

During a trip last month to the community of [Kiana](#), E-News learned that residents were very concerned about the late return of the caribou. Hunters were concerned that the bulls would go into rut reducing the selection of game for subsistence. Caribou is critical component of diet in the Northwest Arctic, in particular for upriver communities. The late arrival of the herd was not limited to the Kobuk River. Noatak Tribal Council Environmental Assistant Carol Wesley wrote,

*This year, the caribou, our lifeblood, our subsistence staple is very, very late. The majority of the Noatak population did not get their catch yet. However, good news today, thousands are heading our way FINALLY. We don't really know why they are late. A few speculated that it was too warm (up until last week), or maybe those wildfires made them reroute? So we will see this week how else things go as far as our winter gathering of our favorite food.*

The population of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is at about 401,000, down from a record high of 490,000 seven years ago (ADF&G 2009). During this period, wildfires have increased, and destruction of lichen on winter grazing land may be one explanation for caribou decline, and changes in migration routes. Here is a recent article on the condition of caribou in other parts of the Arctic, published this week by Environment 360 of Yale University. Despite the late caribou season, berry picking in the Northwest Arctic was reported to be very good this year. Berries are another Arctic dietary staple and when there is change in precipitation or warm dry summers, Arctic residents become concerned about the berry harvest. We are learning more each month about their important health benefits such as with this research on atherosclerosis. Also attached is an article on how climate change is increasing the movement of water from the land to the ocean.

**Caribou in Decline Across the North, Scientists Fearing Collapse** – *Environment 360 (September 23, 2010)*  
Researchers are starting to believe that the observed declines of caribou populations across the circumpolar Arctic and sub-Arctic are due primarily to climate-related changes in the availability of the animals' preferred food and to habitat loss as a result of resource development. [Read Article](#)

**Blueberries Help Fight Artery Hardening, Lab Animal Study Indicates** – *Science Daily (September 30, 2010)*  
Blueberries may help fight atherosclerosis, also known as hardening of the arteries, according to results of a preliminary U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded study. [Read Article](#)

**Alarming Increase in Flow of Water into Oceans Due to Global Warming, Accelerated Cycle of Evaporation, Precipitation** – *Science Daily (October 5, 2010)*  
Freshwater is flowing into Earth's oceans in greater amounts every year, a team of researchers has found, thanks to more frequent and extreme storms linked to global warming. All told, 18 percent more water fed into the world's oceans from rivers and melting polar ice sheets in 2006 than in 1994, with an average annual rise of 1.5 percent. [Read Article](#)

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**Regards – Mike**

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