



**SUBMISSION TO THE
NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD
FOR**

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: Distribution and abundance of Peary caribou and muskox on central Ellesmere Island, March 2017

Background:

Surveys of Peary caribou on Ellesmere Island have been performed occasionally over the past 50 years. Due to the size of Ellesmere Island, the GN has divided it into three portions for survey purposes: southern, central, and northern. Beginning in 2015, the GN intended to conduct three consecutive surveys of these segments of the island (southern, central, and northern) that together would cover the entirety of Ellesmere Island. From March 19 – 26, 2015 the GN systematically surveyed the southern Ellesmere Island study area. Between March 8 and 20, 2017, the GN continued surveying Ellesmere Island, flying the central portion including Fosheim, Raanes, and Svendsen Peninsulas. Unfortunately, due to logistical and financial constraints the third portion, northern Ellesmere Island, is no longer planned to proceed. Here, we provide a summary of the survey results for central Ellesmere Island.

Across the survey region we observed 254 groups of muskoxen and 2,153 muskoxen in total. From these observations, we estimated that there were 5,134-9,278 muskoxen in the study area at the time of the survey. Muskoxen were most numerous on the central part of the Fosheim Peninsula. The previous survey of the area (in 2006) also included northern Ellesmere Island, and so direct comparisons are difficult, but the results of this survey do not give any cause for concern regarding muskox numbers on central Ellesmere Island.

Fourteen Peary caribou were seen on transect during the survey. The small number of caribou seen make it difficult to interpret population trends, but the survey data that exist suggest that Peary caribou persist at low densities on central Ellesmere Island.

A full discussion of the survey and its results can be found in the report *Distribution and abundance of Peary caribou (Rangifer tarandus pearyi) and muskox (Ovibos moschatus) on central Ellesmere Island, March 2017*.

Current Status:

There is currently no Total Allowable Harvest for Peary caribou or muskox on Ellesmere Island (muskox management unit MX-01, proposed Peary caribou

management unit PC-01). Based on the results of this survey no management actions are recommended. Although we saw very few Peary caribou, the area surveyed is not within typical harvesting areas of Grise Fiord and Peary caribou abundance on central Ellesmere Island is not limited by harvest activities.

Consultations:

Survey results were discussed in person with the Iviq HTO (Grise Fiord) on September 18, 2017 and with the Resolute Bay HTA on September 20, 2017.

Recommendations:

N/A