



Northwest
Territories Environment and Natural Resources

Mr. Larry Carpenter
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Dear Mr. Carpenter:

**Proposal to
Re-establish Bulls-only Resident Harvest for Bluenose-East Caribou Herd**

Thank you for your letter dated June 11, 2013 that provided comments on Environment and Natural Resources' (ENR) proposal to re-establish a bulls-only resident harvest for the Bluenose-East herd. In your letter, you had some concerns and questions about the proposal:

- (1) Background materials for the proposal: We have attached the four documents referenced in the proposal for your review.
- (2) How the Aboriginal harvest estimate of 2,700 was derived: in recent years, ENR has sought to monitor harvest of barren-ground caribou in collaboration with its co-management partners. Most of the harvest of the Bluenose East herd has been in winter from Tlicho and Sahtu communities. Estimates of harvest have been derived from information collected by community harvest monitors and estimates from ENR renewable resource officers and biologists. Government of Nunavut biologists in Kugluktuk have provided estimates of the limited Nunavut harvest. Total estimated harvest of the Bluenose-East herd for 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 have been 3,466, 2,918 and 1,766 caribou, respectively. The average of these 3 estimates is 2,717 caribou, which is the source of the rounded estimate of 2,700 caribou in the draft proposal. Sex ratio is reported for some communities but otherwise estimated by ENR biologists, officers or community harvest monitors. Since the harvest is primarily carried out in winter and hunters generally prefer cows, the sex ratio is estimated as being at least 65% cows.

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- (3) Lack of clarity regarding if the proposal was for re-establishing resident harvest or if it was also for commercial harvest: The proposal that is currently being discussed is for re-establishing resident harvest only.
- (4) The role of the Advisory Committee for the Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM)'s draft management plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds: In your letter, you indicate that the management plan is the process for reestablishing resident harvest. ENR respects this management planning process and has contributed to it, and will ensure that harvest management recommendations are consistent with the draft plan.
- (5) Need for more information and better understanding of the long term movements between the Bluenose-East and Bluenose-West herds: As part of its monitoring program under the 2011-2015 Caribou Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories, ENR tracks the movements of collared caribou in the Bluenose-East and Bluenose-West herds. Analyses to date indicate that 2-5% of collared cows move between herds, with roughly equal numbers of cows moving from one herd to the other. ENR will continue to track movements between the Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East herds as part of its overall monitoring program.

Thank you for reviewing the proposal and raising these concerns. We will carefully consider all the comments received on the proposal before making a final decision on opening up a limited bulls only resident harvest of the Bluenose-East herd.

Sincerely,



Lynda Yonge
Director, Wildlife Division

Attachments

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