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## **ADVISORY ANNOUNCEMENT**

*For Immediate Release: January 28, 2020*

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### **Mulchatna Caribou Hunt (RC503) Closes**

(Dillingham) – State Caribou Registration permit hunt, RC503, in Game Management Units 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A and 19B, will close at 11:59 pm on January 31, 2020. In a response to a population decline in the Mulchatna caribou herd, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game issued an emergency order closing RC503.

The department's July 2019 post-calving survey estimated the Mulchatna herd at approximately 13,500 caribou – below the population objective of 30,000–80,000 caribou. Caribou population objectives are based on the number of animals a given range can sustainably support. Information collected over the previous few years identified good calf productivity with high pregnancy rates and good calf survival indicating that the Mulchatna herd's range is healthy and not limiting.

Since 2011 Mulchatna caribou have been under intensive management to increase the herd's population size and harvest by humans. The management approach has been to limit predation by wolves on caribou calves by specifically targeting core calving areas for wolf removal. In 2017 this area was expanded to the full 10,000 square mile control area designated by the Board of Game encompassing all core calving areas in Unit 17.

In August 2019 the department took the first conservation measure by reducing the bag limit from 2 caribou to 1 caribou (EO 04-06-19). Hunters are reminded that completing a hunt report for RC503 regardless of success is critical information for managers. Additional state caribou hunting opportunities are available on the Nushagak Peninsula (RC501) and under general harvest in Unit 19C and 19D.

Hunt reports are due within 15 days of hunt closure. It is important that permittees return their hunt reports regardless of participation to provide wildlife managers the information they need to understand harvest by mailing in their paper reports or completing them online at [https://secure.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=interperm.enter\\_report\\_hunterid](https://secure.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=interperm.enter_report_hunterid), or in person at any Alaska Department of Fish and Game office.

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