



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada

SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD (NWMB)

FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Proposed Path Forward for drafting the Dolphin & Union Barren-ground Caribou Management Plan



Background: The Dolphin & Union Barren-ground caribou is a population of caribou that exists only in Canada.

The Dolphin & Union Barren-ground caribou (Dolphin & Union caribou) were originally assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as a single unit that included Peary caribou. It was assigned the status of Threatened in April 1979. In 1991, the species were split into three separate populations and reassessed: Banks Island (Endangered), High Arctic (Endangered) and Low Arctic (Threatened). In May 2004, the three population categories were removed and the Peary caribou and Dolphin & Union caribou populations were assessed separately. The Dolphin & Union caribou (which was formerly known as the Low Arctic population) was designated Special Concern in May 2004. It was listed as Special Concern on Schedule 1 of the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2011.

Dolphin & Union caribou are endemic to Canada, only occurring in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. They were listed as Special Concern because the species, once believed to be extinct because its' numbers had become so low, is now about one quarter of the historic population size. Major threats to this species are high rates of harvest and increased shipping through their migration route across the sea ice between the mainland and Victoria Island. Climate warming may also make ice crossing along this migration route more dangerous.

Proposed Path Forward:

Under SARA, there are no requirements to restrict harvest or regulate habitat for species that are listed as Special Concern. There is a requirement to develop a management plan within 3 years of a species being listed.

The Dolphin & Union caribou management plan is due to be posted as proposed on the federal Species at Risk Registry by March 2017. Environment Canada's proposed path forward to develop the management plan is as follows:

- Completion of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Threat Calculator via teleconference with COSEWIC and in collaboration with all co-management partners (HTAs, WMBs, Parks, GNWT, GN) - September 2014
- Meet with the Hunters and Trappers Association (HTA) chairs and co-management partners at the *Peary caribou Recovery Strategy Development Chairs meeting* in Yellowknife to discuss path forward and confirm which communities would like to participate in this process – Fall 2014
- Follow-up teleconference with HTA chairs and co-management partners to discuss/plan the key components of the draft management plan – Winter 2014/2015
- Meet with HTA board members (and invited guests chosen by HTAs for their familiarity with Dolphin & Union caribou) to collect additional information and Inuit knowledge for the draft management plan (either in person or by teleconference) – Spring 2015
- Completion of draft management plan – Fall/Winter 2015
- Review of draft management plan by co-management partners – Winter 2015/2016

- Consultation on draft management plan – Winter 2015/2016
- Formally request NWMB approval and Wildlife Management Advisory Council (WMAC-NWT) support on the draft management plan – March 2016

Environment Canada proposes to consult the following HTAs and communities throughout the development of the management plan:

- Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok in the NWT
- Bathurst Inlet, Umingmaktok, Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk in Nunavut.

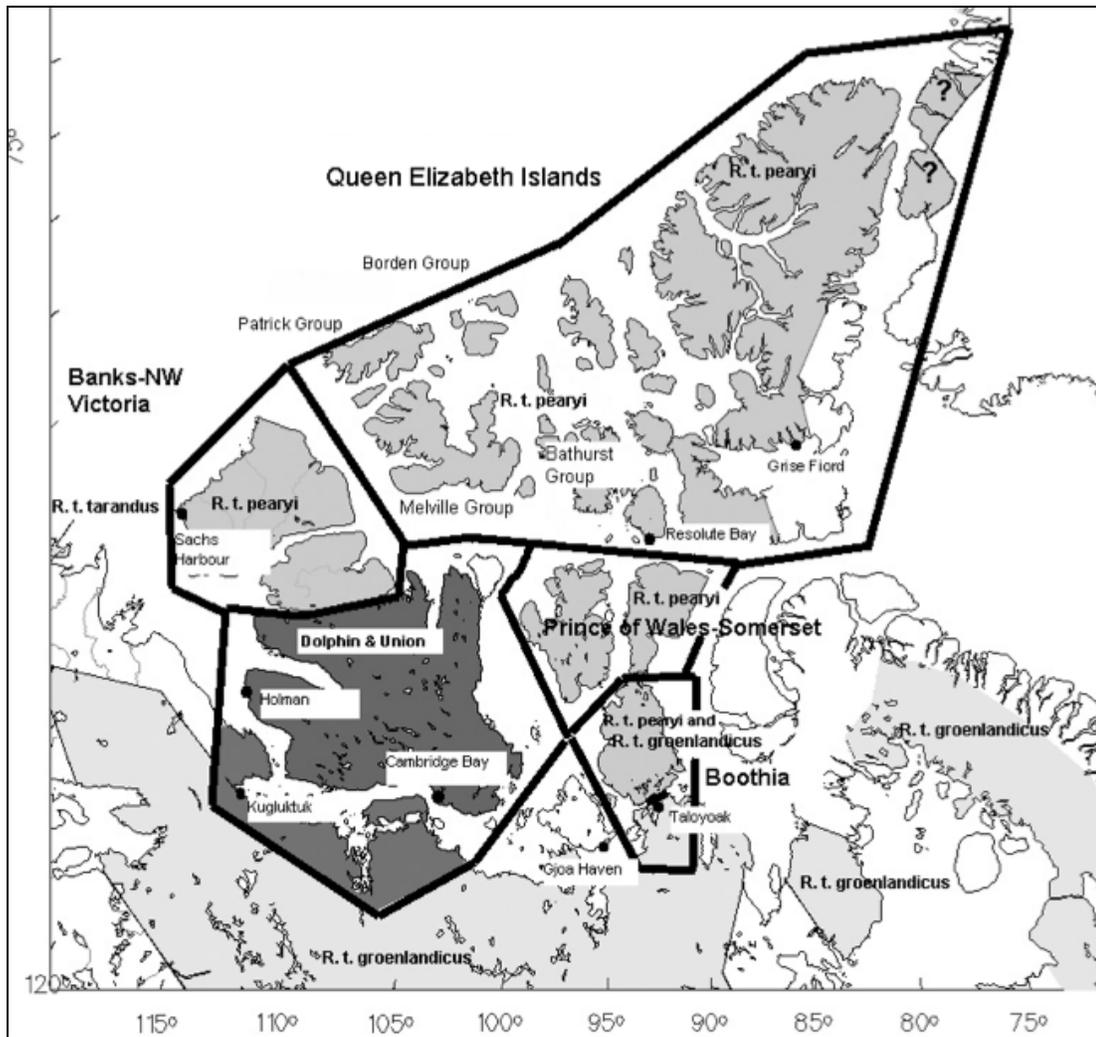


Figure 1. This figure is from the COSEWIC Assessment and Update Status Summary for Peary caribou and Dolphin and Union Barren-ground Caribou. The darker shading indicates the range that Dolphin & Union Barren-ground Caribou occupy.

Prepared by:

Lisa Pirie
Canadian Wildlife Service, Iqaluit

8 August 2014