



February 14, 2020

Daniel Shewchuk, Chair
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
Email: receptionist@nwmb.com

Via Email
receptionist@nwmb.com

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board In-person Public Hearing to Consider the Government of Nunavut's Proposal to Decrease the Total Allowable Harvest for Bathurst Caribou from 30 to 0

Dear Mr. Shewchuk:

The following written submission, supporting documents and presentation are submitted on behalf of the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB), to be considered during the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) public hearing for the Kòk'èeti ekwò (Bathurst caribou) herd, scheduled for March 5-6, 2020 in Cambridge Bay, NU. The Board wishes to thank the NWMB for granting the WRRB 'party' status at the hearing, which permits the Board to make a presentation, respond to any questions, and observe the remainder of the hearing.

The WRRB has a mandate for wildlife, plant and forest management in Wek'èezhì and adheres to the principles and practices of conservation in fulfilling its duties. The Board shares responsibility for managing and monitoring the Kòk'èeti ekwò herd. The Board's written submission, supporting documents, and PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*The Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board & 2019 Bathurst Caribou Herd Proceeding*", provides the NWMB with additional information about the involvement of the WRRB in management of the Kòk'èeti ekwò herd in the Northwest Territories (NWT), specifically Wek'èezhì, and Nunavut.

Kòk'èeti ekwò (Bathurst Caribou) Herd Management in NWT

Since its inception in 2006, the WRRB has been invested in managing the Kòk'èeti ekwò herd. The Board has conducted four proceedings to address caribou harvest limitations in 2007, 2010, 2016, and 2019 for a herd that has continued a declining trend since 2003. Reports from the 2010 and 2016 proceedings and Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tłchq Government (TG) responses are available on the WRRB website.

.../Page 2

2019 Proceeding

In January 2019, the TG and GNWT submitted the *Joint Proposal on Management Actions for the Bathurst ʔekwò (Barren-ground caribou) Herd 2019-2021* to the Board, outlining proposed management actions for the Kòk'èetì ekwò herd in Wek'èezhì. The management actions proposed by TG and GNWT in the Joint Proposal were grouped under the five categories: harvest, predators, habitat and land use, and education as well as research and monitoring. More specifically, TG and ENR proposed continuing a herd-wide total allowable harvest of zero for the Kòk'èetì ekwò herd. Following an initial assessment of the management proposal, the Board determined that a Level 2 review was appropriate, as per its Rule for Management Proposals. Therefore, the Board established a proceeding and an online public registry on February 4, 2019.

As per Section 12.5.5(a)(i) of the Tìchò Agreement, the WRRB has sole responsibility for making a final determination with respect to a TAH for a population or stock of wildlife in Wek'èezhì. In making its decision about harvest limitations, the WRRB considered the risks to the herd from a recent high rate of decline, uncertainties about the underlying mechanisms for the decline and the importance of ʔekwò (barren-ground caribou) for Tìchò citizens to thrive – physically, spiritually, and culturally. The WRRB determined that a TAH of zero shall be continued for all users of the Kòk'èetì ekwò herd within Wek'èezhì for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 harvest seasons. Additionally, the WRRB recommended additional management actions related to predators, habitat and land use, education, and research and monitoring.

For the NWMB's consideration, the WRRB submits the following supporting documents:

- WRRB's 2019 Kòk'èetì Ekwò Reasons for Decision Report, entitled "*Reasons for Decisions Related to a Joint Proposal for the Management of the Kòk'èetì Ekwò (Bathurst Caribou) Herd*"
- Summary of the WRRB's 2019 Kòk'èetì Ekwò Reasons for Decision Report
- Response from the GNWT and TG to the WRRB's 2019 Kòk'èetì Ekwò Reasons for Decision Report
- Implementation Tracking Table for the WRRB's 2019 Kòk'èetì Ekwò determinations and recommendations

Long-term Management Planning and Range Management

Since 2013, the Board has participated in long-term management planning processes with TG and GNWT, as well as organizations from Nunavut, to develop a management and range plan for the herd. The WRRB was pleased to support the final Bathurst Caribou Range Plan in 2019 and looks forward to its implementation. The Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee continues its work developing a management plan. The WRRB looks forward to its completion and implementation in 2020.

Conclusion

With the Kòk'èetì ekwò herd in such a perilous state, the Board believes that all peoples who

.../Page 3

harvest the herd must do their part to ensure the herd's recovery. Users and managers must act now, in whatever ways possible, to protect the herd so future recovery may be possible. With harvest of the Kòk'èeti ekwò herd closed in the NWT, the WRRB encourages the NWMB to take a similar approach to the protection of Kòk'èeti ekwò in Nunavut.

The WRRB looks forward to continuing a collaborative relationship with the NWMB regarding barren-ground caribou. If you have any questions, please contact the office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Joseph Judas
Chair

Attachments

Cc Jason Akearok, Executive Director
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

Hon. Shane Thompson, Minister
Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Erin Kelly, A/Deputy Minister
Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Karin Clark, A/Director of Wildlife
Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Grand Chief George Mackenzie
Tłıchq Government

Laura Duncan, Tłıchq Executive Officer
Tłıchq Government

Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault, Director
Department of Culture and Lands Protection, Tłıchq Government