



May 31, 2013

Hon. Michael Miltenberger
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Via Email

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Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus
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Re: 2013/2014 Bathurst Caribou Herd Management Recommendations

As per the joint letter, dated May 6, 2013, from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Tłıchq Government (TG), the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) understands that the submission of a joint management proposal for the Bathurst Caribou herd is not to be expected until mid to late Fall 2013. Upon receipt, the WRRB will determine the appropriate level of review and the time required to review the joint management proposal, as per the Board's Rule for Management Proposals. As both the WRRB and Government processes will take time, the Board does not expect that management recommendations for the Bathurst Caribou herd will be implemented until the 2014/2015 harvest season.

Therefore, during its May 2013 Board meeting, the WRRB reviewed the sixty recommendations, which follow, made in its October 2010 Recommendations Report to determine if any revisions are required for the 2013/2014 harvesting season. As per Section 12.5.6 of the Tłıchq Agreement, the Board wishes to provide the following Bathurst Caribou herd management recommendations (Motion #331-24-05-2013):

- 1) That commercial, outfitted and resident harvesting of Bathurst Caribou within Wek'èezhì remain at zero for the 2013/2014 harvesting season (WRRB recommendations #2, 3 and 5);
- 2) That the harvest target for Bathurst caribou will remain at 300 caribou for the 2013/2014 harvesting season. The harvest target of 300 Bathurst caribou should be allocated as follows: 150 to Tłıchq Citizens and 150 to Members of other Aboriginal people with rights to hunt in Mq̄whì Gogha Dè Nı̄tlèè. TG should determine distribution of the allocation within Tłıchq communities and GNWT should determine distribution of the allocation to members of an Aboriginal people with rights to hunt in Mq̄whì Gogha Dè Nı̄tlèè in consultation with those groups (WRRB recommendations #7 and 8, as varied by GNWT & TG);
- 3) That the harvest of Bathurst caribou should target an 80:20 bull/cow harvest ratio (WRRB recommendation #9, as varied by GNWT & TG);
- 4) That WRRB recommendations #28 to 41, as varied by GNWT & TG, related to caribou monitoring remain in place;

- 5) That WRRB recommendations #42 and 43 related to developing and implementing conservation education programs remain in place;
- 6) That WRRB recommendations #44 to 46, as varied by GNWT & TG, related to the adaptive co-management framework remain in place;
- 7) That WRRB recommendations #47, 48, 50 and 51, as varied by GNWT & TG, related to development, habitat and wildlife management continue to be implemented;
- 8) That WRRB recommendations #52 and 53 related to wolf management remain in place;
- 9) That collaborative work between TG, GNWT and the WRRB towards long-term Bathurst caribou management continue (WRRB recommendation #55); and
- 10) That the above recommendations are implemented as of August 1, 2013 and that consultations regarding the recommendations take place immediately.

At this time, the WRRB has not provided harvest recommendations for the Bluenose-East and Beverly/Ahiak caribou herds as separate management proposals for these herds are expected in the near future.

The WRRB looks forward to continued collaboration with the GNWT and TG on Bathurst Caribou herd management. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact our office at (867) 873-5740 or jsnortland@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Joseph Judas
Chair

Cc Ernie Campbell, Deputy Minister, ENR
Fred J Mandeville, Superintendent, North Slave Region, ENR
Laura Duncan, Tłıchǫ Executive Officer, TG
Kerri Garner, Director, Department of Culture and Lands Protection, TG

October 2010 Recommendations Report – #1 to 60

Recommendation #1: The Board recommends that the Tłıchǫ Government and ENR report annually on the overall success of the harvest target approach in meeting the objectives of effective collaborative management and the long-term recovery of the Bathurst caribou herd.

Recommendation #2: The Board recommends that all commercial harvesting of Bathurst caribou within Wek'èezhìi be set to zero for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 harvesting seasons.

Recommendation #3: The Board recommends that all outfitted harvesting of Bathurst caribou within Wek'èezhìi be set to zero for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 harvesting seasons.

Recommendation #4: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchǫ Government, prior to the next survey of the Bathurst caribou herd, provide the Board and make public their positions with regard to the reinstatement of outfitting within Wek'èezhìi.

Recommendation #5: The Board recommends that all resident harvesting of Bathurst caribou within Wek'èezhìi be set to zero for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 harvesting seasons.

Recommendation #6: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchǫ Government, prior to the next survey of the Bathurst caribou herd, provide the Board and make public their positions with regard to the reinstatement of resident harvesting within Wek'èezhìi. In developing this position, the Governments will review, assess, and implement, where conservation permits, a limited-entry draw system to facilitate the reinstatement of resident harvesting at the earliest opportunity.

Recommendation #7: The Board recommends the establishment of a harvest target of 300 Bathurst caribou per year for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 harvesting seasons.

Recommendation #8: The Board recommends allocating the annual harvest target of Bathurst caribou between Tłıchǫ Citizens and members of an Aboriginal people with rights to hunt in Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nǫtlèè as follows:

- Tłıchǫ Citizens – 225
- Members of an Aboriginal people with rights to hunt in Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nǫtlèè - 75

The Tłıchǫ Government should determine distribution of the allocation within Tłıchǫ communities and ENR should determine distribution of the allocation to members of an Aboriginal people with rights to hunt in Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nǫtlèè in consultation with those groups.

Recommendation #9: The Board recommends the harvest of Bathurst caribou should target an 85:15 bull/cow harvest ratio, i.e. the annual harvest of Bathurst caribou cows should be less than 45.

Recommendation #10: The Board recommends that if the Tłıchǫ Government and/or ENR have information to suggest that the harvest of Bathurst caribou has or will in the near future exceed the harvest target of 300 by 10% or more, then regulations should be put in place to close all harvesting in areas occupied by the Bathurst herd. If the harvest of Bathurst caribou exceeds the targets of 300

caribou by greater than 10%, the Board reserves the right to reconsider its recommendations and implement a TAH¹.

Recommendation #11: The Board recommends that if the Tłıchǵ Government and/or ENR have information to suggest that the harvest of Bathurst caribou has or will or in the near future materially exceed 45 cows, then regulations should be put in place to close all harvesting in areas occupied by the Bathurst herd. If the harvest of Bathurst caribou materially exceeds the targets of 45 cows, the Board reserves the right to reconsider its recommendations and implement a TAH².

Recommendation #12: The Board recommends that ENR should, in discussion with the Tłıchǵ Government and other Aboriginal groups, identify and make public, prior to the annual fall hunt, areas within which the harvest will be attributed to the Bathurst caribou herd. The Board and public should be advised of any changes to these areas made necessary by movements of the caribou.

Recommendation #13: The Board recommends that ENR should, in discussion with the Tłıchǵ Government and other Aboriginal groups, identify and make public, prior to the annual winter hunt, areas within which the harvest will be attributed to the Bathurst caribou herd. The Board and public should be advised of any changes to these areas made necessary by movements of the caribou.

Recommendation #14: The Board recommends that all commercial, outfitted and resident harvesting from the Bluenose-East caribou herd within We'èzhìi be set to zero for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 harvesting seasons.

Recommendation #15: The Board proposes the establishment of a harvest target of 2800 Bluenose-East caribou per year for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 harvesting seasons. The annual harvest target and its allocation should be finalized in discussions between the existing wildlife co-management boards and Aboriginal governments in the Sahtú, Dehcho and Tłıchǵ. The Tłıchǵ Government should determine distribution of the allocation within Tłıchǵ communities.

Recommendation #16: The Board recommends the harvest of Bluenose-East caribou should target an 85:15 bull/cow harvest ratio, i.e. the annual harvest of Bluenose-East caribou cows should be less than 420.

Recommendation #17: The Board recommends that if the Tłıchǵ Government and/or ENR have information to suggest that the harvest of Bluenose-East caribou has or will in the near future exceed the target by 10% or more, then regulations should be put in place to close all harvesting in areas occupied by the Bluenose-East herd.

Recommendation #18: The Board recommends that if the Tłıchǵ Government and/or ENR have information to suggest that the harvest of Bluenose-East caribou has or will or in the near future materially exceed 420 cows, then regulations should be put in place to close all harvesting in areas occupied by the Bluenose-East herd.

¹ See s.12.5.6 of the Tłıchǵ Agreement.

² See s.12.1.1 of the Tłıchǵ Agreement.

Recommendation #19: The Board recommends that ENR should, in discussion with the Tłıchǵ Government and other Aboriginal groups, identify and make public, prior to the annual fall hunt, areas within which the harvest will be attributed to the Bluenose-East caribou herd. The Board and public should be advised of any changes to these areas made necessary by movements of the caribou.

Recommendation #20: The Board recommends that ENR should, in discussion with the Tłıchǵ Government and other Aboriginal groups, identify and make public, prior to the annual winter hunt, areas within which the harvest will be attributed to the Bluenose-East caribou herd. The Board and public should be advised of any changes to these areas made necessary by movements of the caribou.

Recommendation #21: The Board recommends that the Tłıchǵ Government and ENR do not provide harvester assistance and/or incentives to access the Bluenose-East herd.

Recommendation #22: The Board recommends that the Tłıchǵ Government consider negotiating caribou harvesting overlap agreements with Nunavut and the Sahtú region to make certain that existing relationships endure.

Recommendation #23: The Board recommends that all commercial, outfitted and resident harvesting from the Ahiak caribou herd within We'èezhii be set to zero in order to prevent incidental harvest of Bathurst caribou for the 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 harvesting seasons.

Recommendation #24: The Board recommends that the Tłıchǵ Government and ENR do not provide harvester assistance and/or incentives to access the Ahiak herd.

Recommendation #25: The Board recommends that the Tłıchǵ Government consider negotiating caribou harvesting overlap agreements with Nunavut and the Akaitcho region to make certain that existing relationships endure.

Recommendation #26: The Board recommends that ENR should, in discussion with the Tłıchǵ Government and other Aboriginal groups, identify and make public, prior to the annual fall hunt, areas within which the harvest will be attributed to the Ahiak caribou herd. The Board and public should be advised of any changes to these areas made necessary by movements of the caribou.

Recommendation #27: The Board recommends that ENR should, in discussion with the Tłıchǵ Government and other Aboriginal groups, identify and make public, prior to the annual winter hunt, areas within which the harvest will be attributed to the Ahiak caribou herd. The Board and public should be advised of any changes to these areas made necessary by movements of the caribou.

Recommendation #28: The Board recommends the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *Special Project, Using Tłıchǵ Knowledge to Monitor Barren Ground Caribou* of the overall TK Research and Monitoring Program.

Recommendation #29: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *spring calf survival* monitoring action as identified below:

- **Scientific** – Spring composition surveys to determine calf survival should continue. In addition, ENR should explore methods to improve estimation of cow mortality that

do not involve large numbers of collars to better inform the interpretation of cow/calf ratios

- **TK** – In listening to the oral narratives of Tłıchǵ harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of the number of calves, cows and bulls along migration routes where caribou fences were once located.

Recommendation #30: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *health and condition* monitoring action as identified below:

- **Scientific** – Cows should NOT be harvested specifically for health and condition monitoring. If appropriate per collection methodology, suitable samples from harvested caribou should be collected by Aboriginal harvesters in the community.
- **TK** – In listening to the oral narratives of Tłıchǵ harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' visual appraisals of fitness on hoof and sensory appraisals during skinning, butchering, preparing of meat and hides.

Recommendation #31: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *birth rate* monitoring action as identified below:

- **Scientific** – Birth rate estimates determined from composition surveys on the calving ground should continue.
- **TK** – In listening to the oral narratives of Tłıchǵ harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of calves, cows and bulls on the barrens in the summer (post-birthing rate).

Recommendation #32: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *adult sex ratio and fall calf survival* monitoring action as identified below:

- **Scientific** – Fall composition surveys to determine adult sex ratio and calf survival should continue. As above, this should be augmented with better estimates of cow mortality to better inform the interpretation of bull/cow ratios.
- **TK** – In listening to Tłıchǵ harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of numbers and behaviour of bulls, cows and calves.

Recommendation #33: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *estimate of herd size* monitoring action as identified below:

- **Scientific** – A calving ground photo-survey should be conducted in June 2012.
- **TK** – In listening to Tłıchǵ harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations and their assessment of caribou abundance at key locations.

Recommendation #34: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *wolf abundance (den occupancy)* monitoring action as identified below:

- **Scientific** – To enhance the ability of managers to assess management actions in the future, appropriate indices of wolf abundance, wolf predation rates and population responses to changing caribou abundance should be developed and implemented.
- **TK** – In listening to the Tłıchǵ harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations and their assessment of wolf abundance associated with caribou.

Recommendation #35: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchǵ Government implement the *wolf condition and reproduction* monitoring action as identified below:

- Scientific – A carcass collection program and assessment of carcasses collected for physical condition and reproductive status should continue.
- TK – In listening to the Tłıchq harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of the condition of wolves associated with caribou.

Recommendation #36: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchq Government implement the *wolf harvest* monitoring action as identified below:

- Scientific – Harvest data from a combination of carcass collection, fur sales, resident harvest questionnaires, and mandatory reporting of non-resident harvests should be collected.
- TK – Tłıchq researchers will manage the collection of Tłıchq harvest data.

Recommendation #37: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchq Government implement the *state of habitat* monitoring action as identified below:

- Scientific – Landscape changes, including fires and industrial exploration and development, should be monitored to assess potential impacts to caribou habitat.
- TK – In listening to the Tłıchq harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' detailed observations of caribou habitat.

Recommendation #38: The Board recommends that ENR and the Tłıchq Government implement the *pregnancy rate* monitoring action as identified below:

- Scientific – Cows should NOT be harvested specifically for determining pregnancy.
- TK – In listening to the oral narratives of Tłıchq harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' visual appraisals of pregnancy and pregnancy of any cows harvested.

Recommendation #39: The Board recommends that ENR implement the *density of cows on calving ground* monitoring action as identified below:

- Scientific – Annual calving ground reconnaissance surveys should continue.
- TK – As Tłıchq harvesters have not gone to the calving grounds in the past, there is no suggested action.

Recommendation #40: The Board recommends Tłıchq Government implement the *caribou harvest* monitoring action as identified below:

- TK – Tłıchq harvesters should report their caribou harvest to the TK researchers who will manage the harvest data
- Scientific – Harvest data should not be collected through a scientific process as Tłıchq should collect and manage their own harvest data.

Recommendation #41: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchq Government reporting on monitoring results to the WRRB and the general public a minimum of three times per year in April, September and December.

Recommendation #42: The Board recommends that the Tłıchq Government develop and implement a TK conservation education program to support the relationship and respect Tłıchq have for caribou. The program should be taught by elders and include:

- Tłıchq rules and their holistic approach to monitoring and managing their relationship with caribou;
- The idea of learning by travelling traditional trails so the ‘land’ can be observed and monitored; and
- Information on alternate resources to be harvested when caribou is scarce.

Recommendation #43: The Board recommends that ENR develop and implement a scientific conservation education program to foster an increased appreciation of the resource. The program should be aimed at better harvesting and handling practices, increased knowledge of caribou and their role in the ecosystem, and an enhanced understanding of scientific management practices.

Recommendation #44: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchq Government implement a process of information flow, review and assessment as described above.

Recommendation #45: The Board recommends that the WRRB staff be a full participant in the Tłıchq – ENR Technical Working group without prejudice to the Board.

Recommendation #46: The Board recommends that criteria be developed by ENR and Tłıchq Government for assessing success or failure that would indicate when management actions are to be revised, including reinstatement of harvest for residents, outfitters and commercial tags. These criteria should be approved and implemented by the Technical Working Group.

Recommendation #47: The Board recommends ENR continue discussions with the Government of Nunavut for identifying opportunities for calving ground protection.

Recommendation #48: The Board recommends ENR and INAC collaboratively develop best practices for mitigating effects on caribou during calving and post-calving, including the consideration of implementing mobile caribou protection measures.

Recommendation #49: The Board recommends Tłıchq Government work towards development and implementation of a land use plan for Wek’èezhìi, including the consideration of thresholds for industrial land use.

Recommendation #50: The Board recommends that ENR and INAC monitor landscape changes, including fires and industrial exploration and development, to assess potential impacts to caribou habitat.

Recommendation #51: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchq Government assess the need for forest fire control in areas of important caribou habitat.

Recommendation #52: The Board recommends the harvest of wolves should be increased through the suggested incentives, except for assisting harvesters to access wolves on wintering grounds.

Recommendation #53: The Board recommends that focused wolf control not be implemented. If Tłıchq Government and ENR believe that focused wolf control is required, a management proposal shall be provided to the WRRB for its consideration.

Recommendation #54: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchǵ Government submit a joint management proposal for wood bison in Wek'èezhìi by the fall of 2011 to substantiate the establishment of zones and quotas made through the Interim Emergency Measure.

Recommendation #55: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchǵ Government work collaboratively to meet the obligations of Section 12.11 of the Tłıchǵ Agreement with support from WRRB staff as needed and a meeting be convened by January 2011.

Recommendation #56: The Board recommends that the Tłıchǵ Government increase their capacity to ensure full participation in monitoring and management of caribou.

Recommendation #57: The Board recommends that ENR, Tłıchǵ Government and INAC implement its recommendations no later than January 1, 2011. ENR's Emergency Interim Measures, put into effect on January 1, 2010, should remain in place until then.

Recommendation #58: The Board recommends that Tłıchǵ Government and ENR conduct consultations regarding the Recommendations Report prior to January 1, 2011.

Recommendation #59: The Board recommends that ENR and Tłıchǵ Government develop a detailed implementation and consultation plan incorporating the WRRB's recommendations as soon as possible.

Recommendation #60: The Board recommends that ENR develop and implement an effective and continuing enforcement and compliance program.