



North

Łutsël K'è implements 2-year hunting ban on Bathurst caribou

The self-imposed moratorium is part of a new community-based stewardship plan

[Danielle d'Entremont](#) · CBC News · Posted: Feb 05, 2020 3:47 PM CT | Last Updated: February 5



A file photo of Bathurst caribou. In the last 30 years the caribou herd has declined by 98 per cent, according to the N.W.T. government. (ENR/GNWT)

The Łutsël K'è Dene First Nation is implementing a two year self-imposed moratorium on hunting Bathurst caribou.

The ban is part of a new community-led stewardship plan called Yúnethé Xá ʔetthën Hádi, for managing caribou that migrate in their traditional territory. The council formally approved the plan, according to a news release dated Jan. 28.

In the last 30 years the estimated size of the Bathurst caribou herd has declined by 98 per cent, according to a 2019 N.W.T. Department of Environment and Natural Resources [document](#). The

Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation has long relied on caribou for subsistence.

"We want to contribute to trying to sustain the herd. And hopefully the numbers can start climbing back up," said Chief Darryl Marlowe of the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation.

Marlowe said the First Nation does not believe respectful subsistence hunting has caused the decline of the herd, but they hope to protect the Bathurst caribou for future generations.

"We have survived off the caribou for thousands of years. And we want our children and our grandchildren to live off the caribou the way our ancestors always did. That's our way of life."



Chief Darryl Marlowe said he hopes the community-led plan will contribute to sustaining the Bathurst caribou herd. (Gabriela Panza-Beltrandi/CBC)

The plan also outlines hunting policies, protocols, and activities to support respectful hunting practices based on Łutsël K'é Dënesułiné values and practices.

Four full-time Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers have been hired to monitor the land, animals, and visitors including hunters within Thaidene Nënë and the rest of their homeland.

The territorial government [banned harvesting](#) Bathurst caribou in its mobile hunting zones in 2015.

- ['Nothing was being done': N.W.T. First Nation developing caribou stewardship plan](#)

In an email to CBC News, a spokesperson for the territory's Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it supports the community-based caribou monitoring program.

The department also said in the email it is working with Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation and other Indigenous governments and organizations on the range of the herd to develop a management plan for Bathurst caribou.



Currently, the plan applies to Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation members within the First Nation's traditional territory including the Thaidene Nënë protected areas. (Gabriela Panza-Beltrandi)

Meanwhile, Chief Marlowe said he hopes the new plan can serve as a model for other First Nations.

"We want to work together with all the Aboriginal groups within the Northwest Territories, so one day hopefully everyone buys on to our caribou stewardship plan," Marlowe said.

Currently, the plan applies to Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation members within the First Nation's traditional territory, according to a press release from the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation.

- [N.W.T. releases plan to protect Bathurst caribou, but some fear it's too late](#)
- [Where are the wolves? Satellite collaring planned for wolves on caribou winter range](#)

The First Nation requested hunters from other communities notify the First Nation's wildlife, lands, and environment department of their plan to hunt in the Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, in a press release last week.

After two years, the First Nation said it will consider continuing the moratorium based on the best available Indigenous and scientific knowledge.

With files from Rachel Zelniker, Alyssa Mosher and Loren McGinnis

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