

# Park Service, ADF&G undertake study of Mentasta Caribou Herd

GLENNALLEN — The National Park Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game this spring initiated a cooperative study of the Mentasta Caribou Herd of the eastern and northeastern end of the Copper River Basin.

Over the past 15 years, while other caribou herds in Alaska have shown moderate to strong growth trends, the Mentasta herd has remained static at around 3,000 animals. The purpose of the study is to gather information on why the Mentasta herd is behaving differently.

In early April, 35 female caribou were captured, using helicopter dar-

ting methods and radio-collared. Over the next three years, these animals will be aerially located at regular intervals, with intense monitoring during the calving period.

Researchers hope to gain information on herd size and composition, mortality rates, female productivity, seasonal distribution and movements, and overlap with the adjacent Nelchina and Chisana herds.

Fish and Game Biologist Jim Lieb and Brad Cella of the National Park Service are conducting the study. Further information may be obtained by calling either Lieb, 822-3461, or Cella, 822-5234.