

# Southampton Island Caribou Pre-hearing Consultation Meeting Summary

Coral Harbour Community Hall  
October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

Sarah Spencer  
Anna Magera



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## Overview

On March 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, the Aiviit (Coral Harbour) Hunters and Trappers Association sent a letter to the Minister of Environment, Government of Nunavut expressing their concern over the declining caribou population on Southampton Island and requested that a total allowable harvest and non-quota limitations be put in place to conserve the herd. In April 2012, the NWMB was asked to make a decision on a total allowable harvest of 1000 caribou for the 2012/2013 harvest year (effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2012) and non-quota limitations to prohibit the harvest of mature bulls and cow/calf pairs.

In a May 30<sup>th</sup> 2012 letter to the Minister of Environment, the Board stated that it would be unable to make a procedurally fair decision in time for the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline and suggested that the Minister make an interim decision. Following receipt of this letter the Minister of Environment made an interim decision and set the total allowable harvest and non-quota limitations as proposed, effective July 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

A year later, on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013, the NWMB received a letter from the Government of Nunavut Department of Environment requesting an amendment to extend the interim order until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2014. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, the Board responded with the following decision:

*RESOLVED that the NWMB inform the Minister of Environment that in consideration of the circumstances the NWMB is in agreement that the total allowable harvest of 1000 remain in effect until such time as:*

1. *A 2013 population study is completed;*
2. *The results of that population study are distributed;*
3. *A proposal for NWMB decision is received; and*
4. *The NWMB has made a procedurally fair decision.*

The letter also states that the NWMB is required to conduct a full review of any interim decision, and that following the receipt of the 2013 survey results and request for decision from the Department of Environment the Board will conduct a public hearing into the issue.

At the September 2013 Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB or Board) Regular Board Meeting (RM003-2013), the Government of Nunavut Department of Environment filed a request for decision with the NWMB to lower the current total allowable harvest Southampton Island caribou (Appendix 1) from 1000 animals to 800 and to maintain the two current non-quota limitations which prohibit the harvesting of cows with calves and mature bulls. At this meeting the Board made a decision to hold a public hearing on this issue. In order to discuss the logistics of this hearing the NWMB held a prehearing conference call with co-management partners on September 27<sup>th</sup> 2013. Participants on the call stated that the Board should hold an in-person hearing in Coral Harbour. However, lack of accommodations in Coral Harbour did not allow for the hearing to be held there. In order to make sure the Board has the best available information included in the hearing, a group of a limited number of NWMB staff, Board members, and co-management partners travelled to Coral Harbour to hold a pre-hearing consultation meeting. Coral Harbour community members were invited to share their knowledge on Southampton Island caribou, and in particular provide input on the following issues:

- The proposed lowering of the total allowable harvest from 1000 to 800 animals;

- The current non-quota limitations which state that no one shall harvest mature bulls or cows with calves; and
- The striking of a basic needs level.

The meeting was held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013 at the Community Hall from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Approximately 40 people attended. This report is a summary of the meeting. The official transcript of the meeting may be obtained from the NWMB upon request.

Agenda

**SOUTHAMPTON ISLAND CARIBOU TOTAL ALLOWABLE HARVEST AND NON-QUOTA LIMITATIONS PRE-HEARING CONSULTATION MEETING**

CORAL HARBOUR COMMUNITY HALL

October 23, 2013

6-9 pm

Prayer

Introductions

Initial remarks (meeting Chairperson)

Presentation on Government of Nunavut Dept. of Environment Proposal (Government of Nunavut representative)

Community comments and questions regarding Southampton Island caribou and the Government of Nunavut Proposal: total allowable harvest, non-quota limitations, and basic needs level

**Pre-hearing consultation meeting rules**

1. Every person at the meeting wishing to speak or ask a question shall raise his or her hand, and shall only speak once the meeting Chairperson has recognized him or her.
2. Every person at the meeting shall state their name before they speak. This will assist the court reporter present to produce a transcript for the meeting. The meeting proceedings are also being audio-recorded so a report can be produced and included in the public hearing documents to be considered by the NWMB.
3. The meeting Chairperson reserves the right to place reasonable time limits on presentations, statements and questions.
4. All meeting participants are required to treat one another, the NWMB members and staff, and co-management partners with respect. Meeting participants that do not conduct themselves in a respectful manner may be asked to leave the meeting.

Participants:

**Panel Members:**

Ben Kovic, Chairperson, NWMB

Anna Magera, Acting Director of Wildlife Management, NWMB

Sarah Spencer, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB

Noah Kadlak, Chairperson of Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization

Michel Akkuardjuk, Chairperson of Arviq Hunters and Trappers Organization and Vice-Chairperson of Kivalliq Wildlife Board

Mitch Campbell, Regional Biologist, Government of Nunavut

Glen Williams, Wildlife Policy Advisor, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

**NWMB Staff:**

Karla Letto, Wildlife Management Biologist

Evie Amagoalik, Interpreter

Leetia Janes, Interpreter

Adele Jones, Stenographer

**Speakers:**

Jackie Nakoolak

Noah Kataluk

Joanasie Nakoolak

Peter Nakoolak

Rhoda Paliak

Johnny Ningeongan

Irsurtug Eetuk

Pauloosie Nakoolak

## Summary of the Government of Nunavut Presentation

Mitch Campbell gave a presentation (Appendix 2) on the history and the status of the Southampton Island caribou herd. He explained that the Government of Nunavut worked closely with the Coral Harbour Hunters and Trapper's Organization to submit the request to lower the total allowable harvest from 1000 to 800 animals for decision to the Board. The Government of Nunavut presented the following background information on the Southampton caribou herd:

- In 2000-2001 it was discovered that the pregnancy rates of the caribou on the island dropped from to 50%. Previous estimates of pregnancy rates for this population were 90%.
- In 2002-2003 Brucellosis was identified in the population. Brucellosis is a reproductive disease that makes cows unable to reproduce. Females can recover from this disease within one to two years.
- In 2007, enlarged testes were observed in bulls and blood work showed that males were being impacted by this disease as well. Male caribou can also recover from this disease but there is little know about the long-term effects of Brucellosis on male caribou.
- In order to help the population recover the Government of Nunavut Minister of Environment put an interim order in place from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The interim order set a total allowable harvest of 1000 animals and prohibited the harvest of cow/calf pairs and mature bulls.
- In May 2013, the interim order was extended until June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014.
- Since the interim order was put in place the decline in the population has decreased dramatically.
- An aerial survey was conducted by the Government of Nunavut in May 2013 and this showed only a small decline. However, because there is still a decline the recommendation was made to lower the total allowable harvest to 800 animals.
- One other issue was the export of meat to other regions of Nunavut. A large amount of caribou meat was being shipped from Coral Harbour to other Nunavut communities. This drove the population into further decline.
- Prior to putting the interim order in place there was a danger of losing the entire herd within 5 to 10 years but that has now changed due to the total allowable harvest and non-quota limitations.
- The Government of Nunavut Department of Environment is committed to doing another aerial survey in the spring of 2015. If at that time the herd is showing adequate signs of recovery, the Government of Nunavut will be looking to make a recommendation to the NWMB to remove the total allowable harvest and non-quota limitations.

## **Questions from the Coral Harbour community members regarding the presentation by the Government of Nunavut**

### **Brucellosis:**

- Question: Is the meat safe to eat? A: Brucellosis can be passed onto humans by eating infected meat. However, proper cooking kills the bacteria. It is still best to use your own judgement. If you are infected you will experience flu-like symptoms. Answer: simple blood test at your health care center will tell you if you have the disease. The disease can be cured with antibiotics.
- Question: In caribou, will the Brucellosis heal completely? Answer: We know that it appears to disappear completely from the female caribou but we are unaware of any long term affects in the male caribou. We do know that in some males Brucellosis causes so much damage to the testicles that it makes them sterile for life.
- Question: Brucellosis was identified in 2002-2003. Is this the first major disease outbreak since caribou were re-introduced to Southampton Island in 1967? Answer: In terms of Brucellosis yes.
- Question: What about other caribou diseases on Southampton Island Answer: There has been recorded information of a parasite called Besnoitia- which looks like sandpaper under the skin. We have never seen a major impact on the condition or reproduction of caribou due to this disease.

### **Future Surveys:**

- Question: During the next Southampton Island caribou survey will Coats Island be surveyed as well? Answer: The Government of Nunavut surveyed both Southampton Island and Coats Island together in May 2013 and intends to survey both Islands each time we do a new survey.
- Question: Why is your next survey in 2015 instead of 2014? Answer: The Government of Nunavut would like to be able to survey each year but budget constraints will not currently allow for this.

### **Total Allowable Harvest:**

- Question: Will the total allowable harvest increase with the next survey? Answer: We are recommending that the total allowable harvest of 800 be put in place until the next survey in 2015. If we find the population has recovered we will be making a recommendation to the NWMB for immediate action to adjust or remove the total allowable harvest. This process will take a few months.
- Question: We know that when there is freezing rain the caribou die because they are unable to access their food. Has this been considered in the total allowable harvest recommendation? Answer: It has been considered. In 2010-2011 there was a winter with a lot of freezing rain and there were hundreds of caribou that starved to death. If this was to happen again though, we may need to adjust the total allowable harvest again.

### **Non-Quota Limitations:**



- Question: We are not allowed to harvest females with calves or mature bulls, but we can harvest females without calves. Is there an issue with focussing the harvest on females? Answer: In most cases, when we are trying to preserve a population, we want to restrict the harvest of females and harvest more bulls. But in this case we saw very few bulls during the survey and we are trying to give them a chance to recover. If people start to see more bulls and they are not concerned then we can start looking at removing this non-quota limitation. The Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization considered allowing the harvesting of cows with calves when we put this non-quota limitation in place but then we would have had to offer fewer tags.
- Question: Why can we harvest young bulls but not mature bulls? Answer: We have heard in talking with the Hunters and Trappers organization that the mature bulls are the best for bringing harems together and that younger bulls have lower mating success. Because many of the mature bulls got Brucellosis and we did not see many during the last aerial survey we wanted to give them a couple of years to recover. The Government of Nunavut will revisit this restriction each year and get feedback.

### **Community Concerns**

- Concerns were raised about other communities who harvest from Southampton Island being informed about the total allowable harvest and non-quota limitations. These concerns were addressed by Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization Chair Noah Kadlak who stated that the Hunters and Trappers Organization and the Government of Nunavut had sent letters to the other communities letting them know of the total allowable harvest and the non-quota limitations that are in place. Anna Magera with the NWMB also stated that that Board sent a letter to Repulse Bay and Cape Dorset informing them of the public hearing and inviting them to send a delegate from their communities to attend.
- Some community members wanted to stop or control the selling of caribou meat through the internet from Southampton Island to other Nunavut communities. Noah Kadlak from the Coral Harbour Hunters and Trappers Organization stated that each household is allowed to harvest 4 caribou. This decision was made by the Hunters and Trappers Organization and is enforced by the Government of Nunavut. If they would like to eat their caribou they can; if they would like to sell their caribou they may also do this. He stated that it is important to remember that not everyone in the community has an income so they should be allowed to sell their caribou if they would like. Glenn Williams from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. explained that under Article 5 in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement it is not the government's job to decide what is done with harvested meat (e.g. whether it is consumed by the hunter or sold). If the Hunters and Trappers Organization would like to put restrictions in place on the export of meat out of your community Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. would support this.
- One harvester stated that the four tags that he was supposed to get had been given away without his knowledge. He was advised to talk to the Wildlife Officer in the community regarding this issue.

- One harvester was concerned that people often think that some families are overharvesting but wanted to state that they may just be hunting for other families who do not have hunters living in their home.
- Some community members said that something needed to be done to limit the number of wolves; the numbers of wolves are increasing and they are having a negative effect on the caribou.

Appendix 1



**Figure 1** The Southampton Island study area including White Island.

## Southampton Island Caribou Herd Status ካርቲብ ያምፕሰን አይሎን አይሎን አይሎን አይሎን







