



**MOUNTAIN CARIBOU**  
**CANADA, British Columbia**  
**AVGUST 2013**  
**MECHISLAV KLIMOVICH**

**PHOTO ENTRY**  
**288 1/2**

## Rangifer tarandus caribou

The mountain caribou is one of three regional caribou categories established for record-keeping by dividing the subspecies caribou into geographic groups based on antler size and shape. These categories were established by the Boone & Crockett Club and have come to be accepted by hunters everywhere. (The other two regional categories are Quebec-Labrador caribou and woodland caribou. All three are classified as woodland caribou [*R. t. caribou*] by scientists.)

**DESCRIPTION** The largest-bodied caribou. Bulls stand 50-55 inches (127-140 cm) at the shoulder, and weigh as much as 600 pounds (272 kg). The color is a fairly dark chocolate-brown, with a lighter-colored throat mane that turns almost white in late season. Mountain caribou grow the heaviest antlers of the species, but tend not to have very wide spreads.

**BEHAVIOR** Mountain caribou herds are not nearly as large as those of barren ground caribou, nor are their seasonal migrations as long, often being mainly changes in elevation.

Mountain caribou go high in the mountains during the summer to avoid biting insects, then-as the season progresses-bunch up and move into lower valleys where there is less snow and more feed. Named herds include the Selkirk, Spatsizi, and Wells Gray.

**HABITAT** Mid-elevation mountains and valleys.

**DISTRIBUTION Yukon Territory:** South of Game Management Zone 2 (1978 regulations), and further identified as south of the Stewart River and-from the junction of the Stewart and Yukon rivers-

south of the Yukon River. **Northwest**

**Territories:** South of latitude 66°N and west of the

Mackenzie River to Great Slave Lake, then south of Great Slave Lake to the Slave River. **British**

**Columbia and**

**Alberta:** All parts where caribou are found, except for the northeastern corner of Alberta east of the Slave

River. **United States:** The endangered Selkirk Herd extends marginally into northeastern Washington and northern Idaho.

**REMARKS** Many sportsmen feel that mountain caribou have the most impressive antlers because of their mass, even though they lack the beam length of the barren ground types and the spread and shovels of the Quebec-Labrador. They may also be the most difficult to hunt because of the mountainous, timbered terrain they inhabit. Usually hunted from horseback, often in combination with other species such as moose, mountain goat or sheep.

**TAXONOMIC NOTES** At one time the following populations were considered to be separate subspecies: *osborni* (Osborn caribou), from the Cassiar Mountains of northern British Columbia; *montanus* (mountain caribou), from southern British Columbia; *fortidens* (Rocky Mountain caribou), from southwestern Alberta; and *sylvestris* (Richardson caribou), from southwestern Northwest Territories and northern Alberta. These are no longer considered valid subspecies.

**STATUS** The caribou of the Selkirk Herd of southeastern British Columbia (bounded by the Canada-U.S. border, Columbia River, Kootenay River, Kootenay Lake and Kootenai River), northeastern Washington and northern Idaho are listed as endangered by the USF&WS (1983)

