

**Addendum to Environment and Natural Resources Responses to Bluenose-East
Caribou Herd Management Proposal Sahtu Renewable Resource Board
Information Requests Round 1**

5. Evidence of Underreporting of Harvesting

ENR notes that reported BNE harvests were about 2,700 caribou/year in the winters of 2009 to 2013 but that ENR estimates “true” harvest to have been at least 4,000/year.

- a) Please provide more information about the basis for the 4,000/year estimate of the “true” harvest rate for BNE.
- b) Please provide evidence of known situations of under-reporting of BNE harvests in the past three winters.

ENRs Response:

Collection of complete and accurate caribou harvest information for all herds is a priority in the Northwest Territories (NWT) but experience to date has shown that an unknown amount of harvest is not reported. Under-reporting and not reporting has been commented on by many people, and noted by officers manning check-stations. Over the years, repeated observations of wildlife officers in the field, community monitors and Aboriginal leaders and co-management board members have pointed to un-reported wounding losses, un-reported harvest, under-reported harvest, hunters avoiding check-stations, although the exact amount of un-reported harvest is difficult to estimate. Given this situation, statisticians adjust the reported harvest up by a factor of 1.25 to account for losses due to ineffective retrieval, storage and wounding and unreported harvest.

This approach is also reflected in the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board Operating Procedures which include the following statement as a guideline for estimating harvest: For management purposes to err on the conservative side, the total estimated harvest is adjusted by a factor of 1.25 to account for losses due to ineffective retrieval, storage and wounding and unreported harvest.

Getting accurate harvest reports remains a major challenge in monitoring and managing caribou harvest in the NWT and in understanding its significance to declining caribou herds. Accurate, complete harvest reporting requires a commitment from all hunters, communities, leaders and boards, in addition to continuing work by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Environment and Natural Resources is working with communities to develop methods to work together to collect better harvest information.