



Mr. Joseph Judas, Chair  
Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board  
4504 49<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE  
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 1A7  
[jjudas@wrrb.ca](mailto:jjudas@wrrb.ca)

July 26, 2022

Dear Mr. Judas:

### **WRRB Recommendations – Kòk'èetì ekwò (Bathurst Caribou) Herd**

---

The Tłı̨chǫ Government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories have considered the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) recommendations on the Kòk'èetì ekwò (Bathurst Caribou) Herd received on May 27, 2022.

Please find attached our joint response to the WRRB recommendations. We look forward to working with the WRRB for the ongoing management of the Kòk'èetì ekwò (Bathurst Caribou).

Sincerely,

Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty  
Tłı̨chǫ Government

Shane Thompson  
Minister  
Environment and Natural Resources

Attachment

.../2

c. Honourable Caroline Cochrane  
Premier

Shaleen Woodward  
Principal Secretary

Martin Goldney  
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister  
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Dr. Erin Kelly  
Deputy Minister  
Environment and Natural Resources

Jimmy Noble Jr.  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment  
Government of Nunavut

Dr. Brett Elkin  
Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations  
Environment and Natural Resources

Shawn McCann  
Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Bruno Croft  
Superintendent, North Slave Region  
Environment and Natural Resources

Heather Sayine-Crawford  
Director, Wildlife and Fish Division  
Environment and Natural Resources

Jody Pellissey  
Executive Director  
Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

Deborah Simmons  
Executive Director  
Sahtú Renewable Resources Board

Drikus Gissing  
Wildlife Director  
Environment, Government of Nunavut

Jonah Mitchell  
Field Unit Superintendent  
Southwest NWT Field Unit, Parks Canada

Laura Duncan  
Tłıchǫ Executive Officer  
Tłıchǫ Government

Janita Etsemba  
Community Director of Behchokǫ  
Behchokǫ Community Presence Office – Tłıchǫ Government

Belinda Blackduck  
Community Director of Gamètì  
Gamètì Community Presence Office – Tłıchǫ Government

Cecilia Judas  
Community Director of Wekweètì  
Wekweètì Community Presence Office – Tłıchǫ Government

Shirley Dokum  
Community Director of Whatì  
Whatì Community Presence Office – Tłıchǫ Government

Michael Rudkin  
Chief Executive Officer  
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah and Ndıłǫ)

Lena Black  
Assistant Chief Executive Officer  
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah and Ndilo)

Andre Larabie  
Senior Administrative Officer  
Łutselk'e Dene First Nation

Annie Boucher  
Executive Director  
Akaitcho Territory Government

Carol Ann Chaplin  
Senior Administrative Officer  
Deninu Kųe First Nation

Elizabeth Westwell  
Chief Executive Officer  
Salt River First Nation #195

Glenn Bourke  
Chief Executive Officer  
Smith's Landing First Nation

Darryl McDonald  
Chief Executive Officer  
Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation

Holly Brewster  
Executive Assistant  
Dene Tha' First Nation

Doreen Summers-Cardinal  
Chief Executive Officer  
Mikisew Cree First Nation

Carl Braun  
Manager, Government Relations  
Mikisew Cree First Nation

Maggie Farrington  
Chief Executive Officer  
Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

Paulina Roche  
Chief Executive Officer  
Délı̄nē Got'ı̄ne Government

Ursula Vogt  
Executive Director  
Northwest Territory Métis Nation

Tammy Riel  
Senior Official  
Fort Chipewyan Métis Local 125

Ms. Kilivak (Karen) Kabloona  
Chief Executive Officer  
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

Ms. Debra Young  
Administrative Assistant  
North Slave Métis Alliance

Ms. Orlena Modeste  
Executive Director  
Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated

## **DISTRIBUTION LIST**

Chief Clifford Daniels  
Behchokò Community Presence Office – Tłıchq Government

Chief Doreen Arrowmaker  
Gamètì Community Presence Office – Tłıchq Government

Chief Adeline Football  
Wekweètì Community Presence Office – Tłıchq Government

Chief Alfonz Nitsiza  
Community Government of Whatì – Tłıchq Government

Chief Edward Sangris and Council  
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah)

Chief Fred Sangris and Council  
Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Ndıłq)

Acting Chief Charlie Catholique and Council  
Łutselk'e Dene First Nation

Chief Louis Balsillie and Council  
Denínu Kúé First Nation

Chief David Poitras  
Salt River First Nation #195

Chief Thaidene Paulette  
Smith's Landing First Nation

Chief Louie J. Mercredi  
Fond Du Lac Denesuline First Nation

Chief Bartholomew J. Tsannie  
Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation

Chief Coreen Sayazie  
Black Lake Denesuline First Nation

Chief James Ahnassay  
Dene Tha' First Nation

Chief Peter Powder  
Mikisew Cree First Nation

Chief Allan Adam  
Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

ʔekw'ahtı́dó Leeroy Andre  
Délı́ne Got'ı́ne Government

President Stanley Anablak  
Kitikmeot Inuit Association

President Garry Bailey  
Northwest Territory Métis Nation

President Kendrick Cardinal  
Fort Chipewyan Métis Local 125

President Aluki Kotierk  
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

Vice-President Marc Whitford  
North Slave Métis Alliance

Chairperson Charles McNeely  
Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated

Chairperson Daniel Shewchuk  
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

Larry Adjun  
Chair  
Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association

Camilla Tutcho  
Chair  
Sahtú Renewable Resources Board

Coordinator, Chief Joseph Cluster Reserve #201 Ron Robillard  
Saskatchewan Athabasca Denesuline  
Denesuline Né Né Land Corporation



## Response to Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) Recommendations on the Joint Management Proposal for the Kqk'èetì Ekwò (Bathurst Caribou) Herd 2022

**WRRB Recommendation # 1-2022 (Kqk'èetì Ekwò)** - Through the Barren-ground Caribou Technical Working Group and with the WRRB as lead, TG and GNWT will draft a technical assessment of emigration related to the Kqk'èetì Ekwò herd, beginning in the summer of 2022.

**Response:** ACCEPT

**Reasons:** The Tłıchq Government and the GNWT accept this recommendation. Collar location data and observations during the June 2021 calving ground survey showed heavy overlap between Bathurst and Beverly caribou across and to the east of Bathurst Inlet. Post-calving movements of collared animals resulted in 6 of 34 (17.6%) collared caribou moving further east with the Beverly and continuing to associate with the Beverly herd into the summer and fall.

**WRRB Recommendation # 2-2022 (Kqk'èetì Ekwò)** – TG and GNWT will not conduct the June 2022 aerial reconnaissance survey to (i) assess distribution and separation / overlap of Kqk'èetì and Beverly Ekwò during calving (ii) assess relative abundance of Kqk'èetì Ekwò and (iii) assess sex and age proportions nor the calving ground photo survey for the Kqk'èetì Ekwò herd.

**Tłıchq Government Response:** VARY. Tłıchq Government revises this recommendation to the following:

~~TG and~~ GNWT will not conduct the June 2022 aerial reconnaissance survey to (i) assess distribution and separation / overlap of Kqk'èetì and Beverly Ekwò during calving (ii) assess relative abundance of Kqk'èetì Ekwò and (iii) assess sex and age proportions nor the calving ground photo survey for the Kqk'èetì Ekwò herd.

**GNWT Response:** REJECT

**Reasons:** The GNWT, with the support of the Tłıchq Government, rejects this recommendation with reasons provided previously in its letter of June 10, 2022 to the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB).

**WRRB Recommendation # 3-2022 (Kqk'èetì Ekwò)** – TG and GNWT will come prepared to participate in a technical workshop and discuss technical monitoring questions, including monitoring survey design in herd overlap areas and calving ground survey frequency and design. WRRB will organize and hold this

technical workshop during the summer 2022 with invitations to members of the BGCTWG, Government of Nunavut and statistical support as necessary.

**Response:** VARY. Tłıchq Government and GNWT revise this recommendation to the following:

TG and GNWT will come prepared to participate in a technical workshop and discuss technical monitoring questions, including monitoring survey design in herd overlap areas and calving ground survey frequency and design. WRRB will organize and hold this technical workshop during the ~~summer~~ fall / winter 2022/2023 with invitations to members of the BGCTWG, Government of Nunavut and statistical support as necessary.

**Reasons:** The Tłıchq Government and the GNWT vary this recommendation mainly because the timing for summer 2022 may be challenging. We request preparatory discussions and providing materials ahead of time to ensure the workshop is as productive as possible. We note that GNWT Manuscript Report No. 289, *Optimal Survey Design, Survey Intervals and Analysis Strategies for Caribou Calving Ground Surveys, Reconnaissance Surveys and Composition Surveys* may provide useful context.<sup>1</sup>

**WRRB Recommendation # 4-2022 (Kqk'èeti Ekwò)** – TG and GNWT, through the BGCTWG, will use the existing Adaptive Co-Management Framework to reduce the gaps in available monitoring information about the Kqk'èeti Ekwò herd and to allow adjustments to be made if results are not achieved or if condition change such that a different approach is warranted. Discussions will first occur in August 2022 as per the Framework's timeline with a summary of findings and discussion developed and shared with partner organizations.

**Response:** ACCEPT

**Reasons:** The Tłıchq Government and the GNWT accept this recommendation. Our two governments participated in developing the Adaptive Co-Management Framework with the WRRB and are committed to using the Framework to guide discussions and recommendations on monitoring and management of Kqk'èeti Ekwò.

**WRRB Recommendation # 5-2022 (Kqk'èeti Ekwò)** - TG and GNWT will collaborate and coordinate between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to conduct calving ground surveys for the Beverly Ekwò herd, starting in 2023. This may include sharing costs and personnel to conduct the survey.

---

1

[https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/survey\\_intervals\\_and\\_analysis\\_strategies\\_for\\_caribou\\_calving\\_ground\\_surveys\\_289\\_manuscript.pdf](https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/resources/survey_intervals_and_analysis_strategies_for_caribou_calving_ground_surveys_289_manuscript.pdf)

**Response:** VARY. Tłıchq Government and GNWT revise this recommendation to the following:

TG and GNWT will collaborate and coordinate between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to ~~conduct~~ support calving ground surveys for the Beverly Ekwò herd, starting in 2023 depending on the needs of the Government of Nunavut. ~~This may include sharing costs and personnel to conduct the survey.~~

**Reasons:** The Government of Nunavut is the lead on the calving ground survey for the Beverly barren-ground caribou herd and sets their schedules and priorities for monitoring. The GNWT and the Tłıchq Government would be willing to support Government of Nunavut in their survey efforts if requested. The GNWT will be conducting a composition survey in fall 2022 on the Beverly range to get a bull:cow ratio for deriving the population estimate as a direct contribution towards updating the Beverly population estimate in 2023.

**WRRB Recommendation # 6-2022 (Kqk'èeti Ekwò)** - TG and GNWT will develop a plain language summary of the joint management proposal and the 2021 calving ground survey to assist with communications in the Tłıchq communities by August 31, 2022.

**Response:** ACCEPT

**Reasons:** The Tłıchq Government and the GNWT accept this recommendation. Plain language summaries of the joint management proposals for the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds have been developed as have communications materials on the results of the 2021 calving ground surveys. Engagement activities on the Bathurst calving ground survey results included presentations made to Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations (e.g. Section 15 meeting in November 2021, a status update at Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee meeting December 2021, and a requested presentation to WRRB on the June 2021 surveys in December 2021), engagement letters to Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations, a December 2021 press release and updated website materials.

### **Timeline for Implementation of Previous Recommendations**

**WRRB Recommendation #12-2019 (Kqk'èeti Ekwò)** – Exchange of information about Kqk'èeti Ekwò with Tłıchq communities is necessary to develop trust and improve understanding between the public and governments.

Tłıchq Government conducted community tours prior to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in February 2020 and immediately after the restrictions were lifted in May 2022 on barren-ground caribou monitoring and management activities. Tłıchq Government has also produced videos on the Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è Caribou Research Program for Tłıchq residents to understand more fully the program, what it achieves and

how it contributes to a more fulsome understanding of caribou ecology and wildlife management decision-making processes.

The GNWT continues to produce communication materials on caribou monitoring and management including barren-ground caribou herd one-pagers, pamphlets on wolf management initiatives in the North Slave Region, website materials and social media posts.

**WRRB Recommendation #14-2019 (Kqk'èetì Ekwò)** – Fecal pellet collection on the Kqk'èetì ekwò winter range allows for an increased sample size and, therefore, a more representative pregnancy rate.

Results from the analysis of 331 fecal pellet samples on winter ranges of the Bathurst (Kqk'èetì), Bluenose-East (Sahti) and Beverly herds collected in March 2020 as a pilot project will be reported to the WRRB by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Lab analyses associated with these samples were delayed due to COVID and one set of results was only received in late June 2022. Results of this pilot project can be reviewed with WRRB and Tłıchq Government and the potential for further sample collections assessed.

**WRRB Recommendation #18-2019 (Kqk'èetì Ekwò)** – Annual review of the implementation of Board recommendations, including an evaluation of success, tracks progress and ensures that important items are not missed.

Tłıchq Government and GNWT commit to updating the Implementation Tables and submitting them to the WRRB by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**WRRB Recommendations #2B, 3B, 5B, 19B and 20B-2016** – Comprehensive Tłıchq Knowledge studies are crucial to understand the holistic nature of the relationships between wildlife and with Tłıchq communities.

The comprehensive TK study planned in 2017 by Tłıchq Government has evolved into the Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è Caribou Research Program. This program is holistic and includes information on predators, cumulative effects, and climate change, and addresses many of the aspects of WRRB recommendations in 2016.

Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è Caribou research program has been undertaken by Tłıchq Government to take a holistic approach to what is happening with ekwò and the land. Tłıchq Government intends, through this program, address past recommendations by the Board. Tłıchq Government would like to engage with WRRB on both timing issues relating to these recommendations and how aspects of them, depending on available



resources, can be addressed under the Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è Caribou Research Program. In order to be consistent with the overall adaptive co-management approach in monitoring and data collection, we would suggest that in addition to the August 2022 proposed discussions referred to in Recommendation #4-2022, that Tłıchǫ Government will share the Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è Caribou Research Program information and further a mutual understanding on how Tłıchǫ Government addresses past recommendations.