



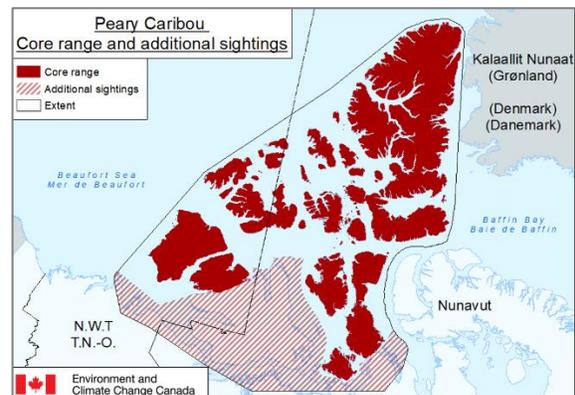
Submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

FOR

Information:

Decision: X

Issue: Request for approval of the proposed final *Recovery Strategy for the Peary Caribou (Rangifer tarandus pearyi) in Canada under the Species at Risk Act*



Background Information:

- The range of Peary Caribou spans two jurisdictions: Nunavut and Northwest Territories. In Nunavut, Peary Caribou are found in the Kitikmeot and Qikiqtaaluk regions.
- Peary Caribou is currently listed as Endangered (2011) under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. In 2015, the species was reassessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as Threatened. NWMB approved the designation of Peary caribou as Threatened under the Federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2018.
- As required under SARA for species listed as Threatened or Endangered, and to respect co-management processes legislated by the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* and the *Nunavut Agreement*, a national recovery strategy was developed in cooperation with all co-management partners.



Consultations:

- The development of the recovery strategy started in 2011 and involved: Hunters and trappers organizations (HTOs) in Nunavut and NWT, key community knowledge holders (elders, harvesters), wildlife boards (NWMB, Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board, Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board, WMAC-NWT and Inuvialuit Game Council), Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), governments of the NWT and Nunavut, and Parks Canada.
- **In total, ECCC had over 50 face-to-face meetings and teleconference calls with partners between 2011 and 2020.**
- Since 2011, partners participated to various teleconference calls and in-person meetings on a regular basis in order to (Appendix 1):
 - Identify and communicate with all user groups, and prepare the development of the Recovery Strategy (pre-consultation);
 - Gather all available information, identify data gaps, and develop an outline for the draft Recovery Strategy. All user groups worked collaboratively to ensure both western science and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)/Traditional Knowledge (TK) were captured and included in the draft Recovery Strategy outline;
 - Draft the Recovery Strategy;
 - To engage with the communities to have their support before sending it for Jurisdictional Reviews to other partners.
- A summary of the engagement effort is included in Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix 1. Appendix 2 includes presentations, meeting summaries and edits made to the recovery strategy between 2011 and 2020.
- Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, Indigenous Traditional and Local Knowledge have been gathered through various community meetings since 2011 (Appendix 1). Additional workshops were conducted in 2013 to gather traditional knowledge and Inuit Qaujisarvingat knowledge about threats, critical habitat and Peary Caribou health, abundance and distribution. HTOs and community knowledge holders (elders, harvesters) attended to those Community Technical Meetings. The development of the recovery strategy is based on input from communities engaged through several face-to-face meetings and teleconference calls between 2011 and 2020.
- The recovery strategy identifies the recovery goals and what actions needs to be done to stop or reverse the decline of the species. The goals, recovery actions

and the Population & Distribution Objectives were set by the HTOs and communities. The recovery strategy is summarized in Appendix 3.

- In the early draft document, critical habitat was identified on both the land and sea ice. During the two jurisdictional reviews in 2016 and 2017, some groups indicated that more knowledge was needed to support the land critical habitat component of the Recovery Strategy. Based on comments received during the first and second jurisdictional reviews, the land portion of the critical habitat was added to the Schedule of Studies to address this knowledge gap.
- All partners supported the identification of sea ice crossings as critical habitat.
- Following a third jurisdictional review (2019) on the identification of critical habitat, ECCC consulted all the HTOs/HTCs within the Peary Caribou range on the proposed approach. HTOs in Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay, Kugaaruk, Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven and Cambridge Bay were consulted in person between January and February 2020, as well as the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board and Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board. The biologist Conor Mallory with the Government of Nunavut, and the researcher Cheryl Johnson with the ECCC Science and Technology Branch participated to the consultations.
- All 10 HTCs/HTOs supported the identification of sea ice crossings as critical habitat. As sea ice can promptly reform after disturbance under specific conditions, it may be possible to break some sea ice within areas identified as critical habitat without destroying critical habitat, **if the sea ice critical habitat is available to Peary Caribou when needed**. Specific conditions and timing of when the sea ice needs to be protected versus when it can be disturbed with respect to caribou needs will be further defined in an agreement after collaboration with all partners, including knowledge holders, HTCs and HTOs.
- All 10 HTCs/HTOs also supported the addition of the identification of land critical habitat to the schedule of studies. All HTCs/HTOs wanted to be involved in implementing the schedule of studies.
- During the in-person consultations in 2020, a list of studies to identify critical habitat on the land was developed in collaboration with the HTOs. Based on the ideas shared during those meetings, a research proposal was developed to 1- document Inuit/Inuvialuit Knowledge on the impacts of climate change on the interactions between Peary caribou, muskoxen and their predators; and 2- examine how climate change affects snow and vegetation, and how those changes affect Peary Caribou. This holistic approach will examine factors driving Peary caribou populations and identify important habitat on the land. Results

from this research project will inform the identification of land critical habitat (Appendix 4 – Research summary).

- In September 2020, the proposal was approved. Just under 2 million dollars is secured to fund the proposed work over the next 5 years. A substantial portion of the money is meant to go back into the communities to support the co-development of the research;
 - GNWT, PCA, WMAC-NWT, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), ECCC, provided cash and in-kind contributions towards the funding of this project.
- The proposed recovery strategy was posted on the federal Species at Risk Public Registry for a 90-day public comment period between July 29 – October 27, 2021. An email including the link to the Proposed Recovery Strategy was sent to all co-management partners, including the HTOs, to notify them about the public consultations. Only minor edits were made to the recovery document.

Next Steps:

- ECCC is now prepared to post the recovery document on the Species at Risk Public Registry as final.
- ECCC is providing the recovery document to the NWMB for final approval decision as per the NLCA s. 5.2.34

Recommendation:

- That the NWMB considers whether or not they approve the proposed final *Recovery Strategy for the Peary Caribou (Rangifer tarandus pearyi) in Canada* under the federal Species at Risk Act as per the NLCA s. 5.2.34

Prepared by:

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