

Hunting and Trapping Organizations Consultation Tour –Qamanirjuaq Caribou and Kivalliq Musk Ox Update

February 20-26, 2018

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Executive Summary

Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment (DOE) Kivalliq Research Division traveled to the communities of the Kivalliq region (except Nauyasat) to meet face to face with the Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) and give an update on the Caribou, Musk Ox and other issues concerning ungulates in the Kivalliq Region as well as take questions the members have on the subject. Presentations with summary results of recent surveys and other details concerning Kivalliq Ungulates were given by Mitch Campbell Kivalliq Regional Biologist, assisted by Keenan Lindell Kivalliq Wildlife Technician and Rob Harmer Conservation Manager for the Kivalliq Region. HTO members were encouraged to ask any questions they may have on the subjects. Additionally, we had questions of our own with regard to HTO member opinions and expertise on the status and general health of the Caribou and Musk Ox within their hunting areas. We aimed to create a casual yet professional atmosphere, where everyone would be comfortable speaking, for it is our goal not only to give, but to gain information as well from the knowledgeable HTO members. We worked to generate a conversation between people rather than a one-sided presentation. This format seems to be successful and is beneficial for both parties where it creates trust and promotes communication and collaboration.

Preface

This report represents the Department of Environment's best efforts to accurately capture all of the information that was shared during the meetings with the Hunters and Trappers Organizations of Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, Baker Lake and Arviat.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Environment, or the Government of Nunavut.

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1.0 Report Purpose and Structure

This report is intended to collate and summarize comments, questions, concerns and suggestions provided by the HTOs in response to presentations given by Mitch Campbell Kivalliq Regional Wildlife Biologist with the Government of Nunavut. The following communities were consulted from February 20-26, 2018:

- Whale Cove , February 20, 2018
- Rankin Inlet, February 21, 2018
- Chesterfield, February 23, 2018
- Baker lake, February 23, 2018
- Arviat, February 26, 2018

2.0 Purpose of Tour

The presentations given were to discuss the newest information regarding the Qamanirjuaq Caribou herd and Kivalliq Musk Ox populations based on recent abundance surveys completed in 2016 and 2017. Summary findings of the Qamanirjuaq Caribou Herd abundance estimate, population trend, overwinter calf survival, and the seasonal range use migratory routes for the past two years based on a long-standing telemetry program were shared. Specific discussions on surveys included areas and transects flown on last survey, presence or lack of disease and parasites, and road effects on the caribou. Summary results of the latest Kivalliq Musk Ox Abundance survey were also a topic of discussion. Details on Population estimates for the Northern and Southern Kivalliq subpopulations, annual movements over years, predator distributions based on survey sightings and population trends were discussed. The GN representatives asked about the overall health of the caribou and muskox within their hunting areas based on the HTO and community members' experience. The members were also asked, whether they agreed with the information provided and the estimates generated. Members were also asked to share their observations over the last two or more years and how that may help inform on the research results being presented. Furthermore, all HTOs were asked if they would be interested in seeing and potentially participating in an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) Study of caribou to further incorporate IQ along side science into the wildlife management process.

2.1 Format of Meetings

The meetings were held in the evening except in Chesterfield where the HTO requested a morning meeting. All meetings ran between 2-3 hours depending on HTO engagement. Meetings were facilitated by the HTO managers and Keenan Lindell and generally took place at the HTO office, with the exception of Rankin Inlet where it was held at the NTI office. After introductions and an opening prayer, a power point presentation was led by Mitch Campbell then translated into Inuktitut by one of the HTO members or Keenan Lindell. The presentations ran about an hour to 1.5 hours focusing on the Qamanirjuaq and Beverly Caribou and Kivalliq Musk Ox. The participants were invited to ask questions, raise concerns, or provide alternative recommendations throughout the meetings while Keenan Lindell was typing notes and capturing all questions and answers. The GN members asked if the information was understandable and if anything needed more explanation. Rob Harmer was there to answer any questions regarding conservation and enforcement issues which were frequent. After the presentation, questions/discussion continued until no further questions were raised by the HTO members. The GN staff asked questions, regarding the members' general impression of the wellbeing of the ungulate herds, and if there is any other information we may find interesting.

3.0 Summary by Community

There were many similar questions, concerns and suggestions raised by HTO Board members in all the communities throughout the tour. Of note were a general Kivalliq wide concerns over the commercial sales of caribou meat to Baffin Island communities, concerns over the impact of roads, and concerns regarding the appearance of "different caribou" onto their traditional hunting areas, which raised questions as to whether another herd had mixed in with the Qamanirjuaq Caribou Herd.

3.1 Whale Cove Meeting Summary

Date: January 20, 2018

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Ungulate Biologist: Mitch Campbell
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Conservation Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Wildlife Technician: Keenan Lindell
- Whalecove HTO Board members
 - Chair: Simon Enuapik
 - Vice Chair: Gerald Maktar
 - Director: Roy Kriterdluk
 - Manager: Lisa Jones
 - Sec/Treasurer: Martha N. Arualak

Comments and questions:

The HTO members expressed their concerns about the selling of caribou meat to Baffin Island and want to know how much meat is being sent out. The use of commercial tags for selling Caribou meat was discussed and seemed that they agreed that it might be a good way to manage the commercial sales. The number of Caribou around Whale Cove seemed to be low this last year, many believe it was due to late rain in November which created a lot of ice, which may have been too thick for the caribou to break free and eat the lichen. An HTO Member expressed that since the exploration camp opened the caribou aren't coming as close to town, possibly because of all the helicopter activity. There were also concerns that the number of large bulls seems to be in decline. An HTO member was stated as saying "...Caribou that look different, like that they are from a different herd, Maybe Beverly?". Other HTO members agreed with his statement that it looks like another herd may be mixing in with the Qamanirjuaq Herd. All agreed that there should be an IQ study on Caribou.

3.2 Rankin Inlet Meeting Summary

Meeting Dates: February 21, 2018

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Ungulate Biologist: Mitch Campbell
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Conservation Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Wildlife Technician: Keenan Lindell
- NTI, Raymond Mercer
- Sinaani (Rankin HTO) Consultant, Ezra Greene
- Rankin Inlet HTO Board members
 - Chair Person, Brian Sigurdson
 - Vice Chair, Israel Aliyak
 - Manager, Clayton Tartak
 - Sec/Treasurer, Peter Taipana
 - Jerome Tattuinee
 - George Hapanak

Comments and questions:

The main concerns for the Rankin Inlet HTO Members were about the road effects on the caribou. Some would like to have a study done on the effects of the Meladine mine road to the Qamanirjuaq herd. Members spoke about the negative effects of the Rankin Inlet road out of town when the caribou are crossing, and how they make a public service announcement asking people not to use the road until the caribou pass. Commercial sales were also a concern and wanting to find a way to manage the sales was a priority, commercial tags were discussed and many were in favor of using that approach to control the sales. Some members said that they have seen some different looking caribou mixed into the Qamanirjuaq herd, with shorter legs. All agreed that an IQ Study on Caribou would be beneficial.

3.3 Chester Field Inlet Meeting Summary

Date: February 23, 2018

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Ungulate Biologist: Mitch Campbell
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Conservation Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Wildlife Technician: Keenan Lindell
- Chesterfield Inlet HTO Board members
 - Janice Aggark
 - Carey Aggark
 - Leonie Memealik
 - Gloria Thompson
 - Valerie Ipkarnerk
 - Mathew Arnauyak

Comments and questions:

HTO Members have been seeing Musk Ox closer to town and more often in the past 2 years and agree with the presentation that shows that the musk ox range is moving east towards the Hudson Bay Coast. The community and elders are wanting the calving grounds to be protected; they are concerned for the caribou if development were to happen around the calving ground. They believe that there should be a harmonious way to have both mining jobs and protect the caribou. All the members were in favor of having an IQ study done on caribou as long as elders are involved. The members agreed that different caribou have been seen mixing with the Qamanirjuaq herd.

3.4 Baker Lake Meeting Summary

Date: February 23, 2018

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Ungulate Biologist: Mitch Campbell
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Conservation Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Wildlife Technician: Keenan Lindell
- Baker Lake HTO Board members
 - Richard Aksawnee
 - Hugh Nateelak
 - James Taipanak
 - James Kalluk
 - Solomon Mariq

- Harold Putumiraqtuq

Comments and questions:

Regarding the Musk Ox, the members agreed with the information in the presentation and asked if we have seen many calves. The GN representatives replied that the number of calves is stable except in the western and southern extents of the Kivalliq region where the predators are numerous. Most concerns were regarding the Beverly Caribou herd, since Baker Lake hunters don't really hunt from the Qamanirjuaq herd. The members expressed concerns that they have not heard details about the Beverly herd in a long time so they are happy to hear of the upcoming Beverly Caribou survey in June of 2018. In addition, they expressed that they believe there is mixing between the Beverly, Ahlak, and Qamanirjuaq herds. Members expressed interest in helping out in the Beverly Caribou Survey and stated "...Beverly herd is our main herd we hunt from." Certain members believe climate change is affecting caribou negatively and would like to see some research on this. All board members felt strongly that locals should be trained to monitor wildlife in and around their communities, which would give employment as well as collect very important information on the wildlife which would be beneficial to the GN, other researchers and of course local hunters. There was concern expressed that if the huckleberry claim gets approved, than a mine such as Areva can re-apply for licences to mine near calving grounds, which they do not wish to see. Support for the IQ Study on caribou was supported by all except the issue of intellectual rights was a concern. A member stated that Inuit want the intellectual rights of information they gave shared with researcher, and this has not been the case in the past.

3.5 Arviat Meeting Summary

Date: February 26, 2018

Representatives:

- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Ungulate Biologist: Mitch Campbell
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Conservation Manager: Rob Harmer
- GN-DOE, Kivalliq Wildlife Technician: Keenan Lindell
- Arviat HTO Board members
 - Louis Angalik
 - Timothy
 - Ludovic Oonik
 - Gordy Kidlapik
 - Amanda Issaluk
 - Don Aqamak Oupiq
 - Angelina Suluk
 - Sam Muckpah

Comments and questions:

Members expressed concern about the impacts of roads on the caribou, both the Arviat road to Mongoose Lake and the Meadow Bank Road to Baker Lake. Members agreed they would meet about whether they would want an IQ study on caribou. Members also mentioned “different” caribou mixing with Qamanirjuaq caribou on their hunting ranges.

4.0 Summary

All HTO’s except Arviat, who stated they would get back to us, agreed that they are in favor of having an IQ study on Caribou done as long as Inuit lead the program. Commercial sales were a common concern with most HTOs and all agreed that commercial tags may help manage the online sales to Baffin Island. All HTOs accepted the data results shared on Caribou and Musk Ox and seemed to agree with the data and research findings. All HTOs were very thankful for the meetings, and all the GN representatives agreed that these meetings are crucial to both the GN and the communities. Most HTOs expressed that this data on the wildlife they rely so heavily on is very beneficial, as well as being able to ask questions and share their concerns. The GN Representatives all agree that these meetings are also very beneficial to the research program and to maintaining communication and trust the HTOs and local hunters in the Kivalliq.