



Submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

For

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Request for decision on the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.



Background:

Distribution

- The range of Barren-ground Caribou in Canada extends from the Yukon to Baffin Island, and south into northern Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- In Nunavut, Barren-ground Caribou are found across the Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Qikiqtaaluk regions.
- There are 11 herds in Nunavut: 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 assessed Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened in November 2016 because of steep population declines. According to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada criteria, the known decline in seven subpopulations is 56.8% over the last three generation (around 2 million individuals in the early 1990s to about 800,000 in 2016).

- Barren-ground Caribou could have been assessed as Endangered due to this reduction (greater than or equal to 50%). However, the assessment was downgraded to Threatened due to existing co-management efforts by governments, wildlife management boards and communities, and because Barren-ground Caribou do not appear to be facing imminent extinction at this time. A Threatened species is likely to become Endangered unless threats are addressed.
- Abundance surveys that have occurred since the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada 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 indicates 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 are listed as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, a national recovery strategy will be required, which will include a plan detailing how to keep all the herds healthy and available for future generations.
- The recovery strategy will be prepared in cooperation with all management partners (i.e. wildlife management boards, Indigenous governments and organizations, territorial and relevant provincial governments).
- Within the recovery strategy, conservation strategies may be identified and described down to the herd level.
- Critical habitat necessary for the survival or recovery of the species (e.g. calving areas) will need to be identified as a component of the recovery strategy. Environment and Climate Change Canada will work with all management partners to identify critical habitat and discuss methods for protecting it from activities likely to destroy it.
- If listed, prohibitions against killing or harming Barren-ground Caribou will automatically come into force in National Parks, National Wildlife Areas, and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries. These prohibitions do not apply to Inuit harvest.

- The *Species at Risk Act*'s prohibitions do not apply to Inuit exercising harvesting rights under the *Nunavut Agreement*; if Barren-ground Caribou were listed under the *Species at Risk Act*, harvest management decisions would still be made according to the processes established by Article 5 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, and existing wildlife management bodies and processes would remain in place. The current roles and responsibilities of Hunters and Trappers Organizations, Regional Wildlife Organizations, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and the Government of Nunavut in caribou management within Nunavut would not change.
- The profile of caribou would be raised and communities would have more resources available to them to support caribou conservation activities (e.g. monitoring programs, Inuit knowledge collection, herd-specific management plans) through federal funding programs such as the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk.

Consultation:

Pre-consultation

- In March 2017, Environment and Climate Change Canada briefed the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board on the upcoming assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada of Barren-ground Caribou.
- In November 2017, Environment and Climate Change Canada submitted a Terrestrial Issues Flagging document to the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board for input on developing a consultation plan. Environment and Climate Change Canada presented a consultation plan to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board in December 2017 to ask for the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's recommendations on the consultation approach.
- It was decided that Environment and Climate Change Canada would consult with all but three Nunavut communities (Grise Fiord, Resolute, Sanikiluaq).

Meetings and Materials

- The purpose of the consultations was to 1) explain the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada assessment, the *Species at Risk Act* -listing process, and the implications of listing, 2) gather comments and formal positions, 3) address questions and concerns raised.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada worked collaboratively with partner organizations in Nunavut, and staff were invited to attend Environment and Climate Change Canada's consultation meetings and attended when feasible.
- The consultation teams typically consisted of an Environment and Climate Change Canada biologist, one or more Environment and Climate Change Canada staff to manage administration, logistics and recordings, an interpreter, and occasionally, when available, representatives from the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Regional Wildlife Organizations, the Regional Inuit Associations and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.

- During each consultation meeting, Environment and Climate Change Canada staff had open discussions during which board members and attendees asked questions, voiced opinions, and shared knowledge about caribou in their area.
- Hunters and Trappers Organizations and the public were asked to provide comments, other information and a formal position on the *Species at Risk Act* -listing proposal (i.e. support, do not support, or are indifferent).

Round 1 (January 2018-February 2019)

- Consultation packages were sent by email and mail to 22 Nunavut communities and partners 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.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada held the first round of consultation meetings from February 2018 to February 2019 in the Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq and Kitikmeot regions.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada consulted with the Hunters and Trappers Organizations, as the local authority for wildlife management in each community, and when requested public meetings were also held.
- Key presentation points included: 1) the assessment of Barren-ground Caribou was conducted by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, not by the government, using best available information, 2) no decision has been made yet, 3) consultation is required with the Government of Nunavut, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Hunters and Trappers Organizations and other organizations before any decision is made (Inuit input is critical), 4) the purpose of the consultations (explained the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada assessment, the *Species at Risk Act* -listing process, the implications of listing, gathered comments, and formal positions, addressed questions and concerns), 5) the *Nunavut Agreement* takes precedence over the *Species at Risk Act*, if Barren-ground Caribou were listed under the *Species at Risk Act*, harvest management decisions would still be made according to the processes established by Article 5 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, 6) if Barren-ground Caribou were listed, a recovery strategy would be developed and critical habitat identified.



This map shows the Nunavut communities that were consulted and the Barren-ground Caribou range

Round 2 (March 2019-May 2021)

- In March 2019, Environment and Climate Change Canada presented to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board on the consultations. The consultation package, meeting notes and meeting summaries were all included. To accommodate concerns shared by several communities and to ensure their questions were addressed, it was decided that Environment and Climate Change Canada would conduct further consultations in Nunavut.

- Environment and Climate Change Canada worked closely with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Nunavut to modify the consultation approach and review presentation materials. The result of this was presentation materials were adapted to provide additional information and emphasis put into addressing outstanding concerns and clarifying misconceptions about the proposed *Species At Risk Act*-listing.
- Presentations now also included: 1) summaries of previous consultation feedback, 2) Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada's assessment process and the *Species at Risk Act*-listing processes, 3) the role of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit involvement, 3) Inuit harvesting rights and wildlife management processes under the *Nunavut Agreement*, 4) the potential benefits to listing, 5) local herd information, and 6) the addition of a Government of Nunavut biologist at all meetings to provide additional information on local herds.
- Through a discussion with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Nunavut, it was decided that Environment and Climate Change Canada would consult with the regional wildlife boards at their fall 2019 annual general meetings.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada met with the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board at their Annual General Meeting in the fall of 2019 and there was no request for additional meetings in the region.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada attended the Kivalliq Wildlife Board Annual General Meeting in the fall of 2019. At the meeting, it was determined that additional meetings would be necessary with Kivalliq Hunters and Trappers Organizations. Environment And Climate Change Canada had a second round of meetings with Hunters and Trappers Organizations in the Kivalliq region in February 2020.
- Due to the federal election, in the fall of 2019, Environment and Climate Change Canada was unable to attend the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board annual general meeting and as a result, reached out to Hunters and Trappers Organizations individually. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, Environment and Climate Change Canada was unable to have in-person meetings in May 2020 as was planned, but was able to have the second round of meetings virtually, with all but one of the Kitikmeot region Hunters and Trappers Organizations and with the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board, from January 2021 to June 2021.
- Consultation meetings with additional organizations (i.e. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Kivalliq Inuit Association and the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board) were also held between 2018 and 2021.

Post-consultation

- After each meeting, Environment and Climate Change Canada prepared meeting summaries, and Hunters and Trappers Organizations were provided an opportunity to review and validate the summaries before they were finalized.

- Environment and Climate Change Canada followed up with Hunters and Trappers Organization's and other organizations to request their official position either by email or through the provided questionnaire.



Table 1: Summary of consultation meetings on the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou held in each community between 2018 and 2021.

Region	Community	Meeting Group	1st Round of Meetings			2nd Round of Meetings		
			Public meeting	Hunters And Trappers Organization meeting	Number of attendees from community	Public meeting	Hunters And Trappers Organization meeting	Number of attendees from community
Qikiqtaaluk	Pangnirtung	Pangirtung Hunters and Trappers Association	Y	Y	Unknown ²	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Qikiqtarjuaq	Qikiqtarjuaq Hunters and Trappers Association	Y	Y	24	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Clyde River	Clyde River Hunters and Trappers Organization	Y	Y	23	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Mattimatalik (Pond Inlet)	Pond Inlet Hunters and Trappers Organization	Y	Y	11	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Ikajutit (Arctic Bay)	Arctic Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization	Y	Y	23	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Aiviq (Cape Dorset)	Cape Dorset Hunters and	Y	Y	34	N	N	N/A

		Trappers Organization						
Qikiqtaaluk	Hall Beach	Hall Beach Hunters and Trappers Association	Y	Y	24	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Iglolik	Iglolik Hunters and Trappers Organization	Y	Y	52	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Iqaluit	Iqaluit Hunters and Trappers Association	N	Y	7	N	N	N/A
Qikiqtaaluk	Kimmirut	Kimmirut Hunters and Trappers Organization	Y	Y	50	N	N	N/A
Kitikmeot	Kugluktuk	Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Association	N	Y	9	N	Y ¹	8
Kitikmeot	Cambridge Bay (Ekaluktutiak) Bathurst Inlet (Qinqaut) Bay Chimo (Omingmaktok)	Ekaluktutiak Hunters and Trappers Association Burnside Hunters and Trappers Association Omingmaktok Hunters and	Y	Y	29	N	Y ^{1,3}	10

		Trappers Association						
Kitikmeot	Taloyoak (Spence Bay)	Spence Bay Hunters and Trappers Association	Y	Y	58	N	Y ^{1,3}	10
Kitikmeot	Kugaaruk (Qutairuruaq)	Qutairuruaq Hunters and Trappers Association	N	Y	8	N	Y ^{1,3}	7
Kitikmeot	Gjoa Haven (Usqsuqtuuq)	Gjoa Haven Hunters and Trappers Association	N	Y	7	N	N	N/A
Kivalliq	Rankin Inlet (Kangiqtinig)	Aqiggiag Hunters and Trappers Organization	N	Y	4	N	Y	5
Kivalliq	Arviat	Arviat Hunters and Trappers Organization	N	Y	6	N	Y	Unknown ²
Kivalliq	Whale Cove (Issatik)	Issatik Hunters and Trappers Organization	N	Y	3	N	Y	6
Kivalliq	Coral Harbour (Aiviit)	Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization	Y	Y	28	N	Y	10

Kivalliq	Naujaat (Arviq)	Arviq Hunters and Trappers Organization	Y	Y	24	N	Y	10
Kivalliq	Chesterfield Inlet (Aqigiq)	Aqigiq Hunters and Trappers Organization	N	Y	5	N	Y	13
Kivalliq	Baker Lake	Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization	N	Y	7	N	Y	9

¹Meeting held virtually.

²Presentation delivered by the Government of Nunavut staff, Environment and Climate Change Canada attendance by phone.

³Joint virtual meeting (multiple Hunters and Trappers Organization's in attendance)



Table 2: Summary of meetings on the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou held with each organization between 2018 and 2021. The Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated were met with on multiple occasions throughout the entire process.

Organization	1st Meeting	2nd Meeting
	Date	Date
Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board	November 17 th 2019	N/A
Kivalliq Wildlife Board	October 23 th 2019	N/A
Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board	March 23 th 2021	N/A
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board	March 2019*	March 2020
Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board	May 9 th 2018	April/May 2019
Kivalliq Inuit Association	February 7 th 2020	N/A

*ECCC first met with NWMB in 2017

Results and responses:

- Environment and Climate Change Canada received four written responses from organizations/boards:
 - Qikiqtani Inuit Association - does not want to be engaged in the proposed listing;
 - Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board - supports the proposed listing;
 - Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board – does not support the proposed listing, and;
 - Government of Nunavut - does not support the proposed listing.
- The written responses received from the Hunters and Trappers Organization boards in response to the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou are as follows:

Table 3: Summary of written responses received from the HTO boards in response to the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou.

Region	Hunters And Trappers Organization	Position
Qikiqtaaluk	Pangnirtung	No Response
Qikiqtaaluk	Qikiqtarjuaq	No Response
Qikiqtaaluk	Clyde River	Indifferent
Qikiqtaaluk	Pond Inlet	No Response
Qikiqtaaluk	Arctic Bay	No Response
Qikiqtaaluk	Cape Dorset	Indifferent
Qikiqtaaluk	Hall Beach	No Response
Qikiqtaaluk	Igloolik	No Response

Qikiqtaaluk	Iqaluit	Do not support
Qikiqtaaluk	Kimmirut	Do not support
Kitikmeot	Kugluktuk	No response
Kitikmeot	Ekaluktutiak	No response
Kitikmeot	Burnside	No response
Kitikmeot	Omingmaktok	No response
Kitikmeot	Spence Bay	Does not support
Kitikmeot	Qutairuruaq	Does not support
Kitikmeot	Gjoa Haven	No response
Kivalliq	Aqiggiag	No response
Kivalliq	Arviat	No response
Kivalliq	Issatik	Does not support*
Kivalliq	Aiviit	Does not support
Kivalliq	Arviq	Does not support
Kivalliq	Aqigiq	No response
Kivalliq	Baker Lake	Does not support**

* Disagrees with Threatened assessment, believes it should be Special Concern.

** Verbal response given

- Written responses received from members of the public in response to the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou included nine “Do not support” responses, one “Support” response, and one “Indifferent” response.
- Core comments and concerns (shared by at least 50% of the communities and shared in all regions, though there is regional variability in the prevalence of input) were as follows:

Table 4: Summary of core input (concern, knowledge, comment etc.) received during consultation meeting. Core input was shared by at least 50% of communities and was shared in all regions (Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq, and Kitikmeot).

Input (Topics, concerns and comments)	All Communities	Qikiqtaaluk	Kitikmeot	Kivalliq
Caribou distribution is always changing, they use different areas/are found in different places	86%	80%	100%	86%
Predation is the main threat or cause of decline; increase in predator population a threat	77%	70%	100%	71%
Concerns about the lack of Inuit participation and traditional knowledge in the assessment process.	64%	80%	100%	14%
Caribou populations undergo natural fluctuations	64%	90%	40%	43%
Concerned over the way the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada	59%	60%	40%	71%

established the Barren-ground Caribou designatable unit, want individual herd assessments				
Caribou are not declining/not at risk or threatened	59%	60%	60%	57%

Accommodations

During its consultations in Nunavut on the proposed *Species At Risk Act*-listing of Barren-ground Caribou (2018-2021), Environment and Climate Change Canada responded to the concerns, feedback, and requests raised by Inuit communities and organizations, in a number of ways that are highlighted below.

Having additional meetings

- During the first round of consultations, a number of questions and concerns arose by communities and Hunters and Trappers Organizations. To accommodate those concerns and to ensure that questions were adequately addressed, it was decided that Environment and Climate Change Canada would conduct further consultations in Nunavut.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada worked with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Nunavut and developed a plan to consult with regional wildlife boards at their fall 2019 annual general meetings and to determine how to adapt the presentation materials to address concerns and misconceptions.
- This resulted in Environment and Climate Change Canada meeting with the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board and the Kivalliq Wildlife Boards in the fall of 2019 and having an additional round of meetings in the Kivalliq (2020) and the Kitikmeot (2021) including a meeting with the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board (2021).
- This meant additional, meaningful consultations, and the ability to answer any outstanding questions and concerns.

Providing Detailed Responses to Questions

- Through the consultation process, three organizations (Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board and the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board) posed detailed questions about the listing process and the implications of listing Barren-ground as Threatened.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada provided detailed answers to all of the questions posed and in the case of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board there was significant and substantive communications to clarify and address questions.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada also had open, in-depth discussions during each consultation meeting where attendees asked questions, voiced opinions and shared knowledge.

- This led to the Hunters and Trappers Organizations, community members, organizations and Environment and Climate Change Canada becoming more informed and led to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board, Hunters and Trappers Organizations and community members being able to determine their position on the listing.

Adapting Presentations

- During our first round of consultations it became clear that Environment and Climate Change Canada's presentation materials needed improvement to anticipate and address key questions and concerns raised by Hunters and Trappers Organizations and communities.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada worked closely with the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to create a new presentation that included additional information and emphasis regarding summaries of previous consultation feedback; the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada's assessment process and the *Species At Risk Act*-listing processes; the role of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit involvement; Inuit harvesting rights and wildlife management processes under the *Nunavut Agreement*; the potential benefits of listing Barren-ground Caribou under the *Species At Risk Act*; and local herd information.
- This meant a more focused and individualized presentation for each community and led to a more meaningful discussion of the *Species At Risk Act*-listing proposal.

Inviting Experts

- During our first round of consultations, Hunters and Trappers Organizations and communities were interested in hearing herd-related information beyond Environment and Climate Change Canada's mandate and that Environment and Climate Change Canada staff were unable to answer. This led to the Government of Nunavut regional biologists being invited to attend Environment and Climate Change Canada's meetings to provide information related to local herds, survey data and methodology.
- This accommodated the requests for herd specific information that Environment and Climate Change Canada received and led to a more meaningful discussion in which Hunters and Trappers Organization members could discuss a more complete picture of caribou management, beyond just Environment and Climate Change Canada's mandate for the *Species at Risk Act*.

Collaboration with Partners

- Throughout consultations, Environment and Climate Change Canada worked collaboratively with partner organizations in Nunavut and their staff (Government Of Nunavut, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated,

Regional Inuit Associations, Regional Wildlife Organizations and Parks Canada), and they were invited to attend Environment and Climate Change Canada's consultation meetings whenever possible.

- Environment and Climate Change Canada also developed a funding agreement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to facilitate internal dialogue amongst Inuit communities and organizations on caribou management and conservation.

Delayed Submission to Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

- The initial consultation period for the *Species At Risk Act*-listing proposal, ending October 2018, was extended significantly due to the need for additional consultation meetings in Nunavut.
- This extension allowed for more in-depth engagement with Hunters and Trappers Organizations and other partners to occur.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada also delayed their submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, to allow adequate time to address concerns and questions, and to allow partners to develop their views and positions.
- These delays allowed more time for Hunters and Trappers Organizations and other organizations to determine their position with their constituents.

Next Steps:

We are requesting a decision from the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board on the proposed listing of Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act* as per the *Nunavut Agreement* s.5.2.34(f) and 5.3.16-5.3.23.

Following the Board's decision, the Minister will make a recommendation to the Governor in Council that takes into account the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada's assessment, consultations with wildlife management boards authorized for that species by a lands claims agreement (including the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board), and the regulatory impact analysis statement. The final decision or final decision as varied, as arrived at through 5.3.16 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, must be respected in the Minister's recommendation to the Governor in Council.

As part of the federal regulatory process, a 30-day comment period follows the publication of the proposed decision in Canada Gazette, Part 1. The final step in the process is for the Governor in Council to make a final listing decision. If the Governor in Council decides to list a species, it is at this point that it becomes legally included on Schedule 1. The decision and the regulatory impact analysis statement will be published in the next edition of the Canada Gazette, Part II.

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