



SUBMISSION TO THE NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR

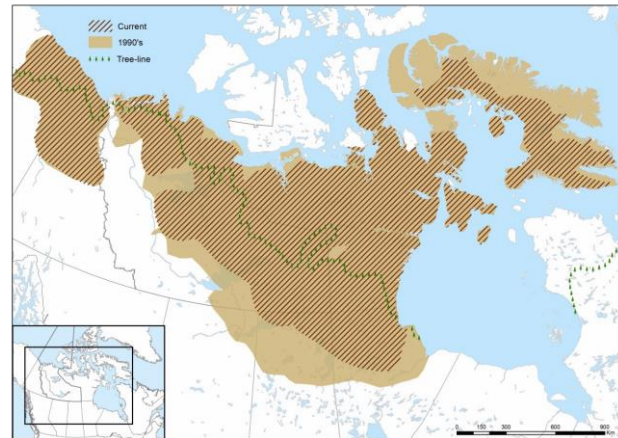
Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Update on consultations in Nunavut on the proposed listing of **Barren-Ground Caribou** as a threatened species under the federal *Species at Risk Act*



Barren-Ground Caribou



Current and historical range of Barren-Ground Caribou

Background

Designatable Unit

- COSEWIC divides caribou in Canada into 12 types or “Designatable Units” based on distribution, genetics, appearance, movements, and behavior and life history strategies.
- The range of Barren-ground caribou in Canada extends from the Yukon to Baffin Island, and south into Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- Barren-ground caribou includes 14-15 populations or herds including the following herds found in Nunavut: Bluenose-East, Bathurst, Beverly, Qamanirjuaq, Lorillard, Ahik, Boothia Peninsula, Wager Bay, Southampton Island, and Baffin Island herds.

Assessment & Threats:

- The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) assessed Barren-Ground Caribou as a threatened species in November 2016.
- A threatened species is likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.

- Most Barren-Ground Caribou herds have shown large declines since 1990, only 2 herds are increasing. Across Canada, Barren-ground caribou have declined from around 2 million individuals in the early 1990s to about 800,000 in 2016. The decline is estimated at 56% over three generations (between 1989 and 2016).
- Evidence from both local Indigenous people and scientific studies suggests that most herds have undergone natural fluctuations in numbers in the past; however, available data does not indicate any sign of rapid recovery at this time.
- Barren-ground caribou meets criteria for *Endangered* status because of a reduction in numbers of $\geq 50\%$, but the lower risk category of *Threatened* was recommended because, overall, this population does not appear to be facing imminent extinction at this time.
- Potential threats include:
 - Climate and weather changes affecting forage availability, predation, parasites and diseases.
 - Industrial exploration and development.
 - Fragmentation of habitat in winter range from forest fires and increasing human presence.
 - Contaminants
 - Subsistence and sport harvest can be significant causes of mortality.

Herds of the Nunavut Territory:

Herds	Bluenose -East	Bathurst	Beverly/ Ahiak ¹	Qamanirjuaq	Lorillard /Wager Bay	Boothia Penins.	Southa mpton Island ²	Baffin Island ³
Increase/ Decrease rate:	- 89%	-96%	Decline	-4%	NA	NA	+113%	-98%
Last Survey reported in COSEWIC report	38,592 (2015)	19,769 (2015)	195,529 (2011)	264,661 (2014)	41,000 (2002)	6,658 (1995)	12,297 (2015)	4,856 (2014)
Maximum observed in surveys	114,472 (2010)	472,000 (1986)	Bev (1995): 276,000 Ahiak (1996): 200,000	495,000 (1994)	41,000 (2002)	6,658 (1995)	30,381 (1997)	235,000 (1991)

1. Beverly and Ahiak herds were merged into one in 2011.

2. One of the only two herds that are increasing across Canada.

3. There is considerable uncertainty in the population estimates and resulting trend.

Implications of proposed listing:

- If Barren-Ground Caribou are listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act* a national recovery strategy will be written. The needs of each herd could be considered separately within the national recovery strategy.
- Critical habitat will be identified to the extent possible and CWS will work with partners to find the best method to protect it from activities that would destroy it. Critical habitat could be used to protect calving areas, migration routes or other important habitat for caribou.
- Prohibitions against killing or harming Barren-Ground caribou will automatically come into force in National Parks, Wildlife Bird Sanctuaries and Wildlife Management Areas. These prohibitions do not apply to Inuit harvest under the Nunavut agreement.
- Federal funding programs such as the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk (AFSAR) are available to provide support for projects that can help species that are listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

Consultations on the proposed listing:

- Consultation packages were sent by email and mail to 22 Nunavut communities within the range of the species in January 2018. The packages included: a letter, a factsheet, a PowerPoint presentation, and a questionnaire in English and Inuktitut.
- Follow-up phone calls were made to Hunter & Trapper Organizations between January and April 2018.
- In person consultations on the proposed listing were conducted starting in February 2018.

Meeting Location	Public Meeting	Separate HTO Board Meeting	Meeting Group	Staff from other organizations in attendance			Meeting Date
				NWMB	GN	Others	
Cambridge Bay	Y	Y	Ekaluktutiak HTO, Omingmaktok HTO, Burnside HTO	N	N	KRWB	February 26, 2018
Kugluktuk	N	Y	Kugluktuk HTO	N	Y	KRWB	Feb 27, 2018
Gjoa Haven	N	Y	Gjoa Haven HTO	N	N		March 1, 2018
Kugaaruk	N	Y	Kurairojuark HTO	N	N		March 2, 2018
Rankin Inlet	N	Y	Kangiqliniq HTO	N	N	NTI	March 5, 2018
Arviat	N	Y	Arviat HTO	N	Y		March 7, 2018
Whale Cove	N	Y	Issatik HTO	N	N		March 6, 2018
Taloyoak			Spence Bay HTO				TBC
Baker Lake	N	Y	Baker Lake HTO	N	Y		March 8, 2018
Chesterfield Inlet	N	Y	Aqigiq HTO	N	Y		March 9, 2018
Qikiqtarjuaq	Y	Y	Nattivak HTO	Y	N		Oct. 23-24, 2018
Pangnirtung	Y	Y	Pangirtung HTO	N	N		Dec 3, 2018
Iqaluit	N	Y	Amaruq HTO	Y	N		Oct 22, 2018
Igloolik	Y	N	Igloolik HTO	N	Y		Sept 25, 2018
Hall Beach	Y	Y	Hall Beach HTO	N	N		Sept 26, 2018
Repulse Bay	Y	N	Arviq HTO	N	Y		Sept 27, 2018
Coral Harbour	Y	Y	Aiviit HTO	Y	N		Jan 22, 2019
Cape Dorset	Y	Y	Aiviq HTO	Y	N		Jan 23, 2019
Kimmirut	Y	Y	Mayukalik HTO	Y	N		Jan 24, 2019
Arctic Bay	Y	N	Arctic Bay HTO	Y	N		Oct 16, 2018
Pond Inlet	Y	N	Mattimatalik HTO	Y	Y		Oct 17, 2018
Clyde River	Y	Y	Nangmautauq HTO	Y	N		Oct 18, 2018

Highlights from meetings:

Many communities and HTOs expressed concerns about the lack of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in the status assessment, and they want more involvement in the COSEWIC assessment stage of the process. CWS has asked COSEWIC to include HTOs in reviews of draft status assessments, so that IQ and local knowledge can be included in the assessment instead of waiting for the listing stage of the process.

People are extremely worried about the possible impact that listing could have on harvest and food security. If Barren-ground caribou are listed it would not require any change to how harvest is regulated

for Inuit hunters in Nunavut. Harvest would continue to be regulated through the co-management process which already takes conservation into account. The only automatic prohibitions would be for non-indigenous people in National Parks, National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries. It is possible that in the future a protection order could be put in place that could impact Inuit harvest, this is known as the “federal safety net”. Any such order would require a separate consultation process.

People would have preferred that the Barren-ground caribou herds were not combined together in one assessment. Nevertheless, they would like to see locally developed assessments and plans for each herd. The Barren-ground caribou were grouped together in COSEWIC’s assessment because all these herds are similar in terms of their appearance, behaviour, and genetics. ECCC presents the original COSEWIC assessment during the consultations, however the different herds can be treated separately in the recovery strategy later on in the recovery planning process.

Some questioned whether the decline was a real cause for concern, suggesting that the caribou population will naturally cycle back up or that the caribou have moved to another area and will come back in the future. The COSEWIC assessment recognized the cyclical nature of the caribou populations, and it is possible that the caribou populations will recover naturally. However, caribou are facing many new threats so COSEWIC was uncertain that what happened in the past will happen again.

Most communities also mentioned the wolf population increasing as one of the important causes of the Caribou decline. Information on threats such as wolf predation can be used in the recovery strategy.

Detailed notes from community meetings can be found in the appendix. The following is a brief summary of the feedback received in each community.

Cambridge Bay [Bathurst and Beverly herds]:

- HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process. They also want to be involved in the drafting of the recovery strategy.
- They would appreciate a herd-by-herd assessment as they are in the opinion that their herd is doing fine.
- Increased predation: would like to see an incentive for hunters to harvest wolves.
- They are worried about their income (subsistence and income hunting).

Kugluktuk [Bluenose-East and Bathurst herds]:

- HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process.

- They would appreciate a herd-by-herd assessment, and worry about the flexibility in prohibitions and how it will be applied to local management.
- They noticed an increase in wolf and wolverine populations.

Gjoa Haven [Ahiak, Beverly and Boothia Peninsula Herd]:

- HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process.
- They are worried about the Caribou declining, the species is critical for their way of life and food security. They are interested in collaborating to help the species recover.
- They mentioned various reasons why they see less Caribou than before :
 - Increased predation (wolves, wolverines and grizzlies)
 - They are seeing a lot more Muskox than before
 - Climate Change: Caribou are vulnerable to migration on thin ice.
- They would like to improve youth education regarding hunting practices.

Kugaaruk [Ahiak, Boothia Peninsula, and Wager Bay herds]:

- HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process.
- They would appreciate a herd-by-herd assessment, they never heard of any studies done in their region.
- They are worried about harvest restrictions and food security.
- They mentioned various reasons why they see less Caribou than before :
 - Increased predation (wolves)
 - They are seeing a lot more Muskox than before
 - Mining (chemicals, plane/helicopters flying low)
 - Climate Change : They noticed a lot of rain on snow event making the foraging harder for the species.
 - Natural cycle of caribou population
 - Diseases

Rankin Inlet [Qamanirjuaq and Lorillard herds]:

- HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process. They would like to see an Inuit representative on COSEWIC committee.
- They would appreciate a herd-by-herd assessment, they never heard of any studies done in their region.
- Increased predation: They are seeing more wolves and grizzlies than before.
- They want to be involved in drafting the recovery strategy. Management plans already in place in some regions should be recognized.

- Some agreed to the listing of the barren-ground caribou.

Whale Cove [Qamanirjuaq and Lorillard herds]:

- HTO members expressed some worries about their harvest rights.
- They mentioned various reasons why they see less Caribou than before :
 - Increased predation (eagles, wolverines)
 - They are seeing a lot more Muskox than before
 - Natural cycle of caribou population
 - Diseases: They noticed swollen hooves (brucellosis)
 - Mining

Arviat [Qamanirjuaq herd]:

- HTO members would like to see a herd-by-herd assessment as they think their herd is stable.
- They mentioned various reasons why they see less Caribou than before :
 - Sport hunting happening south of Arviat
 - Migration routes have changed
 - Increased predation (wolves, grizzlies, wolverines)
 - Moose habitat range has recently extended to their region
 - Hunting ways have changed (bullet type, transportation)

Baker Lake [Ahiak, Lorillard, and Qamanirjuaq herds]:

- HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process. They would like to see an Inuit representative on COSEWIC committee.
- They are worried about their harvest rights and food security.
- They haven't seen the Qamanirjuaq herd for a long time, and mentioned potential causes of the caribou decline, i.e. changing migration routes, natural cycle of the caribou population, forest fires, and increased predation.
- They want to see the recovery strategy being elaborated cooperatively with all territories and provinces sharing the herds. Attention to the migration routes and its protection should be emphasized.

Chesterfield Inlet [Qamanirjuaq and Lorillard herds]:

- HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process.
- The caribou have other predators, like wolves, grizzlies and wolverines that are also responsible for their decrease.
- They are worried about their harvest rights.
- Some noticed the caribou have recently started to increase in the area.

Igloodik [Wager Bay and Baffin Island herds]:

- Community and HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process.
- They are worried about their harvest rights and food security; they see this proposed listing as an additional hardship done to their community and traditional way of life.
- Most of them believed the caribou population is going through a natural cycle and will eventually come back on its own. Some people mentioned the population numbers were not trustworthy.
- They want more responsibility in regards to managing their own herd, instead of having outsiders getting involved. They also didn't appreciate all the herds being merged together for the listing assessment.

Hall Beach [Wager Bay and Baffin Island herds]:

- Community and HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process.
- Most of them believed the caribou population is going through a natural cycle and will eventually come back on its own.
- The caribou have other predators, like wolves that are also responsible for their decrease.
- They are worried about their harvest rights and food security. Some of them thought animals should not be surveyed and didn't like outsiders coming to interfere with their wildlife management.

Naujaat [Wager Bay and Lorillard herds]:

- Community members wanted to see local management of the herd. They didn't like having their caribou lumped in with other herds across Canada as part of the assessment of Barren-ground caribou or in future recovery plans. Some of them mentioned the survey methodology was not trustworthy.
- Most of them believed the caribou population is going through a natural cycle and will eventually come back on its own.
- They are worried about their harvest rights being affected after the listing.

Arctic Bay [Baffin Island herd]:

- There were strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation in the assessment of the caribou and decision-making regarding the wildlife management. They would like to see more traditional knowledge involved throughout the process.

- Community members mentioned the cause of decline is most likely due to wolf predation and natural cycle of the caribou population. They strongly believe the caribou will come back on their own.
- Community members were also worried about their harvest right and food security.

Pond Inlet [Baffin Island herd]:

- Community and HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and decision-making. They would like to see more local management and are concerned about their harvest rights.
- There were some doubts regarding the numbers of caribou and the survey methodology.
- Most of them believed the caribou population is going through a natural cycle and will eventually come back on its own.
- One person asked for a further investigation on the actual causes of decline of the Baffin herd.

Clyde River [Baffin Island herd]:

- Community and HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and decision-making. They would like to see more local management and are concerned about their harvest rights.
- One member mentioned there was a generational conflict where the younger hunters want to try new wildlife management methods, but the elders disagree. The Inuit's profound respect for elders makes the younger generation hesitant to talk about it.
- Community members also mentioned potential causes of the caribou decline, i.e. the natural cycle of the caribou population, the predation by wolves, female-male ratio allowed for hunting, and the new technology (snowmobiles scare caribou away).

Iqaluit [Baffin Island herd]:

- Community and HTO members expressed strong concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment of Barren-ground caribou and the decision-making process.
- They would also like to be involved in the scientific research. The survey methodology is not clear to them, and they believe a herd-by-herd assessment would be much more relevant.
- They believe the caribou populations are going through natural cycle and will eventually come back up on their own.
- Many were worried about their harvest rights and would like to see investigation on other threats like predation, industry and impact of research.

Qikiqtarjuaq [Baffin Island herd]:

- HTO board members expressed their concerns about the harvest restrictions and mentioned they want to collaborate to see the caribou population increase again.
- HTO and community members mentioned the helicopters from mining companies were an important threat to the caribou (scaring them away).
- The wolf population is also an important threat to consider.
- Some of them strongly believed the caribou will come back on their own. They migrate long distance and undergo natural cycles of population density.

Coral Harbour:

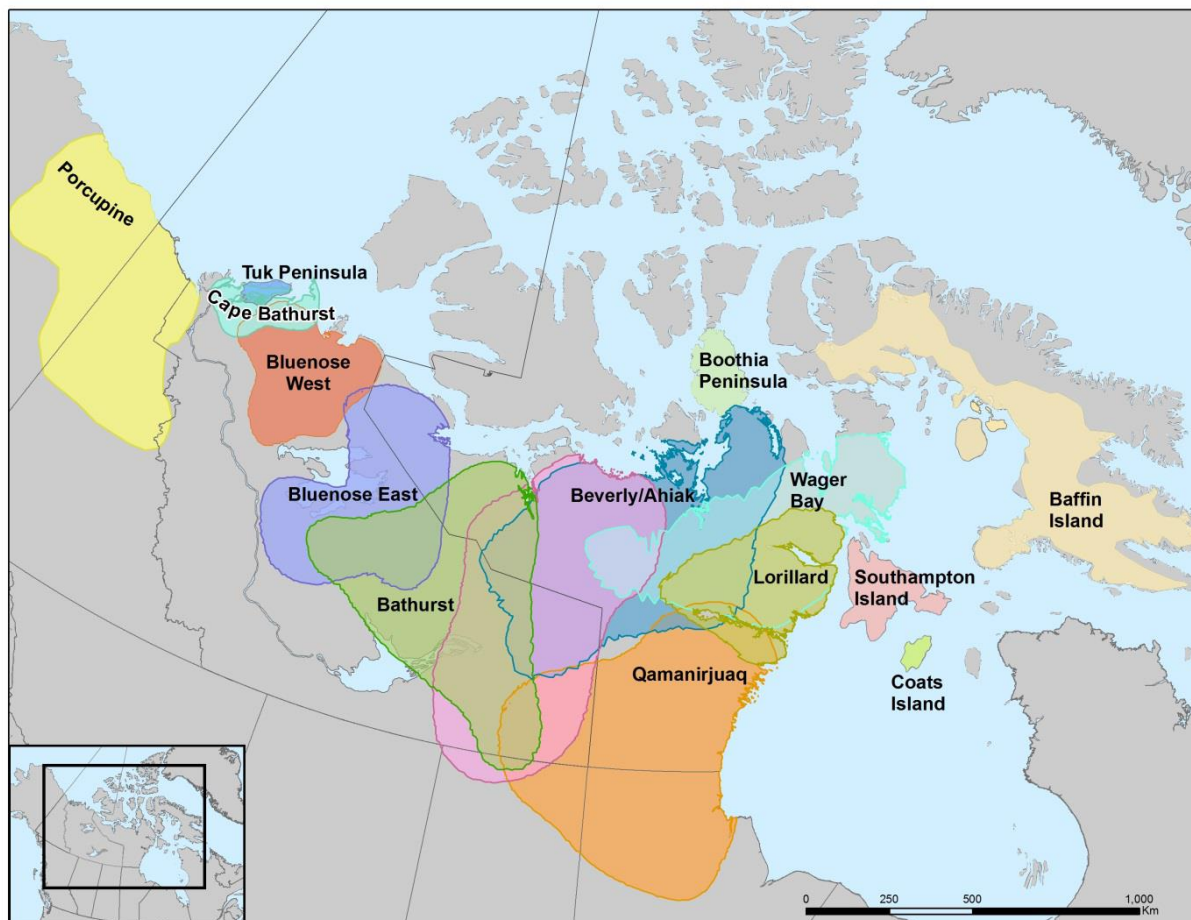
- Community members were concerned about the mining activity and identified industry as one of the main threats to caribou.
- Community members identified climate change as an on-going threat to caribou.
- Several community members believe caribou undergo natural cycles of population density. When populations are too abundant the numbers drop, but increase again when vegetation grows back.
- Community members expressed interest in knowing current local caribou numbers, particularly on Coats Island.
- The lag time between caribou surveys and results is too long. The community members would like to be informed of the health of the herds more quickly, so they can better manage their harvest.
- Community members expressed interest in knowing how caribou herds across Canada were doing, and how they were being managed.

Cape Dorset:

- Community members questioned the accuracy of the range of Barren-ground caribou herds shown on the maps
- Community members weren't sure that caribou populations will cycle up and down as they have in the past because of all the things that have changes
- Community members were concerned about the affect of the mines on caribou and want to find ways to protect the caribou from mining. Critical habitat is one way to protect habitat for caribou.
- Community members were concerned about predation from wolves, and suggested wolf control
- Community members were concerned about harassment of caribou by helicopters and airplanes
- Some community members though that caribou are not threatened, and have just moved to another area
- Community members were concerned that caribou are not surveyed often enough
- Community members spoke about the importance of using Inuit Qaujimajungit
- Community members were concerned about the possible impact that listing caribou might have on harvesting

Kimmirut:

- HTO members expressed strong concern regarding the listing of all Barren-ground caribou herds as one. They believe South Baffin and North Baffin populations should be considered separately.
- Several HTO and community members do not believe the South Baffin population is in decline.
- Several HTO and community members believe caribou undergo natural cycles of population density. When populations are too abundant the numbers drop, but increase again when vegetation grows back.
- Some community members do believe caribou populations on South Baffin Island are in decline, support the listing, and believe more survey efforts are required.
- Community members expressed concern related to methods used to survey caribou (e.g. helicopter use), and suggest using less intrusive methods.
- Community members identified parasites and wolves as threats, and expressed an interest in better understanding how parasites (e.g. ticks) have arrived and how they impact the caribou.
- HTO and community members expressed concern about their harvest rights and the lack of Inuit participation in the listing process.



This map shows the different herds that make up the Barren-ground caribou.