

**SCIENCE TECHNICAL SESSION –
2026 SAHTÌ EKWÒ MANAGEMENT**

On July 17, 2026, Environment & Climate Change (ECC), Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tłıchǵ Government (TG) submitted a joint management proposal, entitled “*Joint Proposal on Management Actions for the Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou (Sahti Ekwò) Herd 2027-2030*” (“the Proposal”) to the WRRB, outlining proposed management actions for Sahti Ekwò in Wek'èezhì. Following an initial assessment of the Proposal, the WRRB determined that a Level 2 review is appropriate, as per its Rule for Management Proposals. The Board opened the 2026 Sahti Ekwò Management Proceeding on August 27, 2026.

The **Science Technical Session** for the Level 2 proceeding will be held on October 27-28, 2026 in Yellowknife, NT (9:00am to 5:00pm daily). Attendees, in-person or via Zoom, will include TG, GNWT, and registered Participants only. A Zoom link will be shared with identified attendees.

Topics of Discussion will include:

1. Day 1 – Integrated Population Model:

- a) Evaluate and discuss the accuracy, precision, strengths, and weaknesses of the calving ground survey population estimates of 2018, 2021, 2023 and 2025 for the Sahti Ekwò herd. Considering the precision of other herd demographic indicators (including the recently measured bull:cow ratio, Fall 2026) and using the IPM as needed, fully substantiate the interpretation of an increasing herd trend including the plausibility of other trends.
- b) The Joint Proposal describes that because the IPM (model) uses all available data and accounts for missing or imprecise data, it is better than estimating the trend from calving ground estimates. However, the IPM cannot correct for any inaccuracy (bias) in the data.
 - i. Potentially there is bias in the collar-based estimates of adult mortality.
 - ii. Potentially, there is bias in the adult sex ratio.
 - iii. The pregnancy rate based on collared females does not take into account the change in age structure typical of a recovering herd.

2. Day 2 – Monitoring

- a) Evaluate and discuss the accuracy and precision of the demographic indicators i.e., bull:cow ratio, calf:cow ratio, adult survival and strengths and weakness of methods, including consideration of alternatives.
- b) The JMP's monitoring identifies late winter calf:cow ratios as a lower priority because of the annually variable overlap with neighboring herds. The need for monitoring over-winter calf survival and thus recruitment is increasing as the annual variability in winter snow conditions is increasing during climate warming and potentially can reduce herd resilience. The current unprecedented ENSO (El Nino) will likely impact the Arctic Oscillation which, in turn, impacts winter snow conditions ([NWT CIMP project #133](#)).
- c) Trend in herd abundance and recovery: The JMP comments that “[herd] trends are not always linear and can also fluctuate over shorter time periods (i.e. survey results should be interpreted in the context of multiple years and alongside information from

Indigenous knowledge". However, the JMP does not provide more information on what is meant by linear and fluctuations in the context of recovery for the Sahtì Ekwò herd. Options for determining herd trend based on the trade-off between frequency of herd estimates and fiscal constraints relative to the risk of assuming the herd is recovering when, if in fact, it is not.

Documents posted to the Public Registry for the 2026 Sahtì Ekwò Management Proceeding can be viewed at: <https://www.wrrb.ca/public-information/public-registry>.