



MAY 24 2013

DISTRIBUTION LIST

ENR Management Proposal for Bluenose-East Caribou - Resident Harvesting

The resident harvest on the Bluenose-East caribou herd was closed between 2006-2009 when population survey data indicated the herd had declined to approximately 66,000 animals. The most recent survey, done in 2010, indicated approximately 122,000 animals in this herd and good calf recruitment. Aboriginal harvest was never restricted and is estimated to average approximately 2700 animals per year with the majority of the harvest being cows.

Given these positive trends and based on analysis of population and harvest projections, Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) believes the Bluenose-East herd can sustain the current level of Aboriginal harvest as well as a limited additional harvest of bulls without a negative impact on the herd.

With this in mind, ENR has developed a management proposal for this herd entitled "Opening of a limited resident harvest of bull caribou from the Bluenose-East caribou range in the NWT". A copy is attached for your review and consideration.

The Department hopes to implement this proposal, as well as a similar proposal for the Beverly/Ahiak herd, by August 2013. Under these two proposals, resident harvesters would have access to one bull-only barren-ground caribou tag that could be used on either the Bluenose-East or the Beverly/Ahiak herds.

Over the spring and summer of 2013, the Department will undertake a population survey on the Bluenose-East herd and expects to receive an updated herd management plan from co-management partners. Once the Department has analyzed this new information, and working with our co-management partners, proposals may be refined to consider additional harvesting on the Blue-nose East herd for resident or commercial use.

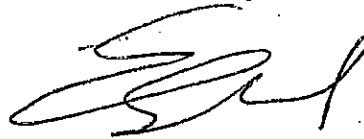
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Thank you in advance for considering this proposal. Department officials would be happy to meet with you at your convenience to discuss details. Please contact Ms. Lynda Yonge, Wildlife Director at (867) 920-8043 as required.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernie Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Ernie Campbell
Deputy Minister

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Mr. Larry Carpenter
Chair
Wildlife Management Advisory Council

Mr. Joseph Judas
Chair
Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources
Board

Mr. Walter Bezah
Chair
Sahtu Renewable Resources Board

Manasie Audlakiak
A/Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

The Honourable James Arreak
Minister of Environment
Government of Nunavut

Ms. Jody Shortland
Advisory Committee for Cooperative
Wildlife Management

Mr. Tony Green
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Colville Lake Renewable Resources
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President
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Mr. Barry Taylor
NWT Barren-ground Caribou Outfitters
Association
Stakeholders Wildlife Act Advisory
Group

Mr. David Radcliff
Stakeholders Wildlife Act Advisory
Group

Mr. Harold Grinde
Association of Mackenzie Mountain
Outfitters
Stakeholders Wildlife Act Advisory
Group

Ms. Karen McMaster
NWT Wildlife Federation
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Group

Mr. Ken Hall
Stakeholders Wildlife Act Advisory
Group

Mr. Malcolm Stark
Stakeholders Wildlife Act Advisory
Group

Mr. David Nivingalok
Chair
Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers
Committee

Mr. David Menacho
President
Tulita Renewable Resources Council

Mr. Raymond Taniton
President
Deline Renewable Resources Council

Management Proposal

Limited resident harvest of bull caribou from the Bluenose-East herd

1 Applicant Information
Project Title: Limited resident harvest of bull caribou from the Bluenose-East herd
Contact Person: Lynda Yonge, Wildlife Director
Organization Name: Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories
Address: ENR, GNWT, Box 1320, 5102 50 th Ave., Yellowknife, NT X1A 3S8
Phone/Fax Number: phone: 867-920-8043 / fax: 867-873-0293
Email: lynda_yonge@gov.nt.ca

2 Management Proposal Summary	
Start Date: August 15, 2013 (start of resident hunting season for caribou)	Projected End Date: Until further notice, but reviewed annually.
Length: Until further notice, but reviewed annually	Project Year <u> 1 </u>
<p>The purpose of this proposal is to re-establish a limited resident harvest from the Bluenose-East (BNE) barren-ground caribou herd. Based on June 2010 population survey results, there were ~122,000 caribou in the BNE herd. This result suggests the herd has increased since 2006, when the herd size was estimated at ~66,000 animals.</p> <p>Resident, outfitted and commercial harvest of the BNE herd was suspended between 2006-2009 in various management zones. There are no restrictions on the sex or number of animals taken by General Hunting Licence (GHL) holders. Estimates of Aboriginal harvest from the BNE herd between 2009 and 2012 averaged ~2,700 caribou per year. Sex ratio of the harvest was not always recorded but is estimated to be cow-focused.</p> <p>Based on analysis of population status and trends, observed calf recruitment and population projections, Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) believes the BNE herd can sustain the current level of Aboriginal harvest as well as a limited additional harvest of bulls without a negative impact on the herd.</p> <p>ENR recommends a bull caribou harvest from the BNE herd be opened up for resident hunters in zones S/BC/03 and R/BC/01. The potential for infringement on Aboriginal and treaty rights is considered minimal as Aboriginal harvest is unrestricted. Aboriginal</p>	

governments will be consulted on the proposal. Opening a resident harvest supports the objective of maximizing benefits of caribou for all residents as described in the 2011-2015 NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy.

Please list all permits required to conduct proposal.

No permits are required to implement this proposal.

To implement this proposal, ENR would need to amend the *Big Game Hunting Regulations* to allow resident hunters to harvest bull barren-ground caribou in zones S/BC/03 and R/BC/02. Resident hunters also require a resident hunting licence and a barren-ground caribou tag to harvest a bull caribou.

3. Background

The BNE herd ranges across four regions in the NWT (Inuvik, Sahtu, Dehcho, and North Slave) and the Kitikmeot Region in Nunavut (Figure 1). Traditionally, the herd is harvested by ten communities in the NWT and Nunavut: Norman Wells, Tulita, Deline, Wrigley, Wekweti, Whati, Gameti, Behchoko, Paulatuk and Kugluktuk.

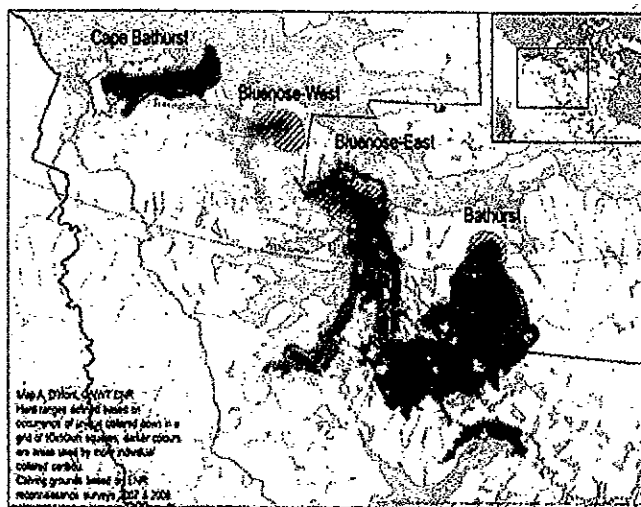


Figure 1. Range of the BNE herd (2006-2010) and adjacent herds.

ENR has been monitoring the BNE as a separate herd since 2000. The herd decreased from ~104,000 in 2000 to ~66,000 in 2006. A number of other barren-ground caribou herds were also declining during this period, including the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bathurst herds.

Resident, outfitted and commercial harvest of the BNE herd was suspended between 2006-2009 in various management zones. No restrictions have been placed on the sex or number of animals taken by General Hunting Licence holders. However, in 2006 and 2010, respectively, the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) and Wek'eezhi

Renewable Resource Board (WRRB) recommended a voluntary Aboriginal harvest restriction of four percent of the 2006 herd size estimate (i.e. a total harvest of 2800 animals). Estimates of Aboriginal harvest of the BNE herd between 2009 and 2012 have averaged ~2,700 caribou. Sex ratio of the harvest was not always recorded but is estimated at 65-75% cows. Most harvest occurs on the winter range, when cows are more available than during other times of the year. Cows are preferred over bulls by Aboriginal harvesters in the winter.

The population size of the BNE herd was last updated in 2010. Results from this survey indicate the herd had increased to ~122,000 caribou. ENR has analyzed the herd's population trend, demographic parameters and the potential impact of different levels of harvest. This analysis indicates that, at the 2010 population level and current level of calf recruitment, the BNE herd could sustain the current level of Aboriginal harvest as well as a limited additional bull harvest without negative population impacts.

Between 2006 and 2009, resident hunters were able to purchase two bull tags per season and could harvest from several herds in the NWT, including the Bathurst herd which was easily accessible from Yellowknife where the majority of resident hunters live. Total estimated NWT resident harvest of barren-ground caribou from all herds between 2006 and 2009 was less than 150 per year. Given the proposed limit of one tag per resident hunter and the remote location of the BNE herd during the proposed hunting season, it is expected the total resident harvest on the BNE will be similar or lower to the number of bulls harvested in the NWT between 2006 and 2009.

Based on ENR's analysis and current understanding of Aboriginal harvest and BNE herd status and trend, ENR recommends opening a limited bull-only harvest on the BNE herd to resident hunters. This limited harvest is not predicted to impact current herd trends. The potential for infringement is anticipated to be minimal as Aboriginal harvest is unrestricted. Aboriginal governments will be consulted on this proposal. Implementing this recommendation would support the objective of maximizing benefits of caribou for all residents as described in the 2011-2015 NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy.

4. Description of Proposed Management Action

ENR proposes to allow resident harvesters to purchase one bull-only tag each starting in the August 2013 season. The resident hunting season would be limited to August 15 to April 30. Resident hunting on the BNE herd would be limited to zones R/BC/01 and S/BC/03 to limit the likelihood that Bathurst caribou would be harvested.

Resident harvesters would be required to retain proof of sex and report their harvest,

including location. Harvest will be monitored and the number of tags available adjusted as necessary.

Tag availability for resident harvesters will be assessed annually in light of:

- new information about the herd's size and trend;
- recommendations from approved management plans (e.g., the final version of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and BNE barren-ground caribou herds management plan); and,
- harvest recommendations by management authorities.

What are the desired outcomes of the proposed management action?

The desired outcome of the proposed management action is to provide an opportunity for NWT resident hunters to hunt barren-ground bull caribou from a herd that can sustain a limited bull harvest in addition to a cow-focused and unlimited Aboriginal harvest. The potential for infringement is considered minimal as Aboriginal harvest is unrestricted. Affected Aboriginal governments and organizations with asserted Aboriginal or Treaty rights will be consulted on the proposal.

What, if any, outcomes may be incidental to the management action?

This management action will help GNWT achieve the objective of maximizing benefits of caribou for all NWT residents, as outlined in the 2011-2015 NWT Barren-ground caribou management strategy.

What monitoring, if any, will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the management action?

ENR will continue to monitor the location and movements of BNE herd and adjacent herds through an active collaring program.

ENR is planning to survey the BNE herd to update the population size estimate in June 2013. Results from this survey will be available in mid-November 2013 and will be used to verify the current status of the herd. It is anticipated the next population survey will be conducted in 2015, to synchronize BNE herd results with updates from the other NWT barren-ground caribou herds. Additional monitoring will be conducted to help improve knowledge of herd trends, including health and condition monitoring (part of community-based monitoring programs), spring calf recruitment surveys (at least three years out of every five, based on ENR analysis), and fall sex ratio surveys the year before and/or after the calving ground survey to monitor if the number of bulls within the population continues to be large enough to promote herd stability or increase.

ENR will continue to work with renewable resource and co-management boards, Aboriginal governments, communities and the Government of Nunavut to monitor Aboriginal and resident harvest of the herd. This includes setting up check stations

along winter roads and working with community-based monitors to ensure harvest is reported, and encouraging harvesting practices that promote respect for caribou (e.g., minimize meat wastage) and hunter excellence (e.g., sight in your rifle events). ENR provides support for community-based monitoring through implementation funds and funds received to support the 2011-2015 NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy.

The resident harvest would also be monitored through mandatory reporting.

5. Rationale for Proposed Management Action

Describe the purpose of your proposal and how it will address the management issue.

The purpose of this proposal is to provide opportunities for NWT resident hunters to hunt bull caribou from the BNE herd in zones S/BC/03 and R/BC/01. The desire to maximize the benefits of caribou for all NWT residents is captured in the 2011-2015 NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy. Aboriginal harvest of the BNE herd is **not** restricted with tags within the NWT so the potential for infringement on Aboriginal and treaty rights is considered minimal. Affected Aboriginal governments and organizations with asserted Aboriginal or Treaty rights will be consulted on this proposal.

Describe alternatives to the proposed management action and reasons for why these were rejected.

ENR's analysis of the population data suggests the BNE herd can sustain unrestricted Aboriginal harvest and a limited bulls-only resident harvest given current herd size, population trend and calf recruitment rates. ENR analyzed the potential effect of allowing an unrestricted resident harvest (i.e. also allowing cows to be harvested) or allowing a larger harvest (i.e. allowing residents to purchase additional tags) but has chosen to take a more cautious approach to re-introducing resident harvest to ensure the health and stability of this herd is not jeopardized. Once the population estimate is updated with 2013 data and a management plan for this herd has been accepted, consideration may be given to increasing harvesting opportunities.

6. Consultation

Aboriginal consultation and public engagement letters outlining ENR's intention to open up a limited one tag/season, bulls-only resident harvest from the BNE herd in zone R/BC/01 and S/BC/03 are being sent to:

Engagement

Affected co-management boards WMAC(NWT), SRRB and WRRB as well as other organizations Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), Government of Nunavut, Wildlife Act Stakeholders Advisory Group applicable members, Hunters and Trappers

Committees. The proposal also is also being sent to the Advisory Committee for the Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) as the group is currently developing the Cape Bathurst, Blue-nose-West, and BNE barren ground caribou herds management plan.

Aboriginal Section 35 consultation

Tlicho Government, Akaitcho Government, Sahtu and Dehcho Governments, and those who have asserted Aboriginal or Treaty rights in the area including North Slave Metis Alliance and Mountain Island Metis.

ENR is available to meet to discuss the proposal at the request of these Governments and organizations.

Results of Public Engagement and Consultation

The results of Section 35 Aboriginal consultation and public engagement will be provided to the renewable resources and co-management boards.

7. Communications Plan

A communications/engagement plan is being developed by ENR.

Annual summaries of resident and Aboriginal harvest from the BNE herd will be prepared and reviewed with Governments and organizations listed above. Summaries will also include up to date information on herd size and trend and health/condition. ENR representatives will also be available to discuss caribou management issues with interested parties on an on-going basis.

8. Relevant Background Supporting Documentation

List or attached separately to the submission all background supporting documentation, including key references, inspection/incident reports and annual project summary reports.

Adamczewski, J., Boulanger, B. Croft, T. Davison, H. Sayine-Crawford, and B. Tracz.

Oct. 2012. A comparison of calving and post-calving photo-surveys for the BNE herd of barren-ground caribou in the Northwest Territories, Canada in 2010. Draft Manuscript Report, Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT, Yellowknife.

Adamczewski, J., and J. Boulanger. 2013. Exploration of harvest strategies for the BNE caribou herd: Plain Language Summary (based on Boulanger 2013). Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT, Yellowknife, NT (unpublished report).

Boulanger, J. 2013. Exploration of harvest strategies for the BNE caribou herd using

post-calving based estimates of herd size, draft contract report March 13, 2013. Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT, Yellowknife, NT (unpublished report). Boulanger, J., and J. Adamczewski. March 2010. Simulations of Harvest and Recovery for the Bathurst Caribou Herd, with Annual Variation (draft report March 12, 2010) (technical report John Boulanger, plain language summary J. Adamczewski). (on WRRB public registry). Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT, Yellowknife.

9. Time Period Requested:

Identify the time period requested for the Board to review and make a determination or provide recommendations on your management proposal.

Ideally, proposal recommendations will be implemented by the August 15th, 2013 season start.

10. Other Relevant Information

If required, this space is provided for inclusion of any other relevant project information that was not captured in other sections.

11. Contact Information

Contact ENR for more information on this proposal.

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