

Respecting Caribou

Treat caribou with respect, always thinking about future generations of harvesters. That is the proper thing to do and is also what I am going to talk about in this essay. I recommend you read this essay, it has a lot of useful information that you can use if you are serious about respecting caribou.

Respecting caribou should start with being as informed as possible. As with any activity, always ask questions that will help you be more respectful of caribou and a better harvester. Try to get as much information from elders and other experienced caribou hunters as possible before you go on a hunt. They can teach you a lot of things. They can teach you things like where to shoot the caribou for a clean kill and how to harvest it properly and how to skin it. Listen to the elders, they have a lot of experience and can help you to learn how to respect caribou and properly and respectably harvest and conserve caribou. Elders are experienced in harvesting caribou and are your most valuable resource.

Here are some ideas for respectful hunting I have learned from my elders. Be sure your rifles are sighted in before you go hunting. Be sure of your target to reduce wounding other caribou, but if you do wound a caribou be sure to try your best to harvest the one you injured, so it doesn't die in pain and the meat is not wasted. Try to take as much meat, skin, and parts of the caribou as you can. Try not to leave anything behind as it is not respectful to take only part of the harvested animal. Try not to hunt caribou in sensitive areas, like while they are breeding, also while they are in their calving ground where they have their calves. The caribou might never go back and these areas are very important to caribou. Don't sell caribou when there are few caribou around as it will reduce their herd and with too much harvesting going on, that will take a lot of caribou away from families that rely on them.

In addition to learning from elders and experienced hunters, also do your best to keep informed on the results of any studies being done on caribou in your area. When herds are declining, try to take only what will provide your immediate needs. Also, as one bull can breed many cows, try to hunt mostly bulls, leaving females to have calves. Their calves will grow into adults and have more calves which can help declining caribou herds to recover.

Respecting caribou also means speaking up for them when they are in danger. With lots of mining interest and other industrial developments taking over the caribou's home, caribou are in danger of being pushed from areas with lots of food and few wolves and grizzly bears to areas with less food and maybe more wolves and grizzly bears. All northerners need to speak up to ensure these industrial activities are not hurting the caribou herds by pushing caribou off their special areas.

Mining natural resources is not renewable; eventually they will run out and leave us with few caribou and a big mess. Caribou will give us food forever if we don't sell them out, but take care of them. We need to think of future generations. Will they be able to know how important healthy caribou is to our minds and body to harvest healthy caribou if the caribou are all gone?

To me, and in summary, I believe if we follow the points discussed in this essay and listen to our elders and other experienced caribou hunters we will always have caribou as part of our lives. Remembering to sight your rifles before a hunt will help ensure that you will not injure or kill another caribou. If you accidentally shoot another caribou, catch the other one you wounded so you do not waste it. Take as much of the caribou as you can from your kill, do not kill caribou and just leave them or parts of them behind to rot. Take only what you need and at times when caribou are few take less than what you need. Try your best to not shoot the cows, aim for the bulls instead as one bull can breed many cows and we need the cows to have young. Try not to scare the caribou away from their important areas, such as their calving grounds, running grounds and their migrating areas. If we respect and take care of the caribou, they will live for a long time and be with us and other hunters, providing food for future generations.



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