



SUBMISSION TO THE

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan

Background:

- The Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan was initially developed in December 2014 in collaboration with ten affected Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs), the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB), Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), and Parks Canada.
- The Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan was submitted to the NWMB for decision in March 2016. The Board requested the Department of Environment (DOE) conduct additional consultations due to edits made to the plan after initial consultations.
- A revised version of the Management Plan was submitted in September 2019 and included results from composition surveys completed from 2015-2018. The composition surveys were used to assess calf recruitment and approximate sex ratios. That version also identified the limitations of identifying population trends based on composition survey results.
- Earlier versions of the draft Management Plan incorporated 5 harvest management units and recommended harvest management actions for Baffin Island based on population phases. Those components were removed from the plan based on feedback from co-management partners during consultations.

Current Status:

- Following the September 2019 regular meeting, the NWMB requested that the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) provide comments, on the content of the proposed management plan, to the DOE by December 13, 2019. The QWB did not provide any comments by the deadline set by the NWMB.
- The NWMB also requested that the DOE address the following concerns:
 - The lack of specific management actions to address current threats to Baffin Island caribou.
 - The management plan has not been updated to include recent changes to Baffin Island caribou harvest non-quota limitations.

- The Minister of Environment sent a letter to NWMB dated January 6, 2020 to address the NWMB concern over specific management actions with the following response:
 - “Specific management recommendations such as Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) levels, which are based on scientific information, traditional knowledge, and consultation with co-management partners, were indeed not included in the management plan. This is because the wildlife management system in Nunavut requires that the NWMB and co-management partners have an opportunity to comment on management recommendations. It is our position that if specific management actions were provided in the management plan, this would be overly prescriptive and create a redundancy, or even a conflict, with the NWMB’s existing approval process.”
- The management plan has now been updated to include the recent NWMB decision to allow a harvest of up to 25 female caribou as part of the total TAH of 250 caribou, before its re-submission to the NWMB.

Consultation:

- Consultations on the draft Management Plan occurred March 16–April 7, 2015 and included discussions on caribou research and monitoring component of the Plan.
- The current Baffin Regional Biologist initiated consultation with all Baffin HTOs, which harvest Baffin Island Caribou, in the fall of 2018, following updates to the Management Plan, to incorporate current knowledge and management priorities.
- During the planning for fall consultations, which were proposed for September 24–October 5, 2018, the DOE received a letter from QWB requesting postponement until January. The DOE agreed to postpone the consultations to facilitate participation from co-management partners.
- The Draft Baffin Island Management Plan was provided to the QWB, NTI, NWMB and ten HTOs on September 25, 2018. At that time, the DOE Baffin Regional Biologist requested that the co-management partners provide comments on the Management Plan prior to the January consultations. An additional reminder email was distributed on November 26, 2018 requesting comments prior to the meetings.
- The Baffin Regional Biologist visited all Baffin communities, which harvest from the Baffin Island caribou herd, from January 7 – 18, 2019, to discuss composition survey results from 2015-2018, the Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan, sex-selective harvest options and future research needs.
- Consultations were held with HTO representatives from Kimmirut, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, Cape Dorset, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet. Unfortunately, during this consultation tour, weather prevented the charter from getting to Clyde River. Consultations were subsequently completed with the Clyde River HTO on May 27, 2019.
- No comments on the draft management plan were received prior to or during consultations and as a result, the DOE asked for comments to be provided by April 15, 2019.

- The DOE received a second letter from the QWB requesting that the comment period be extended. The DOE agreed to accept comments until June 30, 2019. On June 27, 2019, the GN received an additional request from QWB that the comment period be further extended by a week. No comments were received from the QWB on the Baffin Island Caribou Management Plan during the consultation period of 25 September through 30 June 2019, neither up to 15 July 2019.
- A consultation summary report was provided to the NWMB for their regular meeting (RM003-2019) in September 2019.

Recommendations:

1. The GN requests that the NWMB approve the revised Baffin Island Caribou Co-Management Plan