

Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board

Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board Response to Baffin Island Caribou Management

- QWB and the Baffin Island HTO's recognize the Baffin Island caribou population is at a low point of their cycle.
- QWB has not offered an estimate on caribou population numbers or range.
 We have not agreed on an estimated number.
- QWB and Baffin Island HTOs trust the caribou population will cycle up.
- QWB agrees that communities will be impacted by the low caribou numbers.
 Limiting harvest will be difficult for community members with a strong taste
 for caribou. Yet, we would caution against the argument that this natural
 cycle is a food security threat. Inuit have experienced low caribou numbers
 before. For example, Baffin Island caribou numbers were so low in the 50s
 and 60s that a caribou moritorium was enacted. Low caribou numbers is a
 trend, not a threat.
- QWB recognizes that action is needed. QWB has participated in the consultations and the workshops with the HTOs and we have consistenly heard Baffin Island communities say we need to adapt to these realities.
- Caribou management is a co-management responsibility, not only a harvestors' responsibility. Therefore, QWB argues all co-management partners are equally responsible to enact action in support of Caribou management.

Recommendations:

1) Enforcement:

- i) HTOs are willing to set community limits, close off hunting areas and enact other non-quota limitations at the community level.
- ii) HTOs have expressed a willingness to work with neighbouring HTOs, particulary those who share hunting grounds.

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iii) HTOs recognize they lack the supports to enforce their bylaws. HTOs do not have the same powers or supports that conservation officers do.

THEREFORE, QWB strongly encourages the GN to work with us to develop a strategy to improve the working relationship between HTOs and Conservation Officers. Currently, the working relationship between these two entities range from productive to not. More efficent relationships across the whole region would greatly support all co-management partners with information on harvest, caribou health and numbers. Supporting this may require changes in the divison of powers and may require some financial investment.

2) Mining and development:

Co-management partners can comment on forthcoming development projects. QWB encourages all members to voice their concerns about the potential impacts development can have on the health of wildife, particularly to migration rutes and calving areas. We also endorse calls for community based monitoring.

Also, alhough Regional Inuit Associations are mandated to negotiate directly with development companies, I argue Regional Wildlife Boards should also be a member of any IIBA negotations impacting their respective regsions. Doing this will ensure the range of community harvestors concerns are represented.

3) Commerical and non-beneficary hunting:

Currently, commerical tags are distributed through community conservation offices. In considering current low caribou numbers, the distribution of these tags should be halted.

Also, the GN should designate the HTO with this responsibility. Doing this would allow the HTO to have a fuller picture of who is harvesting caribou around their community. Such action would be in line with the NLCA, for example, sections 5.7.3 (c) & (d) AND 5.7.6 (a), (c) & (d).