



## ***Alaska Caribou & Moose Hunting With RAM AVIATION***

**Welcome to Ram Aviation and THANK YOU for booking your hunt with us!** We have put together some reading information on the following pages that may answer some of your questions as you move closer to your hunt date. Please take time to read through these pages, and review information on Hunting Alaska and Leave No Trace. The State of Alaska, Ram Aviation take great pride in the land and animals we have and want to ensure you understand how to best take care of it when you visit.

If you have any questions or concerns after reviewing the information, please feel free to contact the US Fish and Wildlife, AK Department of Fish & Game or our office for additional information. We look forward to seeing you in the fall!

### **Ram Aviation**

#### **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE:**

All of our caribou & moose hunts are based out of Kotzebue, Alaska, which is approximately 33 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Plan on departing from your location and taking a commercial flight into Anchorage, AK. Overnight in Anchorage and jump on an Alaska Airlines flight from Anchorage to Kotzebue on the first flight out the next morning (the day you are scheduled to fly into the field).

When departing Kotzebue, you will want to schedule your flight for the day after you are scheduled to come out of the field. Book yourself a hotel room, get a shower, good dinner & bed before you jump on your flight out of town.

\*\*Although we strive to stay on schedule and get you guys into and out of the field on a timely manner, WEATHER plays a HUGE factor in our ability to do that. We simply cannot “guarantee” that you will get out of the field when scheduled – therefore – we **HIGHLY RECOMMEND** you book your flight leaving Kotzebue as a “FLEXIBLE” TICKET (i.e. allowing you to make changes to your flights without additional charges) – this may save you money in the long run. **THIS IS NOT A REQUIREMENT – BUT IT IS RECOMMENDED!!!**

**PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU SEND US YOUR ITENERARY SO WE KNOW WHEN YOU WILL BE ARRIVING & DEPARTING.** If we have this information, we will have someone from our staff at the airport to greet you and assist with getting your gear from the AK Airlines terminal to our building on the airport tarmac.

If you choose to overnight in Kotzebue, please keep in mind that Kotzebue is a **REMOTE NATIVE VILLAGE** – it’s not a major city by any stretch of the imagination! Therefore, accommodations, shopping and restaurants are very limited so you’ll want to do some homework **PRIOR** to your arrival and make the necessary arrangements/reservations. For your convenience, we have listed below the few places to make reservations:

**BAYSIDE INN & RESTAURANT**  
**BIBBERS BED & BREAKFAST**  
**NULLAGVIK HOTEL**  
**SUE'S BED & BREAKFAST**

**(907) 442-3600**  
**(907) 442-2693**  
**(907) 442-3331**  
**(907) 442-3770**

[www.nullagvik.com](http://www.nullagvik.com)

Upon arriving in Kotzebue you will be met by a representative of our staff and transported to our building on the tarmac. At this area you will receive a basic orientation on what to do and not to do in the field as well as in town. Additionally, our staging area is within the secure area and on the tarmac of the airport; there are safety and legal requirements/restrictions which must be followed. Failure to adhere to such restrictions could result in you being fined and/or arrested. With our facility being on the tarmac of the airport, there are no on-site restrooms or eating facilities. They are available a short distance away, and our personnel will provide you with directions for these services. **THERE IS NO WALKING AROUND ON THE BLACKTOP** ... Please stay within the building or in the dirt area.

Your required paper work will be completed, final payments will be collected and your equipment and supplies will be staged & readied for flight. When you prepare to load the plane make sure all of your gear is on the plane with you! This can be hectic at times and with multiple people trying to help they can grab the wrong stuff. **Be responsible for your own gear until you see all of it loaded onto the plane.** From there you will be flown out to your hunting area.

**WEATHER/FLYING/MECHANICAL:** Weather & mechanical issues are variables that no one can control. We would like you to be aware that weather conditions and/or mechanical issues may prevent us from being able to fly on any given day. Such instances are rare, but can occur. Keep in mind, we make every effort to get you and your gear into the field on the day you are scheduled to depart/arrive in Kotzebue. However, the weather around the Kotzebue Sound and into the Brooks Range can vary greatly and we do not fly if there is any chance we may be putting anyone at risk. Safety is of the utmost importance and we will not put you or our pilot at risk if the weather is such that the plane cannot safely take off and land. Be mindful that the weather has to be acceptable at both ends of the flight -- just because the weather is "beautiful" at your location, does not mean the other end has the same weather. We will make every effort to get you where you need to be on the day that you are meant to be there. However, please remember to be patient if the weather is not cooperating with us.

We are not responsible for food and hotel accommodations, nor the loss of hunting days or rescheduling fees of commercial airline tickets incurred due to the inability to fly due to bad weather. As you fly to camp, you should have the opportunity to view the surrounding area. This will be very helpful in giving you the "lay of the land." While in the field be mindful of the weather. You are in a remote area, and weather issues can be life-threatening. Keep your tent closed up while away from camp - winds can destroy unsecured flaps and leave you without shelter. The weather can change quickly and bring precipitation; keep rain gear with you when you are away from your tent, and secure camp supplies from the elements prior to departing camp for the day.

We make every effort to put you in game rich areas; however your success is directly related to the effort you put into the hunt. While it does happen, the likelihood of shooting a trophy caribou from your tent is very rare. The game is out and about in all types of weather, so you may as well be also.

**IN FIELD COMMUNICATIONS:** Your hunt is being conducted in a REMOTE wilderness area within the Arctic Circle. Communications are very limited in such remote areas. There is **ABSOLUTELY NO CELL SERVICE FROM THE FIELD**, and most cell phones from the lower 48 will not work in Kotzebue. We REQUIRE all unguided groups rent and bring with them an **IRIDIUM SATELLITE PHONES (others may not work)**. This will allow you to keep in contact with us in case of an emergency or when you are scheduled to come out of the field, we ask that you call and give us a weather/wind report so our pilot has a good weather report from your location. You can do this by going online and typing in Satellite phone rental. Contact numbers will be given to you in Kotzebue. Take extra precautions while doing even routine tasks -- for your own personal safety.

Your camp location is accessible only by small aircraft, and this access is completely weather dependant. Unless you can attract someone's attention, your ability to make contact outside of camp is VERY REMOTE without a satellite phone.

**LUGGAGE INFORMATION:** Please remember that hunter's luggage and rifle cases typically all look similar. Please have all of your luggage and rifle cases clearly labeled to aid in keeping your gear properly identified.

Weight is limited to 125#s gear per person (70#s if you are renting gear from us in Kotzebue), not including your weapon. Please keep your luggage to smaller – soft sided cases or back packs. Please DO NOT use extra large bags or the large hard sided suitcases...they do not fit well into the small aircraft.

**We do not transport hard sided weapon cases into the field –  
SOFT CASES ARE REQUIRED to transfer your weapons into the field.  
Hard cases are kept in our locked storage at the airport.**

If you exceed the weight limits, charter fees on a per case basis will apply to overweight and/or oversized items being transported into/out of the field.

**CAMP RENTAL EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING:** If you are renting CAMP GEAR from us, please review the equipment list on our website. The items listed are those essential for your hunt. We are hunters ourselves, and have repeatedly been in this hunting area/environment, and make our recommendations to aid in the better comfort and success of your hunt.

We know that clothing/equipment items that work perfectly well in different parts of the country often do not work in the Alaskan Arctic. Based on our experiences as well as experiences of other clients, we give the following suggestions:

**CLOTHING:** Keep your clothing lightweight, warm, and waterproof. Synthetic materials work best due to their drying and wicking capabilities. We suggest you do not bring any clothing made of cotton. Cotton is slow to dry, does not wick moisture, and is heavy when wet – field translation: you will be cold, wet, and miserable in cotton. A few pieces of proper clothing are better than multiples of the wrong stuff... **Blaze orange is NOT required in Alaska.**

**FOOTWEAR:** Make sure you have spent time walking in ALL footwear that you bring – INCLUDING waders and wading boots. We highly recommend you bring waist high Gore-Tex or Dry Plus stocking foot breathable waders in lieu of rubber hip boots. Rubber boots will trap in moisture, will never dry in the field, and are uncomfortable to walk in for most people. Breathable waders can be turned inside out each night and hung in the tent to dry; you only need to dry the inside of the waders. If not dried each night the neoprene booty may freeze late in the season. By warming for a very short time they will thaw out and be ready to put on (Do not burn!). With the stocking foot waders you can buy a shoe or boot to go over the wader that is comfortable for you, (do not buy shoe/boot with felt soles). Also bring a pair of good waterproof leather boots.

**CAMPSITE:** Hunters are responsible for set-up and teardown of their own tents and camping equipment. Prior to setting up your camp look around the immediate area; try to locate your tent(s) next to trees/bushes that will serve as protection from the wind. Look for a level spot to set up, and take time to remove small/sharp twigs, and level the ground surface prior to placing your tent. A few minutes preparing the ground will be well worth the time. Keep food items out of and a short distance away from your tent. Keep food in the totes with the lids on to reduce scent and protect your cache from rodents.

Make sure you set a waypoint in your GPS with your camp location. Look at your surroundings, study the hills and valleys around you to help familiarize yourself with the area. Select an area away from your camp for your "privy," and cover your waste prior to leaving. Consider burning food items, which are odorous or greasy. Please

be sure to bag up metal and other garbage items to be hauled out, this is essential to prevent problems with bears, predators, and rodents. **We practice “leave no trace” camping, therefore, do not bury or leave trash behind – it must be picked up and hauled out. Camp clean-up is each hunter’s responsibility -- leave the camp in a condition you would like to find it.** You may make small campfires. Use of downed or dead wood products is permissible. Keep fires small and be certain they are dead out when not attended.

**WEAPONS and AMMO:** Alaska law does not separate licenses or seasons by weapon. As such both firearms and archery gear are acceptable. Black powder hunting is also permitted, however, airline transport regulations (both commercial and air freight) will not permit transport of black powder or percussion caps. Access to this area is limited to air travel, which eliminates black powder as an option. Further black powder and caps are not available for purchase in Kotzebue.

**FIREARMS:** Appropriate caliber selection is important. We recommend .30 cal. or better. While smaller calibers will work for caribou, you are in bear country and the bigger caliber makes better back up in the rare event you should have a close encounter. More important than actual caliber is the Ammo. Select and sight in your rifle with **PREMIUM AMMO**. Select premium bonded type ammo that shoots well in your gun. These rounds shoot more consistent and the bullets simply perform better. We want you to be successful when opportunity presents itself, and we do not want to see animals wounded or injured which cannot be taken cleanly and recovered promptly. Bullets are the cheapest part of your hunt, and are called upon for the biggest task. When packing your Ammo for your commercial flight it needs to be in the original box or a container specifically made to hold appropriate ammo.

**ARCHERY:** Alaska bow requirements are 40# min draw weight for caribou, black bear, dall sheep, wolf, wolverine; 50# min mountain goat, moose, brown bear/grizzly. Alaskan law also requires minimum 7/8” blade, 300 grain minimum shaft/tip weight, and no mechanical broad heads for species requiring the 50# min. bow weight. You should be able to consistently shoot out to 40 yards or more with your bow, both standing and kneeling. The hunting area is primarily open tundra with rolling hills, with scattered bushes and stunted trees along stream banks and valleys which can be used as cover. Caribou are primarily seen in the open areas, so archery hunters should be prepared for stalks which require patience and crawling to get within a good shooting distance.

**BEVERAGES/WATER:** We do not provide alcoholic beverages or soda for remote wilderness hunts. Most of the small villages in Alaska are dry, therefore, alcoholic beverages are generally not readily available. Soda is available in the small villages, but *very* expensive (\$25-30 per case). Water in the Arctic is quite safe to drink from the rivers in the area, therefore, it does not need to be boiled before drinking if the rivers are flowing. This area does not have pollution or Giardia like many other areas.

For your peace of mind, we recommend bringing a filtered water bottle. This will allow you to drink from any source of water that you come across. It is very important to stay hydrated when hunting - drink plenty of fluids constantly. Do not wait until you are thirsty, as you will quickly become dehydrated. Alcohol and guns do not mix. Hunts are conducted in remote areas, where accidents are perilous – and there’s no emergency room around the corner.

**FIELD CARE OF TROPHIES:** Do not get in a big hurry with your knife. Make sure your weapon(s) are again safe, and secure your tag on the trophy/complete your harvest ticket. Take time to pose, clean up and take some good photos of your trophy. Consider lighting and fill the frame with the hunter & trophy. Take multiple shots and several different poses. Don’t straddle or sit on your trophy – these do not yield quality photos. Prop the animal up and sit or kneel behind it.

We recommend you consult with your taxidermist for instructions on caping and fleshing if you do not know how to do these important tasks. Heads must be caped in the field, as well as, fleshed and the ears and lips turned and salted. We also recommend splitting the skull caps on all Caribou. They can be easily be put back together by yourself or your taxidermist, and you will save hundreds of dollars on shipping fees. If you should choose to keep the antlers in tact, you are subject to an additional flight fee in order to get them out of the field. While in

the field, keep your capes opened up, out of direct sun, and preferably hung in a small tree or bush so it can have air circulate and stay cool. The cool nights will help dramatically.

Once you return to Kotzebue, we can suggest a location where you can further process and package your own meat and ship it to your home. We can also suggest taxidermists or guide you on proper shipment of your cape and antlers back home. Ram Aviation is not responsible for your caribou meat or cape and antlers. We can only offer verbal assistance so that you can understand the options available and make choices based on your budget. Make sure to allow extra time when you return to Kotzebue so that you can properly handle your caribou meat and trophy prior to making your way for home.

**HUNTING REGULATIONS:** US Fish and Wildlife Officers and State Troopers are present to ensure your safety and that the rules and regulations of the State are being adhered to. The Game Units are monitored both by air and in person on the airport tarmac, as well as, in and around Kotzebue. Don't be surprised if you see their planes land at your camp, want to talk to you about your hunt or just check out what's happening with you and your hunt. Please be sure to review the Alaska Hunting Regulations for the area you are hunting. Penalties for game violations are severe. You will be hunting in GMU 23 or 26. We encourage you to obtain and study the game regulations so you do not inadvertently violate game laws. The web address is:

**[www.adfg.state.ak.us/regs/dept\\_regs.php](http://www.adfg.state.ak.us/regs/dept_regs.php)**

**REMEMBER THAT ALASKA STATE LAW  
PROHIBITS HUNTING THE SAME DAY THAT YOU FLY.**

**TAGS AND LICENSE:** Purchase your needed tags and licenses online prior to arrival. Remember you must have your tags & license in hand when you reach Kotzebue, and on your person when in the field. The web address is **[www.admin.adfg.state.ak.us/license](http://www.admin.adfg.state.ak.us/license)**

<b>Non-Resident Hunting license</b>	<b>\$160</b>	<b>Wolf Tag</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>Caribou Tag</b>	<b>\$650</b>	<b>Wolverine</b>	<b>\$350</b>
<b>Black Bear Tag</b>	<b>\$450</b>	<b>Brown/Grizzly</b>	<b>\$1000</b>
<b>Moose Tag</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>Fishing Licenses</b>	<b>\$20/\$35/\$55</b>

If your tag is part of a Drawing; MAKE CERTAIN YOU FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS AND OBTAIN ALL NECESSARY HARVEST TAGS, PERMITS, FORMS, ETC. When you arrive in Kotzebue, you will be required to show your required permits & licenses. You will not be able to obtain duplicates or replacements for items forgotten or lost -- the State of Alaska simply does not issue them.

**HUNTER EDUCATION & INFORMATION:** As we have mentioned several times throughout this welcome kit, it is the HUNTERS responsibility to know and understand the rules and regulations surrounding the hunt you are planning. Please take the time to visit the Alaska Fish and Game website which provides you with a vast variety of information from planning your hunt (part of the Hunt Alaska book included in your welcome kit), to hunter education, Meat Care, GMU information, Rules and Requirements, Equipment, etc., etc. This site can be found at:

**<http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunting.general>**

**MEAT CARE:** All edible meat must be salvaged. Non-guided hunters are responsible to pack all edible meat back to the runway at their camp (including rib and neck meat). Meat of the front and hindquarters, and ribs must remain on the bone until removed from the field (or eaten). **It is solely each hunter's responsibility to assure the quality and condition of his or her game meat and trophies.** Ram Aviation WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGE, LOSS OR SPOILAGE, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES! At camp keep your meat out of direct sun and a short distance away from your camp. Set the meat so it can cool, and allow

air to circulate around it. Do not put meat in a pile – it will quickly spoil. Antlers May **NOT** be removed from the kill site until ALL salvageable meat is removed (state law). **DO NOT STORE YOUR MEAT IN ANY LAKES OR RIVERS.**

For people wishing to take meat home with them, wet lock boxes can be purchased at our building. Boxes can be checked on as luggage on your commercial flights. Excess luggage fees may/will be charged by the airlines for additional pieces of checked baggage on Alaska Airlines and/or airlines of your choice.

For those of you wishing to donate meat: you must complete a transfer of possession form (we have them for you to complete). We have a local donation system and is easily donated, however, partially butchered quarters of meat are not accepted for donation. We ask that you donate a “whole half” of your animal – not just those parts you do not want to take with you. Remember it is the hunter’s responsibility to see the meat is properly donated or boxed for your flight home. Deboning meat is not permitted by airport regulation at the airport facility.

**FISHING:** Approximately 50% of our hunters are placed adjacent to streams suitable for fishing. The other 50% are on hilltops or tundra which may be a considerable distance to any stream containing fish. The larger streams and rivers in this area contain Arctic Char and Grayling. Please remember hunters are placed in the field based upon the pilot’s assessment of the best access for the caribou in the area; if you are fortunate to be in or near an area where you can also fish, it should be considered a bonus and a fishing license is required.

**WOLVES:** This area does have a good population of wolves, which can also be hunted. If you are interested in trying to harvest a wolf, you should purchase a wolf tag. Each fall our clients harvest several wolves, which make a great bonus trophy! Harvested wolves must be skinned (both hide and skull) for transport out of the field and then sealed by local Troopers or AKDF&G. There is no trophy fee or additional charge to transport wolf hides from the field.

**BEARS:** You are in grizzly country. Respect Them. Be mindful of them and watch for them. If you spot them from a distance, avoid them if possible. Generally they do not want to be anywhere near you, but if you startle them, or come upon their food – they can be aggressive. If you encounter a grizzly, begin making noise – YELL continuously. Stand up and make yourself look as large as possible. Do not cower or run. Defend yourself, only if absolutely necessary – most encounters result in bears walking away.

**KEEPING WARM:** Moisture is your enemy! Your sleeping bag will hold moisture and a few days build up of moisture may make your bag lose a significant amount of ability to insulate you. Open bags up, hang, etc to let them dry as needed. Wet or damp clothing can be dried in the sun or next to a small fire.... be careful by fire, the done vs. ruined amount of heat is a real small window!! Damp clothing can be worn in your sleeping bag and your body heat will dry it overnight. Utilize layering of clothing during the day, and do not overdress while hiking. You will generate heat to stay warm, but sweating will make you cold for hours. Take off what you don’t need, and carry extra clothing in your pack for use while sitting.

**PICK UP INSTRUCTIONS:** On the day you are to be flown out, have your gear packed and ready to go. Do not pile gear/meat/antlers on the runway area. Keep gear assembled off to the side where it was unloaded; our pilot may not be able to see these items as he taxis to your location. Depending on the weather, you may need to keep a tent up for shelter (please have it readied to be taken down timely).

Stay near your camp, and be attentive to air traffic. Pick up times are weather dependant and not time specific. If the plane comes to get you, and you are not at camp, or ready to go; the pilot may not be able to wait for you. You will be responsible for any missed flights, or additional charter fees in such cases. We make every attempt to get you back to town with ample time to prepare your gear before departing. In the rare event of inclement and un-flyable weather, don’t panic. Remain with your camp and know that you will be picked up as soon as the weather breaks. Such instances are very rare, but they can and do occur.

## Tips For A Successful Hunt

### HUNTING IN ALASKA:

- Fly In-Drop Off "Do It Yourself" hunts - you need to be prepared to not only judge your animals, but you need to be able to deal with the meat on your own while you're in the field. You are responsible for salvaging the meat according to the rules and regulations set forth in the AK Department of Fish & Game Unit #23's guidelines.
- The #1 thing heard when our hunters come out of the field is: Tundra is constantly underrating or underestimating how "tough" it is to walk in/on. The Tundra a.k.a. "Tussiks" - is like walking on frozen rolling footballs. The tundra has perma-frost underneath it, although it may look like it's dry on the top and doesn't look like it would be difficult to walk across, during the summer the top of the perma-frost defrosts and keeps the plants slick!! A GREAT pair of COMFORTABLE/GREAT FITTING, lace up, supportive hiking boots are **ESSENTIAL**.
- You are hunting in ALASKA - **above the Arctic Circle** - it can be, and often times is, COLD and snows during our hunting season. Remember having survival items like a good quality sleeping bag (which is rated down to at least a -20 degrees), a nice heavy jacket and clothes you can layer and will dry easily are also a necessity while in the field. It's Alaska - the weather changes every 15 minutes (in theory) - so plan on "layering" your clothes so you can put them on or take them off when needed!!
- Our hunts are in Game Management Units (GMU) # 23 – with the occasional hunt happening in GMU 26.
- We suggest you plan on taking in a Wolf Tag (lots of them out there) and you can hunt Wolverine & Black Bear on an open Caribou Tag/Moose Tag as a "lessor" animal without having to purchase the tags. Both of those animals are "few and far between", but have been seen in the field. Hunting on a "lessor" animal tag is a great way to expand your hunting options, without having to put additional money into tags.
- Watching all the "hunting" videos on TV about Alaska Hunting is great - gives you a lot of information, however, many times they don't relay the realities of the hunts. No matter where you go to hunt - HUNTING IS HUNTING. Weather and Animals are two things we simply cannot "control" and both are the major contributions to the hunts (for obvious reasons). You need to be prepared to HUNT while you're in the field, generally speaking the animals are not going to walk in front of you or through your camp. We are going to put you in the BEST place for you to be successful on your hunt based on the draw/sub unit of your hunt and/or the migration pattern of the Caribou herd.

**IN CLOSING:** We hope this information has been helpful and informative. If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact us at (907) 521-1723 or visit our website at:

[www.flyingak.com](http://www.flyingak.com)