



Submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

For

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Pre-listing consultations for the Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA)



Background:

- Barren-ground caribou was assessed as Threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in November 2016.
- Barren-ground caribou are medium-sized and have longer legs than Peary caribou and Dolphin and Union caribou, but shorter legs than Boreal caribou. They have dark brown legs, backs and antler velvet, with a distinctive brown and white coat pattern in the fall.
- COSEWIC’s reason for designation: Most of the Barren-ground caribou herds have declined dramatically. Overall, the decline is estimated at 56% over the past three generations. The Porcupine caribou herd is one of the few exceptions to this trend and is increasing. There are currently 800,000 Barren-ground caribou, down from over 2 million in the early 1990s.
- A number of threats are thought to be causing the decline, such as climate and weather changes that are affecting forage availability, predation, parasites and diseases. Some others are Industrial exploration and development, fragmentation of habitat in their winter range from forest fires and increasing human presence, as well as subsistence and sport harvests that are a significant cause of mortality.

- The decline of Barren-ground caribou is so drastic that it could have been assessed as Endangered. However, COSEWIC recommended the Threatened status in recognition of the numerous management actions that are being initiated by governments, wildlife management boards and communities, and because Barren-ground caribou do not appear to be facing imminent extinction at this time.
- In October 2017, COSEWIC submitted its assessment of the species to the Minister of the Environment. The Minister of the Environment will respond within 90 days, by posting a response on the SARA Public Registry. The response statement will indicate the scope of the consultation and timelines.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) will consult with the appropriate Minister(s), wildlife management boards and Indigenous organizations on changes to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1) of the *Species at Risk Act* for terrestrial species.
- For species that are listed as Threatened, a recovery strategy is to be prepared within two years of the species' addition to Schedule 1 and added to the Species at Risk Registry. Recovery strategies are prepared in cooperation with the jurisdictions, wildlife management boards, and Indigenous organizations.
- If Barren-ground caribou are listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act* a national recovery strategy will be written that identifies the threats to the species and its habitat, and sets population and distribution objectives for the survival and recovery of the species. The national recovery strategy will identify critical habitat to the extent possible. After critical habitat is identified, CWS will work with partners to find the best method to protect the habitat from activities that would destroy it.
- Prohibitions against killing or harming Barren-ground caribou will automatically come into force if the species is listed. In the territories, these automatic prohibitions only apply on federal lands that are under the authority of the Minister of the Environment or the Parks Canada Agency, such as National Parks and National Wildlife Areas. As well, these automatic prohibitions do not apply to people engaging in activities in accordance with conservation measures under a land claims agreement.

Next Steps - Consultation Process:

- Jurisdictions and wildlife management boards, including the NWMB and the Government of Nunavut, will be asked to review and provide input into the draft Terrestrial Issues Flagging (TIF) document, which outlines the species' current status, presence on the landscape, projected impact of listing, and issues flagged. This process helps inform the decision on the consultation timeline – normal or extended.
- It is expected that consultations on the proposed listing will be held between January and October 2018. Organizations such as hunters and trappers organizations (HTOs) and regional wildlife boards are asked to provide their formal position on the proposed listing (i.e. oppose, support or are indifferent) and with any other comments, concerns or information that they feel should be considered. ECCC will ask partners to provide feedback by April 30, 2018 in order for ECCC to follow up on any outstanding questionnaires or participation in meetings by October 2018.
- Given the range of the species, CWS plans to consult all Nunavut communities with the exception of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.
- Consultation packages, in Inuktitut and English, will be sent by mail and email, include: a letter, a PowerPoint, and a questionnaire. The full COSEWIC Assessment and Status Report will be provided in digital format in English only.
- To support consultations, CWS will extend an offer to provide more information, if requested, in the best means possible, including attending a board meeting by teleconference or in-person. A reminder email and

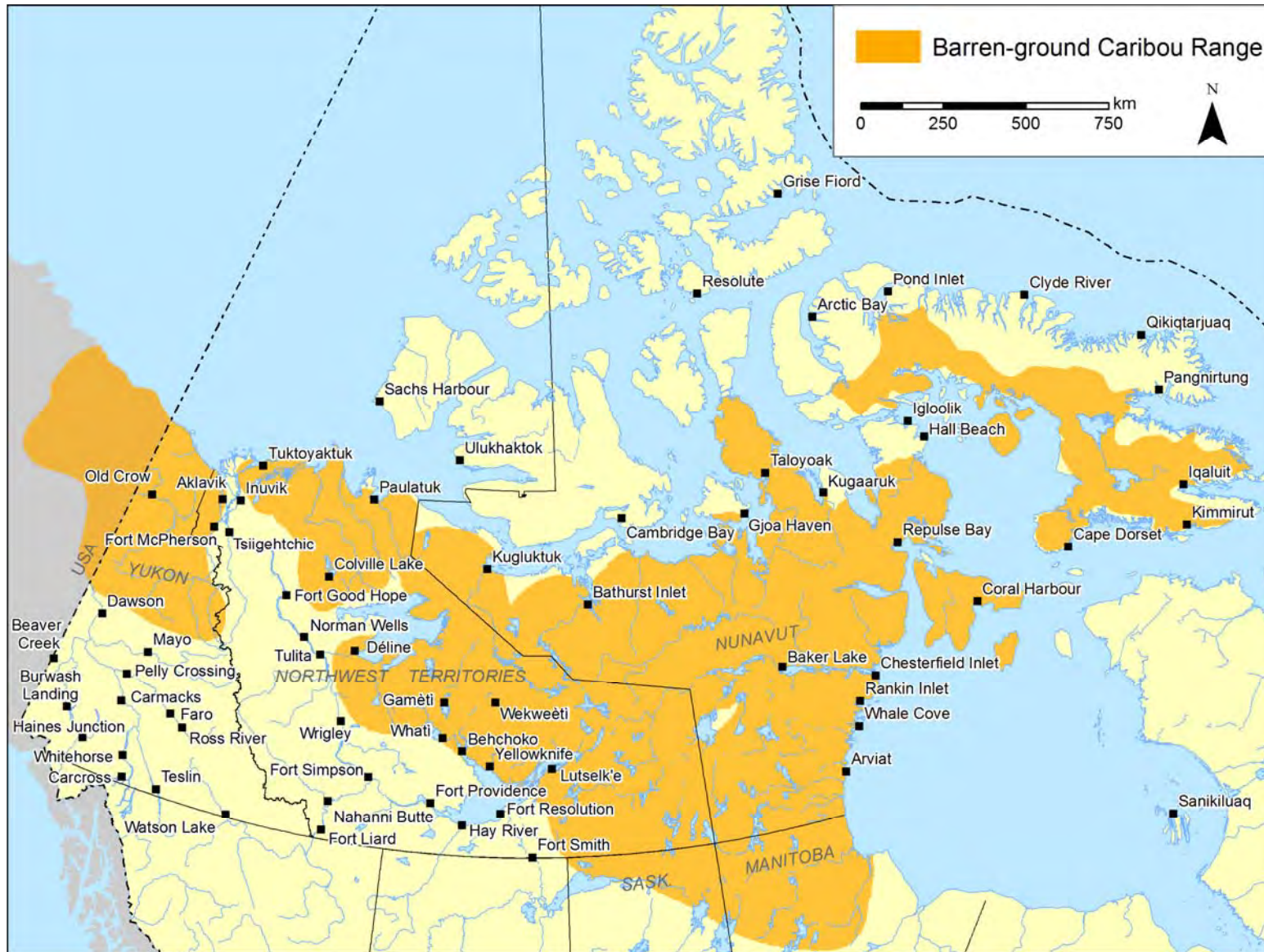
follow-up phone calls, to the extent possible, will be done to seek input from as many organizations as possible.

- Following consultations, CWS will summarize the consultation results and present them to the Board at the next quarterly meeting following the consultation period and seek NWMB's decision on the proposed listing of the species.

Request of the NWMB:

- That the NWMB provide Environment and Climate Change Canada with any feedback on the consultation process to obtain input and a decision on support from Hunters and Trappers Organizations for the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.





Barren-ground Caribou – Range

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