



## Porcupine Caribou Management Board

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### PCMB RESPONDS TO COSEWIC “THREATENED” DESIGNATION FOR BARREN-GROUND CARIBOU IN CANADA

**Whitehorse, YT, December 6, 2016** – The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has announced a status designation of “threatened” for barren-ground caribou in Canada. This assessment is made for all barren-ground caribou herds in Canada, which includes about 15 herds that are found throughout the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

COSEWIC stated in its recent press release that, “Both science and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge indicate unprecedented declines in several herds with some human activities on the landscape being novel, potentially disrupting natural cycles. According to Justina Ray, co-chair of the Terrestrial Mammals Subcommittee, ‘Caribou are, sadly, very sensitive to human disturbances, and we are disturbing Caribou more and more. These stressors seem to be interacting in complicated ways with rapid warming in the North. Many of the great northern Caribou herds have now fallen to all-time lows, and there is cause for concern that they will not rebound in the same way they have before.’”

The Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) shares COSEWIC’s concern for the overall welfare of barren-ground caribou in Canada and supports the designation, considering the status of other herds across Canada.

While there have been drastic decreases in most barren-ground caribou herds in Canada’s Arctic, the Porcupine caribou herd has remained fairly stable over the long term and its population is currently at a record high of 197,000 caribou, based on the population count completed in 2013. Therefore, the PCMB continues to consider the herd to be in excellent condition at this time, with the ability to meet all users’ needs.



We anticipate that following COSEWIC's assessment, the Government of Canada will initiate processes to list barren-ground caribou under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. The process of listing a species takes time and involves extensive consultation with many groups. The PCMB will work through this process to help ensure the Porcupine caribou herd is treated appropriately, with full consideration of our PCMB partnerships that exist among user communities, recognizing the management tools already in place.

The PCMB also feels that there are plans in place, such as the *Harvest Management Plan for the Porcupine Caribou Herd in Canada*, to help manage human activities if the herd declines in the future. The Harvest Management Plan was developed cooperatively by all parties to the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* and the PCMB. The Harvest Management Plan and its corresponding Implementation Plan contain carefully determined management zones triggered by herd population size and other herd status indicators. The herd's movements, population and health are monitored on an ongoing basis. If the Porcupine caribou herd's population decreases, management actions will be adjusted accordingly. The PCMB continues to fully engage in land use planning efforts and environmental assessments throughout the herd's Canadian range to ensure the herd's habitat remains intact and effective.

The PCMB is an advisory board established under the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* (1985) to communicate information, ensure collaborative management of the herd, and protect and maintain its habitat in Canada. The Board's membership includes federal, territorial, and Inuvialuit and First Nation governments that work with the users of the herd and those who study it to gain a better understanding of this dynamic and important natural resource.

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Deana Lemke, Executive Director, at 867.633.4780 or email at [dlemke@pcmb.ca](mailto:dlemke@pcmb.ca)

