



Advisory Announcement

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State Closes Cow Caribou Season in Unit 22, Unit 23, and Unit 26(A) Southwest

(Kotzebue, AK) – This Emergency Order closes the state resident hunting season for cow caribou in Units 22, 23, and that portion of 26A within in 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, also known as 26A Southwest. These hunt areas are managed under registration permits RC800 and RC907.

Despite recent attempts to slow the decline of the Western Arctic Herd (WAH), the population has continued to decline. Regulatory changes that took effect July 1, 2024, to decrease bag limits and reduce the harvest of cows have not slowed the rate of decline. The harvestable surplus for the WAH has decreased concurrently with the population decline and is estimated at zero cows based on the 2025 census of 121,000 individuals. Elimination of cow harvest has been identified as a necessary step towards slowing the population decline as there is no harvestable surplus of cows at this time.

The state resident bag limit under the RC800 and RC907 permits in the Units 22, 23, and 26A Southwest will be 15 bulls total with a season of July 1 – June 30 for RY26. See the 2026-2027 Alaska Hunting Regulations for seasons, bag limits, and when and where to obtain permits. Hunters are reminded to report their harvest after hunting; reporting allows the department to provide the maximum allowable hunting opportunity and without it, the department must take a conservative approach to hunter harvest.

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