

Recent Augmentation of Mountain Caribou to the Southern Selkirk Mountains of Northeastern Washington, Northern Idaho, and Southern British Columbia

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ABSTRACT

Over a 3-year period, we transplanted 43 radio-marked mountain caribou from central British Columbia to the southern Selkirk Mountains of Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia. We have monitored these animals to determine initial movements from release site, seasonal movements, habitat use, recruitment, and cause of mortality. Five caribou have emigrated from the Selkirk Mountains recovery zone; 2 returned to the area, 3 died within weeks of leaving. Other movements and habitat use are still being analyzed and will be completed in time for presentation at the conference. We have observed calf production each year, but survival of this cohort is unknown. Twenty-six radio-collared caribou have died: 4 were killed by cougars, 1 by grizzly bears, 1 from accidental fall, 2 from poaching, and 18 from unknown causes. Monitoring of this population will likely continue for at least 2 more years. We also have initiated a cougar study in cooperation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Forest Service, and British Columbia Wildlife Branch to determine the effects of predation on the survival of this endangered caribou population.
