



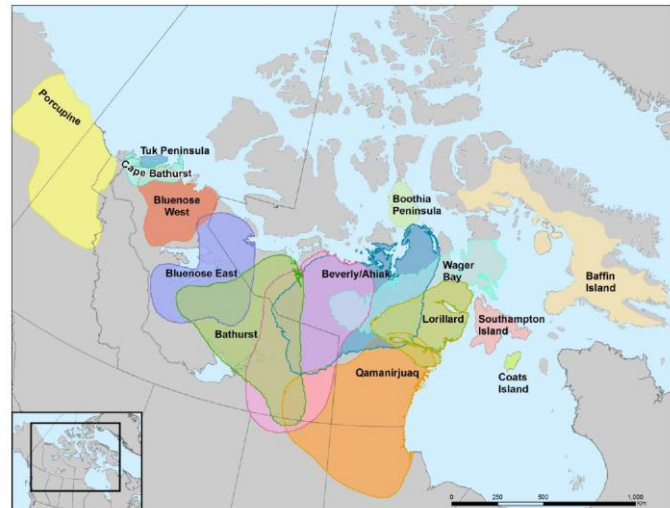
## Submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

For

Information: X

Decision:

**Issue:** Update on the consultations in Nunavut on the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA)



### Background:

#### Distribution

- The range of Barren-ground caribou in Canada extends from the Yukon to Baffin Island, and south into Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- In Nunavut, the range includes the Bluenose-East, Bathurst, Beverly, Ahiak, Qamanirjuaq, Lorillard, Boothia Peninsula, Wager Bay, Southampton Island, Coats Island, and Baffin Island herds.

#### Assessment and Threats

- The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) assessed Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened in November 2016. A threatened species is likely to become endangered unless threats are addressed.
- Most Barren-ground Caribou herds have shown large declines since 1990. 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). Abundance surveys that have occurred since the

COSEWIC assessment have shown further declines in some populations, including the Bluenose-East, Bathurst, and Beverly herds.

- Herds are more vulnerable and sensitive to threats when their populations are low.
- Inuit knowledge says that caribou cycle through population highs and lows. New threats, such as development and climate change, may make it more difficult for populations to cycle back to peak levels and there are no indications that populations are making rapid recoveries 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 their winter range from forest fires and increasing human presence.
  - Increased human population and an increased demand for caribou meat.

#### Implications of the proposed listing

- If Barren-ground Caribou is listed on SARA, a national recovery strategy will be written. This will include a plan detailing how to keep the herds healthy and available for future generations.
- Important caribou habitat will be identified and CWS will work with partners in Nunavut to identify the best ways of protecting it from activities that would harm it. For example, important habitat such as calving grounds and migrations routes could be protected.
- Upon listing, general prohibitions would apply to non-Inuit; they would be prohibited from harvesting caribou in National Parks, National Wildlife Areas, and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.
- Harvest decisions for Inuit-harvest will continue to follow the Nunavut Agreement decision-making process, thus, a SARA listing does not directly affect Inuit-harvest.
- The profile of caribou would be raised and communities would have more resources available to them to support caribou conservation (e.g. funding for monitoring and the development of herd-specific management plans).

#### Consultations on the proposed listing

- In December 2017, CWS presented a consultation plan to the NWMB, outlining our intentions for consultations in Nunavut. Although the initial plan was lacking details, we ultimately did conduct face-to-face meetings in each of the communities within the Barren-ground Caribou range.
- 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 were conducted between February 2018 and February 2019 in all 22 communities within the Barren-ground Caribou range.

- Throughout the consultations, it became clear that many communities had similar concerns about the proposed listing (see Appendix A for a summary of the feedback received).
- To accommodate the concerns shared by several communities and to ensure their questions were addressed, we decided to conduct further consultations in Nunavut.
- CWS worked closely with the GN and NTI to develop a plan to consult with the regional wildlife boards at their fall 2019 annual general meetings (AGM). The overlap of the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board (KRWB) AGM with the 2019 federal election meant our plans were put on hold and we were not able to meet with the KRWB.
- Since then, CWS has been working with GN biologists in each region to determine the best strategy for additional consultations.
- In October and November 2019, respectively, we presented at the Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB) and Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) AGMs with new material aimed at addressing outstanding concerns and clarifying common misconceptions about the proposed listing. Following each presentation, we had open discussions during which board members and attendees asked questions, voiced opinions, and shared knowledge about caribou in their area. A summary of the feedback received at these meetings is included in Appendix A.
- Upon advice from the GN's Kivalliq biologist, and the fact that the Kivalliq represents a substantial portion of the Barren-ground Caribou range (7 of the total 11 herds in Nunavut), we decided that further in-person consultations in this region might be warranted. The GN gave us the opportunity to coordinate with their annual regional tour which would streamline and support our efforts and reduce the consultation burden to HTOs and communities. We presented this idea at the KWB AGM and received no objections from board members or attendees.
- As the Baffin herd is shared by 10 communities, the most efficient and effective way to address concerns for this region was to consult at the regional level at the QWB AGM. Following the presentation and subsequent discussion, we asked members if they required any follow-up consultations in their communities. We did not receive any such requests or indications of interest. As a result, we consider consultations with the Baffin region to be complete at this time.
- As we were not able to attend the KRWB AGM in the fall, we will be looking for other ways to engage with the Kitikmeot community HTOs.
- We have made multiple efforts to consult with the Regional Inuit Associations, starting in January 2018 when they were sent the initial consultation package. In December 2019, we received confirmation that the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) had received and reviewed the information. They noted that they had limited capacity to address the proposed listing and did not request any further engagement from us.
- Discussions have occurred with the Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) and an in-person meeting will take place in February 2020.
- We are still waiting to hear back from Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KitIA) on whether they require further engagement.

### Upcoming consultations

- In February 2020, in conjunction with the GN regional biologist's community tour, we plan to travel to each of the seven Kivalliq communities to conduct further in-person consultations on the proposed listing. Representatives from the GN and NTI will be in attendance of each of these meetings.
- We will have an in-person meeting with the KIA in Rankin Inlet in February 2020.
- In April 2020, we will meet with the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (a board made up of members from the Kivalliq, NWT, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, as well as NWMB) for further consultations.
- Spring 2020 (TBD) consultations in the Kitikmeot region, as required.

### Next Steps:

- Complete further consultations in the Kivalliq (February 2020) and Kitikmeot (spring 2020, TBD), as required.
- Request decision from the NWMB on the proposed listing (TBD, possibly June 2020).