



OCT 03 2017

MR. TOM BEAULIEU
MLA, TU NEDHE - WIILIDEH

Oral Question 864-18(2): Species at Risk Protection of Caribou

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on September 22, 2017 regarding the Species at Risk Protection of Caribou. I am responding to your question with information about the processes underway for boreal caribou and barren-ground caribou. There are also species at risk processes underway for the other types of caribou in the Northwest Territories (NWT): northern mountain caribou, Peary caribou, and Dolphin and Union caribou.

In Canada as a whole, species at risk are dealt with through the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). In the NWT, species at risk are dealt with through the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. These two Acts are complementary, with SARA considering the status of species across Canada and the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* considering the status of species just within the NWT.

Boreal caribou is listed as Threatened under both these Acts. Species listed as Threatened need recovery strategies developed for them within two years of listing. The federal boreal caribou recovery strategy was developed by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and addresses the management of boreal caribou throughout Canada. Although this is a federal document, provinces and territories are responsible for certain aspects of its implementation. The NWT boreal caribou recovery strategy speaks to these territorial implementation duties. The NWT recovery strategy was developed by the Conference of Management Authorities (CMA), and was informed by extensive consultation and engagement.

The CMA is the group of co-management authorities who share responsibility for wildlife management in the NWT. They include the wildlife co-management boards, the Tłı̄chǫ Government, the Government of Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

Barren-ground caribou has been assessed as Threatened by both the federal Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and territorially by the Species at Risk Committee (SARC). COSEWIC and SARC are both advisory boards and their assessments are considered recommendations on listing.

.../2

The GNWT has two staff members appointed to COSEWIC: Dr. Suzanne Carrière and Dr. Nicolas Larter. SARC's members have been appointed by the NWT's wildlife co-management boards and the GNWT and have expertise from traditional, community, and scientific knowledge. Both COSEWIC and SARC use traditional knowledge as an important part of their assessments. The members act as independent experts and not as representatives of their appointing organizations.

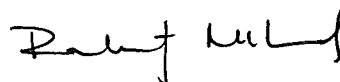
From COSEWIC and SARC's recommendations, barren-ground caribou are currently being considered for listing. Both the federal and territorial listing decisions will be informed by extensive consultation and engagement.

The federal listing decision will be made by the Government of Canada on the recommendation of the Minister of ECCC. The Government of Canada is responsible for engagement and consultation. If barren-ground caribou is listed under the federal SARA, prohibitions against killing or harming barren-ground caribou would come into force on federal lands such as National Parks and National Wildlife Areas.

The territorial listing decision will be made by the CMA by no later than April 2018. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) is consulting with Aboriginal governments and organizations that have asserted or established Treaty or Aboriginal rights and has also provided an opportunity for public comment. If barren-ground caribou are listed under the territorial legislation it would not change current harvesting rules or practices, because there are no automatic prohibitions or protections for species or their habitat once listed.

ENR works closely with ECCC and with Aboriginal governments to identify and mitigate any potential impacts of species at risk listings.

I trust this response addresses your question regarding the protection of caribou as a species at risk in the NWT.



Robert C. McLeod
Minister
Environment and Natural Resources

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs