

Reindeer rescue planned

A Native Nome doctor will finance an airlift in an effort to save hundreds of reindeer from starving to death. The airlift will remove the animals from remote Hagemeister Island in Bristol Bay before they face another winter without food.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service granted a permit to Don Olson, in order for him to establish his own herd.

For the past two winters, the herd of 900 to 1200 reindeer on the island suffered severe die-offs from starvation, according to Aaron Archibeque, manger of the

US F and WS Togiak National Wildlife Refuge.

The reindeer will be flown to Goose Bay near Anchorage where they will stay in quarantine until they are certified free from disease.

Olson will try to remove as many animals as possible from the island. He plans to sell salvageable meat from healthy adult reindeer not airlifted. The Service will donate 5 percent to villages on or near the Togiak refuge.

As of press time, Olson, stationed in Golovin, airlifted 38 animals off the island in a DC-3.