SUBMISSION TO THE

NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

FOR

Information: X **Decision:**

Issue: Information on progress of the community-based management plan for Bluenose-East caribou in Nunavut

Background

- In June 2015, the Bluenose-East caribou population was estimated at 38,592 animals, which was significantly lower than the 2013 population estimate of 68,000 caribou, representing an annual decline of 21%.
- Barren-ground caribou, such as the Bluenose-East herd, were assessed as Threatened in 2016 by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) (Appendix I).
- With the recent assessment by COSEWIC, there is a strong emphasis on developing a management plan for the Bluenose-East herd.
- In December 2016, based on the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board decision, the GN Minister of Environment implemented a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) of 340 caribou for the Bluenose-East herd and supported the development of a community-based management plan referred to as the "*Integrated Community Caribou Management Plan*" (ICCMP) (attachment 1).

Current Status

- The Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment, continues to offer its assistance in working closely with affected Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) and the Regional Wildlife Organization (RWO) to further develop their draft ICCMP for the Bluenose-East herd.
- On June 2016, during the NWMB Public Hearing, the Kugluktuk HTO presented a draft of the ICCMP for the Bluenose-East herd.
- On July 2017, The Department of Environment sent a letter to the respective HTOs to offer technical support and resource assistance towards the further development of the ICCMP for the Bluenose-East herd (attachment 2).
- The Department continues to engage and work closely with affected communities and respective co-management partners (HTOs, Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.) on management needs.

Recommendation

- N/A

Attachment 1

Building Nunavut Together
Nunavuliuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le Nunavut ensemble

Nunavut

December 14th, 2016

Larry Adjun
Chairperson
Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association
P.O. Box 309
Kugluktuk, NU X0B 0E0

Simon Qingnaqtuq
Chairperson
Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board
P.O. Box 309
Kugluktuk, NU X0B 0E0

Dear Co-Management Partners,

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's decisions concerning Bluenose-East harvest management.

The Government of Nunavut received and has accepted the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) decision to "*Establish an interim total allowable harvest of three hundred and forty (340) Bluenose East caribou in the Nunavut Settlement Area until such time as either (i) circumstances require a revision to that number, or (ii) the integrated Community Caribou Management Plan for the Bluenose East caribou in the Kitikmeot Region (Bluenose East Caribou Management Plan) is approved and implemented pursuant to Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Sections 5.2.34 (d)(i) and 5.3.7 to 5.3.15*"

The total allowable harvest (TAH) of 340 on the Bluenose East Caribou herd will be enacted as soon as the regulations have been updated, likely by the end of January 2017. In the meantime, my Department's regional staff and local Conservation Officers will work with co-management partners particularly the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association

ᑲᑐᑎᓗᒍ ᓄᓇᕗᑦ ᐱᕈᖅᐸᓕᐊᑎᓪᓗᒍ
Building Nunavut Together
Nunavuliuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le Nunavut ensemble

to prepare for the implementation and management of this TAH, aspects of which will include: the management of the tags, the harvest reporting, and sample collection.

Please note that the NWMB did not make a decision on sex selective harvest, but recommended that the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board (KRWB) promptly establish the prescribed harvest sex-ratio for the Bluenose East Caribou herd. Therefore, it is recommended that the KRWB or Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) establish bylaws to address the sex selectivity of the harvest. My staff will be available to provide technical and field support for the development of any necessary RWO or HTO rules related to the management of tags and non-quota limitations such as: harvest area restrictions, seasonal harvest restrictions, and/or sex-selectivity of the harvest.

Further my Department will be happy to assist Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association to finalize its "Integrated Community Caribou Management Plan (ICCMP) for the conservation of the Bluenose East Caribou herd". It would be amicable to have this ICCMP finalized by the end of September 2017, as this would be aligned with the territorial and inter-jurisdictional initiatives related to the management of this herd.

On-going communication, meetings, and the recent NWMB public hearing have shown that we all share concerns regarding the declining rate of the Bluenose East caribou herd. I hope that our collaborative work will continue in implementing this TAH and other management actions needed to foster the recovery of this caribou herd.

Best Regards,

Joe Savikataaq
Minister

C.c. Daniel Shewchuk, Acting Chairperson, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board;
Paul Irngaut, Director of Wildlife and Environment, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated;
Lynda Yonge, Director of Wildlife Division, Government of Northwest Territories

P.O. Box 2410
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 0H0

(867) 975-5026
(867) 975-5042

Attachment 2

Building Nunavut Together
Nunavuliuqatigiingniq
Bâtir le Nunavut ensemble

Department of Environment
Avatiliqiyikkut
Ministère de l'Environnement

July 27, 2017

Joe Ashevak
Chairperson
Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board
P.O. Box 104, Kugaaruk, NU, X0B 1K0

Larry Adjun
Chairperson
Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association
P.O. Box 309, Kugluktuk, NU, X0B 0E0

Dear Co-Management Partners,

Re: Status of the Integrated Community Caribou Management Plan (ICCMP) for the Bluenose East Caribou in the Kitikmeot Region.

The sustainability of Bluenose East caribou in Nunavut assures caribou harvest by Inuit for future generations - and this is a shared goal among co-management partners in Nunavut. Following the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's decision to establish a Total Allowable Harvest of 340 Bluenose East caribou for the 2017 harvest year (see Minister Savikataaq's letter, attached), the Board identified a community-based management plan, the *"Integrated Community Caribou Management Plan (ICCMP)"* for the Bluenose East Caribou in the Kitikmeot Region to be finalized by September 30, 2017, in order to align with other territorial and inter-jurisdictional initiatives related to the management of this herd.

To this end, the Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment, would like to offer our technical support and resource staff to assist the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association and the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board in further developing this community-based management plan - in whatever ways that may be of assistance. We would also like to follow up on any further sex selectivity harvest discussions that the KRWB and Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association may determine would be helpful.

Our Department is looking forward to working together with you on this community-based co-management initiative that will help foster the re-vitalization and sustainability of Bluenose East Caribou.

P.O. Box 377, Enokhok Building
Kugluktuk, Nunavut X0B 0E0

(867) 982-7440
(867) 982-3701
www.gov.nu.ca

Please feel free to contact me for any further technical assistance and support on these community-based management initiatives. I can be reached at 867-982-7444 at any time, or LLeclerc@gov.nu.ca.

Regards,

Lisa-Marie Leclerc

Lisa-Marie Leclerc
Regional Wildlife Biologist, Kitikmeot
Department of Environment
Government of Nunavut

c.c. L. Orman
M. Dumond

Appendix 1

COSEWIC
Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada

COSEPAC
Comité sur la situation des espèces en péril au Canada

Caribou, Monarch butterflies: Canada's iconic migrants at grave risk

OTTAWA, ONTARIO (December 5, 2016). From Coho Salmon to Caribou to the much-cherished Monarch butterfly, migration is a key component of Canadian biodiversity. Migratory species, migration and movement all figured prominently at the semi-annual Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) deliberations on species at risk, held November 27 - December 2nd.

Young Coho Salmon from the Interior Fraser River basin leave the watershed and live much of their adult lives at sea before migrating back to their native rivers to lay eggs. The Committee considered threats in both fresh and salt water, and the wildlife species' status was assessed as having improved from Endangered to Threatened. Despite ongoing active management and some improvements, the situation faced by Interior Fraser River Coho Salmon is still perilous.

Caribou, Barren-ground population © Ann Gunn

Another iconic migratory species considered by COSEWIC was Caribou. Several populations migrate hundreds of kilometres en masse between their calving and wintering grounds every year. Caribou have experienced alarming declines. Both science and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge indicate

unprecedented declines in several herds with some human activities on the landscape being novel, potentially disrupting natural cycles. According to Justina Ray, co-chair of the Terrestrial Mammals Subcommittee, "Caribou are, sadly, very sensitive to human disturbances, and we are disturbing Caribou more and more. These stressors seem to be interacting in complicated ways with rapid warming in the North. Many of the great northern Caribou herds have now fallen to all-time lows, and there is cause for concern that they will not rebound in the same way they have before." COSEWIC considered the status of two such populations for the first time. Both were found to be in trouble: The Caribou Barren-ground population was assessed as Threatened, while the much rarer Torngat Mountain population in far northeastern Canada was assessed at even higher risk - Endangered.

A third migratory species considered by COSEWIC was the Monarch butterfly. These insects fly over 4,000 kilometres south to Mexico in the fall to overwinter. They breed on their return trip, and their great-grandchildren arrive back in Canada in spring. However, the remarkably tiny wintering grounds where Monarchs congregate continue to be chipped away by habitat loss. Monarch butterfly migration is now recognized as a "threatened process" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Indeed, it is the only natural process with this unfortunate distinction. COSEWIC assessed the species as Endangered. Jennifer Heron, co-chair of the Arthropods Subcommittee, summed it up: "We need to continue to support the conservation of milkweed caterpillar habitat both here in Canada and along the Monarch's migratory journey, and we need to support continued conservation of critical overwintering areas. Otherwise, Monarch migration may disappear, and Canada may lose this iconic species."

Monarch © Jessica Linton

The Pink-footed Shearwater finds itself in a comparable situation. Breeding on only three small islands off the coast of Chile, many of these birds travel thousands of kilometres north to feed along the coast of British Columbia during our summer months. The species' southern home is under multiple threats from humans and exotic predators, and shearwaters are killed as fishing by-catch throughout its range. This rare bird was re-assessed as Endangered.

Human interference also causes problems for animal movements at smaller, local scales. Dams that stop Westslope Cutthroat Trout from moving between spawning and feeding grounds have contributed to their shrinking distribution in Alberta. This fish's Saskatchewan – Nelson Rivers populations were re-assessed as Threatened. Slow-moving Blanding's Turtles, which can live for 80 years, travel up to three kilometres from nesting beaches and other summer habitats to fewer small freshwater pools where they overwinter, year after year. Vehicles increasingly threaten this rare turtle wherever roads cross the turtles' seasonal routes, and this species was assessed as Endangered in both Nova Scotia and in central Canada.

In contrast to most of the species assessed by COSEWIC, the widely distributed Blue Shark was assessed as Not At Risk in Canada, in part due to ongoing successful management. New satellite tracking data for this renowned long-distance migrant confirmed long-range movements and seasonal migrations between inshore and deeper offshore habitats.

But of the species assessed, Blue Shark was the exception. Many migratory species decline in step with human barriers and habitat changes. The Chair of COSEWIC, Eric Taylor, stated the bottom line: "Disruptions to migratory behavior are associated with the threat of extinction for species all over the world. We will need to continue to change how we use our landscape so that we and wildlife can thrive together. COSEWIC's work assessing Canadian wildlife helps us do that."

Next meeting

COSEWIC's next scheduled wildlife species assessment meeting will be held in April 2017.

About COSEWIC

COSEWIC assesses the status of wild species, subspecies, varieties, or other important units of biological diversity, considered to be at risk in Canada. To do so, COSEWIC uses scientific, Aboriginal traditional and community knowledge provided by experts from governments, academia and other organizations. Summaries of assessments are currently available to the public on the COSEWIC website (www.cosewic.gc.ca) and will be submitted to the Federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change in fall 2017 for listing consideration under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). At this time, the status reports and status appraisal summaries will be publicly available on the Species at Risk Public Registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

At its most recent meeting, COSEWIC assessed 40 wildlife species in various COSEWIC risk categories, including 13 Endangered, 6 Threatened, and 11 Special Concern. In addition to these wildlife species that are in COSEWIC risk categories, COSEWIC assessed 6 wildlife species as Not at Risk. An additional 4 were found to be Data Deficient.

COSEWIC comprises members from each provincial and territorial government wildlife agency, four federal entities (Canadian Wildlife Service, Parks Canada Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Canadian Museum of Nature), three Non-government Science Members, and the Co-chairs of the Species Specialist and the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Subcommittees.

Definition of COSEWIC terms and status categories:

Wildlife Species: A species, subspecies, variety, or geographically or genetically distinct population of animal, plant or other organism, other than a bacterium or virus, that is wild by nature and is either native to Canada or has extended its range into Canada without human intervention and has been present in Canada for at least 50 years.
Extinct (X): A wildlife species that no longer exists.

Extirpated (XT): A wildlife species that no longer exists in the wild in Canada, but exists elsewhere.
Endangered (E): A wildlife species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.
Threatened (T): A wildlife species that is likely to become Endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.
Special Concern (SC): A wildlife species that may become Threatened or Endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.
Not at Risk (NAR): A wildlife species that has been evaluated and found to be not at risk of extinction given the current circumstances.
Data Deficient (DD): A category that applies when the available information is insufficient (a) to resolve a wildlife species' eligibility for assessment or (b) to permit an assessment of the wildlife species' risk of extinction.
Species at Risk: A wildlife species that has been assessed as Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern.

Dr. Eric B. (Rick) Taylor Chair, COSEWIC Department of Zoology University of British Columbia Telephone: 604-822-9152 etaylor@zoology.ubc.ca	For general inquiries: COSEWIC Secretariat Canadian Wildlife Service Environment and Climate Change Canada 351 St. Joseph Blvd, 16th floor Gatineau QC K1A 0H3 Telephone: 819-938-4125 Fax: 819-938-3984 ec.cosepac-cosewic.ec@canada.ca www.cosewic.gc.ca
For inquiries on Amphibians and Reptiles (Blanding's Turtle, Western Painted Turtle): **Dr. Kristiina Ovaska** Biolinx Environmental Research Ltd. Telephone: 250-727-9708 ke.ovaska@gmail.com	For inquiries on arthropods (Gold-edged Gem, Magdalen Islands Grasshopper, Monarch, Sonora Skipper, Transverse Lady Beetle): **Jennifer M. Heron** BC Ministry of Environment Telephone: 604-828-2542 jenniferheron@gmail.com
For inquiries on birds (Evening Grosbeak, Pink-footed Shearwater, Prothonotary Warbler): **Dr. Marcel Gahbauer** Stantec Telephone: 613-784-2216 marcel@migrationresearch.org	For inquiries on freshwater fishes (Channel Darter, Pygmy Whitefish, Speckled Dace, Westslope Cutthroat Trout): **Dr. John R. Post** University of Calgary Telephone: 403-220-6937 jrpost@ucalgary.ca

For inquiries on marine fishes (Blue Shark, Coho Salmon - Interior Fraser population): **Alan F. Sinclair** Telephone: 250-714-5690 alanfsinclair@me.com	For inquiries on marine mammals: **Dr. Hal Whitehead** Dalhousie University Telephone: 902-494-3723 hal.whitehead@dal.ca
For inquiries on terrestrial mammals (Caribou, Nuttall's Cottontail *nuttallii* subspecies): **Dr. Justina C. Ray** Wildlife Conservation Society Canada Telephone: 419-850-9038 x22 jray@wcs.org	For inquiries on molluscs (Mapleleaf): **Dr. Dwayne Lepitzki** Banff, Alberta Telephone: 403-762-0864 lepitzki@telusplanet.net
For inquiries mosses and lichens: (Nugget Moss, Golden-eye Lichen, Seaside Centipede Lichen) **Dr. David H. S. Richardson** Saint Mary's University Telephone: 902-496-8174 david.richardson@smu.ca	For inquiries on plants: (American Hart's-tongue Fern, Leiberg's Fleabane, Western Prairie Fringed Orchid) **Del Meidinger** Meidinger Ecological Consultants Ltd. Telephone: 250-881-1180 Cell phone: 778-977-1180 delmeidinger@gmail.com
For inquiries on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge: **Dr. Donna Hurlburt** Telephone: 902-532-1341 donna.hurlburt@eastlink.ca	

Further details on all wildlife species assessed can be found on the COSEWIC website at: www.cosewic.gc.ca