
HISTORY OF WOODLAND CARIBOU IN MONTANA

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Within the contiguous U.S., woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) were historically a resident of mature, deep-snow forests of northwest Montana, north Idaho and northeast Washington. Because of habitat changes, predation, and unregulated hunting, numbers dwindled to remnant populations or even extinction throughout their distribution within the U.S. By the 1950s, any caribou that might be observed in Montana were considered transitory from either southern British Columbia or north Idaho, where remnant populations still remain. In this paper, we review historical and current records of woodland caribou in Montana, discuss their biological requirements and legal status, and offer comments on future recovery efforts.