



National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Teshekpuk Caribou Herd Analysis

Teshekpuk Caribou Herd near Teshekpuk Lake on the NPR-A

A Collaboration in Science

The summer range of the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd largely overlaps a vast unit of public land known as the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Proposed oil and gas development, in combination with the effects of climate change, could cause significant changes to the caribou herd's habitat.

With the help of radio collar data, researchers have previously noted the caribou herd's calving grounds are concentrated in a region lying north, east, and south of Teshekpuk Lake.

Our analysis describes the conditions that make the greater Teshekpuk Lake area the preferred destination for calving caribou in the Teshekpuk herd.

The Teshekpuk Lake area offers some of the most nutritious food available for caribou during the June 1-15 calving season. This is important because caribou graze on newly sprouted cotton grass, which is highly digestible and offers higher levels of protein for lactating caribou.

This research highlights the importance of maintaining existing calving areas for the herd. *If the Teshekpuk Lake calving grounds are disturbed, calving caribou are unlikely to find other suitable areas for calving across their range.*

Our models provide managers with important baseline information on factors that influence the summer distribution of the herd. When coupled with different scenarios for the development of the NPR-A, these results can aid land managers in deciding which development plans will be least disruptive to caribou as they move among key habitat areas.

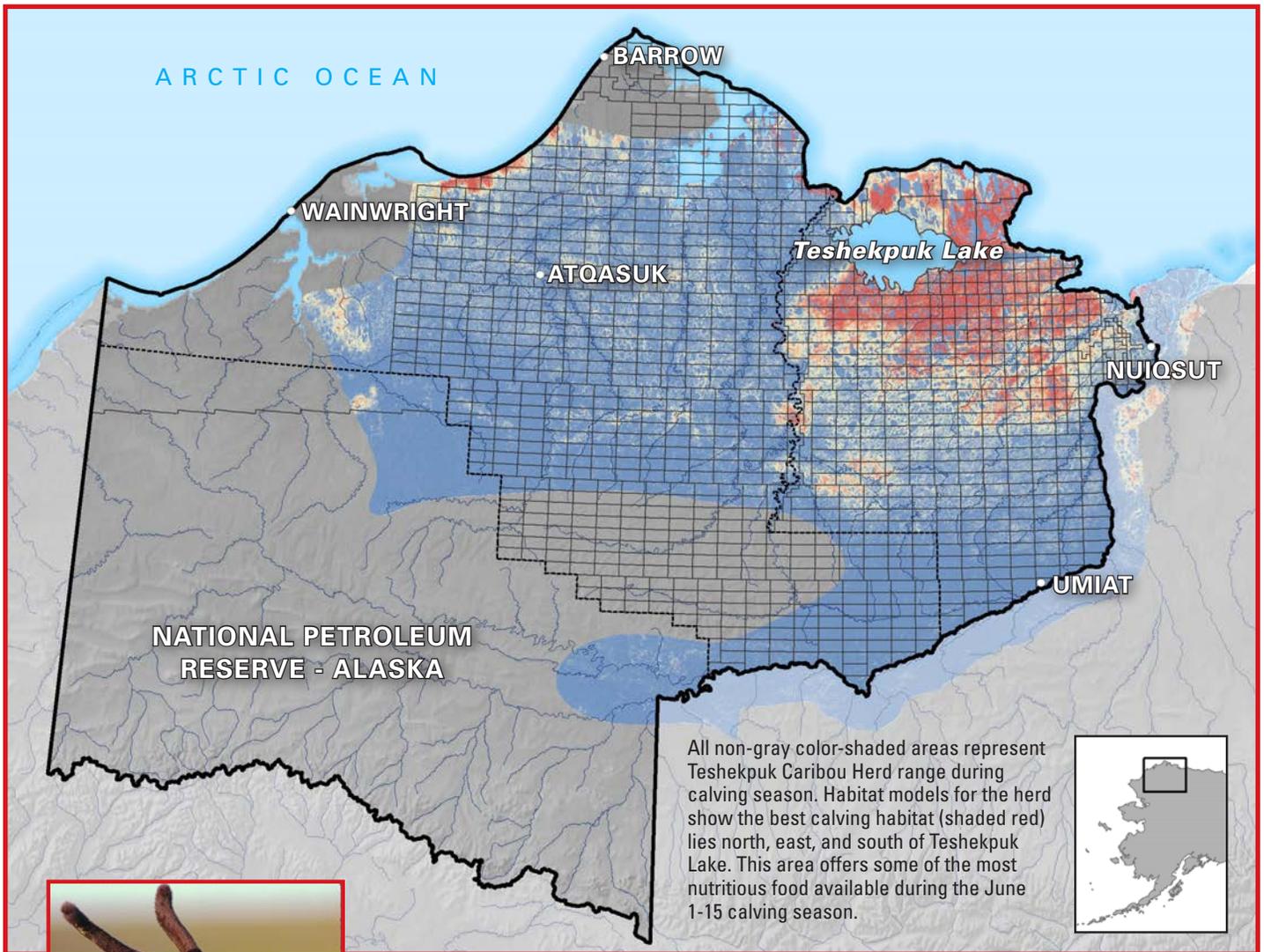
FAST FACTS

- Area of National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska: more than 22 million acres
- Area of Teshekpuk Lake calving grounds: estimated 1.8 million acres
- Teshekpuk Caribou Herd population: estimated 64,000
- The Teshekpuk Lake area offers some of the most nutritious food available, in the form of newly sprouted cotton grass, for calving caribou.
- NPR-A hosts a great diversity of habitats vital to migratory birds, two of Alaska's largest caribou herds, predator species, and marine mammals.

Partners

ABR Inc.
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The Nature Conservancy
North Slope Borough
The Wilderness Society
U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Teshkepuk Caribou Habitat Selection Probability: Calving Season (June 1-15)



The purpose of this publication is to share the results of this collaborative research. It is a publication of Audubon Alaska, The Nature Conservancy, and The Wilderness Society, all of which are working toward a sustainable future in the Arctic.



People and Caribou in the NPR-A

Decisions about development in the NPR-A are also decisions about people and caribou. People from multiple villages with a deeply rooted subsistence tradition rely on the Teshkepuk herd as a source for caribou meat. Caribou is the region's primary terrestrial subsistence resource.

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Source: Wilson, R.R., Prichard, A.K., Parrett, L.S., Person, B.T., Carroll, G.M., Smith, M.A., Rea, C.L., Yokel, D.A. (in review). Summer source selection by the Teshkepuk Caribou Herd in northern Alaska. *Journal of Wildlife Management*. Photographs: Gary Braasch