

DEIS done for Porcupine caribou treaty plan

A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on a proposed agreement between the U.S. and Canada for conserving caribou has been issued by the U.S. Department of State. The statement was prepared with Department of the Interior cooperation.

Caribou cross the international boundary during annual migrations between their summer range in Alaska and wintering areas in Canada. Three herds have been identified for possible inclusion under the agreement. The Porcupine Herd, with 100,000 head, is the largest. The other herds are the Fortymile and Chisana Herds.

The report, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Agreement Between the United States and Canada for the Conservation of Migratory Caribou," discussed possible effects of establishing or not establishing an international agreement for caribou conservation. The report identifies points such a convention might cover and discusses environmental effects of alternatives.

Among factors considered are which herds might best be covered, alternative approaches to habitat protection and caribou management, use of caribou for subsistence and sports hunting, and alternatives for a commission or international body to implement the agreement. The final agreement would be fixed by negotiation.

Wildlife officials in both countries advocate the agreement because of changing conditions in the migration routes, and impacts of a declining caribou population on subsistence users and animal species.

Copies of the report are available from William H. Mansfield, Office of Environment and Health, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520 or the Area Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 E. Tudor Rd., Anchorage, AK 99503. Public comment on the DEIS will be accepted until June 17 by the Department of State.