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Minister of Environment
Ministaat Avatiliqiyitkut
Ministre de l'Environnement

22, 2020

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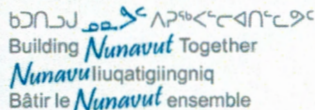
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Tammaqtailinahuarniriit annugutighat atuqhugit Inuit qaujimajatuqangillu ilihimaniillu ilitquhiannin
Conserving wildlife through the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge

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Minister of Environment
Ministaat Avatiliqiyitkut
Ministre de l'Environnement

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
P.O Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

October 8, 2020

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's Final Decision on the Proposal to Reduce the Total Allowable Harvest of the Bathurst Caribou Herd from 30 to 0.

Dear Mr. Shewchuk,

Thank you for your letter dated September 11, 2020 outlining the final decisions of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) concerning Bathurst caribou harvest management following the NWMB in-camera session on September 3, 2020 (IC003-2020).

The NWMB submitted the following final decisions:

- *RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 5.3.12 of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board maintain its initial decision to modify the Total Allowable Harvest of the Bathurst caribou herd from 30 to 10 pursuant to Sections 5.6.16 and 5.3.3(a) of the Nunavut Agreement, as its final decision.*
- *FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 5.3.12 of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board maintain its initial decision as its final decision to maintain the Non-Quota Limitation of a male-only harvest for the Bathurst caribou herd pursuant to Section 5.6.48 of the Nunavut Agreement.*
- *FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board maintain its initial recommendations to the Minister of Environment and request that the Minister provide a response to the recommendations made by the Board.*

I thank the NWMB for its reconsideration of their initial decisions on this complex matter. Pursuant to section 5.3.13 (a) of the *Nunavut Agreement* I hereby accept the decision of the NWMB to establish a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of ten (10) caribou for the Bathurst Caribou herd. This decision was made after careful consideration of input we received from the NWMB and co-management partners. As per input during the consultation and public hearing process, these ten caribou should be harvested for subsistence and I support the NWMB recommendation that the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board should allocate the TAH to the Kaodloak family living at Contwoyto Lake.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is the lead jurisdiction on the survey and research program for Bathurst caribou, including the planning and implementation of abundance surveys, and my Department remains highly involved in supporting this program. The GNWT has already completed a biological and management feasibility assessment for wolves in the Bathurst caribou range and there is currently a working group formed to complete the same for grizzly bear and wolverine management. The Government of Nunavut (GN), as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., have been invited to participate in the working group for this management feasibility assessment. My department is working on finalizing recent wolverine research while planning for an updated assessment of grizzly bear density in the Kitikmeot region, which will be used to inform predator management.

I wish to thank the Board for their hard work and careful consideration of this significant conservation and management issue of inter-jurisdictional importance.

for Santitas

Cc. Jimmy Noble Jr., Deputy Minister of Environment
Steve Pinksen, Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment
Drikus Gissing, Director of Wildlife Research



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Conserving wildlife through the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge

Honourable Joe Savikataaq
Minister of Environment
Government of Nunavut

Dear Minister Savikataaq:

Background

On December 4, 2019, the Government of Nunavut submitted a proposal to the NWMB requesting approval to decrease the Total Allowable Harvest of the Bathurst caribou herd from 30 to zero.

The Government of Nunavut's proposal was based on a new aerial survey to estimate the abundance of the Bathurst caribou herd that was carried out by the Government of Northwest Territories and the Government of Nunavut in 2018. The 2018 population abundance estimate of 8,210 caribou (95% confidence interval = 6,218–10,831) has declined from the 2015 population abundance estimate of 19,769 caribou (95% confidence interval = 12,349–27,189). The most recent analysis also found that calf productivity and survival are low. The Government of Nunavut indicated that the decline is likely the result of a natural population cycle, but that harvest pressure and disturbance due to development could increase the rate of decline and impact recovery of the Bathurst herd.

The Bathurst caribou herd is transboundary and traditionally has been harvested by the communities of Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay, Bathurst Inlet, and Bay Chimo in Nunavut, and by several Indigenous groups in the Northwest Territories. The current harvest of 30 male-only caribou in Nunavut is allocated as 10 tags to the community of Kugluktuk (all 10 tags assigned to the Kugluktuk HTO were provided to an outpost camp near Tahiyook or Contwoyto Lake), 10 tags to the Bathurst Inlet HTO, and 10 tags to the Bay Chimo HTO. The Northwest Territories has had a harvest of zero for all user groups on the Bathurst herd since 2015.

The NWMB considered the Government of Nunavut's proposal during its In-Camera meeting on December 5, 2019 (IC 004-2019). The NWMB decided to hold an In-Person Public Hearing prior to making a decision, to gather more information from co-



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NWMB Public Hearing

In addition to the oral submissions presented at the hearing, the NWMB received written submissions from the Government of Nunavut, Kugluktuk HTO, Bathurst Inlet HTO, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Government of the Northwest Territories, Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board, Adventure Northwest, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

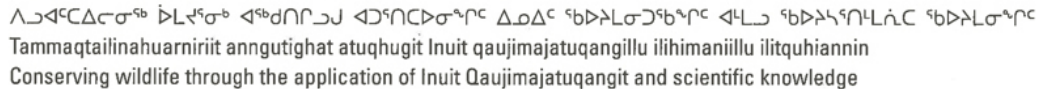
NWMB Decisions and Recommendations

At the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB or Board) In-Camera Meeting on June 11, 2020 (IC 002-2020), the NWMB considered written and oral evidence and arguments presented during the March 5–6, 2020, In-Person Public Hearing regarding the Government of Nunavut's proposal to reduce the Total Allowable Harvest of the Bathurst Caribou Herd from 30 to zero and made the following decisions and recommendations:

NWMB Decisions

RESOLVED that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board modifies the Total Allowable Harvest of the Bathurst caribou herd from 30 to 10 pursuant to Sections 5.6.16 and 5.3.3(a) of the Nunavut Agreement.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board maintain the Non-Quota Limitation of a male-only harvest for the Bathurst caribou herd pursuant to Section 5.6.48 of the Nunavut Agreement.





Allocation of the Total Allowable Harvest

The Board's recommendation considered the unique circumstances of the Kaodloak family who live in an outpost camp at Contwoyto Lake. The Board heard that this family rely on the 10 tags from Bathurst caribou for food and to continue their cultural way of life but could potentially replace caribou with alternate species and supplies from communities. The NWMB recognizes that it is the authority of the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board to decide how any established Total Allowable Harvest should be allocated. The Board also understands that once tags are allocated it is up to individual HTOs to allocate tags to individual members. However, the Board cannot ignore the need to maintain some level of cultural continuity especially for an Inuit family that predominantly lives on the land and depend on wildlife for subsistence.

Other Considerations

Basic Needs Levels

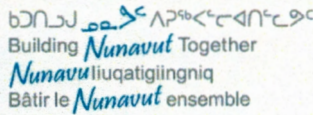
The *Nunavut Agreement* directs the NWMB to strike a Basic Needs Level for Inuit (Section 5.6.19) and other Aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories (Section 40.3.3) who harvest from the Bathurst herd when it sets a Total Allowable Harvest. At this time, the NWMB is not striking Basic Needs Levels, nor is it in a position to do so as the Basic Needs Level was not a part of the Public Hearing. It is presumed that Inuit have a Basic Needs Level at least equal to the full amount of the Total Allowable Harvest set by the Board.


Conclusion

The Board recognizes that most caribou herds in Nunavut and across the Arctic are experiencing rapid declines. For the Bathurst caribou herd, the reported decline by approximately 98% from its peak in 1986 necessitates an improved collaboration among all stakeholders in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories to manage the herd. The Board also recognizes that Inuit are the most directly impacted by the implementation of a reduced Total Allowable Harvest. The Government of Nunavut should recognize that Inuit also have a desire to ensure caribou remain sustainable. Alternative measures to promote recovery of the Bathurst herd are likely more challenging, but engaging Inuit that are directly affected is worth examining now and into the future.

The NWMB hereby forwards its decisions to you for your consideration pursuant to Section 5.3.8 of the *Nunavut Agreement*. The NWMB recognizes the importance of this decision to stakeholders across the entire range of Bathurst caribou, and looks forward

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1867-975-5050
 867-975-5051

Department officials are reviewing your additional recommendations and I will provide comment on them at a later date.

Sincerely,

for Saint Louis

Cc: Jimmy Noble Jr., Deputy Minister of Environment
Steve Pinksen, Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment
Drikus Gissing, Director of Wildlife Research
Jason Aliqatuqtuq, Director of Wildlife Operations



involved in aerial survey planning and when conducting future aerial surveys.

3. Community-Based Management and Monitoring

The Board recommends that the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated should continue to provide support and resources to assist the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board and Kitikmeot Hunters and Trappers Organizations in developing, implementing, and maintaining community-based management and monitoring initiatives.

4. Allocation of the Total Allowable Harvest

The Board encourages the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board to allocate any Total Allowable Harvest (equal to or less than 10 caribou tags) to the Kaodloak family living at Contwoyto Lake.

Reasons for the NWMB's Final Decision

After carefully considering your reasons for disallowing the NWMB decisions, and the evidence and arguments presented by the parties in response to your reasons for disallowance, the Board has decided to maintain its initial decisions as its final decisions.

You cited the decline of the Bathurst herd from the 1980s to 2018 and the approximate decline of 58% between the 2015 and 2018 abundance estimate surveys as the reason for your disallowance. You also stated that a harvest of zero is the most appropriate management decision for the Bathurst herd. In reaching its final decision, the Board weighed the evidence that the population is likely continuing to decline but also considered other evidence from Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge including:

- harvesting did not significantly contribute to the observed decline;
- there was no persuasive evidence from Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit or scientific knowledge to suggest that a limited harvest of 10 male-only caribou is likely to delay the recovery or precipitate the decline of the Bathurst caribou herd;
- other factors such as emigration from the Bathurst caribou herd to neighbouring herds and predation may have contributed to the overall population decline;
- Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific evidence suggest that the Bathurst caribou herd has a cyclical population abundance and has the potential to recover from the current decline.

Based on the above evidence, the Board determined that the harvest of a small number of male caribou will likely not have a significant biological impact on the herd.



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Nunavunmi Anngutighatigut Aulapkaijitkut Katimajiat
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

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Conserving wildlife through the application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and scientific knowledge

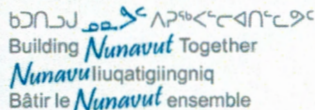
your prompt reply and timely completion of the *Nunavut Agreement* Article 5 decision-making process.

Should you or your officials have any questions or concerns about the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the NWMB.

Sincerely,

Daniel Shewchuk
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

c.c. Drikus Gissing, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment;
Jason Aliqatuqtuq, Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment.



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Minister of Environment
Ministaat Avatiliqiyitkut
Ministre de l'Environnement

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
P.O Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

October 8, 2020

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's Final Decision on the Proposal to Reduce the Total Allowable Harvest of the Bathurst Caribou Herd from 30 to 0.

Dear Mr. Shewchuk,

Thank you for your letter dated September 11, 2020 outlining the final decisions of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) concerning Bathurst caribou harvest management following the NWMB in-camera session on September 3, 2020 (IC003-2020).

The NWMB submitted the following final decisions:

- *RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 5.3.12 of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board maintain its initial decision to modify the Total Allowable Harvest of the Bathurst caribou herd from 30 to 10 pursuant to Sections 5.6.16 and 5.3.3(a) of the Nunavut Agreement, as its final decision.*
- *FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 5.3.12 of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board maintain its initial decision as its final decision to maintain the Non-Quota Limitation of a male-only harvest for the Bathurst caribou herd pursuant to Section 5.6.48 of the Nunavut Agreement.*
- *FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board maintain its initial recommendations to the Minister of Environment and request that the Minister provide a response to the recommendations made by the Board.*

I thank the NWMB for its reconsideration of their initial decisions on this complex matter. Pursuant to section 5.3.13 (a) of the *Nunavut Agreement* I hereby accept the decision of the NWMB to establish a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of ten (10) caribou for the Bathurst Caribou herd. This decision was made after careful consideration of input we received from the NWMB and co-management partners. As per input during the consultation and public hearing process, these ten caribou should be harvested for subsistence and I support the NWMB recommendation that the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board should allocate the TAH to the Kaodloak family living at Contwoyto Lake.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is the lead jurisdiction on the survey and research program for Bathurst caribou, including the planning and implementation of abundance surveys, and my Department remains highly involved in supporting this program. The GNWT has already completed a biological and management feasibility assessment for wolves in the Bathurst caribou range and there is currently a working group formed to complete the same for grizzly bear and wolverine management. The Government of Nunavut (GN), as well as Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., have been invited to participate in the working group for this management feasibility assessment. My department is working on finalizing recent wolverine research while planning for an updated assessment of grizzly bear density in the Kitikmeot region, which will be used to inform predator management.

I wish to thank the Board for their hard work and careful consideration of this significant conservation and management issue of inter-jurisdictional importance.

for Saint Louis

Cc. Jimmy Noble Jr., Deputy Minister of Environment
Steve Pinksen, Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment
Drikus Gissing, Director of Wildlife Research