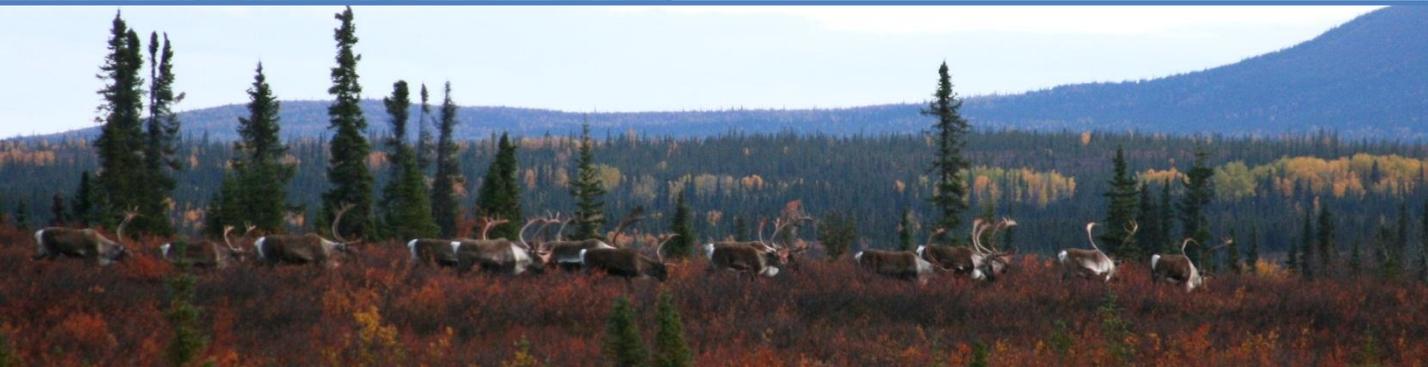




Migration Timing

Year	Date	% Crossing
2010	Sep 24	97
2011	Sep 27	75
2012	Oct 8	85
2013	TBD	TBD

Average dates that collared caribou crossed the Noatak River on their fall migration and the percentage that migrated south for winter



Photos: Migrating caribou in Kobuk Valley NP (above) and beating tracks through the snow heading south (top). K. Joly, NPS.

Fall 2013: Late Caribou Migration

Western Arctic Herd caribou calve in the Utukok Uplands, north of the Brooks Range, in early June and spend most of the summer in Noatak National Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, and the BLM-managed National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). While some caribou often stay north of the range for winter, the vast majority of the herd has consistently migrated south through Kobuk Valley National Park to reach their wintering grounds. This path has been used by caribou, and caribou subsistence hunters, for over 10,000 years. As of September 21, 2013, less than 30% of the collars have crossed the Noatak River and none across the Kobuk River – making this the latest migration documented by the program thus far. Many caribou are still north of the Colville River on the North Slope. Investigations as to what may factor into the timing of caribou migrations are on-going. As for this year's late fall migration, a very late spring or a mild fall may have contributed to this unusual movement pattern. Subsistence hunters may have a hard time finding caribou this year.