

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Project Number: 2-14-07

Applicant: Mitch Campbell

Title: Distribution and abundance of Baffin Island barren-ground caribou

Funding Requested: Single Year Funding - \$75,000 for 2014-2015

Rank: 1 / 18

Total Score 90.00 /100
(no deductions)

Scoring Breakdown: NWMB Priority: 17.50 / 17.50
Regional Priority: 7.50 / 7.50
Quality: 29.50 / 35.00
Consultation: 12.00 / 15
Funding: 23.50 / 25

Project Summary: The principle goal of this project is to determine the abundance and distribution of caribou on Baffin Island by: 1) observing and recording the number and location of caribou within their late winter range; 2) estimating yearling and adult caribou abundance; and 3) involving Baffin Hunters and Trappers Organizations and their representatives with the research program in a meaningful way through both ground and aerial survey efforts and survey planning and reporting.

Project Contributions:

Requested from NWMB	\$ 75,000	8%
Other Contributions	<u>\$857,500</u>	<u>92%</u>
Total	\$932,500	100%

NWMB Staff Evaluation:

NWMB Priority: #1 - Contributes to the establishment, modification or removal of levels of Total Allowable Harvest (S 5.6.16 to S 5.6.18) for stocks or populations where there is believed to be a conservation concern or that are priority species for harvest by Inuit.

Regional Priority: #1 Baffin – Population estimate, Baffin Island Caribou

Project design: During March and April 2014 caribou on Baffin Island will be surveyed following standard double observer techniques. The survey areas will be broken down into 4 levels depending on the known caribou abundance, including one level for unknown abundance. Ground surveys will be used prior to aerial surveys in areas of unknown caribou abundance. Full consultations including all Baffin Island communities were conducted from December 2013 through January 2014. During these consultations the Department or Environment research staff will work with communities on survey design and implementation based on local knowledge and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit. Inuit knowledge and existing scientific information were used to determine the area to be surveyed. Survey lines will be positioned 10 km apart, running east and west across the study area, and will be divided by eco-region (distinct areas of habitat type). The survey will cover the entire land base with the exception of extensive ice fields or glaciers. Upon detection, all individuals and groups will be approached to record location, and identify sex, age and group size. All observations and flight tracks will be mapped to illustrate the spatial distribution of caribou in late winter.

Scat samples for genetic analysis will be collected when available at fresh feeding site locations and will be used to identify the population structure.

Application of results: Project results will be documented in a Government of Nunavut file report and applied to conservation and management initiatives for the purposes of sustainably managing all Baffin Island barren-ground caribou subpopulations. Population estimates along with Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit will be incorporated into an information driven decision making partnership between Baffin Island community Hunter and Trapper Organizations, the Government of Nunavut, and the NWMB. This management partnership will examine the need for land-use and harvest management measures to address the status of Baffin Island caribou.

Community involvement / consultation: The Project Leader conducted consultations with Hunter and Trapper Organizations in Baffin Island communities in December 2013 and January 2014. In addition to providing valuable input and advice into the survey design and its implementation, community members will participate in the survey as Wildlife Observers' in all aircraft, conduct ground surveys to inform aerial survey coverage, and provide ongoing logistical support and advice throughout the project.

As per the NWRT policy, if the project is funded by the NWRT the project is required to: (1) provide a letter of support from all affected communities by June 30th, 2014; **OR** (2) provide a letter of support from a majority of the affected communities by June 30th, 2014 and provide evidence that the research has done a "conscientious" job of consulting; **OR** (3) provide the required information to demonstrate that "conscientious" consultation has been conducted by June 30th, 2014.

Recommendations: If this project is funded, the following conditions should apply:

1. Funding should be conditional on other funding, as identified in the proposal, being approved. This should be confirmed in writing; and
2. Funding should be conditional on meeting the consultation requirements identified as per the NWRT policy.

Prepared By: Peter Kydd, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB

Consultations: Danica Crystal, Wildlife Management Biologist, NWMB

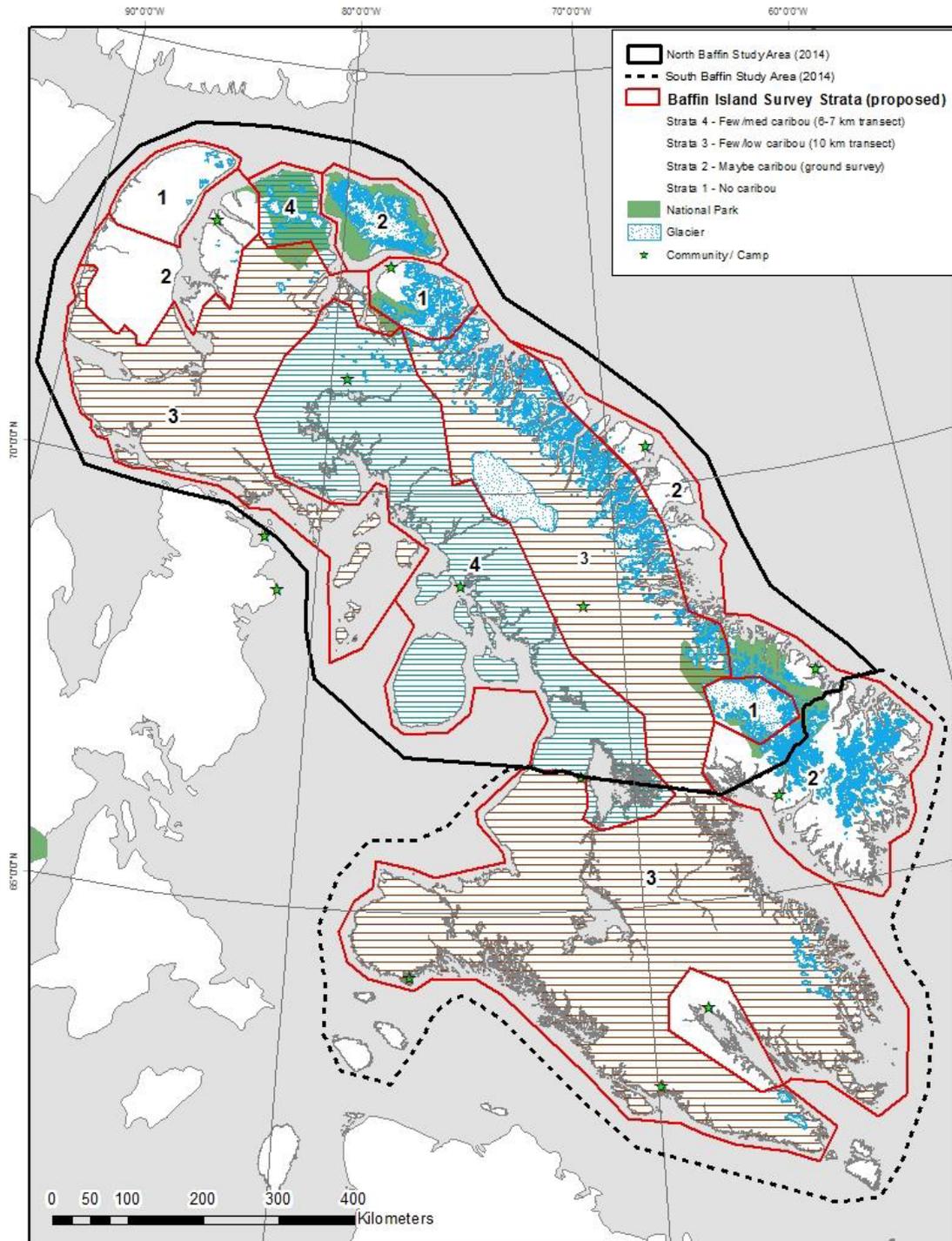


Figure 1: The north and south Baffin Island survey study areas showing draft survey strata. Strata are developed based on estimated caribou relative densities from past surveys and Inuit knowledge. Strata boundaries may be adjusted following pre-survey community consultations.