



SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Aerial Abundance Survey Results for Baffin Island caribou

Background

- Historical qualitative estimates suggested that more than 100,000 caribou inhabited Baffin Island in 1985, and in 1991 were considered stable, with 60,000–180,000 caribou in South Baffin, >10,000 caribou in Central Baffin, and 50,000–150,000 caribou in North Baffin.
- During the mid to late 1990s, hunters across Baffin Island reported declining caribou numbers and the need to travel farther from communities to locate caribou.
- In March 2014, the Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment, in collaboration with co-management partners conducted an island-wide aerial survey which confirmed significant declines in Baffin Island caribou.
- Following the release of Report on November 1, 2015, the Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment (GN ENV) implemented a Total Allowable Harvest (Table 1). and in August 2015 the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) established a whole-island Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of 250 caribou with a male-only Non-Quota Limitation (NQL).

Table 1: Harvest Regulations Baffin Island caribou

Date	Harvest restrictions	Total Allowable Harvest (TAH)	Regulation
January 1, 2015	Moratorium		R-032-2014
August 27, 2015	Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) with a male-only Non-Quota Limitation (NQL)	250 Caribou	R-024-2015
September 19, 2019	Modification of the NQL to allow female harvest	250 caribou with 10% female harvest	R-025-2019

July 18, 2022	TAH and NQL Modification (Annual TAH Increase)	350 with 50 caribou annual increase with ~5% TAH female	R-022- 2022
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Current Status

- In collaboration with affected Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) the Department of Environment (ENV) completed a South Baffin Island caribou abundance survey in March 2024, and the North and Central Baffin Island caribou abundance survey in March 2025.
- These aerial surveys included 28 HTO selected participants from Iqaluit, Pangnirtung, Kinngait, Kimmirut, Qikiqtarjuaq, Clyde River, Pond Inlet, and Igloolik.
- The final report was distributed to co-management partners and stakeholders on December 23, 2025.
- The current total estimated caribou abundance on Baffin Island is 48,681 (95% CI: 43,973–53,893).

Consultations

- On February 6, 2026, the Department of Environment (Operations and Wildlife Research) met with HTO representatives from Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Pond Inlet, Sanirajak, Igloolik, Kinngait, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung, and Kimmirut in Iqaluit. The Amaruq HTO did not attend. During the meeting, the aerial survey report was discussed at length. Representatives from the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) met with ENV and provided a resolution of a TAH of 6,000 caribou, representing approximately 12% of the 2024-2025 Baffin Survey estimate, with an annual increase of 125 caribou. The meeting participants supported these recommendations to be forwarded to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB).
- There was an additional community member led recommendation to include up to 40% female harvest. This is not included in the ENV recommendation to the NWMB, but we would support this initiative by our co-management partners, the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board and Hunters and Trappers Organizations if they choose.

Recommendation

- Based on the current population estimate, all available scientific information, and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, the Government of Nunavut (GN) recommends the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board modify the existing Baffin Island Total Allowable Harvest to a non sex-selective harvest of 6,000 caribou annually, representing approximately 12.3% of the population, with an annual increase of 125 caribou.