

SAHTÚ INFORMATION FROM:

# *“We have been living with the caribou all our lives...”*



A report on information recorded during community meetings for:

*‘Taking Care of Caribou - the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds Management Plan’*

*Part of a larger report prepared by:*

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October 2014

### **About the ACCWM:**

The Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management was established to exchange information, help develop cooperation and consensus, and make recommendations regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat issues that cross land claim and treaty boundaries. The committee consists of Chairpersons (or alternate appointees) of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT), Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, Ɂehdzo Got'ıñé Gots'é Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board), Wek'eezhìi Renewable Resources Board, Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board, and Tuktut Nogait National Park Management Board.

### **About the Management Plan:**

The ACCWM developed a plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds, addressing the needs to: develop a cooperative approach to managing for the herds; protect the habitat in the herds' range; and make decisions on the shared harvests in an open and fair manner. The plan was developed in consultation with most of the communities that harvest from the three herds. The ultimate goal was to ensure that there are caribou today and for future generations. The Management Plan is a working document used in developing specific management tools such as Action Plans; it is called '[\*Taking Care of Caribou: the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan\*](#)'.

### **About this report:**

[\*"We have been living with the caribou all our lives"\*](#) is a companion document to the Management Plan. It provides a record of the information that was recorded during the community engagement done to develop the Plan, and contains information from 17 communities and six different regions. This document is an abbreviate version of that report, which mostly contains information from the Sahtú Settlement Area. All other information can be found in the complete report.

### **Production note:**

Drafts of the full report [\*"We have been living with the caribou all our lives"\*](#) as well as the Management Plan [\*"Taking Care of Caribou"\*](#) were prepared by Janet Winbourne (under contract with the ACCWM) and the Bluenose Caribou Management Plan Working Group. Copies of both documents are available through: Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management, c/o Wek'eezhìi Renewable Resources Board, 102 A 4504 49th Avenue, Yellowknife, NT X1A 1A7 Tel.: (867) 873-5740 Fax: (867) 873-5743.

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Hundreds of people attended the community engagement sessions conducted during the development of '***Taking Care of Caribou – the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan***'. They shared their time, knowledge and experience with the ACCWM with a goal of creating a plan that would help ensure that caribou would be sustained for future generations. We would like to acknowledge and appreciate their input and interest.

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# Executive Summary

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The Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) developed a plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds to address caribou management and stewardship over the long term. The plan is called '***Taking Care of Caribou – the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan***'. It is a working document used in developing specific management tools such as Action Plans.

The process to develop the plan involved meeting with most of the communities that harvest from the three herds. Between 2007 and 2013 a series of public engagements were held in communities of the Northwest Territories and the western portion of the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut. Seventeen communities in six land claim areas took part in the meetings:

- Inuvialuit Settlement Region – Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk
- Gwich'in Settlement Area – Aklavik, Inuvik, Tsiiigehtchic, Fort McPherson
- Sahtú Settlement Area – Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Tulít'a, Délı̨nę
- Wek' èezhìi (Tłı̨chǫ Region) – Gamètì, Whatì, Behchokò
- Dehcho Region – Wrigley (Pedzeh Ki First Nation), Fort Simpson (Liidlii Kue First Nation)
- Kitikmeot Region – Kugluktuk, Nunavut.

Meetings were also held with members of the Northwest Territories Métis Nation and the North Slave Métis Alliance. Other members of the public were engaged through direct involvement of interested users groups and making the draft plan available online.

This report is intended to be a companion document to the Management Plan. The information presented here was recorded by note-takers during the meetings and should not be seen as a complete record of the traditional and community knowledge that exists about these caribou. Instead, we suggest that the report be used as a reference for the Management Plan – a source that contains a fuller account of the information that was recorded during the engagement sessions.

Because the engagement process was under the direction of each of the ACCWM members, it differed somewhat from region to region. This resulted in differing quantities and qualities of information that were available to include in this report. Readers will find that a lot of the information comes from four regions: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Gwich'in Settlement Area, the Sahtú Settlement Area, and the western portion of the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut (Kugluktuk). Due to lower engagement levels there was less information that resulted from the Wek' èezhìi (Tłı̨chǫ Region), the Dehcho Region, and Métis organizations.

There are four main sections to this report, based on focus questions used during the engagement sessions. Within each of these four sections information has been organized into sub-topics and is presented by region. Some of the main themes that arose in the four main sections of this report were:

*1. Have you seen any changes in the herds?*

- Caribou go through natural cycles, and populations tend to come and go, or increase and decrease, then recover on their own over time – these changes are not unusual to Aboriginal people
- Harvesters did not see evidence of large declines that the scientific surveys indicated in recent years
- Some caribou migration patterns and timing have changed
- There have been some shifts in caribou distribution and possibly calving areas
- Herds were further away from many communities around the time of the engagements
- Predators increased in number and were thought to be impacting caribou populations
- People have seen changes in weather and climate conditions, such as increases in fires and icing events, changes in break-up/freeze-up timings, etc.
- Caribou habitat has increasingly been impacted by development activities and human disturbance
- Muskoxen have been expanding their range and could be competing with caribou in some areas.

*2. What changes how you harvest caribou?*

- Overall, harvest levels are thought to have gone down, however harvest pressure did increase in a few areas
- Increasing harvesting costs (e.g., the price of gas and distance to travel) have had a big influence on harvesting patterns in most communities
- In some areas, harvest restrictions have impacted peoples' ability to meet their needs and to share their harvests with others
- Harvest restrictions impacted traditional harvesting practices in some areas, such as influencing where and when harvesting occurred
- While increased road access and new technology have tended to make harvesting easier, people have also restricted their harvesting because of conservation concerns.

*3. What information is needed for management? How can your knowledge be best used in management?*

- Traditional knowledge has played an important role in sustaining caribou
- Traditional knowledge needs to be more fully researched and its use promoted in management
- Good management needs to accommodate both traditional/community knowledge and scientific knowledge
- Harvest regulations need to accommodate traditional knowledge and practices
- Education may achieve conservation better than imposing restrictions
- Education should include messages about conservation, as well as traditional knowledge and harvesting practices

- Research needs to address the cause of caribou population decline or cycles, ‘inter-herd’ movements, cumulative impacts to habitat, predation rates and the impact of predation on herds
- There is a need for harvest monitoring programs and the information needs to be shared with other communities and other regions
- Local people would like greater involvement in many aspects of caribou research and monitoring and Management Planning
- Better communication and cooperation between regions and between communities and government is needed.

*4. If management actions limit the harvest of caribou, how should the herd be shared?*

- Management needs to be cooperative and any negotiations based on respect
- Stricter harvesting regulations may be necessary, but Management Planning will need to consider how people will meet their needs under those conditions
- Enforcement of harvest restrictions is necessary and will require resources
- Past harvest restrictions didn’t seem fair within communities, between communities, and between regions
- Hardship caused by hunting restrictions affected people unequally; quotas must be fair and consider or accommodate regional effects
- A consistent approach to harvest restrictions and management is needed across all neighbouring regions
- Communities will need to define and act on commercial harvesting
- Limiting industry and protecting habitat need to be part of Management Planning
- Communities want to see restrictions on activities that impact caribou negatively, such as low level flying, seismic activity, mining exploration and development, pollution and garbage
- There was some concern that sport hunting activities could be negatively impacting herds by removing prime bulls
- The Management Plan will need to be adaptive, to change as herd size changes.

Throughout the report, there are some regional differences that are notable. However, for many topics, there were also strong similarities in the information recorded across most or all regions. It is important to note that this report can only provide information that represents a snapshot in time from the people that took part in the community engagements between 2007 and 2013. Clearly, as conditions change, the information in this report will not remain current. Continuing research and dialogue with these communities and other interested user groups will be the best way of ensuring relevant and current information can be used in caribou Management Planning.

# Introduction

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This report presents information that was recorded during community meetings held in the Sahtú Settlement Area to draft '**Taking Care of Caribou: the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan**'.<sup>1</sup> Meetings were held over six years, in 17 communities, in six land claim areas, with people that know about and harvest these caribou. During this process, many different voices and perspectives were heard about caribou, their habitat, the issues facing caribou herds and harvesters today, and how best to manage actions and conditions that impact caribou. This information strongly shaped the Management Plan and is included in it as much as possible, but many details could not be included there. '**We have been living with the Caribou all our Lives**' was written as a companion document to be used with the Management Plan.

This document only contains detailed information that was recorded in the Sahtú Settlement Area. For all other information, the reader is directed to the full account of the community engagements, available from the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management.<sup>2</sup> There is also a scientific report which accompanies the plan that includes results from scientific studies about these caribou.<sup>3</sup> It is the '**Technical Report on the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds**'.

## Background

### The Caribou ?ekwé/?epe/?edé

The barren-ground caribou included in this report are known to scientists as the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East herds.

### The People

Due to their large range, these caribou cross through many regions over the course of a year and are commonly harvested by a variety of people including Inuit, Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Dene,

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<sup>1</sup> Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management. 2014. Taking Care of Caribou: the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds management plan. Yellowknife, NT. Available from ACCWM members, ENR and most member board websites.

<sup>2</sup> Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management. 2014. We have been Living with the Caribou all our Lives: a report on information recorded during community meetings for '*Taking Care of Caribou – the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan*'. Yellowknife, NT.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Environment and Natural Resources. 2014. Technical Report on the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds. Supplement to *Taking Care of Caribou: Management Plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds*. Government of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, NT. Available from ACCWM members and on ENR website.

Métis, and non-Aboriginal harvesters. There are long-standing relationships between the people and the caribou of these regions. History, culture, knowledge and experience have shaped and continue to inform these relationships as well as understandings of caribou and land and resource management today. While the location and movement of caribou does change over time, generally, these caribou are known about and harvested in the following communities and regions:

- The Cape Bathurst herd usually migrates through two settlement areas/regions and is typically harvested by four communities in the course of its annual cycle: Aklavik, Inuvik, Tsiiigehtchic and Tuktoyaktuk;
- The Bluenose-West herd usually migrates through three settlement areas/regions and is typically harvested by 13 communities: Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Tsiiigehtchic, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Tulit'a, Délı̨nę, Ulukhaktok, and Sachs Harbour;
- The Bluenose-East herd migrates through four settlement areas/regions in the Northwest Territories and into the western portion of the Kitikmeot Region, Nunavut. The herd may be harvested by nine communities: Wrigley, Norman Wells, Tulit'a, Délı̨nę, Whati, Gamètì, Behchokò, Paulatuk, and Kugluktuk.

These caribou may also be harvested by people from other communities with rights or privileges to access the herds. For example, residents of Yellowknife historically harvested Bluenose-East caribou, and hunters may travel north from Fort Simpson, Łutselk'e, and other communities in the South Slave. Some herds have also been harvested by outfitters at times.

## The Plan

The Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) consists of the Chairpersons (or alternate appointees) of:

- Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) (WMAC\_NWT);
- Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB);
- Ɂehdzo Got'ı̨nę Gots'é Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board [SRRB]);
- Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB);
- Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board (KRWB); and
- Tuktut Nogait National Park Management Board (TNNPMB).

The ACCWM decided to develop a plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds to address management issues over the long term. The ACCWM identified the need to:

- Develop a cooperative approach to managing for the herds;
- Protect the habitat in the herds' range; and
- Make decisions on the shared harvests in an open and fair manner.

The ACCWM formed “The Bluenose Caribou Management Plan Working Group” (BCMPWG or the Working Group) to help develop the plan. The Working Group is made up of representatives of:

- Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT);
- Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board;
- ?ehdzo Got'jnë Gots'é Nákedí (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board);
- Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board;
- Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board;
- Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Association;
- Dehcho First Nations;
- Tuktut Nogait National Park Management Board;
- Tłı̨chǫ Government;
- Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), GNWT;
- Department of the Environment, Government of Nunavut;
- Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB); and
- Parks Canada.

The Management Plan is now complete. It is called “***Taking Care of Caribou***” and describes:

- Principles and goals for taking care of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East caribou herds;
- The need for a plan and the importance of working together;
- Current population estimates and trends;
- Roles and responsibilities of the wildlife management boards and agencies;
- Information required to effectively take care of the herds;
- How to make management decisions that can impact herds;
- A framework for determining what management actions should be taken; and
- How to communicate with communities, harvesters, youth, and others.

## **The Process**

Between 2007 and 2013, meetings to gather information for the Management Plan were held in the following regions and communities in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut:

- Inuvialuit Settlement Region – Tuktokyaktuk, Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk
- Gwich'in Settlement Area – Aklavik, Inuvik, Tsigehtchic, Fort McPherson
- Sahtú Settlement Area – Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Tulít'a, Délı̨ne
- Wek'èezhìi (Tłı̨chǫ Region) – Gamètì, Whati, Behchokò
- Dehcho Region – Wrigley (Pedzeh Ki First Nation), Fort Simpson (Liidlii Kue First Nation)
- Kitikmeot Region – Kugluktuk.

The Management Plan was drafted using community input received during three main ‘Rounds’ of engagement. Each member/Board represented at the Working Group decided how the

meetings and engagement would take place in their region, and so the process differed somewhat from region to region.

The main purpose for **Round 1** engagements was to:

- Share the best available information on the current status of the herds. This included scientific information, traditional knowledge and harvester observations;
- Identify the key issues and concerns from each community's perspective (e.g., What do you think is happening to the herds? Why?);
- Discuss possible solutions (e.g., What can we do to address these issues and concerns? How can we include this in a plan?);
- Outline the next steps in developing a plan.

The information that was heard in the first round of engagements was used to prepare a draft Management Plan. Once this draft plan was ready, it went through two more rounds of community engagement that were intended to:

- Provide communities with an opportunity to review the content of the drafts and comment on how well the Working Group had captured previous community input, and
- Receive feedback on the draft plan being presented.

Information received during **Round 2** engagements was used to further revise the plan and then produce a revised or second draft Management Plan. **Round 3** was the last round of community engagement done; this was an opportunity for community members to review the revised draft, ask questions and provide feedback. The major steps of community engagement involved in drafting the Management Plan are diagrammed in **Figure**.

#### *Sahtú Settlement Area (SSA)*

**Round 1** community engagements were held in Normal Wells, Tulít'a, Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, and Déljnę in December 2009. The objectives of the meetings were:

- To review the current status of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East herds of barren-ground caribou;
- To hear people's concerns and opinions as to what is happening with barren-ground caribou in the GSA; and
- To discuss what people would like to have included in a Management Plan for the herds.

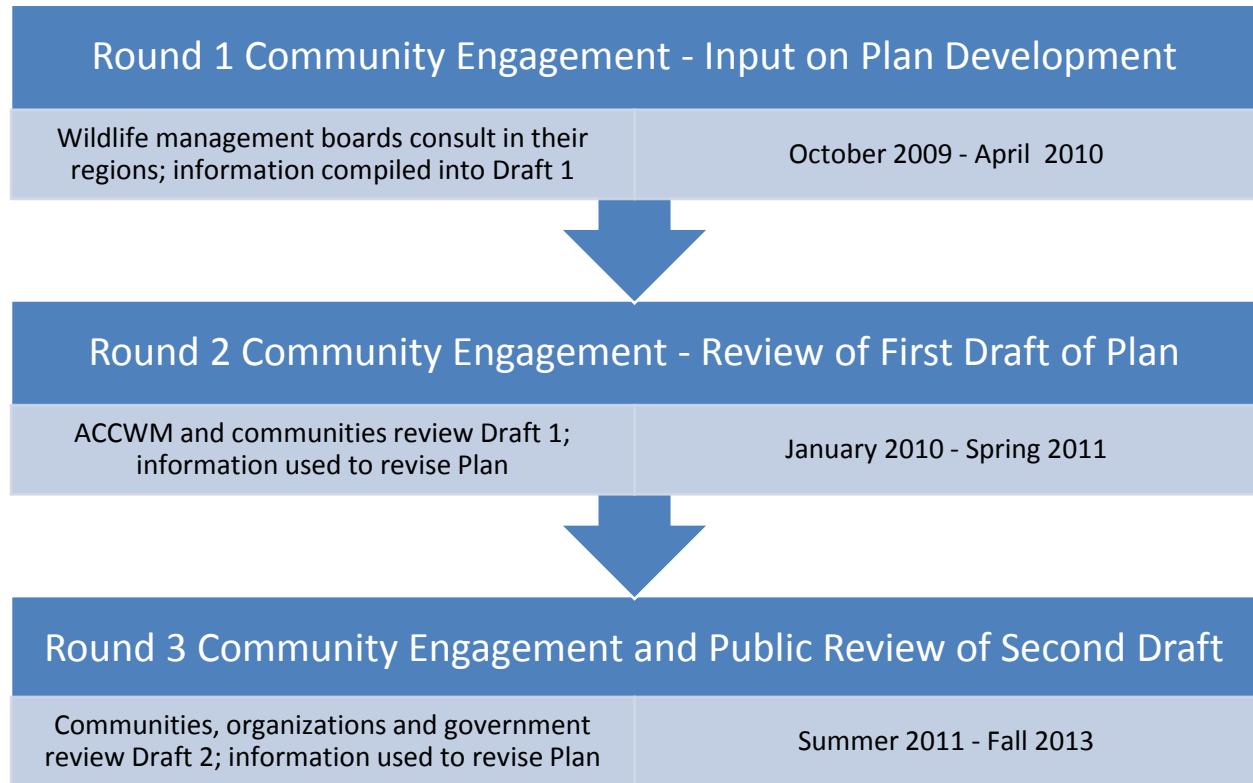
A summary report was produced with information documented during these meetings.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Developing a Management Plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds: Summary of phase 1 community engagements in the Sahtú Settlement Area. December 2009. Available from ACCWM members.

Only one **Round 2** community engagement occurred in the Sahtú. This was a public meeting held in Déljnë in March 2011, to develop a Management Plan for the herds. Comments were recorded during the meeting and provided to the ACCWM and the Working Group.

**Round 3** engagements took place in Tulít'a, Colville Lake, Déljnë, Fort Good Hope and Norman Wells between August and October 2011. These meetings were public meetings held by ENR to review the revised or second draft Management Plan. ENR also did presentations and held discussions in five schools of the Sahtú to engage high school students. Comments were recorded during all meetings and provided to the ACCWM and the Working Group.



*Figure 1: Flow chart showing the community engagement process in developing 'Taking Care of Caribou – the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds Management Plan'.*

# How to Use this Report

This report is intended to be used as a reference document. It was organized to help the reader find information quickly based on community/region and by topic. The report is made up of four main sections based on the focus questions identified by the Working Group in Round 1 engagements:

*Section 1: Have you seen any changes in the herds?*

*Section 2: What changes how you harvest caribou?*

*Section 3: What information is needed for management? How can your knowledge be best used in management?*

*Section 4: If management actions limit the harvest of caribou, how should the herd be shared?*

Input from the next two rounds of engagement was also organized into these four sections. Because the goal of these later meetings was to review the content of the draft plan, ask for feedback, and see how well the Working Group did at including earlier input, the information did differ somewhat from that resulting from Round 1. However, for the most part, we found that it was possible to sort the comments into these existing categories, rather than creating new themes and/or trying to fit them into sections that correlated more directly to the plan.

To help the reader keep track of where they are in the document, each of the four main sections has a coloured sidebar that corresponds to these four questions or colours. Within each of these sections, information is organized into topics. Each topic starts off with an **Overview** – a short, interpretive introduction that helps highlight the similarities and differences in the information from each region. Within each topic, only detailed information from the Sahtú Settlement Area is provided.

The main themes for each region are summarized in bulleted points in blue sidebars on each page to further help the reader compare information from different regions at a glance. If there were three or fewer comments from a region for a particular topic, these were not summarized in a sidebar. Naturally, there is some overlap between topics, and while we tried to minimize redundancy, comments that touch on several topics are often included in more than one section of the report.

# Results from Community Engagement Sessions:

## 1. Have you seen any changes in the herds?



Topics:

- A. Changes in Caribou Population, Distribution and Migrations
- B. Changes in Predators
- C. Changes in Environment
- D. Changes in Development
- E. Changes in Competitors
- F. Changes in Caribou Health and Physical Condition

## **1a. Changes in Caribou Population, Distribution and Migrations: Overview for all regions**

The total range of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East caribou spans a large part of the Northwest Territories and part of Nunavut. Observations about caribou numbers differed in different regions, but community members in many places said that caribou numbers did not seem to have declined as much as the scientific surveys showed. While declines were reported in Fort Good Hope and Kugluktuk, caribou were being seen more and more around Paulatuk, and people in Gamètì said that the population there had stabilized or was increasing. In Behchokò, there was an indication of a large decline, as elders said that a migration that used to take ten days took only two days in more recent years. For other communities the caribou had moved away and people were not seeing them as much. As a result, they couldn't say whether there had been a change in abundance. This was heard in parts of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Gwich'in Settlement Area, the Sahtú Settlement Area and in Kugluktuk, Nunavut.

People that took part in the community engagement sessions consistently said that caribou do cycle in abundance and change where they go from time to time. These changes are natural and are often in response to changes in feeding conditions. Because these cycles take place over several decades, it is difficult for short-term scientific studies to see them. It is also difficult for surveys to see large scale changes in migrations. This means that it can sometimes look like there is a decline, but it is actually part of what are considered natural cycles and changes in movement patterns. It is natural for caribou to 'go away' for some time and then come back again. Generally, people said that while caribou populations may go down at times, they should also be able to recover on their own.

Changes in population, distribution and migration can also be driven by changes in habitat, human activities or weather patterns. In many places, people had similar observations:

- Weather had become unpredictable
- Increased activity out on the land had affected caribou migrations
- Migration timing had changed, and
- Sometimes caribou were seen calving in unusual areas.

Seismic activity and mining were mentioned in particular as influencing caribou movement patterns. However, it was also noted in several communities that in areas where human disturbance had decreased, caribou had moved back into those areas.



Since the 1970s, a change in distribution has happened around Paulatuk. In recent years, caribou have stayed around Paulatuk longer in the fall and winter than they used to. They were reported to be there year-round during the time of the ISR community engagements (2009-2013). There were also observations that caribou had changed their migration routes, and were spending more time in the treeline and less time out on the tundra.

Interestingly, people in Colville Lake also said that caribou had come back to the area in the 1970s after being away for many years. Other distribution changes were noted in the Sahtú, where caribou were not being seen in some of the places they used to be in the past, and they were found further north and east than before. Déljnè participants said that the timing of the migration had shifted to be two weeks later in the fall. In Behchokò, migration timing may also have changed by as much as one month later in the fall. In both the ISR and in Kugluktuk, caribou were being seen in smaller groups than in the past.

Harvesting was not mentioned as having a negative influence on caribou numbers. In most communities, people said that fewer caribou were being harvested than in the past, whether due to harvest regulations, difficulty of the harvest, or changing traditions. There was just one comment in Déljnè about harvesting levels having increased. However, while human harvests might have been impacting caribou less, other changes on the land – such as fire, mining exploration and development – have increased and could have been impacting caribou more than before.

A lot of the information on these topics comes from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Round 3 of community engagements was done later there than in other areas (2013) and different types of questions were asked. Specifically, ISR communities were asked about caribou movements, exchange of animals between herds, and whether Management Planning should be based on defining these caribou as one or three separate herds. While the ACCWM had originally decided to define and develop a Management Plan for these caribou as three herds based on information from science, this is not necessarily how Aboriginal cultures think of caribou. As the plan developed, it became important to have a discussion about how caribou herds are defined by biologists, how they are viewed by indigenous peoples, and what the implications for management might be. There is a subsection on this topic here, with information for the ISR only, as these questions were not asked in the other regions.

*Themes:*

1. There were differing perspectives about whether caribou numbers were declining
2. Caribou distribution and migration changed in some areas
3. Caribou returned after industrial activity stopped
4. Fewer caribou were being harvested

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- There seems to be plenty of caribou around; we haven't seen any big changes. The only thing I notice now is that they come here from a different direction. There's never a time lately when people go out and don't see any tracks at all. What's new is that we shoot less caribou now. There were no stores then; we shoot less now because we have the store. (Colville Lake)
- For the last few years there's been no development [around Colville Lake] and the caribou are moving back. (Colville Lake)
- Gassend Lake [SSA/ISR border north of Colville Lake] and way further [north] is where you start seeing these bulls that are much bigger and brownish. (Colville Lake)
- The elders say that the cycle might be low when they are being disrespected, such as when you hit them with a stick and then the caribou go away for seven or eight years. Around here before 1941, that's when the caribou moved over here, about 70 years ago. (Colville Lake)
- One big change we've seen is that now that the oil and gas companies are gone, the caribou have come back closer. When the oil companies were here, there were no caribou close by. They were way up past Aubry Lake [north of Colville Lake]. (Colville Lake)
- They are getting further and further away from Fort Good Hope and so we can hardly notice if there are any changes. We used to travel only 50 km and see lots of caribou. (Fort Good Hope)
- When you say the herds are in decline – personally I believe it. (Fort Good Hope)
- I am wondering if ENR has information on caribou from back in the 1960s. I remember going out with my Dad to Burnt Lake where there were a few families living and a few caribou. Then around Colville Lake there were also a few caribou. But suddenly in 1972 there were many caribou and we went out on community hunts with everyone harvesting caribou. Nobody was monitoring them but where did they come from and where were they all of those years? Is there a cycle going on? Or is the population going down because there are more people, more wolves and more grizzly bears? (Fort Good Hope)

- We used to have caribou come up here before all of those drill rigs around Colville Lake; maybe they disturbed the herds. (Fort Good Hope)
- We used to go up to harvest caribou around [Déljnē] but now they are much further north. For the last two winters [2007-2008] I have seen tracks past my cabin but only a small bunch heading north and west, and I haven't actually seen the animals and don't know where they go. (Fort Good Hope)
- Some of the caribou travel to Little Albert Lake towards Inuvik and they used to go by Little Doctor Lake [NE of Norman Wells] but there is nothing anymore, just a few woodland caribou hanging around. I don't know why that is. (Fort Good Hope)
- Caribou are now going to places where they shouldn't go. The changes may not necessarily be man-made; effects from industry may be part of the answer but we really don't know. Do you think it may have something to do with climate change? (Fort Good Hope)
- I watched a show about two couples who followed the caribou from Old Crow. It showed that the caribou couldn't cross a river because of the river volume when it got too warm too fast. What I am wondering is if the caribou are not making it to their calving area; if they just have their calves wherever they are? That makes sense to me. (Fort Good Hope)
- Caribou have cycles like rabbit and foxes. (Norman Wells)
- Years ago there were [barren-ground] caribou on the [winter road] towards Fort Good Hope. Now there is nothing left. (Norman Wells)
- All the herds used to go in a circle through the year. One year the Bluenose-West came right to Norman Wells and to the Enbridge road [west side of the community]. They are not doing those circles anymore. That's why you can't get a good count because the caribou are spread all over. Blame it on industry, mines, muskoxen, and fires – the fires burn caribou feed and it takes 100 years to grow. That is why Aboriginals were once nomadic because the caribou migrated. (Norman Wells)
- Caribou are away from us right now so we can't really say how they are doing today. I traveled the winter road between Tulít'a and Déljnē last year and didn't even see one track. (Tulít'a)
- I think that the caribou – the Bluenose-East – came back because there wasn't so much work – no noise like there was around Fort Good Hope or Colville Lake. (Tulít'a)
- Caribou used to come as far as Mating River in the winter. Why are the caribou not around Déljnē anymore? (Tulít'a)

*Themes:*

5. Caribou moved away from some Sahtú communities and some areas so people weren't seeing them as much
6. Changes in cycles or caribou distribution can be in response to things such as industrial activity or changing weather patterns
7. As development has stopped, caribou have been coming back to their former areas

*Themes:*

Sahtú Settlement Area

8. Caribou naturally cycle in abundance
9. Caribou arrived two weeks later in the fall than in the past
10. More people in Déljnę were harvesting caribou.

- Bluenose-East – they are going very far east [into Tłı̨cho lands] these last few winters. It is out of the question for us to hunt them? (Tulít'a)
- They come along in September – two weeks later now. That's too late. Do a study on the weather. Most time to hunt is now because of access over the frozen lakes. (Déljnę)
- Maybe in the future – in 20 or 30 years – the caribou will go down again. The elders have beliefs, signs that something is going to happen to the caribou. There are other signs too about what is going to happen to the caribou. Sometimes there are signs that it will be a good harvest of caribou, but you see signs from the ptarmigan or the grouse that will tell you that there will be no caribou there – if you don't look at these signs, you will starve. (Déljnę)
- Caribou don't really come near. Some people have to go far for hunting. It hurts to see less caribou because we need them for so much. We here have caribou as food – we just take what we need. (Déljnę)
- We really have to think about our harvesting. A lot more people are out there harvesting now. (Déljnę)
- Animals are like human beings – if you bother them too much they don't like it. How many times have we got to keep telling ENR this? They should treat animals like human beings and with respect. In the old days when there was no ENR, animals roamed anywhere they wanted. It seems now with all the activity and the flying around, that's why the migration route has changed and we must acknowledge that. (Déljnę)
- In the fall [Sahtúot'jne] go to the north shore of Great Bear Lake. Last few years we didn't see any caribou up there – no caribou at Caribou Point, Clearwater Bay [north shore Great Bear Lake]. We're right in the middle of all the activity that surrounds us; we're central. In the summer time and fall time we don't see them. (Déljnę)

## **1b. Changes in Predators: Overview for all regions**

People in all regions commented on predators and how they might be impacting caribou populations. Some caribou predators were reported to be increasing in number – wolf, grizzly, and eagle populations were all mentioned as increasing. Possible increases in wolverine numbers were also noted in more than one area.

Of all caribou predators, wolves were mentioned most often as playing a role in caribou declines. People reported very large wolf packs in many areas during the community engagements (2007-2011). However, it was also noted that wolf populations naturally go up and down like caribou populations. One community member in Tuktoyaktuk said that people used to see more wolves when the caribou were more plentiful, and that they were actually seeing fewer wolves in recent years. In the Sahtú it was noted that since the muskoxen moved in, there had been more wolves and no caribou. In the Dehcho region, some hunters pointed out that the increase in wolves is only in certain areas, and in other areas they see few or no wolves.

Grizzlies were also mentioned in relation to predation of caribou calves. In both the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in settlement regions people said that they see grizzly bears following caribou and feeding at calving grounds.

In several places, community members suggested that the increase in predators may in part be due to the fact that there are fewer people out on the land hunting and trapping predators these days. While wolves were recognized as having a natural role in maintaining caribou populations, there were also suggestions that possible ways of controlling wolf populations may have to be considered at times when predator numbers are high and caribou numbers are low.

Predator control is very controversial and the effects are not well understood by ecologists. While there were numerous strong opinions supporting predator control expressed during the community engagements, there were also some equally strong opinions against it. Overall, many people suggested that predation needs to be studied more, so that there is a better understanding of its impacts on caribou numbers. There is more on this topic in section 3c of this report, ***Research Questions and Suggestions***.

*Themes:*

1. Wolf numbers increased and pack sizes were large
2. Wolf predation was the biggest issue for caribou
3. May need to consider predator bounties and incentives.

### Sahtú Settlement Area

- Lots of changes are affecting caribou. I have seen an increase in the number of wolves. (Norman Wells)
- There are a lot of wolves out there. You see them in the thick bush. I think they are increasing – I have found them right in town beside my dog. They are hungry; they are coming into town. (Tulít'a)
- The big issue for caribou is wolves – they are the biggest issue. (Tulít'a)
- Lots of wolves are after caribou. I had one pack up along the lake – 50 wolves howling at night. \$200 is too little for a wolf; we need to increase this. (Déljnē)
- I would like to see [the incentive] for wolf carcasses extended to year-round. (Tulít'a)
- I've seen wolves near Burnt Lake past Carnwath River and I could see a wide trail of wolf tracks, but they heard the skidoo coming and left the road. It is hard to see and harvest wolves – they are so shy. (Fort Good Hope)
- The changes affecting caribou are climate change, vegetation, migration routes, new animals like cougar and muskoxen. (Norman Wells)
- Around Déljnē they used to have a lot of caribou. The muskox are coming in, and now there are a lot of wolves and caribou are not coming close anymore. (Tulít'a)



*Photo courtesy of Richard Popko, ENR, GNWT*

## **1c. Changes in the Environment: *Overview for all regions***

During the community engagements, people expressed a lot of concern about changes in weather patterns and the resulting impacts on caribou habitat and behaviour that they are witnessing. In several places, climate change was said to be the biggest problem facing caribou. There was information documented on this topic in all regions except the Dehcho, and there were a lot of similarities in the types of information that was documented.

Overall, people said that weather has become unpredictable and this has impacted the ability of caribou to access their usual feed and follow their usual seasonal cycles. In the Inuvialuit and Tłı̨chǫ regions, as well as in Kugluktuk, the timing of freeze-up and break-up were reported to have changed. This is important because later freeze-up can cause more caribou to die by drowning, if they break through the ice during migrations. People in several regions also reported thinner ice or snow packs than in the past.

Another concern is the occurrence of ‘icing’ events – these are generally caused when a period of warmer, rainy weather follows a period of snow. Once temperatures drop again, and a crust forms on the snow, it becomes much more difficult for caribou to get to their feed. Harvesters have seen caribou die of starvation when the weather has followed this pattern. This type of event was noted in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Gwich’in Settlement Area, the Sahtú Settlement area, and Kugluktuk. There are concerns that the frequency of icing events is increasing in some places.

Changing climate conditions were also noted to be directly impacting vegetation and the firmness of the ground. This was most often mentioned in the Gwich’in Settlement Area, where permafrost has been melting faster and the ground has become ‘swampier’ in certain places. People said that caribou avoid the changed vegetation and swampy ground.

Another main message was about the impact of fire on caribou – in all regions except Kugluktuk people said that forest fires are not being fought enough to protect caribou habitat, and caribou do not return to burned out areas for many years. This seemed to be of greatest concern in Wek’ èezhii, where most of the comments recorded about changes in the environment centered on the impact of fires. Comments about forest fires impacting caribou habitat were echoed by members of the NWT Métis Nation, who stressed that forest fire management should always be part of caribou habitat management regardless of population status.

In all regions, there were strong messages that the impacts of changing weather on caribou need to be studied, and that it is critical to protect caribou habitat to protect caribou.

*Themes:*

1. Weather has changed
2. Climate change has impacted caribou habitat and behaviour
3. It is necessary to look after the environment and caribou habitat better
4. Forest fires have impacted caribou habitat – once an area is burned it takes a long time for lichen to grow back.

**Sahtú Settlement Area**

- The development is a scary part, the climate change. We're in the center; the lake surrounds us. We can't go anywhere until the lake freezes, like now. (Déljnę)
- Do you study the weather changing? One time we had caribou all over. One October we had ice and rain on the snow and the caribou went away. In the olden days [we] had dog teams – no noise. Now it's all airplanes, mining, and exploration all around Great Bear Lake. What I'm trying to say is that the weather is important. That's how come they go down to Wrigley – they're trying to find good feeding grounds. The weather, the climate change – that's the biggest problem we have. (Déljnę)
- Maybe sometimes it snows too much and then it rains. This makes it hard for the caribou. Today with the warm weather.... it's all changing. An elder said that all the wind now comes from directions other than the north. When it's from the north it is cold. Now it comes from the south and east. (Colville Lake)
- I watched a show about two couples who followed the caribou from Old Crow. It showed that the caribou couldn't cross a river because of the river volume when it got too warm too fast. What I am wondering is if the caribou are not making it to their calving area; if they just have their calves wherever they are? That makes sense to me. (Fort Good Hope)
- I work on firefighting crews. The 'Values at Risk' don't affect how we need to manage for the caribou. It takes lichen 100 years to grow back. (Fort Good Hope)
- People do point out the differences in current fire management as opposed to how things were done in the past. They say that today we are not fighting all of the fires and that may be one of the reasons that we see a decline in caribou herds. (Norman Wells)
- But if you look at your map of the ranges of these herds there are no fires in these areas [near the coast]. Also, I have been in [fire management] for a long time and we would fight fires here in the valley, but leave fires to burn elsewhere – we couldn't fight them. The only places we would put out a fire was 20 miles around the community of Colville Lake, and there hasn't been a fire there since the early '90s. The rest of the area was an observation area; we have never fought fires there. (Norman Wells)

## 1d. Changes in Development: *Overview for all regions*

There was information recorded on this topic for all regions, and there were many similarities between comments from different regions. Mostly, people were concerned that industrial development activities were impacting caribou habitat and causing changes in caribou behaviour. Some of the factors commonly identified as having a direct negative impact on caribou and/or caribou habitat were:

- Aircraft
- Pollution and dust
- Noise
- Physical developments like roads and camps.

Overall, people said that caribou were most sensitive to noise and would try to avoid it.

In both the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in settlement regions seismic work has changed caribou movement patterns. However, it was also noted that the caribou do return once this work is over. Some of the other specific activities associated with development that are impacting caribou in the ISR included: mining, helicopters, recreational traffic, and low level flying.

In the Sahtú, people were also concerned about industrial development and impacts of human activities on caribou. They mentioned very similar activities as those listed in the ISR as impacting caribou negatively, such as air and land pollution, helicopters, mining, and drilling. Again, caribou have been observed to avoid areas of pollution and noise created by these types of development.

For communities of Wek' èezhìi and Kugluktuk, most of the concerns raised around development and disturbance centered on mining activities. People mentioned blasting, truck traffic, air/water/land pollution, noise and impacts on vegetation.

Members of the NWT Métis Nation suggested that it was necessary to monitor industrial activity – especially mining exploration and operation.

Apart from these direct impacts of industrial development on caribou, there can also be indirect impacts – such as increased access for hunters when new roads are built.

*Themes:*

1. There were concerns about many types of industrial development and activity that have impacted caribou
2. Impacts are direct (e.g., helicopters, noise, pollution, etc.) and indirect (e.g., impacts to caribou habitat).

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- Some of the elders think maybe some of the problem is air pollution. The land breathes. When you spill sewage on the land it is hard for it to breathe. If we get running water and sewage now where are we going to put it? [It] could be polluting the land and the animals. Let the young people know they should not make decisions they might regret – could be destroying their own land. (Colville Lake)
- Now we have a generator for power, when you're coming home from out on the land you can smell that generator from five miles away. I think that's why the caribou are staying away. That's why it's better to burn wood because it doesn't smell so bad. (Colville Lake)
- When you mention maintaining caribou habitat that means you have to lobby against the industry that is coming in. They are the major concern. Without them, things will be okay. (Tulít'a)
- For the next few years, Husky is going to be the problem; they are going to ruin the habitat. (Tulít'a)
- The industry is really affecting the caribou. The helicopter is the worst, not only for caribou but for all animals. (Tulít'a)
- Across from Déljnē we had a lot of caribou. PetroCanada came in and did drilling and the caribou left. Now they are over at Hottah Lake area. Caribou avoid noise – they hear noise and they go away. Before the oil company the caribou were even on this side of the lake. (Déljnē)
- Now look at the Tłchq – they are really into mining and minerals and the caribou are in dire straits again. Now caribou are concentrating in the Colville Lake–Fort Good Hope area. There are thousands of caribou in that area. Now we have to go a long way to get caribou. Maybe we should say no to development, make it quiet [the land around Déljnē]. (Déljnē)

## **1e. Changes in Competitors: *Overview for all regions***

Communities in four regions commented on how changes in competitors may be influencing caribou – these types of comments were heard in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Gwich'in Settlement Area, the Sahtú Settlement Area and Kugluktuk. Most of the information on this topic was heard in the Sahtú, where many of the comments focused on the impacts of muskoxen on caribou.

People from Aklavik, Tulít'a, Fort Good Hope, and Déljné all talked about either an expansion of muskox range into new areas or an increase in numbers of muskoxen in recent years. There was a message from many places that once muskoxen moved into an area, caribou tended to move out. Muskoxen were seen to compete for caribou habitat. They can destroy the lichen the caribou depend on, by pawing it down to the ground. There was also an observation that once the muskox moved in, the predators seemed to follow. In Kugluktuk, people mentioned community hunts to try and reduce numbers of muskoxen where they are seen to directly compete with caribou for food.

In Inuvik there was also a comment that reindeer compete for caribou habitat by eating the food preferred by the caribou. There were no comments about caribou competitors recorded for the other regions that took part in the community engagements.

*Themes:*

1. Muskox directly competed with caribou by eating their food
2. When muskox moved in to new areas, predators also moved in and caribou moved out
3. Muskox destroy lichen – they paw it down so it doesn't grow back.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- According to elders, muskoxen are a problem for resident animals. They drive caribou out and eat their food. (Norman Wells)
- At Mahoney Lake they have noticed that since muskoxen have moved in, there are no caribou. (Tulít'a)
- Muskoxen are moving from the barren lands to below tree line. They should be moved back to the barren lands. (Tulít'a)
- There are a lot of muskoxen in that area. Last year in North Bay all I saw was herds and herds of muskoxen. They are pretty stinky animals – you can smell them even a week after they have gone by and maybe that's keeping caribou away. (Fort Good Hope)
- One of the principles of the plan is to protect the lands important for caribou. A few years ago, you were protecting the muskox and now the muskox are everywhere. How are you going to protect the caribou? Muskox are really overpopulated. They are in Colville Lake, they have come inland, they are all over the place. (Fort Good Hope)
- Another issue is muskox – no one talks about it. You have areas where there are caribou, the muskox comes in and then the caribou are gone. (Tulít'a)
- We have to come back to the muskox problem. We are told by the elders that the muskox are supposed to be on the tundra. The caribou eat the food, the lichen, down to the ground. But the muskox they paw it right through to the ground so nothing grows back. Maybe you should be paying for muskox like you do for wolves. (Tulít'a)
- Around Délı̨nę they used to have a lot of caribou. The muskox are coming in, and now there are a lot of wolves and caribou are not coming close anymore. (Tulít'a)

## **1f. Changes in Caribou Health and Physical Condition: Overview for all regions**

People that go out on the land often have very keen observations of caribou health and physical condition. For example, the amount of fat on a caribou can be a good indicator of the animal's health. Some years caribou have more fat than others –fat levels can be affected by habitat conditions, parasites or disease levels, and events like freezing rain. Harvesters also often comment on how healthy caribou joints and/or organs look, and whether an animal has a lot of warble flies or evidence of nose bots.

The amount of disease or caribou health condition varies from year to year. Overall, hunters in Kugluktuk said that caribou seemed to be healthier in the past than in recent years. They reported seeing more signs of disease and more types of disease in recent years and noted that that predators have an easier time getting the weak or diseased animals. In both the Sahtú and Tłı̨chǫ people said that caribou were not as fat at the time of the community engagements (2009-2011) as they used to be.

Another indicator of health can be the number of calves seen with cows. In Paulatuk, harvesters saw more calves per cow caribou in recent years (2002-2008). This can be a sign of relatively good caribou health or physical condition. In contrast to this, Kugluktuk harvesters reported that caribou cows used to have more than one calf, but in 2010, people were only seeing one calf per cow.

Questions about caribou health or physical condition were not part of the list of focus questions developed by the Working Group and so were not usually asked during the community engagement sessions. This means that there were very few comments recorded about whether people have seen changes in these things. This does not mean that there is not much information on this topic in community and/or traditional knowledge systems, just that the relevant questions were not asked. In this section, a lot of the information came from Nunavut, as these topics were discussed more in the Kugluktuk engagements. However, there were also some comments in the Wek' èezhìi (Tłı̨chǫ Region) and from the North Slave Métis Alliance that people were concerned about caribou health.

## **Sahtú Settlement Area**

- The caribou are not as fat now. (Déljnę)

# Results from Community Engagement Sessions:

## *2. What changes how you harvest caribou?*



Topics:

- A. Harvest Traditions and Timing
- B. Meeting Needs and Sharing
- C. Harvest Regulations
- D. Cost and Distance of the Harvest
- E. Conservation Concerns and Ease of Access

## **2a. Harvesting Traditions and Timing: Overview for all regions**

From year to year, caribou harvesting patterns may change in response to things like changing needs, ability to access other food sources, weather conditions, the price of gas, location of the herd, and so on. However, there are some aspects of harvesting that do not change as much from year to year – these harvesting practices tend to become traditions or even rules over time as they are passed down from generation to generation. Harvesting traditions are usually based on seasons, the landscape, food or taste preferences, understandings of human-animal relationships, and other cultural factors that are slow to change. Harvesting traditions throughout the regions of the north are usually based on principles of sustainability and respect, such as taking only what you need, not wasting food, and sharing the harvest with others. These traditions are part of how Aboriginal societies have taken care of caribou.

The type of information that was discussed about harvesting traditions during the community engagements was mostly directly related to management scenarios (such as harvest composition, timing, etc.). Two inter-related topics that were often mentioned were:

- How caribou were traditionally harvested according to season, location and condition
- How choices to selectively harvest (i.e. bull or cow, young or old caribou) were made.

There was some information from every region for this topic, and there are several common themes among what was said. In most communities, people said that season and caribou location both influenced harvest composition and pressure. For example, people said they took more cows if cows were closer to communities at the time that bulls were not desirable. In the spring, cows were sometimes targeted because the fetus was desirable, but otherwise bulls were hunted at that time of year. Bulls tended to be targeted more towards by summer as they got fatter. Overall, traditional harvesting practices did not usually target bulls, but it was stressed that keeping a balance of bulls and cows in the population was very important. It was also emphasized that bulls play an important role as the leaders of the herd and it is important to keep enough strong bulls around. Management actions need to take these types of traditional knowledge and harvesting practices into consideration to be successful.

Not following traditions of respectful behaviour can affect how caribou behave as well as hunters' success in harvesting. An important part of maintaining and passing on traditions like these is being out on the land. There is more information on some of these topics in section 3 of this report (see '**Traditional Knowledge and Harvesting Practices**' and '**Education**').

It is important to note that the information recorded on this topic is quite narrow in scope due to the type of questions that were asked during the engagements. Generally, Aboriginal communities have very rich harvesting traditions, but the meetings were not a suitable setting for people to share more cultural aspects of their harvesting.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- Everyone looks for cows at this time of the year [December] because the bulls are skinny and the meat is ‘rotten’. Bulls do not get fat again until July or August so we need to concentrate on fall hunts, not the spring. (Tulít'a)
- Cows are usually shot this time of year [November to December] because they are fat and the bulls are not. (Norman Wells)
- In the fall we mostly get the bull moose and we don’t bother the cows and that is why we have all the moose now. (Fort Good Hope)
- [They] should have open season for barren-ground caribou only in March and April when both the bulls and the cows are fat. Caribou are the only mammals that can gain fat two times in one year and bulls are fat again in spring. Hunters won’t shoot bulls this time of year [November/December]) as there is no fat on them, but will shoot bulls in spring instead of cows because [there’s] more meat. (Norman Wells)
- I hunt a lot and I think we should decide on shooting the bulls and not shooting too many of the cows. ‘Harvest more bulls and leave the cows alone’ – remember our SRRB t-shirts. Depends on fat and time of year and cultural interest in harvesting cows to be able to eat the fetus for example. (Fort Good Hope)
- You have to keep a good balance in the bull to cow ratio. (Tulít'a)



Photo courtesy Sarah Gordon

### Themes:

1. Harvesting did not traditionally target just bulls but a mix of bulls and cows depending on season, location and condition of the caribou
2. It was important to keep a balance of bulls and cows.

## **2b. Meeting Needs and Sharing: Overview for all regions**

In most parts of the north, harvesting caribou is a very important way that people provide meat for their families. Imported foods are very expensive, and there is a strong cultural tradition of sharing within communities that ensures peoples' needs are looked after. Many of the comments on this topic directly or indirectly relate to the next one, '**Harvest Regulations**'.

There was naturally a lot of overlap between this topic and the next. They are different in that this topic includes more comments about how peoples' needs drive or influence their harvesting; the following topic focuses more on comments about how harvest restrictions have impacted peoples' ability to meet their needs. Harvesting restrictions and/or caribou scarcity were identified as the underlying cause of changes in how well people were able to meet their needs and their ability to share and pass on traditions.

Most of the information on this topic came from engagements in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, nonetheless, there some themes common to most regions. In the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Tłı̨chǫ regions as well as Kugluktuk, it was stated that harvest restrictions and caribou scarcity had impacted values and limited sharing – sharing had declined as restrictions were introduced and more emphasis was placed on the dollar value of the meat. In some communities, people that couldn't get enough caribou had to take part in the wage economy more to be able to support their families. In the Sahtú region, people stressed that traditionally, caribou was not sold but shared, and that for management to work, it would be necessary to work on improving ways of sharing.

Overall, there was a message that traditionally, harvesters tended to only take enough caribou to meet needs – whether their personal needs or the needs of an extended family and/or people that couldn't hunt. As these needs can change from year to year, so can harvesting levels and practices. However, it was also pointed out that harvesting activities could also depend on factors such as how close the caribou were to communities or how accessible they were to hunters, as well as what other species were plentiful. There is more information on these topics in a later sections, such as 2d '**Cost and Distance of the Harvest**'.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- It hurts to see less caribou because we need them for so much. We here have caribou as food – we just take what we need. We talk among the community and discuss what's needed. (Déljnè)
- We usually go to the mountains to hunt and only take advantage of the Bluenose-East when they are close by. Barren-ground caribou are not relied upon as the main source of food. (Community not identified)
- What's new is that we shoot less caribou now. There were no stores then; we shoot less now because we have the store. Lots of families here go out on the land. People really respect the land and the caribou. (Colville Lake)
- We really have to think about our harvesting. A lot more people are out there harvesting now. (Déljnè)
- Caribou don't really come near. Some people have to go far for hunting. It hurts to see less caribou because we need them for so much. We here have caribou as food – we just take what we need. (Déljnè)
- The only time we go to get caribou is when we're having a carnival or feast. We just hunt barren-ground caribou when they are available [and take five or six]. (Norman Wells)
- The government – they want to put a limit on it, but we live with the caribou. We have some laws that we keep. We really don't want to put a limit on it. In fall, we go out on the land. People think that we shoot a lot, but we don't. We only take what we need. (Colville Lake)
- Sometimes young people shoot too many. Most of the people around here don't do that; they listen to the elders and parents and know not to do this. A lot of elders around here and people don't sell caribou for money. In other places you do get people selling them. It is disrespectful to sell them. Maybe that is part of the problem. (Colville Lake)
- We don't sell the meat. I don't know what they do when they bring it up [to other communities] – maybe sell it? (Colville Lake)
- We need to have more on meat sharing among people, including where non-Aboriginal people hunt with Aboriginal people. If two guys hunt together they should split the meat no matter what. (Norman Wells)
- If there is no caribou I'll starve. (Fort Good Hope)

### Themes:

1. Traditionally, people just took what they needed and hunted when caribou were close to communities
2. There were mixed impressions about whether people were harvesting more or less caribou
3. People need to work on mechanisms for respectful harvesting and sharing.

- Back in the 1950-60s, you did not hear about declines in caribou because Aboriginal people were managing properly. We used community freezers which were filled with bulls from fall community hunts. People were allowed to take meat once a week from the freezer. We need to go back to the old ways of managing things. (Tulít'a)

## **2c. Harvest Regulations: Overview for all regions**

Since the introduction of government harvest regulations, there have been four categories of harvesting recognized in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut – subsistence, resident, non-resident (i.e., outfitted), and commercial harvests – for these caribou. Most of the comments on this topic came from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, as people were experiencing subsistence harvesting restrictions at the time of the community engagement sessions. There was very little information recorded on this topic in the Sahtú and Tłı̨chǫ regions, and nothing from the Dehcho Region, Métis organizations or Kugluktuk.

The regulatory setting in the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtú areas was described as follows:

All non-resident, non-resident alien, resident, and commercial hunting was stopped in March 2006 in the ISR and in October 2006 in the GSA and Sahtú Settlement Area. The WMAC and GRRB made further recommendations to restrict Aboriginal harvesting of the Cape Bathurst (no hunting) and the Bluenose-West (tag required) herds. These were implemented in September 2007. The SRRB held a Public Hearing in November 2007 to determine whether a Total Allowable Harvest for the Bluenose-West herd was warranted and has since made recommendations on a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) for the SSA to the Minister of ENR. These recommendations in the SSA and ISR included changes to the barren ground caribou hunting zones to better reflect the geographic distribution of each of the three herds.<sup>5</sup>

In Wek' èezhìi, resident and non-resident hunting last occurred in 2009.

During the community engagements it was clear that in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, people were hunting less because of the regulations and felt they had a hard time filling their quotas because of the closed zones. Restrictions on harvesting impacted the passing on of harvesting and sharing traditions and increased poaching activities. As in the ISR, people in the Gwich'in Settlement Area also had a hard time filling their quotas because of the closed zones – they reported having to travel further to hunt. There was some uncertainty expressed about regulations, and people feared being charged for accidentally hunting in closed zones. Another theme was about how regulatory or management settings that promote a bull-dominated harvest can impact harvesting and conflict with traditions. However, because there are currently no harvest restrictions based on gender in the range of these caribou, these comments were included under '**Harvesting Traditions and Timing**' (2a).

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<sup>5</sup> Developing a Management Plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds: Summary of phase 1 community engagements in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. December 2009. Available from ACCWM members.

## **Sahtú Settlement Area**

- Caribou is caribou. How would you know if you hunted Bluenose-East or Bluenose-West caribou? (Tulít'a)
- What if the other communities will not give us a tag? This is affecting our land claim rights. We do not want to be charged if hunting Bluenose-West caribou and we have no tags. (Tulít'a)



## **2d. Cost and Distance of the Harvest: *Overview for all regions***

Similar information was recorded on this topic in communities of three regions – the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Gwich'in Settlement Area, and the Sahtú Settlement Area. Generally, people said that caribou are harvested most when they are close to the communities and less when they are further away. This theme was also heard in Wrigley and in Kugluktuk.

Two other common themes heard in the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, and Sahtú communities were:

- The cost of harvesting increased as people had to go further and gas was more expensive (hunting zones changed distance to travel)
- People were not harvesting as much caribou as a result of cost increases.

In the ISR and GSA hunting zones had an effect on the average distance harvesters had to travel to hunt caribou. This was not the case for people in Paulatuk or Colville Lake; both of those communities reported caribou being the same or easier to access as they were close to the community.

There were no comments recorded for Wek' èezhìi on this topic.

*Themes:*

1. People were not harvesting as much
2. People mostly harvested when the caribou were close to the communities.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- It hasn't changed much how we harvest around here. (Colville Lake)
- We haven't had any organized hunts for the last few years; it is just too far away and too costly. A couple of weeks ago we considered a community hunt but we would be looking at \$700/skidoo for the gas and supplies. We decided we couldn't afford this. (Fort Good Hope)
- We used to travel only 50 km and see lots of caribou but now they are just too far away; we can't afford to hunt them. (Fort Good Hope)
- Tulít'a mostly hunts moose and mountain caribou. Our experience with barren-ground caribou is limited to when they are close to the community. (Tulít'a)
- We cannot hunt in the summer because the caribou are too far away. (Tulít'a)
- Hunters from Tulít'a do not really go to Fort Good Hope or Colville Lake to hunt. We usually only hunt the herd around Great Bear when they are close; it's too far to go to Hottah Lake [SE of Great Bear Lake]. When barren-ground caribou do not come close to Tulít'a, we do not harvest them. (Tulít'a)
- Norman Wells people don't bother about barren-ground caribou much, but others disagreed and said that Norman Wells people 'hunt all over' the Sahtú. Certain families hunt more moose than caribou or hunt in the 'hills' [west side of Mackenzie River]. Caribou are harvested when they are close and available. (Norman Wells)
- It's very expensive getting to there. A jerry can of fuel costs \$40 and won't get you too far. We only hunt when the caribou come close and only take enough to feed your family. It's a different story now; we don't harvest as much. The harvest is low because of the distance. (Déljné)
- It's 100 gallons for me to go to north shore of Great Bear Lake. The point is that it's hard for people. (Déljné)



## **2e. Conservation Concerns and Ease of Access: Overview for all regions**

While there was a strong message during the community engagements that in most places, people were harvesting fewer caribou than in the past, there were also some concerns stated that people may need to temporarily restrict their harvesting to help conserve the caribou when their abundance is low. In most regions, people mentioned concerns that there may have been too much harvesting pressure on the caribou during the time of the community engagements.

In communities of the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtú regions, there were three main themes heard during the community engagements on these topics:

- Some people had already changed their harvesting to conserve caribou;
- Skidoos and ATVs made it easier to hunt;
- Roads increased access to caribou.

Some harvesters mentioned the need to adopt stricter conservation measures or harvesting restrictions. In the Sahtú Settlement Area, it was suggested that disrespectful practices (like wasting caribou) need to be addressed to protect the animals. In Kugluktuk, some harvesters were trying to select barren cows so that the population could recover more quickly.

*Themes:*

1. Need to adjust actions to protect caribou
2. Skidoos and ATVs made it easier to hunt
3. Roads increased access in some areas.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- Years ago there was a drop in marten around Whitefish River area [north of Déljnę] and we voluntarily shut down trapping in that area for a few years. (Déljnę)
- We really have to think about our harvesting. A lot more people are out there harvesting now. (Déljnę)
- Sometimes young people shoot too many. Most of the people around here don't do that; they listen to the elders and parents and know not to do this. A lot of elders around here and people don't sell caribou for money. In other places you do get people selling them. It is disrespectful to sell them. Maybe that is part of the problem. (Colville Lake)
- We have to keep the caribou protected. If we don't then they will move away. (Colville Lake)
- In Fort Good Hope there were four truckloads wasted. Some of these young people go kind of crazy. We really have to respect and not bother them [the caribou]. (Colville Lake)
- There is increased use of motorized vehicles in hunting now. People are not abiding by the rules and more people are using motorized vehicles than years ago [it's too easy to hunt]. (Norman Wells)
- Today we have skidoos and can go way far. If you travel too much where the caribou like to go they may go away. (Colville Lake)
- [There is] easy access and with more exploration, there will be even more access. (Norman Wells)
- Hunting is much easier today with so much access by road and planes. (Tulít'a)
- We don't have roads; we don't have access. (Déljnę)

# Results from Community Engagement Sessions:

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*3. What information is needed for management? How can your knowledge be best used in management?*



Topics:

- A. Traditional Knowledge and Harvesting Practices
- B. Education
- C. Research Questions and Suggestions
- D. Harvest Levels and Hunting Pressure
- E. Scientific Knowledge and Research Practices
- F. Using Local People

### **3a. Traditional Knowledge and Harvesting Practices: Overview for all regions**

The community engagements were not intended to be thought of as traditional or local knowledge research. Nonetheless, some of this type of information was shared and documented during the meetings in all regions. Under this topic we have compiled some traditional and community knowledge that was recorded about these caribou that did not fall under other topic headings in this report. This section cannot provide a comprehensive look at all the traditional and/or community knowledge that exists about these caribou; we can only present what was heard at the meetings about the Management Plan.

The following themes were heard across five regions:

- There is a long relationship between caribou and Aboriginal people, based on respect and principles that foster sustainability or wise use (e.g. no waste, switch to other prey during low abundance, use all parts of the caribou, etc.)
- Knowledge about animals like caribou is usually gained and/or shared while out on the land
- Traditional knowledge (TK) has played an important role in sustaining caribou
- More TK needs to be documented and its use promoted
- Harvest regulations need to accommodate traditional practices, such as letting the leaders pass
- Traditionally, people hunted by the seasons and according to the condition of the animal
- Good management needs to accommodate traditional knowledge, community knowledge and scientific knowledge
- ENR and communities need to cooperate to use both sources of information effectively.

Importantly, it was also pointed out in more than one area that knowledge systems and knowledge gained on the land are negatively impacted by harvest restrictions. That is, if people are not going out to harvest as much, less new information is being built into knowledge systems and is available for monitoring and research, and fewer traditional practices are being passed down.

There is some overlap between this topic and information included in section 2 of this report. This section focuses primarily on information needs for management. Most comments about how traditional knowledge affects how caribou are harvested (e.g. by season, condition, location) is included in section 2a (***Harvesting Traditions and Timing***).

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- My grandfather says that we were once caribou and caribou were once people. We switched when there was starvation. There are a lot of stories. In the past, not too long ago, some years [there was] no caribou, no meat. Before some elders were born, some years [there was] no meat. (Colville Lake)
- We have been living with the caribou all our lives. (Colville Lake)
- In the past the elders knew the caribou. The caribou made laws for themselves. We have to respect that – like the legend about the young boy that turned into a caribou. He told the other people not to worry about him. [They] can make clothes from his skin. When you harvest a caribou, don't throw anything over your head. You have to respect that. Caribou, when they give birth they usually only have one calf, two is rare. Last fall a hunter had a cow with three calves – there is a Dene name for this. [They] killed one cow years ago that when they cut it open had three fetuses. The elders said that this was a good sign, that [they] would have lots of caribou. [It's the] same as a few years ago when we had thousands of caribou here, so [it] is the same recently when we had the cow with the three calves – [it] might be a sign there will be hundreds and thousands of caribou. Across the lake here is a good feeding ground for caribou. This is why they travel thousands of kilometers to [come] here. ... We have beliefs like that. (Déljneq)
- We see lots of our grandfathers' signs out there on the land. We go there to visit the caribou – it's like when you visit where you came from. We need to protect the caribou but we don't really agree with limiting the caribou. If you look back at our history, we have caribou all the way. We look after the caribou. It's kind of not safe if we put the caribou in the hands of the government. (Colville Lake)
- The government – they want to put a limit on it, but we live with the caribou. We have some laws that we keep. We really don't want to put a limit on it. In fall, we go out on the land. People think that we shoot a lot, but we don't. We only take what we need. (Colville Lake)
- The elders of the past taught us that the caribou knows when people disrespect the other caribou; they have a lot of power. (Colville Lake)

### Themes:

1. There is a long relationship between caribou and people, based on respect
2. Traditional knowledge and practices have played an important role in sustaining caribou
3. More TK needs to be documented and its use promoted
4. Harvest regulations should accommodate traditional practices

*Themes:*

5. Good management needs to use both TK and SK; ENR and communities need to cooperate
6. Traditionally, people would let the leaders pass.

- You should combine scientific and traditional knowledge. I keep saying to the government that my people have doctorate degrees in their knowledge. If you come here and say you know more than these people, then you can just go away. Where are our papers that say we have degrees? (Déljne)
- The elders say that the cycle might be low when they are being disrespected, such as when you hit them with a stick and then the caribou go away for seven or eight years. Around here before 1941, that's when the caribou moved over here, about 70 years ago. (Colville Lake)
- Lots of families here go out on the land. People really respect the land and the caribou. People from other communities shoot too many caribou and bother the caribou. Maybe you guys don't know as much as the elders do! We need to work together. (Colville Lake)
- It's very hard for elders to express their feelings when they are asked about caribou. I have feelings for the caribou. We really take care of the caribou. Every time we ask for money to address these things, the people from the government who come don't understand the Dene way and how we relate to the caribou. (Déljne)
- How [do you] tell what herd a caribou is from? The elders say they can tell about the caribou from the way that they look – they can tell a caribou that is 'not from around here.' (Colville Lake)
- Maybe that's part of the problem with the caribou... many of the old ways not being practiced. (Colville Lake)
- There is a loss of culture – maybe that's part of what's going on with caribou. In the past what the elders taught was really respected. They took it all in. Now [that's] not happening. Maybe we should bring it into the school. There's always no funding for language. (Colville Lake)
- A lot of the young people here in Colville Lake know the respect that should be given to caribou. But young people from other places don't know this respect; they aren't being taught. Maybe that is why we still have caribou around, because the respect is still there. (Colville Lake)
- Around here, people understand the caribou... in October a lot of caribou went by. You let them go – even if there are lots – you respect the animals (Colville Lake)
- People can't take the first caribou that come through [during migration]. (Tulít'a)

- The elders just want to leave it the way that it is. Many of the elders just don't feel comfortable talking about it. If you hit one caribou [with a stick] – how do the other 100,000 caribou know? They all move away. So, it's hard for us. (Colville Lake)
- The caribou are their own boss. The animals take care of themselves. (Déljnę)
- You eat all the meat off of the neckbone – that is respect. The caribou will come back then because they know you will use them. We have to watch how we waste. Don't throw it out. (Déljnę)



*Photo courtesy Deb Simmons, SRRB*

### **3b. Education: Overview for all regions**

This arose as a priority topic during the community engagements even though it was not directly asked in the focus questions identified by the Working Group. A lot of information was documented in all regions. Overall, there was a very strong message from the communities that a greater emphasis on education – especially lessons about how to harvest caribou respectfully – should be the first approach to management. Then, if education was not found to be successful enough, harvest restrictions should be considered.

The common themes documented for most regions were:

- Good education may achieve conservation better than imposing restrictions
- The Management Plan should emphasize conservation education
- Education should include traditional knowledge and harvesting practices for caribou
- Educate about respectful harvest practices and safety in school and out on the land.

It was also commonly stressed that it's not just youth, but also adults who need education about respectful caribou harvesting practices. There were ideas about using radio, video, flyers, YouTube, Facebook, meetings and television for education as well as communication. For example, it was suggested that the radio could be used to inform harvesters on thresholds and harvesting requirements, and the television could be used to show videos on how to butcher properly.

Some of the messages that people said they would like to see included in educational programs were:

- Proper hunting and butchering techniques (e.g., how to sight rifles and select caribou, how to use all parts)
- How to reduce waste and wounding loss
- How to harvest with the seasons
- How to dress and share meat
- Leaving pregnant cows alone
- Only take what you need, and
- How to recognize and not harvest leaders of the pack.

It was suggested that many people have a role in education – ENR, RRCs and family responsibilities were all mentioned. In addition to educating the public, it was stressed in Kugluktuk that it is also important to educate industry on minimizing disturbance and proper monitoring of caribou.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- A lot of the elders in this community really believe what they learned from their elders and parents. If they learn something, it is like the Ten Commandments. (Colville Lake)
- The change is that the new generation needs to be taught. The teaching has to be there – it has to start with the family – safety, everything. Single parents need more help. (Déljnè)
- Harvesting – it is hard, it is our way of living for Dene people. Now, we have a lot of non-Aboriginals taking animals. They don't know how to skin the animals. That is one of the things that needs to be looked at. (Tulít'a)
- Many of the old ways are not being practiced. There is a loss of culture – maybe that's part of what's going on with the caribou. In the past what the elders taught was really respected. They took it all in. Now that's not happening. Maybe we should bring it into the school. There's always no funding for language. (Colville Lake)
- Could this type of course be taught through the schools, then bring in the RRCs to help? It must be hardwired in somewhere, if it is going to last. The funding needs to be there every year. (Norman Wells)
- The age of the hunter also comes into it too. You can't be too young; you have to be strong enough to move the animal. I don't like the age 14. It should be 18, 19, or 21. (Tulít'a)
- In Fort Good Hope there were four truckloads wasted. Some of these young people go kind of crazy. We really have to respect [the caribou]. (Colville Lake)
- [We] need hunter education on things like proper use of meat, sharing, meat wastage, and conservation. (Norman Wells)
- I have seen a lot of people going out to hunt without ever having sighted in their rifles – they just go out and hunt. There needs to be education for all hunters. I done the training, I learned a lot from it. Today, I see kids going out without anyone to teach them; they take their gun and learn on their own. There should be a hunter safety and education course through the school – make it part of the curriculum. (Déljnè)
- Use YouTube and FaceBook, or also radio – have radio contests. (Déljnè)

### *Themes:*

1. Educate children in respectful harvest practices and safety in school and by taking them out on the land
2. Adults also need education about respectful harvesting practices (e.g., no waste, proper sighting, let leaders pass, etc.)
3. Education should include traditional knowledge and harvesting practices for caribou

*Themes:*

4. Use media (like radio) and road signs to remind people to respect caribou.

- A hunter awareness course could teach targeting, so people know where the vital organs on the animal are, etc. (Déljnę)
- About a month ago I went out on the land and saw a moose that was shot in the leg and was bleeding pretty bad... I shot it and brought it back here. (Colville Lake)
- It would be good to get signs on the winter road to remind people to respect caribou. (Community not identified)

### 3c. Research Questions and Suggestions: Overview for all regions

As noted under '***Traditional Knowledge and Harvesting Practices***Error! Reference source not found.' at the beginning of this section, communities in all regions stressed how important it is to use traditional knowledge in Management Planning. For this to happen, the information first needs to be researched and/or documented. This is considered an 'information gap' in many areas – a lot of knowledge is held by community members, but it has generally not been communicated or shared very effectively with management organizations, nor has it been accommodated very well by regulatory regimes. During the community engagements and Management Planning process, it was repeatedly emphasized – by many different people, in many different places – that it is critical that this work gets done and the resulting information helps shape Management Plans.

Many of the comments recorded in the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtú settlement regions were similar for this topic. Some common research suggestions in these areas were to:

- Document traditional knowledge on many topics
- Improve understandings of caribou population decline or cycles
- Study 'inter-herd' movements
- Look at cumulative impacts to habitat, including impacts of climate change and human disturbance
- Study predation rates and the impact of predation on herds.

Additional research topics that were suggested involved looking into calf mortality, researching caribou health, and monitoring insect populations. It was also stressed in several areas that traditional knowledge should inform how and when scientific surveys are done; for the most part, these comments have been included in '***Scientific Knowledge and Research Practices***' (3e).

During the public review, members of the NWT Métis Nation suggested that the influence of industrial activity and mining exploration and operation should be closely monitored at all stages of caribou population status. It was also suggested that winter roads be added to the zone of influence on caribou and ways to monitor and assess how trucks travelling disturb migrating and staging caribou be developed.

*Themes:*

1. Need to document traditional knowledge about barren-ground caribou
2. Caribou population declines or cycles need to be better understood
3. Need research looking into habitat, insects and predators
4. Research needs to look at cumulative impacts, including climate change, competitors and human disturbance

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- Ask elders about past cycles of herds – not so much numbers, but remembering when the herds would come into their communities, or were plentiful, as opposed to the times when they could not find them. (Norman Wells)
- The government is spending thousands of dollars on counting caribou but are they spending any money on trying to understand why the numbers are changing? (Fort Good Hope)
- We are missing 20,000 caribou, so maybe that [satellite collars] is part of the problem. (Colville Lake)
- Do you study the weather changing? One time we had caribou all over. One October we had ice and rain on the snow and the caribou went away. In the olden days [they] had dog teams – no noise. Now it's all airplanes, mining, and exploration all around Great Bear Lake. What I'm trying to say is that the weather is important. That's how come they go down to Wrigley. They're trying to find good feeding grounds. The weather, the climate change – that's the biggest problem we have. (Déljnè)
- If we are out there collecting data we should be collecting information on water and insects and predators and habitat. (Fort Good Hope)
- Maybe the wolves are killing more? (Colville Lake)
- Nunavut too, [there is] lots of development there – mining. That should be a study too – the development effects on caribou. (Déljnè)
- Last few years we didn't see any caribou up there – no caribou at Caribou Point, Clearwater Bay [north shore Great Bear Lake]. We're right in the middle of all the activity that surrounds us; we're central. In the summer time and fall time we don't see them. For us, instead of studying the caribou, we think they should study the climate change, the weather patterns. (Déljnè)
- Research the impact of muskoxen on caribou, moose [we need to look at them before they are in crisis], mountain caribou and Dall's sheep [we need to know population size and health]. (Tulít'a)

- Nobody is monitoring the junior exploration companies that punch holes in the ground. Nobody is monitoring outfitters. Nobody is monitoring the ships that come into town, the helicopters flying over our land, the planes that come up from BC and Alberta. Nobody is monitoring who shoots the caribou. These junior companies – no one is watching them. Someone could come in and kill a few hundred caribou, or infest them with a disease. We need to monitor them more carefully. We need to monitor the nutritional value of the caribou, look at their blood. Where are the caribou getting their nutritional value from – the trees, cranberries, what? This should all be in the Management Plan. (Fort Good Hope)
- ... Wouldn't it be beneficial to identify and document the migratory routes of the caribou and map it out over a five year span? I think it would be beneficial because it would give the Management Plan more strength. (Fort Good Hope)
- About the mixing of the herds, maybe the Bluenose-East has gone to the Bluenose-West herd range? (Déljnè)
- Are there any surveys on wolves in the Sahtú Region? Since the herd numbers are going down, can we monitor where the cows are having calves on the tundra? And maybe we could keep all of the wolves and grizzly bears away from them in the calving grounds. Maybe that will help the herds come back. (Fort Good Hope)
- We could learn a lot by having monitors out there. For example, watching if calf mortality is caused by wolves, or grizzlies, or ice, etc. (Fort Good Hope)
- The calving areas are so sensitive – I wonder if monitors will help – monitoring the predators. I wonder if that help. Set up a monitor far out with a tripod and spotting scope to keep an eye on predators. It only takes a week or two then they are okay. (Tulít'a)

*Themes:*

5. The effects of development need to be better understood
6. Research needs to look into interactions between species
7. Research needs to look into herd 'mixing' or 'inter-herd' movements
8. Predation rates and impact on herds should be studied.

### **3d. Harvest Levels and Hunting Pressure: Overview for all regions**

Caribou harvesting is recorded differently for different categories of hunters. For example, land claim agreements set out requirements for subsistence harvest reporting for those with Aboriginal harvesting rights, and resident and non-resident hunters' harvests are usually recorded through other programs, such as territorial tag programs and/or General Hunting Licenses. As a result, there are some differences in harvest reporting between areas.

Most of the land claim mandated studies that were done in the range of these caribou were done for a set period of time and took place between the late 1980s to the early 2000s. Since then, wildlife management boards have started new programs documenting harvests in areas such as the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Gwich'in Settlement Area and the Western Kitikmeot Region. While their methods differ somewhat, each program does record barren-ground caribou harvests. The Sahtú, Wek' èezhìi and Dehcho regions do not currently have comprehensive harvest monitoring programs in place but caribou harvests are recorded in some areas.

Most of the information recorded on this topic came from the Gwich'in and Sahtú Settlement Areas. There was less information available from the Wek' èezhìi and Dehcho regions, but there was support expressed for some of the same ideas. In many communities people stressed that accurate harvest reporting is necessary for Management Planning. This opinion was echoed by the NWT Métis Nation. In some areas, people felt so strongly about the importance of harvest monitoring that they suggested reporting should be mandatory. It was also commonly stressed that to get accurate information, harvest surveys need good promotion and education programs, as well as the use of local labour.

In addition to monitoring caribou harvesting levels, the need to monitor pressure on other species and populations was also mentioned. There was also a lot of interest in communities and neighbouring regions cooperating and sharing harvest information. All types of harvest monitoring require a budget, so funding would have to be found for any type of program.

In both the ISR and GSA people taking part in the community engagement sessions stated that hunting pressure had increased in some areas, and that the impacts of these changes in hunting pressure need to be considered. Harvesters in Kugluktuk also said that impacts from changes in hunting practices need to be looked at. Both of these topics could be informed by harvest data, so those comments are included here.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- An accurate record of harvest should be mandatory as it is important to know how many caribou are being harvested from each herd. (Norman Wells)
- I would suggest that ... there be mandatory reporting of all harvest for all three of these herds and that the Sahtú harvest study be reinstated (Déljnè)
- Every year, you have a count of how many caribou are being shot; this is very good. We should keep this sort of thing going. (Colville Lake)
- If a harvest study is restarted in the Sahtú, everyone should have to provide information. It should be the RRCs collecting and inputting the data but they need the SRRB to coordinate. There should be a public meeting by the RRC to let people know what it is trying to do by collecting the information. (Norman Wells)
- We need more monitoring and need an officer. Right now there is no monitoring system except for what comes from ENR. My point is to get a monitor – [SRRB], are you trying to get money for this? [There is] better management with the community. Right now it is just the government. You can have the best monitor in place, but you need to have the community support. (Déljnè)
- It'd be good to have a monitor for the RRC, but we have no money – someone to do work with ENR. The RRC gets so little money. We have meetings and get a little payment. I know ENR has said they will get a young man to work on this. (Colville Lake)
- [We] need harvest study information for the subsistence hunting. This record has not always been accurate because not everyone is reporting. (Norman Wells)
- If I go hunt west side [Bluenose-West] I have to talk to Colville Lake. In 1996 I was up there and they monitored us. After the first day they said, 'They're good.' People here haven't seen the calving grounds. (Déljnè)
- If we know what each community harvests maybe we can agree on something and go ahead with tags. (Fort Good Hope)
- It should be mandatory for the people from Fort Good Hope to report their harvest. (Colville Lake)

### *Themes:*

1. Accurate harvest reporting is needed for management planning
2. Harvest reporting should be mandatory
3. Harvest surveys need good promotion and education programs to be successful

*Themes:*

4. Information needs to be shared between communities and regions
5. Need to find funding sources for harvest monitoring.

- We need to know harvest information from other communities like Kugluktuk, Wrigley, and Gamètì before we can make decisions. (Tulít'a)
- There should be some funding for monitors to determine how many caribou are being hunted. We need someone to be out there and figure out how many animals are being taken, for example in Colville Lake. (Fort Good Hope)
- Having a wildlife monitor is a good idea. There are stories of people taking a lot of caribou and people selling the meat. They don't believe caribou should be sold. (Colville Lake)
- We would like monitors this year. There were people coming from the other communities shooting the caribou on the road then taking it back, without coming through Colville Lake. People were taking too much. Would like a monitor reinstated this year. (Colville Lake)
- We need to know about harvest in the Tłı̨chǫ. (Délı̨nę)
- What about the Dehcho people? Wrigley people are shooting caribou. We don't know how many they are taking. Are you asking them the same questions as you ask us? The caribou go down to Keller Lake and then to Fish Lake. (Délı̨nę)
- For many years big game hunters hunted in the mountains and paid \$10,000 for sheep. Is there any way we could use some of that money for monitors or a harvest study? (Fort Good Hope)
- Services and fees are being paid from big game hunters to the GNWT. Could we look to managing our own fees in the Sahtú? (Fort Good Hope)

### 3e. Scientific Knowledge and Research Practices: Overview for all regions

Most of the comments on this topic were recorded in the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtú settlement regions. In those three areas, there were two main themes that were shared:

- There were concerns that some ENR surveys missed caribou and were therefore not accurate
- Many people were worried that scientific research was stressful for caribou.

It was suggested that research methods should be adapted to minimize stress on caribou at sensitive times. For example, there was a common interest in seeing caribou surveys take place during migrations. People also suggested that collaring in seasons other than spring could cause less stress to pregnant cows.

At the same time, there were also a number of comments suggesting that scientific surveys should occur more often, so that there could be population estimates available more than every three years.

People in Kugluktuk raised the point that there needs to be better communication between scientists and harvesters on issues around caribou parasites or disease and meat safety. More information on communication and education can be found in other sections of this report.

There is some overlap between this topic and the previous topic, '***Traditional Knowledge and Harvesting Practices***' (3a), especially comments that suggest cooperation between the different knowledge systems is necessary for management.

*Themes:*

1. Surveys should be done during migrations
2. There were mixed feelings about how stressful scientific surveys were for caribou
3. Research methods should be adapted to minimize stress on caribou at sensitive times.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- Follow the migration routes of the caribou; build corridors or corrals to help monitor them more closely. (Norman Wells)
- We really have to respect them and not bother them [the caribou]. When ENR do the count it's okay once in a while with the chopper, but not too much. The caribou wants to be free. (Colville Lake)
- Animals are like human beings – if you bother them too much they don't like it. How many times have we got to keep telling ENR this? They should treat animals like human beings and with respect. In the old days when there was no ENR, animals roamed anywhere they wanted. It seems now with all the activity and the flying around, that's why the migration route has changed and we must acknowledge that. (Déljné)
- It would be nice to get a figure [population estimate] every year. (Déljné)



*Photo courtesy Mathieu Dumond –  
Government of Nunavut*



### **3f. Using Local People: *Overview for all regions***

Overall, communities in all regions pointed out that local residents could be employed to have a greater role in many aspects of caribou research, monitoring, and Management Planning. Increased involvement in field surveys, traditional knowledge interviews and harvest surveys were mentioned most often.

It was also noted that locals should be trained and employed to document and share information about things such as meetings and Management Planning events, and that adequate training would be necessary for this.

Some further information on this topic is included in '***Harvesting Levels and Hunting Pressure***' section (3d).

## **Sahtú Settlement Area**

- When you do that monitoring you should get a couple of community guys out there. (Déljnę)
- It would be good for us to be involved in the count. They want to put a limit on the [caribou harvests] – two per person. We took the elders to Fort Good Hope [to SRRB Public Hearing, Nov. 2007]. The elders just want to leave it the way that it is. Many of the elders just don't feel comfortable talking about it. (Colville Lake)
- Environmental monitors should have the proper training. There have been courses put on through the Aurora College ... the graduates of these programs and only the graduates should get the monitoring jobs. (Norman Wells)

# Results from Community Engagement Sessions:

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4. *If management actions limit the harvest of caribou, how should the herds be shared?*



Topics:

- A. Making Tough Decisions
- B. Communication and Cooperation among Regions
- C. Switching Foods and Sharing Harvests
- D. Tags and Quota Systems
- E. Fairness
- F. Development and Disturbance
- G. Non-Subsistence Hunting
- H. Enforcement

## 4a. Making Tough Decisions: *Overview for all regions*

A lot of the information in this section comes from four areas – the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Gwich'in Settlement Area, the Wek' èezhìi (Tłı̨chǫ Region), and Kugluktuk, Nunavut.

There was a strong recognition in most of these communities that as a result of land claims, community members, as well as Aboriginal organizations and governments, have the responsibility to make some difficult decisions in regards to sustaining caribou. Many people in the community engagements stressed that it is important to think about the future of the caribou, as well as the future of today's youth, and to manage actions accordingly.

Some of the other themes commonly heard on this topic include:

- Communities need to be more involved in management and not just wait for action from a Minister
- Management needs to be cooperative, and negotiations need to be based on respect and good faith
- Stricter harvesting regulations may be necessary
- Communities will need to define and act on commercial harvesting
- The Management Plan will need to be adaptive, to change as herd size changes
- To be successful, the Management Plan will need to consider peoples' ability to meet their food needs
- It is important to act quickly with the Management Plan.

Another main theme was that communities, regions and governments must act cooperatively to make these difficult decisions and to manage actions that affect the caribou. There is more on this topic in 4b, '***Communication and Cooperation among Regions***' later in this section.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- Maybe there should be limits [placed on harvest of barren-ground caribou] right now. (Norman Wells)
- We really have to think about our harvesting. A lot more people are out there harvesting now. (Délı̨nę)
- We need a consistent approach and law for all regions that share the same population of caribou. If we don't apply the same rules the population will decline and the most we will be able to say is, 'What happened?' This Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East, and Cape Bathurst caribou herds is the perfect example of that need to work together and use the same rules. (Fort Good Hope)
- It's not good to always talk about the caribou or bears. They might stay away because we are talking about them. We can't make decisions on behalf of the animals because we don't own them. The caribou has its own mind and should be free. We should also be free. We shouldn't be told we can shoot only three. [It's] not good to be putting laws down. (Colville Lake)

### *Themes:*

1. Stricter harvesting regulations may be necessary
2. Management needs to be cooperative and restrictions need to be followed by each region.



## **4b. Communication and Cooperation among Regions: Overview for all regions**

The comments included on the previous topic set the stage for some of the types of difficult decisions and discussions that may need to take place in order to help sustain caribou for the future. This section focuses on comments about regional communication and cooperation, what is needed, and how it might occur.

There is information from four regions on this topic: Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtú and Wek' èezhìi (Tłı̨chǫ Region). People taking part in community engagement sessions in these regions stressed some of the following points:

- All caribou users need to come together to talk about Management Planning
- Communication needs to improve within communities (for example, there need to be more harvesters and elders attending meetings), between communities in a region, as well as amongst or between regions
- Accurate and up-to-date information about caribou needs to be shared, so that good plans can be negotiated among the different regions
- Issues around management actions can be sensitive and all parties need to come to the table with respect.

There were suggestions that communication about the plan, the wildlife management process, and information on regulations or harvesting restrictions needs to be improved and that locals could be the ones to do this. Some of these suggestions are similar to the ones presented in '***Education***' (3b) and '***Using Local People***' (3f).

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- I think there should be discussion; the parties should meet. We are only 3000 people compared to the Tłı̨chǫ. (Dél̨iné)
- If we know what each community harvests maybe we can agree on something and go ahead with tags. (Fort Good Hope)
- These caribou come from the same place; I don't know who hunts down there but what do the Inuvialuit or the Gwich'in think? I am interested in hearing about their thinking. (Fort Good Hope)
- Sometimes there are things going on around Paulatuk; they try to make Colville Lake aware of these things. Last year they heard about a company going between Paulatuk and here. The chief stopped it so that the caribou wouldn't be affected. It is good to work with each other for these reasons. (Colville Lake)
- We need to know about harvest in the Tłı̨chǫ. (Dél̨iné)
- I don't go to Norman Wells and tell them what to do. I know they have oil. They shouldn't come here and tell us what to do. (Dél̨iné)
- When they do that flying around it would be good to know. We seem to be the last to know. If Tłı̨chǫ makes [an] announcement about caribou we should be aware of it. (Dél̨iné)
- If there is a restriction someplace we should be aware of it. If we shut down a section for hunting it would be nice to know ahead of time. That's why the SRRB should work with the other boards. We need a plan – a Management Plan. (Dél̨iné)
- In 1995 we tried to set up a committee with Nunavut [to discuss protected area status for Bluenose-East calving grounds]. ENR said they would fund it, but it didn't happen. Nunavut government is 100% behind development. (Dél̨iné)
- We should involve the Dehcho. They hunt Bluenose-East. If I go hunting in the Tłı̨chǫ I have to ask. People come here to hunt; nobody tells me. If we have to coordinate our hunt in April with Gamètì... (Dél̨iné)
- All the other [land claim agreements] are different than Sahtú. The leadership needs to get together. (Dél̨iné)
- I don't want an invasion [of hunters from other areas] here. It's pretty hard for us to go to Hottah Lake this time of year, we don't have mutual ground to talk to Tłı̨chǫ. (Dél̨iné)

### Themes:

1. All users need to come together to talk about what to do
2. Good information (like harvest data) should be shared and plans negotiated among different regions
3. There was a need for better communication about regulations
4. There was a need to coordinate with neighbouring regions.

## **4c. Switching Foods and Sharing Harvests: Overview for all regions**

For most regions, the comments recorded about switching to different sources of meat and sharing or re-distributing harvests in the community were very similar. However, no comments were recorded for this topic in the Wek' èezhìi or Dehcho regions, nor during meetings with Métis organizations. For the other areas, in times when fewer caribou were available, people said they would traditionally switch to other foods. Depending on the region, some other food sources that were identified were different types of caribou, reindeer, Dall's sheep, muskox, fish, moose, buffalo or geese. It was noted that if switching harvesting to other species is recommended, the impacts on other species will need to be considered.

In each region, people stated that for the Management Plan to be successful, it would need to consider how people will meet their needs for meat during times when caribou are not plentiful. It was stressed that it would be especially important to ensure that the needs of elders are met. As noted in earlier sections, harvest restrictions can negatively impact how food is shared. Sharing is extremely important in all Aboriginal communities and it is essential that this practice continues. Some type of compensation or assistance to harvesters, community-organized hunts or meat purchases could help people meet their needs and take some pressure off caribou. While people said there can be a tendency to purchase more store-bought meat during caribou shortages, this is usually more expensive than hunting and not always possible.

There is some overlap between this topic and 2b, '**Meeting Needs and Sharing**'. In the earlier section, most of the comments focus on how needs influence harvesting patterns; here, we have included comments that focus on possible solutions or alternate approaches to meeting needs when caribou are scarce.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- The ACCWM should look into selling caribou among settlement areas. The Dene practice is to share meat with elders and other people in the community, including non-Aboriginal people. (Norman Wells)
- Back in the 1950 and 1960s, when there was a lot of activity out on the land, you did not hear about declines in caribou because Aboriginal people were managing properly. One thing that really helped to keep the harvest constant is the community freezer. You can't control everybody when they have their own freezer to fill up. We used community freezers which were filled with bulls from fall community hunts. People were allowed to take meat once a week from the freezer. We need to go back to the old ways of managing things. You have to look at that; you have moved to a system that doesn't work. We should go back. (Tulít'a)
- These past few years we received meat from [Mackenzie Mountain] outfitters – send some of this to other communities. Most of the meat was in better condition this year than in past years. Some [are] sending in plastic which is why the meat is spoiling. Sharing the meat – this should continue. (Norman Wells)
- [We] need to have more meat sharing among people, including where non-Aboriginal people hunt with Aboriginal people. If two guys hunt together, they should split the meat evenly no matter what. (Norman Wells)
- The newer generations have other sources of food – the store, fish, and moose. I think there should be discussion; the parties should meet. (Déljne)
- [I am] happy that the plan mentions encouraging harvest of alternate species – this [is] important. Barren-ground caribou aren't always accessible. They do move out of sight, away from the guns. (Norman Wells)
- If there is no caribou I'll starve. (Fort Good Hope)
- We don't traditionally hunt barren-ground caribou, we hunt in the mountains. People who traditionally hunt barren-ground caribou may turn to hunting in the mountains. (Tulít'a)
- Elders say that if it is hard to get caribou, then we should go to the mountain lakes for fish. (Community not identified)
- [People should] harvest more boreal woodland or mountain woodland caribou. (Norman Wells)

### *Themes:*

1. The management plan will need to consider how people will meet their needs to be effective
2. Forms of compensation, organized hunts or community meat purchases could help people meet their needs and take pressure off caribou
3. Need better distribution of meat from outfitters
4. Sharing is important in the community and should continue
5. Other foods could be other types of caribou, fish, moose and store-bought meat.

#### **4d. Tags and Quota Systems: Overview for all regions**

There were comments recorded on this topic from community engagements in all regions except Wek' èezhii.

In the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, it was very clear that most people were unhappy with the tag system and would rather rely on traditional harvesting rules and practices than the recent management regime. The tag system was seen to be influencing how people shared and whether people could provide for elders and others in the community as well as they had before. This was a very sensitive issue for people. There was an additional comment that once a quota is imposed, people tend to hunt fewer caribou, but they also tend to hunt fewer predators, allowing those populations to increase. In the Gwich'in Settlement Area, people were also unhappy with the system of closed zones for hunting and finding it harder to meet their needs.

In the Gwich'in and Sahtú Settlement Areas, there was some support for imposing a quota to conserve caribou. However, it was also mentioned that having a quota in some areas was impacting other neighbouring areas and impacting user groups unequally. It was stressed that quotas need to be fair and consider or accommodate regional effects. Harvesters in Kugluktuk stressed that introducing a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) is a complicated process – the elders need to be consulted, the population estimate needs to be accurate, and the TAH needs to respond to changing population levels.

There were several comments from the NWT Métis Nation in regards to allocation issues. Members felt that the use of tags should be mandatory for all hunters at most population levels, but that a harvest quota should not be used. In addition, the NWT Métis wanted to be recognized as an Aboriginal group if a Total Allowable Harvest was ever put in place.

There is some overlap between this topic and the next (**'Fairness'**), as well as 2c **'Harvest Regulations'**.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- If there was a limit on how many caribou you can shoot, I don't think it will work. If you shoot just one caribou, you share it. (Colville Lake)
- People in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region should have tags because the caribou calve right next to Paulatuk. (Norman Wells)
- If there are tags for Bluenose-East then they should be allocated to all five communities in the Sahtú – not like Bluenose-West. (Norman Wells)
- Why are there no Bluenose-West tags for Tulít'a? Does this mean that Tulít'a is not restricted from hunting Bluenose-West caribou? (Tulít'a)
- If we know what each community harvests maybe we can agree on something and go ahead with tags. (Fort Good Hope)
- What if the other communities will not give us a tag? This is affecting our land claim rights. We do not want to be charged if hunting Bluenose-West caribou and we have no tags. (Tulít'a)
- Tags should have been also given to Tulít'a – at least five. A commitment was made by the SRRB to add Tulít'a's request to the [January 2010] board meeting agenda for consideration. Tulít'a RRC should provide a formal written request to the SRRB. (Tulít'a)
- [There] should be some way to limit the number of people that come here to harvest caribou or to limit these guys to three caribou. They are taking more than we do. (Colville Lake)

### *Themes:*

1. Tag/quota allocations in some areas impact other nearby areas and user groups differently; quotas need to be fair and consider regional impacts.

## **4e. Fairness: Overview for all regions**

Most of the comments recorded on this topic came from community engagements in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and the Gwich'in Settlement Area. There were few comments from the Sahtú on this topic, and no comments from the Wek'èezhìi or Dehcho regions, nor from Kugluktuk. Many of the comments here relate to the harvest regulations discussed in 2b, as well as comments about tags and quota systems in the preceding topic (4d).

Comments recorded in the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in regions were similar for this topic. Some of the common themes heard at the meetings were:

- Harvest restrictions didn't seem fair within communities, between communities, and between regions
- Meat/quota distribution appeared unequal
- Hardship caused by hunting restrictions affected people differently
- Community members suffered hardships related to area closures and harvest restrictions while industry did not.

Participants in the Sahtú suggested that to be effective, a consistent approach to harvest restrictions and management is needed across all neighbouring regions. In addition, resident hunters didn't feel it was right that they be penalized when they took only 50 caribou a year.

Comments about fairness were also recorded during meetings with Métis organizations, but these were of a different nature than those heard from other regions. The North Slave Métis Alliance were not represented on the ACCWM and were frustrated that they were being excluded from having a seat in that part of the planning process. The NWT Métis expressed frustration about access to the herds, saying that they have harvested Bluenose-East caribou for a long time and want to have access to animals of that herd in the winter time regardless of the status of the herd when it is above the red zone.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- We need a consistent approach and law for all regions that share the same population of caribou. If we don't apply the same rules the population will decline and the most we will be able to say is, 'What happened?' This Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East, and Cape Bathurst caribou herds is the perfect example of that need to work together and use the same rules. (Fort Good Hope)
- Resident hunters in the Sahtú don't feel they should be penalized when they take less than 50 caribou a year. (Norman Wells)



*Photo courtesy Richard Popko, ENR, GNWT*

## 4f. Development and Disturbance: *Overview for all regions*

There were comments recorded during community engagement sessions in all regions about the importance of addressing the impacts of development and human disturbance on caribou and caribou habitat.

Not all types of development impact caribou to the same extent and impacts vary over time. For example, while seismic work was observed to disturb caribou, animals were also seen moving back into disturbed areas once the activity had stopped. Some of the activities or developments that were mentioned as disturbing to caribou were:

- Low level flying and helicopter traffic
- Seismic activity
- Mining exploration and development
- All-weather roads and highways
- Fire
- Pollution, dust and garbage.

There were mixed opinions in the GSA as to whether pipelines impacted caribou.

Quite often, harvesters expressed frustration that while their harvesting had been restricted in order to help sustain caribou, industry was seen to be allowed to continue its activities. There was a strong message that without protecting caribou habitat, there would be little point in trying to protect caribou. People stressed that limiting industry and protecting habitat need to be part of any Management Planning – critical habitat such as calving grounds, feeding areas and migration routes were mentioned in particular. It was also suggested that land use activities that impact caribou be monitored more carefully, and that people should be compensated for the negative impacts that resulted from development.

Section 1d ('Changes in Development') presents comments about how development and disturbance were observed to be impacting caribou. This section present comments on any potential management actions that could address those impacts. Comments on cumulative effects on habitat such as climate change are included in 1c '**Changes in the Environment**'.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- Nunavut too, [there is] lots of development there – mining. That should be a study too – the development effects on caribou. (Délı̨nę)
- When you mention maintaining caribou habitat that means you have to lobby against the industry that is coming in. They are the major concern. Without them, things will be okay. (Tulít'a)
- For the next few years, Husky is going to be the problem; they are going to ruin the habitat. (Tulít'a)
- We have to keep the food places [for the caribou]. (Colville Lake)

### *Themes:*

1. Impacts of industrial activities and developments on caribou need to be considered and monitored
2. Habitat protection needs to be part of the management plan
3. Industry can negatively impact caribou habitat
4. Limiting industry needs to be part of the management plan.

## 4g. Non-Subsistence Hunting: *Overview for all regions*

For this topic, information was documented for every region within the range of the Bluenose caribou. There was a very strong message in the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, and Sahtú regions, as well as Kugluktuk, that commercial caribou hunts and meat sales need to be addressed. People in several communities noted that they had seen or heard of large scale caribou hunts done for profit. It was suggested that communities and Aboriginal organizations need to have conversations around what is considered 'commercial' and how to regulate these activities. Hunting for profit seemed to be of concern more in some areas than others. As a result, it was suggested that more control is needed in certain locations, but not in all areas. Nonetheless, it was also pointed out that the issue will need consistent regulations that go across boundaries to be effective.

In Kugluktuk and some communities of the Gwich'in, Sahtú, and Wek' èezhìi regions, sport hunting for caribou also came up as a topic that some people were concerned about. People raised questions about whether sport hunting could negatively impact the herds. Specifically, there were concerns around impacts on herd structure that could be caused by removing big bulls from the population. As noted in previous sections about traditional knowledge and harvesting practices, bulls are not usually specifically targeted by Aboriginal hunters, but many harvesters feel it is important to take a balance of cows and bulls to maintain leaders in the herd and healthy populations.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- [With] outfitting, people don't like the idea of the commercialization of wildlife in any way. [They] really don't like killing animals for heads and not taking the meat; it shouldn't be allowed. [There are] some questions as to what happens to the meat – mostly moose and caribou – from the outfitters. (Déljnę)
- Go back 60 years, since the first outfitter came out. Is there any way to shut them down for one year or two? I know they are making their money off trophies. They are slowly affecting the future generations – they are taking a lot of moose, sheep, etc. It is hard for us to do anything about it because we make money off of them. (Tulít'a)
- The outfitters they aren't walking anymore; they are using choppers. (Tulít'a)
- I would suggest that the resident hunters be given two tags for bull Bluenose-East animals for Unit S [hunting zone in the Sahtú], and that a commercial quota of 30 bulls go to Déljnę. (Déljnę)
- There are simply no jobs in Tuktoyaktuk. One of the only ways of making money is harvesting caribou and selling the animal or selling dry meat. I've heard the going price for a caribou is \$200 in the ISR and hopefully, we don't have to go to that extent here. (Fort Good Hope)
- Having a wildlife monitor is a good idea. There are stories of people taking a lot of caribou and people selling the meat. [We] don't believe caribou should be sold. (Colville Lake)
- We have to keep the caribou protected. If we don't then they will move away. Other communities, they sell caribou. That's not our way; we don't do that. The caribou know what we do. (Colville Lake)
- Was any thought given to a poaching policy? Say you jump on a plane in Edmonton – you should see a sign saying that if you harvest a caribou illegally, you get one year in jail and a big fine. (Fort Good Hope)
- [Resident harvesters] shouldn't be penalized here in the Sahtú, where we don't take a lot of caribou. (Norman Wells)

## Themes:

1. There were some concerns about outfitter methods, harvest rates and impacts on herd structure (i.e., taking big bulls)
2. There was a need to address commercial sales/hunts that were taking place
3. Selling caribou was not considered a traditional activity.

## **4h. Enforcement: *Overview for all regions***

As mentioned in the preceding topic, during the community engagement sessions there were some concerns expressed about commercial caribou hunts or meat sales that have been taking place, that ‘poaching’ has been increasing as harvesting has become restricted, and that these issues need to be addressed. However, comments regarding needs for enforcement of harvest regulations were only recorded in the Inuvialuit, Gwich’in and Sahtú regions.

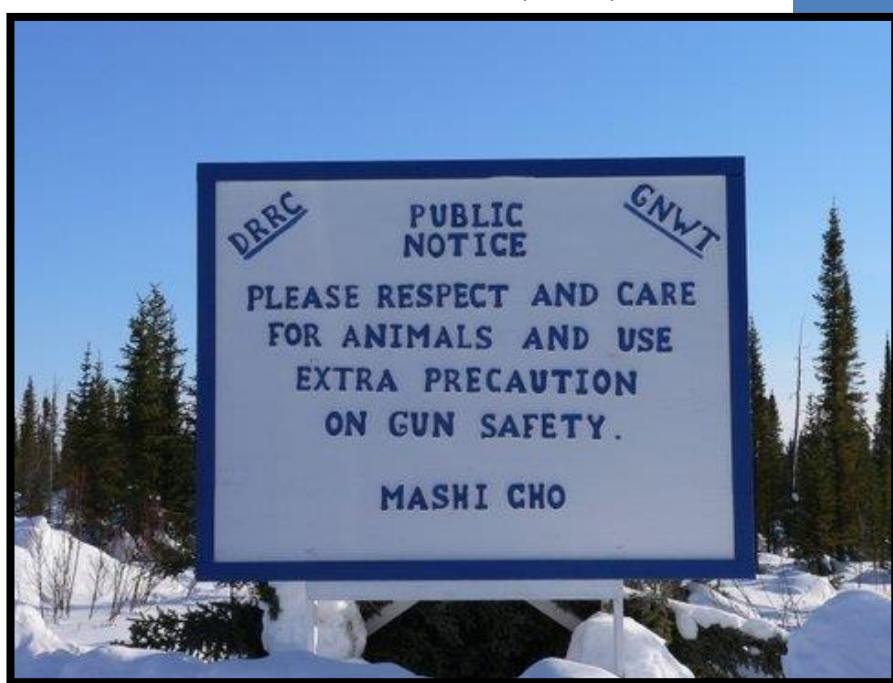
In all three areas there were many suggestions that the harvest of caribou for sale needs to be monitored and/or regulated within communities. There were also concerns that harvesters coming into a region from neighbouring areas need to be monitored and/or regulated similarly. It was recognized that regulations may be difficult to enforce if they differ for different herds, and that more enforcement will require more resources and funding. However, it was also stressed in several communities that education can help with compliance.

One additional concern that was raised was the question of how to better regulate or enforce rules with industry.

## Sahtú Settlement Area

- I was just in Inuvik where I was talking with a young guy from Tuktoyaktuk who said that although they have a tag system, there are some people who are going out and killing as many caribou as they want [30 or more]. There is no one there to enforce or patrol; [there is] only one woman officer but she does no patrols. I figure that in Paulatuk they have easy access in the calving areas and I wonder what they are harvesting. (Fort Good Hope)
- We really need more enforcement, especially where there is easier access like on calving grounds or where people are selling animals. Maybe you can monitor them more, watch night and day, check on harvesters. (Fort Good Hope)
- Those guys that come in here with trucks. That's not included [in the harvest statistics for Déljnè, 1940s-2000s]. That's where Renewable Resource Officers come in. (Déljnè)
- I believe it is getting out of hand in Tuktoyaktuk because the herd is so close to the community and many people are going out and getting as many as they can. I know that on the Dempster Highway there were check points, counting and sampling but there is nothing like that happening near Tuktoyaktuk. This is something that should be done. (Fort Good Hope)
- Caribou is caribou. How would you know if you hunted Bluenose-East or Bluenose-West caribou? (Tulít'a)

Photo courtesy Richard Popko, ENR, GNWT



## Themes:

1. There were suggestions that there needs to be greater monitoring and/or regulation of commercial meat sales
2. There were concerns about harvesters coming in from other areas to harvest and how to regulate those activities
3. It could be difficult to enforce when regulations differ by herd.

# Conclusions

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The community engagements that were conducted as part of developing '***Taking Care of Caribou – the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan***' were an important way of ensuring that people living within the range of these caribou had an opportunity to inform and shape the Management Plan. Overall, sixteen communities in the Northwest Territories and one in the western portion of the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut took part in the engagement process. The purpose of the initial engagements was to share information, identify key issues and concerns, discuss solutions, and outline next steps for the Management Plan. The second and third rounds of engagements provided opportunities for community members to fine-tune versions of the draft plan. During these stages, people were able to review the plan, assess how well their input had been included, and suggest further changes.

This report presents as accurate a record as possible of what was heard and documented during the community engagement sessions. It is not intended to be a comprehensive report on traditional and/or community knowledge of these caribou, as the meetings that informed it did not take the place of doing formal traditional and/or community knowledge research on caribou. There is still a need to facilitate the access to and sharing of this type of information throughout the range of the caribou, so that it can play a larger role in Management Planning. We recognize that there is a wealth of knowledge held in these communities and this report is limited in the depth and extent of this type of information.

Effort on researching and documenting community knowledge about caribou is required – traditional knowledge in particular can span periods of time much longer than most scientific research is able to. Active community members often spend long periods of time 'in the field' and have rich observations that can support, refute or enhance scientific findings.

# Appendix A: Summary Table for Management Plan Engagement and Review Process

Date	Region	Community (#participants)	Engagement Round, Meeting Type or Objective	Outcome or Products
Feb. 28 – Mar. 22, 2007	Western Kitikmeot Region, NU	Kugluktuk (12)	Workshop intended to provide an opportunity for participants to share knowledge of caribou herds, as well as proposing several actions that could promote the recovery of the caribou herds and help the community during this period of low caribou availability.	Workshop focused on Bluenose East and Dolphin-Union herds. Report produced (Dumond 2007).
<b>ROUND 1</b>		<b>COMMUNITY INPUT AND ENGAGEMENT</b>		<b>WORKING GROUP AND CONSULTANT HOLD COMMUNITY MEETINGS</b>
Oct. 20 – Nov. 3, 2009	ISR	Aklavik (23), Inuvik (14), Paulatuk (11), Tuktoyaktuk (17)	Community engagements to review status of herds; hear concerns and opinions as to what's happening with BGC in the region; discuss solutions and what to include in a Management Plan. Also did school tours in communities.	Summary report produced for ISR. Inuvik and Aklavik meetings were shared with GSA participants; comments from these community members were not sorted into Gwich'in or Inuvialuit but only by community.
Oct. 21 – Dec. 18, 2009	GSA, ISR	Aklavik (23), Fort McPherson (11), Inuvik (14), Tsuigehtchic (8)	Community engagements to review status of herds; hear concerns and opinions as to what's happening with BGC in the region; discuss solutions and what to include in a Management Plan; RRCs invited to provide comments at meeting and formally afterwards if desired. Also did school tours in communities.	Summary report produced for GSA. Inuvik and Aklavik meetings were shared with ISR participants; comments from these community members were not sorted into Gwich'in or Inuvialuit but only by community.
Dec. 1 – 18, 2009	SSA	Colville Lake (17), Deline (11), Fort Good Hope (15), Norman Wells (5), Tulit'a (14)	Community engagements to review status of herds; hear concerns and opinions as to what's happening with BGC in the region; discuss solutions and what to include in a Management Plan. Also did school tours in communities.	Summary report produced for SSA.
Feb. 17, 2010	Western Kitikmeot Region, NU	Kugluktuk (12-15)	Community engagements to review status of herds; hear concerns and opinions as to what's happening with BGC in the region; discuss solutions and what to include in a Management Plan	Summary report produced for Nunavut.

ROUND 2		COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON FIRST REPORT DRAFT		ACCWM MEMBERS CONSULT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE REGIONS.
Jan. – <b>Feb.</b> <b>2011</b>	ISR	Inuvik (6), Aklavik (5), Tuktoyaktuk (12), Paulatuk (13)	Community meetings to review first draft of Management Plan	Meeting recorded in notes.
<b>Feb. 14-</b> <b>Feb. 16,</b> <b>2011</b>	GSA	Aklavik(5), Inuvik (7), Fort McPherson(10), Tsiigehtchic(10)	GRRB Public meetings with Gwich'in RRCs to review first draft of the Management Plan to get input on the draft plan, the management actions and thresholds for actions; ENR WG member invited to help present plan with GRRB staff; RRCs invited to provide comments at meeting and formally afterwards	Summary report of all GSA consultations; summary does not include GTC comments. Themes identified to help review comments.  Additional comments received from Gwich'in Tribal Council in March, 2011 on Dec 2010 version of draft plan.
<b>Feb. 22 –</b> <b>24, 2011</b>	WRMA (Tłı̨chǫ)	Bechoko (40), Gameti (5), Whati (25)	In this region, Round 2 engagements included information conveyed to other regions during Round 1, as well as presenting information in the Draft Plan.	Notes produced for each community.
Mar. <b>2011</b>	SSA	Deline (6)	Public meeting to develop a Management Plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East caribou herds	Meeting notes provided, but no translation of discussions in North Slavey.
<b>Aug. 2-4,</b> <b>2011</b>	Western Kitikmeot Region, NU	Kugluktuk HTO	Community consultations on draft Management Plan	Meeting notes provided.
ROUND 3		CONSULTATION ON SECOND DRAFT		ACCWM MEMBERS CONSULT IN THEIR REGIONS. ENR RELEASES DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT.
Jun. <b>2011</b>			Draft plan posted on ENR website for public review, sent to key audiences*, and provided at following assemblies: Dehcho FN (Wrigley), Akaitcho Territory Government (Lutsel K'e), Tłı̨chǫ (Whati), Dene Nation (Fort Providence), Gwich'in (Tsiigehtchic), Sahtú (Colville Lake).	Written comments provided to ACCWM.
<b>Aug. 9</b> <b>2011</b>	GSA, ISR	Inuvik (10)	ENR public review meeting on the draft Cape Bathurst, Bluenose- West, and Bluenose-East Caribou Herds Management Plan.	Summary notes provided.
<b>Aug. 2- Aug. 18, 2011 &amp; Dec. 7, 2011</b>	GSA	Aklavik (8), Fort McPherson (5+8), Inuvik(6), Tsiigehtchic(3)	GRRB community consultations on draft Management Plan with RRCs and open to the public.	Community notes include list of participants and affiliation

<b>Aug. – Oct., 2011</b>	SSA	Tulit'a (11), Colville Lake (9), Deline (13), Fort Good Hope (16), Norman Wells (7)	ENR public review meetings on the draft Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Caribou Herds Management Plan.	Summary notes provided.
<b>Nov. 2011</b>	WRMA (Tłı̨chǫ)	Bechoko, Whati	Information session on draft plan.	No information available.
<b>Nov. 2011</b>	NWT MN	(unknown)	ENR meeting with NWT MN for comments on draft Bluenose Management Plan	Summary notes provided.
<b>Nov. 2011</b>	NSMA	(unknown)	ENR meeting with NWT MN for comments on draft Bluenose Management Plan	Summary notes provided.
<b>Jan. 2012</b>	Dehcho	Wrigley (5), Fort Simpson (7)	ENR public review meeting on the draft Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Caribou Herds Management Plan	Summary notes provided.
<b>Apr. – Jun., 2013</b>	ISR	Paulatuk (9), Aklavik (7), Inuvik (6), Tuktoyaktuk (24)	WMAC presentation and meetings to review draft plan and address IGC concerns with plan	Summary notes provided.

\*In addition to the meetings and presentations conducted as part of the engagement process, ENR solicited public input on the draft Management Plan by posting it online (June 2011 – present). While no broader distribution occurred in Nunavut, the draft plan was sent to the following NWT organizations for review and comment:

Aklavik Hunters' and Trappers' Committee	Caribou Pass Outfitters Ltd.
Aklavik Métis Local #56	Charter Community of Arctic Red River
Arctic Safaris	Charter Community of Délı̨nę
Association of Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters	City of Yellowknife
Aurora Caribou Camp	Community Government of Behchokǫ̀, Tłı̨chǫ Government
Ayoni Keh Land and Dugha Financial Corporation	Community Government of Gamètì, Tłı̨chǫ Government
Barren Ground Caribou Outfitters Association	Community Government of Gamètì, Tłı̨chǫ Government
Behdzi Ahda First Nation Band Council	Community Government of Wekweètì, Tłı̨chǫ Government
Behdzi Ahda First Nation Economic Development Corporation	Community Government of Whatì, Tłı̨chǫ Government
Behdzi Ahda Renewable Resources Council	CPAWS Northwest Territories
Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board	Deh Gah Gotie Dene Council
Canadian Arctic Resources Committee	Dehcho First Nations
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers	Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee

Délı̨nę First Nation	Jean Marie River First Nations
Délı̨nę Land and Financial Corporation	Joint Review Panel Manager
Délı̨nę Renewable Resources Council	Ka'a'gee Tu first Nation
Denehdeh National Office	K'ahsho Got'ine Charter Community Council
Deton' Cho Corporation	K'atlodeeche First Nation
Ecology North	Liidlii Kue First Nations
Ehdiiat Gwich'in Council	Mackenzie Gas Project (Regional offices)
Ehdiiat Renewable Resource Council	Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
Enodah Wilderness Travel Ltd.	Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
Environmental Impact Review Board Joint Secretariat – Inuvialuit Renewable Resource Committees	MLAs
Fort Norman Métis Land/Financial Corporation	Nahanni Butte Dene Band
Fort Providence Métis Local #57	Nihtat Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council
Fort Providence Resource Management Board	Norman Wells Land Corporation
Fort Simpson Métis Local #52	Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council
Fort Smith Métis Council	North Slave Métis Alliance
Gwich'in Land and Water Board	Northern Gas Project Secretariat (Yellowknife and Norman Wells)
Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board	Northwest Territory Métis Nation
Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board	NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines
Gwich'in Tribal Council	NWT Tourism Association
Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council	NWT Wildlife Federation
Hay River Aboriginal Métis	Paulatuk Hunters' and Trappers' Committee
Hay River Fish and Game Association	Pehdzeh Ki First Nation
Hay River Métis Council	Qaivvik Ltd.
Inuvialuit Game Council	Rabesca's Resources Ltd.
Inuvialuit Joint Secretariat	Resident hunters
Inuvialuit Land Administration	Sachs Harbour Hunters' and Trappers' Committee
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation	Sahtú Land and Water Board
Inuvik Métis Local #62	Sahtú Land Use Planning Board
J. Group (Peterson's Point Lake Lodge)	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board

Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated

Sambaa K'e Dene Band

Tetlit Gwich'in Council

Tetlit Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council

Tłı̨chǫ Renewable Resources Committee

True North Safaris Ltd.

Tuktoyaktuk Hunters' and Trappers' Committee

Tulít'a Dene Band

Tulít'a Land and Financial Corporation

Tulít'a Renewable Resources Council

Wek'èezhìi Land and Water Board

Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

West Point First Nation

Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)

Yellowknife Shooting Club

Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah)

Yellowknives Dene First Nation (N'Dilo)

Yellowknives Dene First Nation

