

Press Release

CARIBOU RELEASED FROM CENTRAL SELKIRK CARIBOU MATERNITY PEN

[August 9, 2023, Nakusp] – The caribou in the Central Selkirk Caribou Maternity Pen were released on July 21, 2023. The original 14 animals (ten cows) have been kept in the pen since capture in April 2023. Eight calves were born over the months of June and July. ALCS identified seven male calves and one female calf.

Upon release this year, ALCS observed the caribou taking a similar route to last year. The caribou quickly travelled up to the top of Raven Creek and were in the subalpine within a couple of hours. The caribou split up into two groups, and are remaining in the area above Raven Creek and Heart Lake.

The purpose of the maternity pen is to increase calf survival and decrease environmental pressures, such as predators, to cows and calves during calving and after when the calves are less than six weeks old.

ALCS monitors the cows and calves in the pen and feeds them a high nutrition diet so when they are released, they have the best chances possible to escape predation, and find their way back up into the alpine until breeding season in the fall.

The caribou are ideally released six weeks after the last calf is born, which allows calves to mature to keep up with the rest of the herd in their natural habitat.

Because of increasing temperatures in the summer months, the pen was closely monitored for living conditions, and it can be a consideration to release the caribou earlier to ensure they regulate a good body temperature.

Caribou were closely monitored by maternity pen shepherds from a specialty-built observation blind. Shepherds have included various stakeholder groups including some ʔaq`am First Nations community members.

There was a controlled access zone on Kuskanax Forest Service Road around the maternity pen, starting 600 metres up from Hot Springs Road. A gate and information signage have been installed. The gate was closed as necessary during critical periods – the road was closed during calving and after while the calves were developing. The Kuskanax Forest Service Road is open to the public for access to the Kuskanax drainage as per instructions on the signage and under the direction of ALCS and the BC Caribou Recovery Program.

Thank you to the community and local stakeholder groups for supporting this project.

Follow this project on our website (www.arrowlakescaribousociety.com) and social media for more information. Facebook: @arrowlakescaribou, Instagram: @arrow_lakes_caribou.

Or, for more information contact the society by emailing al.caribou.society@gmail.com.