

PROPOSAL 26

5 AAC 99.025. Customary and traditional uses of game populations.

Determine customary and traditional uses of the Unimak Island caribou herd (Unit 10 – Unimak Island).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Under AS 16.05.258, the Board of Game (board) is required to identify game populations, or portions of populations, that are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence. Historically the Unimak caribou herd (UCH) was considered part of the Southern Alaska Peninsula caribou herd (SAP). Under 5 AAC 99.025, in 1987 the board determined a positive customary and traditional use (C&T) finding for caribou on Unimak Island as part of the Southern Alaska Peninsula herd (SAP) with an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS) of 100–150 caribou. The positive C&T finding was applied to the combined mainland and island herds. In the last decade there has been very little movement between these herds based on collared caribou monitored in both herds. The Department of Fish and Game (department) is proposing that the herds be managed separately (Proposal 25).

Because the caribou on Unimak island are now managed as a herd separate from the SAP, there is no C&T finding specific to the UCH. False Pass (population 49) is the only community on Unimak Island. The UCH population is at a low level (approximately 430 caribou), is increasing slowly, and has remained closed to hunting under state regulations since 2008. Three federal subsistence permits were issued during the last two years through special action requests to the Federal Subsistence Board. Reported cumulative UCH harvest from 1997 to 2008 was 117.

The department will prepare a report with information relevant to the eight criteria (5 AAC 99.010) that the board uses to identify game populations with C&T uses, to assist the Board with this finding.

If the board chooses to make a positive C&T finding for the Unimak caribou herd, we recommend that the board postpone establishing an ANS for the herd until the population reaches management goals and harvests consistent with traditional levels are sustainable.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F20-035)
