

Field Museum News

Published Monthly by Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

Vol. 4

JANUARY, 1933

No. 1

ALASKAN CARIBOU ADDED TO HALL OF AMERICAN MAMMAL HABITAT GROUPS

BY WILFRED H. OSGOOD
Curator, Department of Zoology

By coincidence rather than design, a group appropriate to the season was completed and opened for exhibition in Hall 16 in December just before the holidays. This is a habitat group of Alaskan caribou or reindeer. That the American caribou are really reindeer is perhaps not generally known. They are, in fact, so closely related to the Old World species from which the domestic reindeer was derived, that in early classifications they were regarded as the same species. In other words, there are wild species of reindeer in both the Old World and the New, but it was only in the Old World that a domestic variety was produced. The name "caribou" is of French-Canadian origin and has become so established for the American animals that it is now almost universally used.

The Museum's group was obtained in consequence of the Thorne-Graves-Field Museum Arctic Expedition, sponsored and led by Bruce Thorne of Chicago, and George Coe Graves II of New York. To this expedition the Museum is also indebted for its group of Pacific walrus. The specimens of caribou were not actually collected by Messrs. Thorne and Graves but it was through their intervention that they were obtained by Alaska Guides, Inc., of which Mr. Thorne is a vice-president, under permit

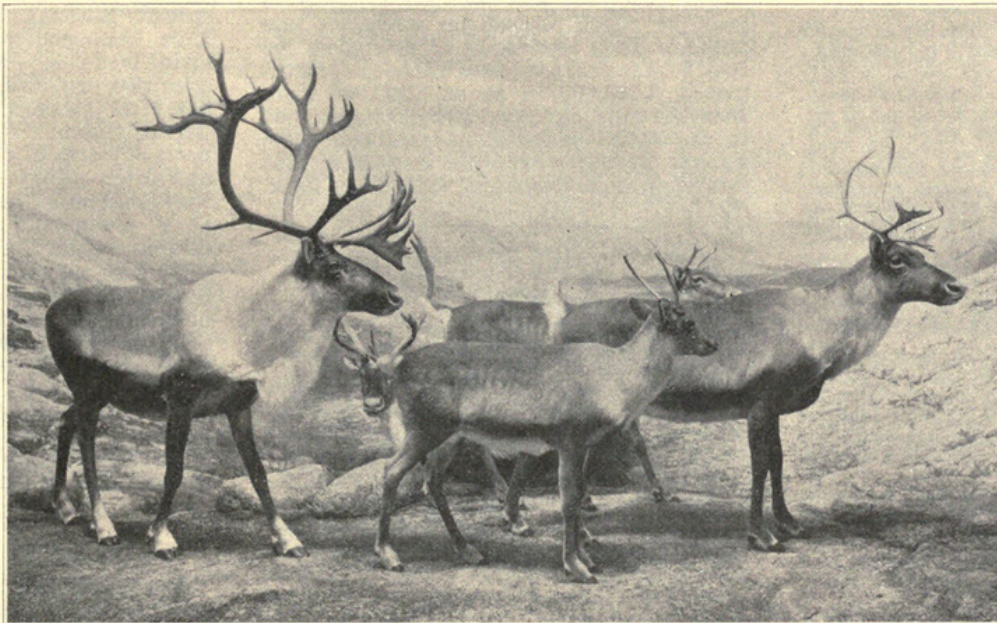
from the United States Biological Survey and the Alaska Game Commission.

Five animals are shown, two large bulls, two adult females, and a young male. They stand rather close together, in keeping with their well-known gregarious habits, on a moss-grown ledge of rock, overlooking a wide panorama of treeless mountain tops. The specimens were collected near Rainy Pass in the general region of Mount McKinley, and the scene in which they appear is characteristic of many mountains in the interior of Alaska.

the others, however, they have many peculiarities. Among these is the fact that the females have horns as well as the males. The feet, also, are unusual, the "dew-claws" being large and the hoofs very heavy and broad to prevent sinking in snow and swampy ground. The muzzle is very wide and entirely hairy. A peculiar habit is that of migration, which is rare among mammals. In passing from one feeding ground to another, especially in the fall, caribou often gather in very large herds, sometimes numbering thousands.

The caribou group marks the completion of the Museum's Hall of North and South American Mammal Habitat Groups, being the twenty-fourth and last of the series representing the principal large mammals of the New World. The other North American species included in this hall are: Virginia deer (in four groups showing seasonal changes), mule deer, Olympic elk, Alaska moose, musk-ox, bison, mountain goat, mountain sheep, prongbuck, grizzly bear, Alaska brown bear, glacier bear, polar bear, mountain lion, and beaver. South American subjects are: guanaco, tapir, ant bear, marsh deer, jaguar and capybara (the last two in one group).

The caribou were prepared by Taxidermist Julius Friesser, assisted by Arthur G. Rueckert and W. E. Eigsti. The background was painted by Staff Artist Charles A. Corwin.



The Reindeer of America

Group of caribou, installed last month in Hall 16, completing the series of twenty-four North and South American mammal habitat groups. The scene is typical of the mountains of the Alaskan interior.

Caribou belong to the deer family, all the members of which shed and renew their horns annually. As compared with

TO FIELD MUSEUM MEMBERS:

Field Museum takes this opportunity to thank its thousands of Members for the support they have so loyally given during the trying times which it, like other institutions, has had to face as a result of the worldwide business depression. The membership plays an important part in maintaining the Museum and in making it possible to carry on successfully its educational and scientific missions. Under present conditions, the revenue obtained from membership fees is more than ever a vital factor in the budget of the Museum.

While the stress of the past few years has naturally brought some decline in the number of Members on the rolls, the great majority have continued their support, and this is deeply appreciated by the Museum's Trustees and Officers. On their part the

Trustees and Officers have instituted economies wherever possible, in order that the full service of the Museum to the public might be maintained at the most reasonable level of expense. Many projects and activities which would normally be considered necessary have been postponed or suspended pending economic improvement, but the curtailments have been of a character which causes the least interference with the Museum's primary functions as an educational institution.

With full recognition of the loyalty shown thus far by the Members, it is felt that it is now permissible to make a special appeal for further continuation of the Members' support. Likewise, Members are requested to propose the names of possible new Members who might take the places of some of those who, because of financial difficulties, have been forced to resign.

COFFEE PLANTS STUDIED

Field Museum recently received on loan from European herbaria two valuable collections of tropical American plants of the Rubiaceae or coffee family. The Botanical Museum of Berlin forwarded more than 300 sheets. From the Museum of Natural History of Paris there were received 1,850 sheets.

All this material has been determined by Associate Curator Paul C. Standley. Several new species were discovered in it. A large part of the Paris sending consisted of plants collected in Brazil by Auguste de Saint-Hilaire in 1816-21, and of others gathered in Colombia by José Triana in 1851-57. It was remarkable to find also a specimen collected in Uruguay by Commerson in 1767. It had waited 165 years for study and identification.



Osgood, Wilfred Hudson. 1933. "Alaskan Caribou Added to Hall of American Mammal Habitat Group." *Field Museum news* 4(1), 1-1.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/25716>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/350777>

Holding Institution

Field Museum of Natural History Library

Sponsored by

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

Rights Holder: Field Museum of Natural History

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.