



## SECTIONS



# AK Beat: Is global warming good for reindeer?

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**Climate change could help reindeer -- or might harm them:** Global warming is working out great for reindeer. Or maybe not. A recent study that followed the animals (the same species that's mainly known as caribou in Alaska) on the island of Spitsbergen in Svalbard -- an Arctic archipelago that's part of Norway -- found that population was growing as the area warmed. The correlation makes sense: "[T]he plants that reindeer eat during the relatively short Arctic summer are available for longer periods as the region warms," writes [National Geographic](#). "Having better food resources means the reindeer are in better condition and therefore more able to cope with the Arctic winter," the study's lead researcher told the publication. But it's not that simple, University of Alaska Fairbanks biologist Perry Barboza, not connected to the study, told [National Geographic](#). Warming temperatures can also pose a threat because the increase the chance of deep snow and ice, both of which can keep reindeer from reaching their food. "Barboza also stressed that reindeer populations often undergo boom-and-bust cycles for reasons that can be difficult to pin down," [National Geographic](#) noted.

**A year after VAWA was reauthorized, Alaska remains an outlier:** When the Violence Against Women Act was re-authorized last year, it was amended to clarify issues that arose over tribal jurisdiction, and whether tribal authorities can enforce protection orders against non-Natives (under the 2013 amendments they can). But nearly all of Alaska remains exempt from that amendment. That continues to create problems for authorities seeking to address domestic violence, especially in the state's rural areas, David Voluck, a tribal court judge for the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska [told Al Jazeera America](#). "The trooper is waiting, because he's not sure who has jurisdiction," he said. "We need to get rid of those exceptions that create confusion." But the state's attorney general, Michael Geraghty, countered that the jurisdiction issue isn't a major problem in combating domestic violence in Alaska: "Geraghty said he has never heard of a situation when a victim was in danger because of confusion over jurisdiction," [Al Jazeera America](#) reported. "If tribal courts had jurisdiction before, they do now," Garaghty told [Al Jazeera](#). "Troopers are not lawyers. If they are faced with a situation, they are going to protect the public. These concerns are overblown."



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