



June 2010

Caribou Update



Harvest Management Plan Signed

It's an exciting time for the Porcupine Caribou Management Board! All eight Parties responsible for Porcupine Caribou management in Canada have agreed and signed an unprecedented plan for the cooperative harvest management of Porcupine Caribou.

The Harvest Management Plan will coordinate management actions for this essential herd which ranges close to eight communities in five aboriginal land claim areas in two territories in Canada.

The Plan is a plan for all times — one that will respond to the status of the Herd whether the population is high or low.

The Plan allows us to be proactive, with many hard decisions already made if the herd continues to decline. There are four management regimes to be enacted for different herd sizes.

This Plan was the second part of a three-part strategy that includes: (i) a protocol agreement, signed by all the Parties, which outlines how the plan would be developed, (ii) the harvest management plan now signed, and (iii) Native User Agreements.

The Board recommended a draft Plan to the Parties in June 2009. The Parties then met to come to agreement on the final Plan, which is now being released. The Plan has been formally signed by the Parties responsible for Porcupine Caribou management in Canada — the Inuvialuit Game Council, Gwich'in Tribal Council, First Nation of NaCho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government, Vuntut Gwich'in Government,

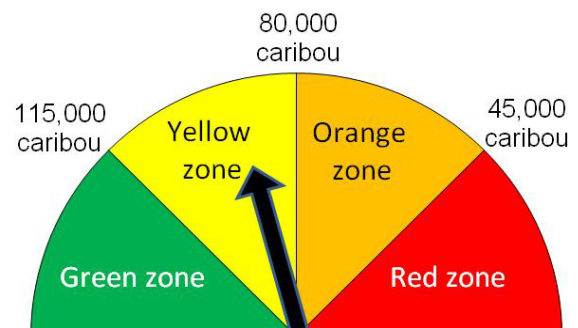
Government of Yukon, Government of the Northwest Territories, and Government of Canada. Witnesses to the signing included PCMB Chair Joe Tetlichy along with chairs of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, the Wildlife Management Advisory Committee (North Slope) and the Wildlife Management Advisory Committee (NWT) which all have roles in implementing the plan.

Next steps

Next steps include the development of an implementation plan. This is currently being developed by the Parties. This includes methods to collect and verify harvest data from all hunters.

All Parties agree the herd is currently in the Yellow zone (between 80,000 and 115,000 animals). The herd status will be reviewed each year in February at the Annual Harvest Meeting. At this meeting all Parties will meet, share information about how the herd is doing, and then the PCMB will make recommendations on what zone the herd is in and which management actions should be taken.

Harvest Management Colour Chart



The Yellow zone is where we all agree that the number of caribou is low enough to be a concern for everyone. Switching to a bulls-only harvest will reduce the impact of harvest on the caribou population. This is an opportunity for harvesters to take responsibility and do their part. All Parties agreed this is what we all need to do to conserve the caribou. In the HMP, the Parties committed to achieving 100% bulls-only harvest. The Parties also committed to review the Plan's implementation to determine if this target is being effectively met and, if not, consider other measures including the potential application of a mandatory bulls-only harvest.



Photo: Don Russell

Rigorous and verifiable harvest reporting is a requirement in the plan. Harvest data is needed for the computer model used to predict the herd size in years when there is not a census. It is also used for the modelling tool that will predict the impacts of different management actions on the herd. If the management actions do not stop the decline and the herd continues to decline to below 80,000 animals, into the Orange zone, the plan calls for an Annual Allowable Harvest to be set. This means the bulls-only harvest will be mandatory and there will be limits on the number of caribou that can be harvested. The Native User Agreements

will outline how those limits will be allocated between aboriginal groups. These agreements still need to be developed in both the NWT and Yukon.

What does this mean for you now?

If you are a **licensed hunter**, this means you are allowed one male tag and you will be required to report your harvest to the respective government.

If you are an **Aboriginal hunter**, this means you need to take bulls and report your harvest.

For **all hunters** there will be check stations set up during key hunting periods to provide information and collect harvest data. Please stop in, talk to the attendants and report your harvest and any problems or wildlife you see while out hunting.

Currently there are still interim conservation measures in place in the Yukon that include mandatory bulls-only harvest and mandatory reporting. Government of Yukon will be reconsidering the interim measures once the Harvest Management Plan has been implemented.

Watch for more information in your mailbox. A copy of the Plan and a brief summary can be downloaded from the PCMB website at www.taiga.net/pcmb

Together let's help make sure there is a future for the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Hunt bulls only and report your harvest.

For more information, please visit PCMB's Web site at www.taiga.net/pcmb or contact Deana Lemke at (867) 633-4780, fax 393-3904 or email pcmb@taiga.net.

