

Other Resources Available

- Counting the Caribou brochure
- Aim for your Best When Porcupine Caribou Hunting
- Hunting for Porcupine Caribou along the Dempster Highway
- A series of one-page fact sheets
- Sensitive Habitats of the Porcupine Caribou Herd
- PCMB Annual Reports
- 2001 Porcupine Caribou Review
- Caribou: Deer of the North
- The Status and Life History of the Porcupine Caribou Herd
- PCMB School Program – videos, DVDs and manual
- Summer Ecology of the Porcupine Caribou report
- PCMB Web site: www.taiga.net/pcmb



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ABOUT THE Porcupine Caribou Management Board

About the Porcupine Caribou Management Board

The Porcupine Caribou Management Board is a co-management board formed under the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement*. This Agreement was signed in 1985 by the governments of Northwest Territories, Yukon and Canada as well as all the First Nations that have traditionally used the herd.

The Agreement officially recognizes the herd's cultural importance and the need to protect the herd and its habitat. By protecting the herd, we are ensuring there are enough caribou around for future generations to hunt.

The Agreement also officially recognizes and protects "certain priority harvesting rights in the herd for native users, while acknowledging that others may also share the harvest." This means that if harvest quotas become necessary, they may be imposed on native users, but restrictions will be made to licensed users before native users.

The PCMB does not make laws or regulations, but it does make recommendations to governments with authority. Because all native user groups and governments are represented on the Board, Board recommendations are considered by the Ministers to be very important. Often, the Ministers conduct government-to-government consultations before acting on PCMB recommendations.

The Board has eight members, representing the following groups:

- Government of Yukon
- Government of the Northwest Territories
- Government of Canada
- Vuntut Gwitch'in Government
- Gwich'in Tribal Council

- Inuvialuit Game Council
- First Nation of Na'Cho Nyäk Dun
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

The Board's Chairperson is chosen from outside the Board and is assisted by a Secretariat.

You can see from the long list of members that there are a lot of groups that are concerned about the herd. And each of these groups has some authority to make regulations about things like hunting and land use planning within their own region. This is why co-management is so important — so that all groups can share ideas and resources, and to coordinate efforts.

All groups nominate their own representative to the Board. In addition, the Board makes every effort to form a consensus on any decisions it makes. Although the Board members represent the communities that appoint them, Board members must be loyal first to serving the caribou herd.

Main duties of the Board

To cooperatively manage the Porcupine Caribou Herd and its habitat within Canada to ensure the conservation of the herd for the ongoing subsistence of its native users

To maintain communication with the native users of the Porcupine Caribou and governments to assist in coordinated management and conservation of the herd

To review technical and scientific information relevant to the management of the herd and make recommendations on its adequacy

To encourage native users and other harvesters to participate in the management of the herd

To maintain a list of eligible native users for each Native User Community and up-to-date information on the sub-allocation of native user allocation among communities.



Porcupine Caribou Herd Projects and Activities

Some activities of the Board are:

- To facilitate the development of a harmonized Harvest Management Strategy, which is being developed by the native user groups to protect the herd.
- To consider the cumulative impacts of potential and current development activities on the herd's calving and wintering grounds.
- To ensure sensitive habitats of the herd are given adequate protection.
- To review and recommending changes to hunting regulations.
- To identify the effects of climate change on the herd.
- To determine why the herd is still declining.
- To recommend methods to collect harvest data from hunters.

Research, Monitoring and Management

- Cooperating agencies and organizations assist with a number of tasks, including:
- Counting the caribou
- Monitoring body condition
- Monitoring diseases, parasites and contaminants in caribou
- Collecting and analyzing harvest data
- Monitoring calf birth and survival rates
- Documenting seasonal range use by the herd using conventional and satellite collars
- Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of Dempster Highway regulations put in place to address hunting issues
- Developing a Harvest Management Strategy for the herd
- Increasing information exchange among user groups
- Continuing to assist with educational activities such as youth camps, the school curriculum and the Johnny Charlie Scholarship.

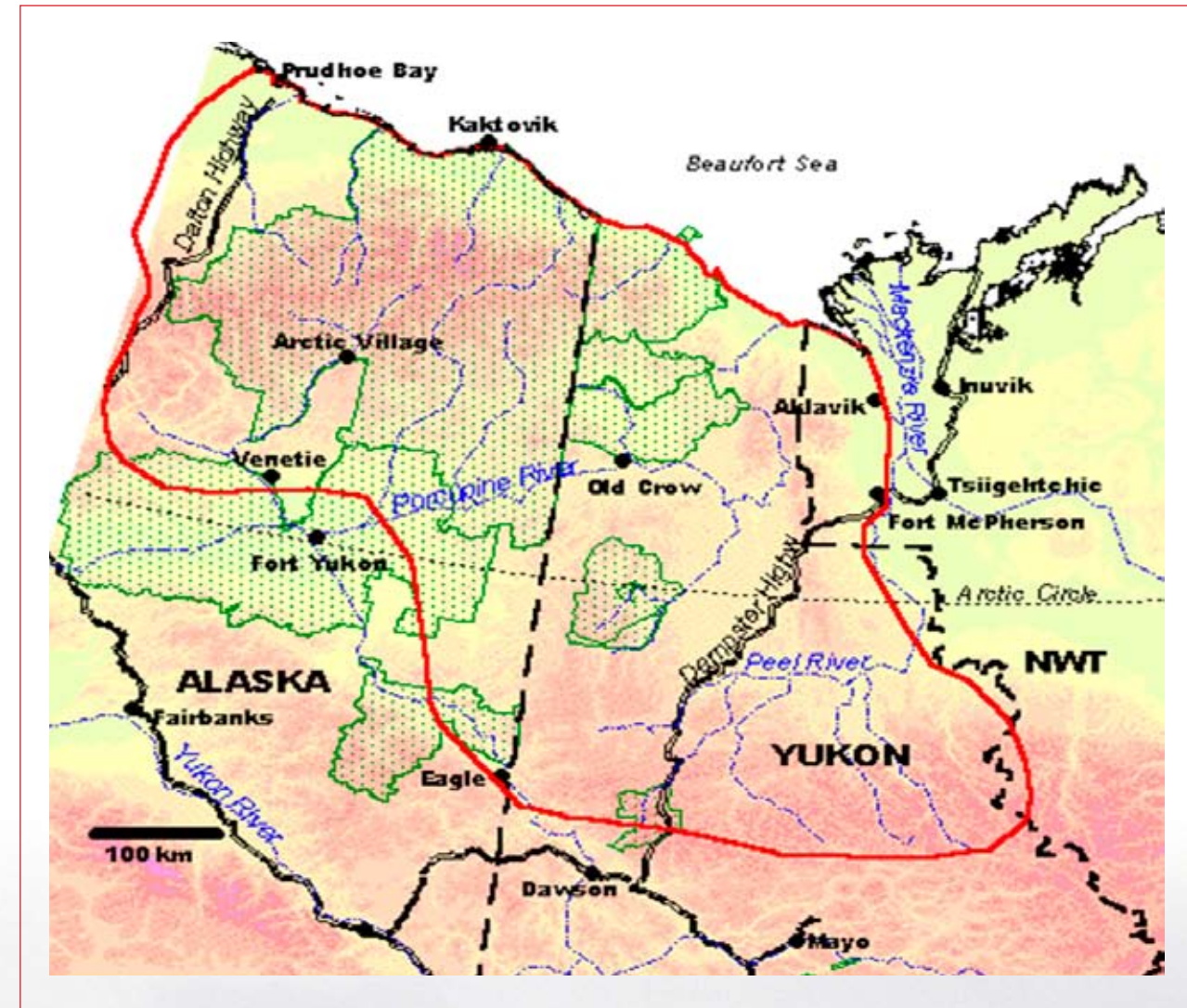
About the Porcupine Caribou Herd

The Porcupine Caribou Herd is a population of barren-ground caribou also known as Grant's Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus granti*). The herd migrates through two countries (U.S. and Canada), the State of Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories. The range covers 250,000 km². Caribou traditions support 17 communities throughout that region.

Traditional users include the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, Inupiat, Han and Northern Tutchone cultural groups. For people in these groups, the caribou herd is at the centre of their cultural traditions. Caribou is an important source of food, and clothing items such as moccasins, mukluks, hats and mitts are still commonly made today. Tools such as knife handles are still made from caribou bone and antler.

Because weather has such a strong influence on caribou migration, each year's pattern of movements is unique, with one exception - the calving grounds. No matter where caribou have spent the rest of the year, they unfailingly head for the same calving area each spring unless snow conditions are so bad they must calve elsewhere. Even so, they will still complete their migration to the calving and post-calving areas in the '1002' section of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on Alaska's North Slope. There, the food is best for nursing cows, predators like wolves and grizzlies are relatively scarce, and there is some sanctuary from the biting flies that descend on the herd in July. In years when the caribou cannot make it to the calving grounds, there tends to be a lowered calf survival rate.

In the summer, the herd tends to move throughout northern Alaska in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Ivvavik National Park, Vuntut National Park, and the Inuvialuit Special Management Area north of Old Crow. After first snows the caribou typically move south of the treeline and toward the Porcupine River. They remain on the winter range for around eight months, scattering



throughout the Peel and Porcupine River watersheds in the Yukon as well as in northeastern Alaska.

The herd size has been declining since 1989, when the herd had 178,000 caribou. In 2001, the herd was down to 123,000 caribou. The reasons for the decline are unclear, but the Board is concerned. In 2006 the Board passed a resolution that stated among other things that the herd is in immediate need of conservation.

Reproduction is similar to other large barren-

ground herds, with 80 to 93 percent of the adult cows giving birth each year. As with other herds, almost half of the calves die within a year.

Research has shown that about 15 percent of the herd dies from natural causes each year. This is one of the highest rates for North America. The most common predators are wolves, golden eagles and bears. About 2% to 4% of the herd is harvested by hunters each year.