



Porcupine Caribou Management Board

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PORCUPINE CARIBOU HERD REACHES RECORD SIZE

A 2017 photocensus shows the Porcupine caribou herd's population has grown to a record high.

Whitehorse, YT, January 3, 2018— According to a July 2017 photocensus shows the Porcupine caribou herd has grown to an estimated population of 218,000, which is a record high since population monitoring of the herd first began in the 1970s. The survey was conducted in Alaska and Yukon as a cooperative effort with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Yukon Department of Environment.

Researchers try to conduct an aerial photocensus of the Porcupine Caribou herd every two years. Photocensus estimates are important management tools that help caribou biologists track and manage herd population trends. The results are used by territorial and federal wildlife managers to help manage the herd. The Porcupine herd's last peak was in 1989 at 178,000 animals. The herd then declined to 123,000 animals in 2001. Since then, while almost all barren-ground caribou herds in North America are experiencing drastic declines, the Porcupine Caribou herd has been stable and even slightly increasing in size. Surveys in 2010, 2013, and 2017 have documented steady growth.

Accuracy of the 2017 photocensus was improved through implementation of upgraded camera equipment. The new digital systems replaced World War II-era black-and-white film cameras used since the 1970s.

The Porcupine Caribou herd's range is approximately 250,000 square kilometres and includes the northeastern part of Alaska, northern Yukon, and northwestern portions of the Northwest Territories in Canada. The herd is cooperatively managed by Alaska and Canada.

The Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) is an advisory board established under the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* to communicate information about the herd and provide recommendations to agencies responsible for managing the herd.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact the PCMB at 867.633.4780

