For example, methods for determining mixing ratios, aggregation behavior, and estimating cumulative incidental harvest in winter will need to be addressed.

Findings from monitoring activities will be reported on an annual basis in ADF&G Survey/Inventory reports, WRST Inventory and Monitoring reports, and FWS Inventory and Monitoring reports. On request, copies will be provided to local Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the WRST Subsistence Resource Commission, and the Federal Regional Advisory Councils.

Rationale

ADF&G, NPS, and FWS all have legal obligations to assure proper management of the Mentasta herd. Management decisions must be defended with sound biological data. Unfortunately, staff and budgetary constraints often dictate the quantity and quality of data any one agency can collect. Thus cooperative efforts to share costs of collecting data on wildlife populations is warranted.

AMENDING THIS PLAN:

In preparing this plan the cooperating agencies have attempted to consider all plausible scenarios. However, wildlife management, and particularly harvest allocation, are complex, contentious, and ever changing issues. No single plan can provide a formula for all possible occurrences. This Mentasta caribou management plan must be considered dynamic, and to that extent, the cooperators must be able to alter this plan if unforeseen circumstances arise.

Any cooperator can propose a change to this plan by circulating a written proposal to all other cooperators. Proposed changes shall take effect upon signing by all agencies. A full review and resigning of this plan should be done every five years or as needed.

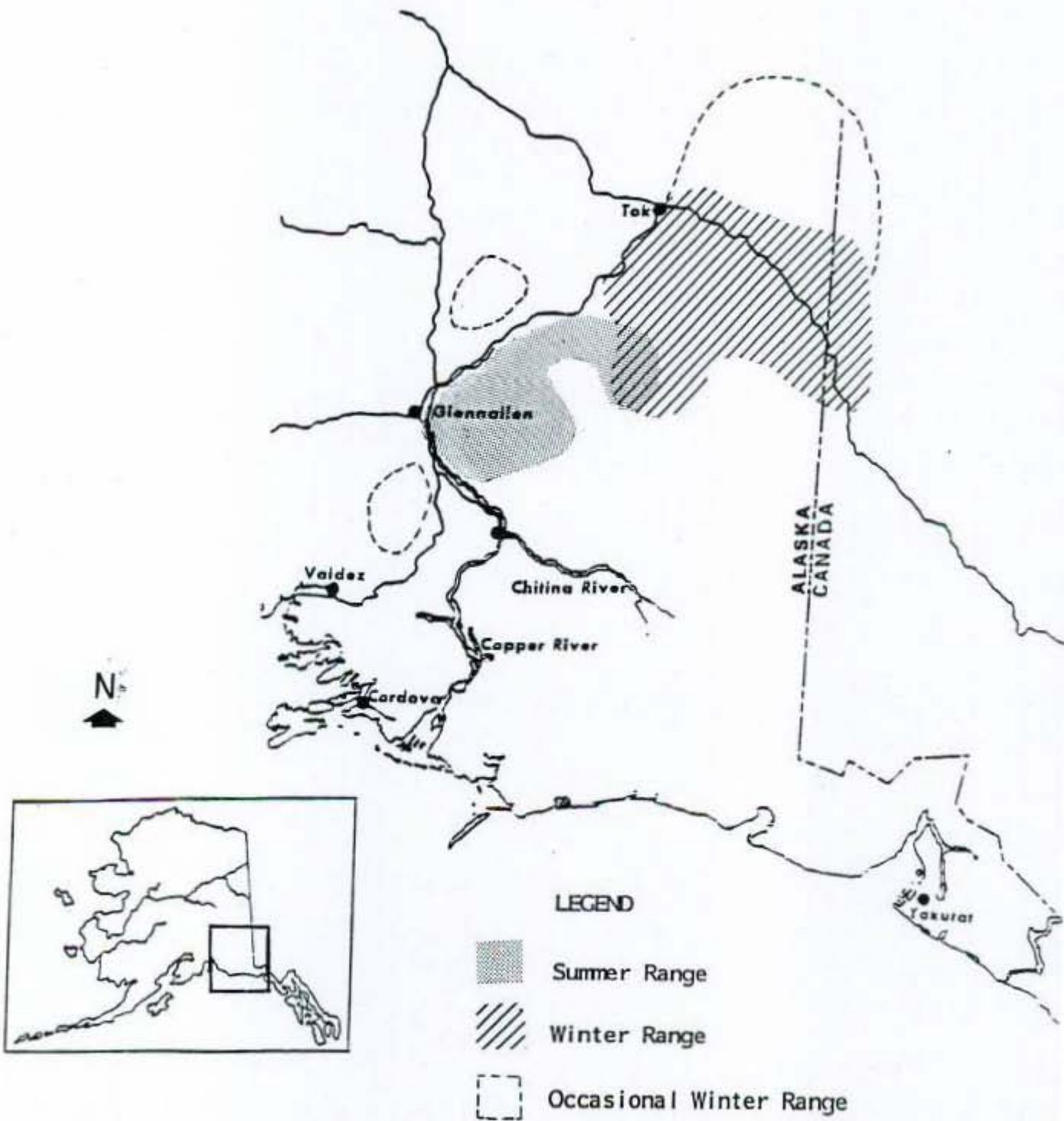


Fig. 1. Summer and winter range of the Mentasta caribou herd in southeast mainland Alaska and western Yukon Territory, Canada.

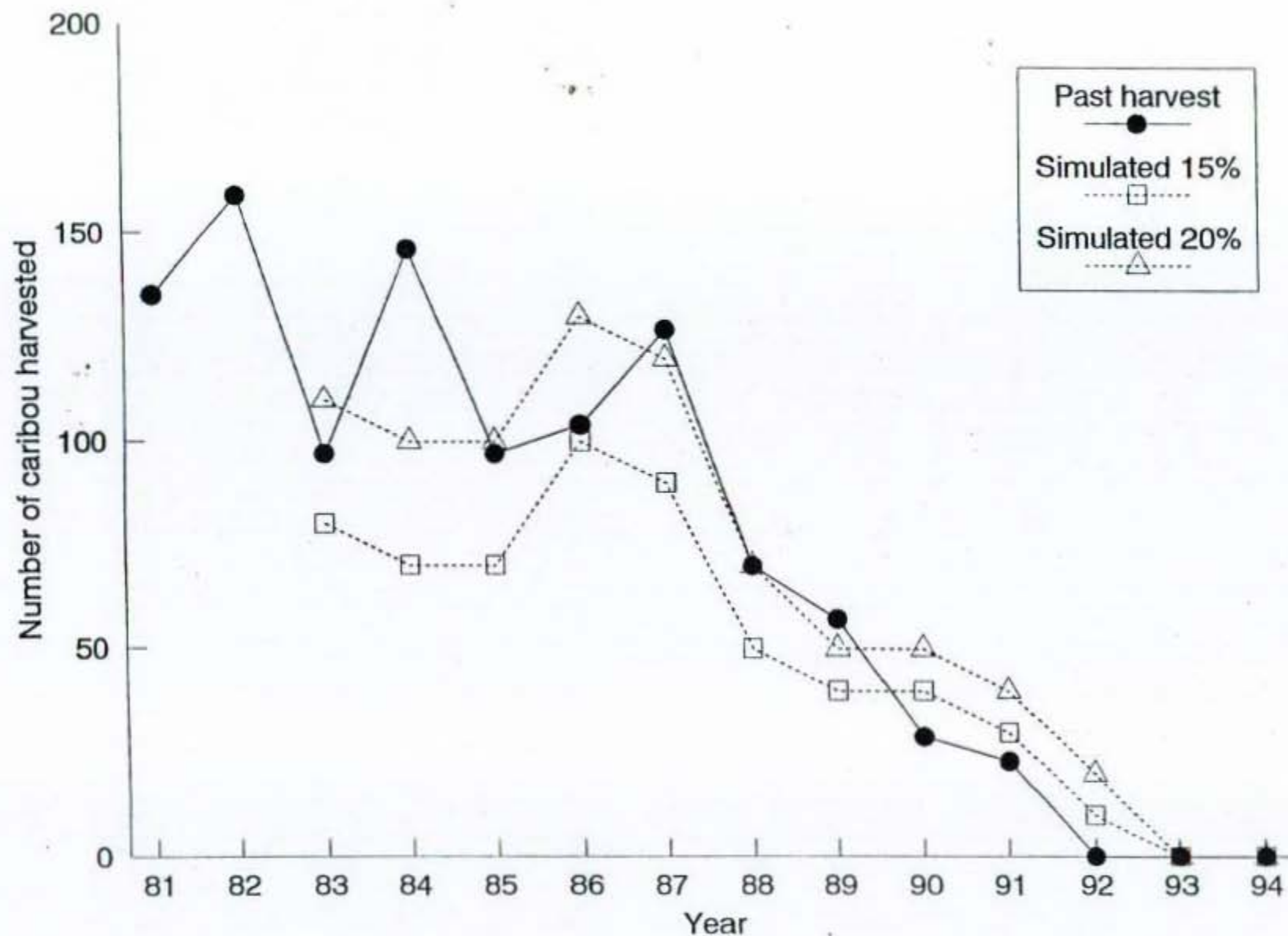


Fig. 2. Comparison of past reported harvest on the Mentasta herd with simulated harvest if this plan had been adopted then. Simulations were run using 15 and 20 percent of the previous 2-

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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Area Biologist, Glennallen
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

PLAN APPROVAL:

The following agencies have given their approval to this Mentasta Caribou Herd Cooperative Management Plan.

Jonathan B. Jarvis Date: 6-12-95
Jonathan B. Jarvis
Superintendent
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
U.S. National Park Service

Wayne Reglin Date: 6/29/95
Wayne Reglin
Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Robert Schultz Date: 7-3-95
Robert Schultz
Active Refuge Manager
Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ENDORSEMENTS:

The following citizen advisory groups have read and endorse as is, endorse with concerns, or do not endorse this Mentasta Caribou Herd Cooperative Management Plan.

The Subsistence Resource Commission for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

- ☐ endorse
☐ endorse with concerns (comments attached)
☐ do not endorse (comments attached)

_____ date: _____
Chairperson

The Southcentral Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

- ☒ endorse
☐ endorse with concerns (comments attached)
☐ do not endorse (comments attached)

Joe Baenar date: *June 30, 1995*
Vice-Chairperson

The Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

- ☐ endorse
☐ endorse with concerns (comments attached)
☐ do not endorse (comments attached)

_____ date: _____
Chairperson

The Copper Basin Advisory Committee

- ☐ endorse
☒ endorse with concerns (comments attached)
☐ do not endorse (comments attached)

Donald R. Howell date: *6/10/95*
Chairperson

ENDORSEMENTS (continued):

The Tok Cutoff - Nabesna Road Advisory Committee

- ☒ endorse
☒ endorse with concerns (comments attached)
☐ do not endorse (comments attached)

Bel Elli date: June 14, 95
Chairperson

The Upper Tanana - Fortymile Advisory Committee

- ☐ endorse
☐ endorse with concerns (comments attached)
☐ do not endorse (comments attached)

_____ date: _____
Chairperson

CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP CONCERNS:

Tok Cutoff - Nabesna Road Advisory Committee:

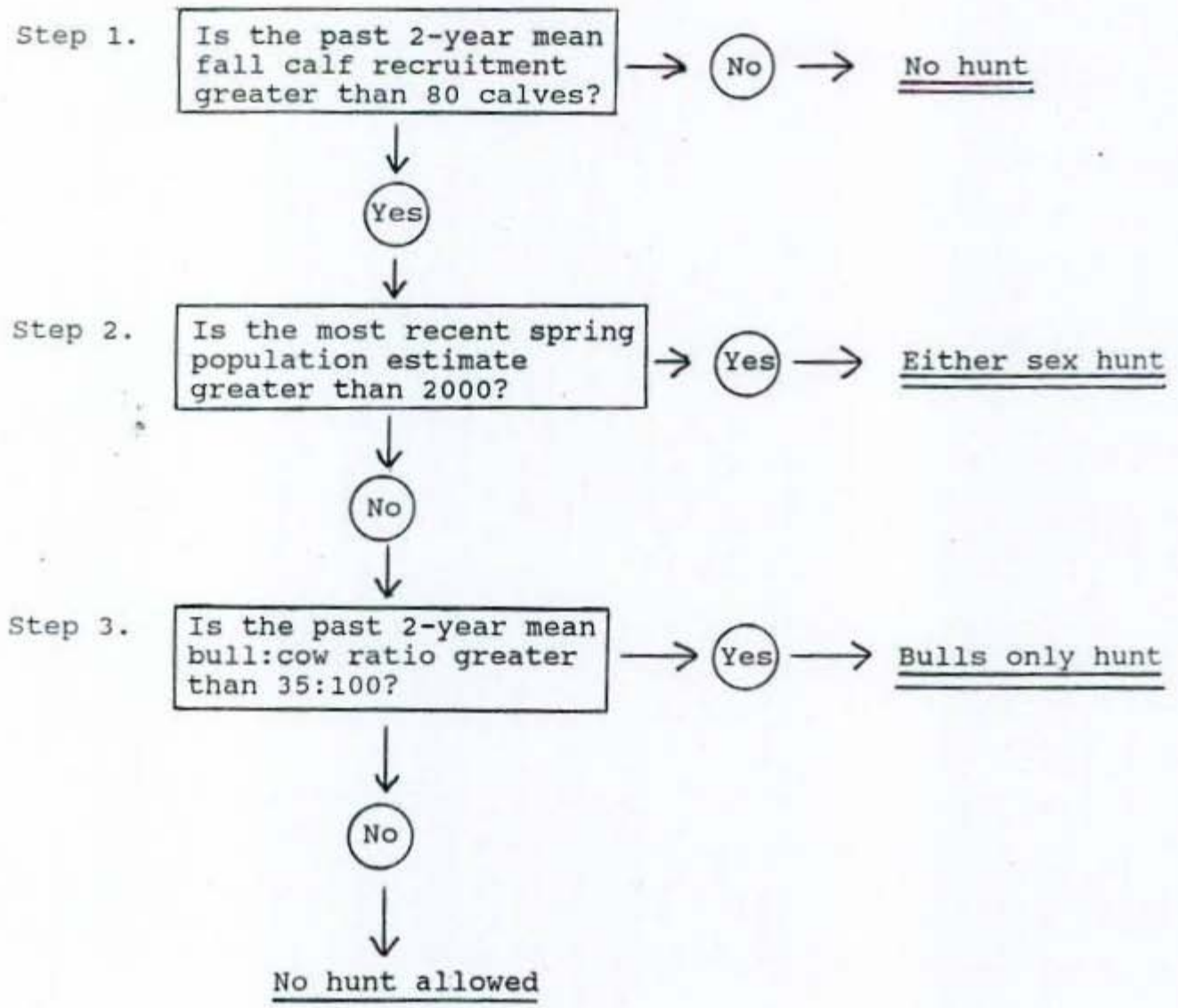
The Tok Cutoff-Nabesna Road Advisory Committee endorses the Mentasta Caribou Herd Cooperative Management Plan, however, some members are concerned that the harvest strategy may result in too many cow caribou being harvested. The concern is that high cow harvests will reduce herd growth and potentially reduce overall harvest in the following years. We request that if and when the harvest strategy calls for an "either sex" harvest, the Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board consider this decision carefully and that this plan be re-evaluated.

Copper Basin Advisory Committee:

The Copper Basin Advisory Committee endorses the Mentasta Caribou Herd Cooperative Management Plan but we have one concern. We understand that the National Park Service can not conduct or endorse predator control, however, we feel that the Mentasta herd will remain at low numbers unless there is predator reduction. Without active predator management fewer caribou will be available for harvest by both subsistence and sport hunters. At a minimum predator seasons and bag limits should be liberal when predators are abundant in the Mentasta herd range.

Appendix. Decision flow chart for determining the harvest quota and bag limit for the Mentasta caribou herd.

DECISION FLOW CHART FOR MENTASTA CARIBOU HARVEST QUOTA AND BAG LIMIT



17 July 2007

Jeff,

Here's a copy of the Mentasta Caribou Plan that I mentioned as a model for the Chisana Herd. As we discussed, such a plan would be worthwhile to spell out the allocation of harvest between the US and Canada, and then among users in each jurisdiction, and to determine the annual allowable harvest. Something like the methods for coming up with a fall harvest in the Mentasta Herd would be useful because it takes into account changes in recruitment and herd size to come up with a quota.

Layne