

Public Consultation

Bluenose East and Bathurst Caribou
September 22, 2014

Issues:

Information meeting on the Alarming trends in size of the Bluenose-East caribou herd and the Bathurst Caribou from the 2014 reconnaissance calving ground survey.

Purpose of the Consultations:

A community consultation was organized in Kugluktuk on September 22, 2014 as the Bluenose East and the Bathurst herds appear to be in serious decline. The main objective to the meeting was to inform the community members of this decline based on the new reconnaissance calving ground surveys. In addition, this meeting gave a unique opportunity to hear and gather the community members' knowledge and concerns about these herds. The objectives were then to work together, listen to local needs and priorities, listen to Inuit, learn from their way of life, and to discuss potential management recommendations.

Communities visited: Kugluktuk

Representatives:

GN, DoE, Wildlife Biologist: Lisa-Marie Leclerc
HTO Kugluktuk, Chairperson: David Nivingalok
HTO Kugluktuk, Manager: Barbara Adjun
Community members: around 15 participants

Supporting document:

Attached PowerPoint Presentation: GN_Consultation

-The difference between a reconnaissance survey and a population estimate was put forward so the participant could know the limitation of the last survey, but understand that it is the "trend" of the decline that is alarming. New population survey will be done in the summer of 2015.

Subjects discussed and community views:

Community knowledge:

- The Bathurst caribou number must be going down as there were no caribou around Bathurst Inlet this summer.
- Hunters have seen a lot of caribou south of Dismal Lake in late April.
- The Bluenose East caribou are known to have calved north-east of Bluenose Lake and this area should also be taking into consideration for the next population survey.
- 25 km to the East of the community, for the past two years there is not much cow at this location as it used to be.
- We need to be careful about the management goal. They put a TAH on Peary caribou for the number to increase and then they declined due to the limit in the habitat capacity, diseases. So having a too high number is not necessarily healthy.

- The rut is a very exhausting period for the male caribou as they fight with other bulls and mating, and weak bull could be an easy target for predator. A hunter reported to have observed very tired bulls.
- 1 prime bull could get around 20 cows pregnant. So they are to an important factor to consider to make the population increase.
- The caribou are getting used to the high number of wolf in the calving area, they do not seem to be afraid of them.

Harvest:

- There is currently no sport hunting on the Bluenose and the Dolphin and Union caribou herds
- Kugluktuk HTO sent letters to stop the sport hunt on the Bathurst herds.
- Kugluktuk HTO stopped the sport hunt in the Contwoyto Lake area.
- Hunters do not target prime bulls or pregnant females.
- Nunavut hunters go by snowmobile or ATV to go hunting which restrict the access to the herd due to the terrain. In NWT, they have access to charter plane to hunt the Bluenose Caribou herd.

Predators:

- There is an increase in number of wolf and grizzly, but there is less hunters harvesting them.
- The interaction predator-prey is very complex as you have three predators (wolf, wolverine, grizzly bears) and two main preys (caribou, muskox).
- The price of the wolf pelt is down which do not support the cost to go out hunting.
- Extend the wolf season.
- In the past, Inuit use to kill the wolf in the den to control the predator.
- You don't want to kill them all, as they are useful to take the diseases animals and maintain the herd healthy.
- We need a balance.

Monitoring information:

- Community members suggested to have field report booklet to record note, observation and harvest. Someone commented that they used to have it, but nobody was filling them out.
- Hunters do not have all a GPS while out on the land. They will be interested in participating to the MESA program from NWMB.
- Distributing harvesting calendar which could also use as a tool to collect local, community, and traditional knowledge.

Concerns:

- People feel insecure to report their harvest, so the number will be used to set up the TAH.
- The participants would like to have some action put together before the population reach a to low level.
- The community members would like to be kept informed about the status of their herd but having a poster that the coop or a wildlife new board.

Suggestions:

- We need to work more closely together
- We can only manage our action and impact, we cannot manage the caribou.
- Establish a caribou board or working group in the community.

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