

# Western Arctic Caribou herd season to open

The Department of Fish and Game announced last week an emergency regulation passed by the Alaska Board of Game providing for a bulls only permit hunt for the Western Arctic Caribou herd. Dick Bishop, regional supervisor, Division of Game, said that the regulation provides for an unlimited number of permits to be issued on the basis of one per legal hunter. Season length is Aug. 26 through Oct. 5 and March 15 through April 15. However, the season will be closed when the harvest reaches 3,000 bulls.

The Alaska Board of Game at their spring, 1977 regulatory meeting initially adopted regulations that provided for a Western Arctic Caribou permit hunt allowing up to 3,000 bulls to be harvested. However, because of a ruling by Judge James Blair on the TVSA-Wartes vs. State of Alaska case, the regulations were declared invalid. The Board then closed the upcoming season because of legal uncertainties and lack of an alternative proposal. "The new emergency regulations do not conflict with the court decision," Bishop said, "but do provide opportunity to hunt and to obtain meat without jeopardizing the herd."

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dizing the herd's recovery."

Recent biological information about the Western Arctic Caribou herd indicates the herd's well being has improved sufficiently to justify a controlled bulls-only harvest, Department biologists report. Final results from the 1969 photo count indicated a known 1976 minimum population of 64,000 caribou and preliminary data from 1977 suggest the population now numbers approximately 75,000.

Bishop stressed that recovery of the herd looks promising if humans do not kill any females from the herd. Any human kill of a female caribou from the herd will jeopardize recovery of the herd and delay by many years the time before humans can substantially increase their annual harvest.

Department employees will be issuing permits at the following locations and times in Game Manage-

ment Units 24 and 26:

Unit 24: Bettles Aug. 23; Allakaket Aug. 23; Hughes Aug. 24; Huslia Aug. 24.

Unit 26: Barrow Aug. 23-26; Wainwright Aug. 23; Point Lay Aug. 23; Anaktuvuk Pass Aug. 22; Nuiqsut Aug. 24; Atkasook Aug. 24.

Department employees will issue permits in Kotzebue (Unit 23) throughout the Aug. 20-Sept. 7 period. Specific dates of issuance in other villages in Unit 23 will be announced on the Kotzebue radio station.

Also, for people unable to apply in person under the above conditions, permits may be obtained during the period Aug. 20-March 31 by mail or in person by supplying name, address and hunting license number (or by stating age if under 16) to: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.