



Beverly and Qamanirjuaq
Caribou Management Board



Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Plan 2013-2022

Summary

Produced by the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board
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This document and the detailed technical management plan are
available from:
www.arctic-caribou.com

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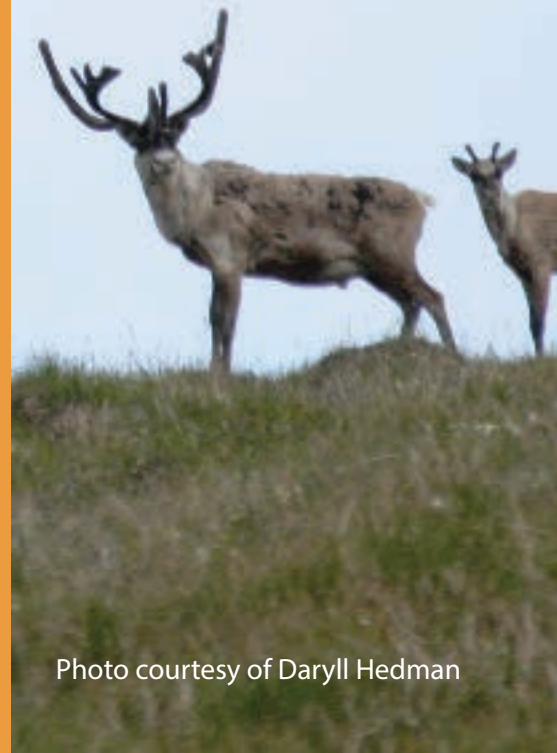


Photo courtesy of Daryll Hedman

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Photo courtesy of Gov. of the NWT

Introduction

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou are two major herds in northern Canada. They were named after the lakes where they gave birth to their calves. The historic ranges of these herds include parts of two territories (Nunavut and Northwest Territories) and three provinces (Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta). The governments of four of these areas, along with the federal government, manage the two herds and their habitats.

Inuit, Dene, Cree and Métis people from about 20 communities depend on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou for food, clothing and handicrafts. But harvesting caribou is not simply about providing food and income. A strong traditional, cultural and spiritual relationship exists between Aboriginal people and these animals. It is an important part of the traditional harvester's identity, which has been passed down through many generations.

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds and their habitats can be harmed by various factors. These include wildfires, environmental contamination, mineral exploration, mining development, roads, low-flying aircraft, increased harvest, caribou wastage, disease, parasites, predators and climate change.

It is important to monitor the effects of these factors because they threaten the future of the herds and the livelihood of the people who rely on them. The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) was established in 1982 to address most of these issues. The Board provides advice and works together with federal, provincial and territorial governments and communities to safeguard the caribou herds.

The BQCMB hopes that this Management Plan Summary will stimulate comments and spur action from governments, organizations, communities and individuals with interests and responsibilities for conserving Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou. This Summary is also intended to provide key information and direct readers to the technical Management Plan for more detailed explanations, additional maps, graphs and a glossary.

For this Management Plan to succeed, many groups will need to work together and provide different kinds of knowledge and experience to help the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds.



Photo courtesy of
Pierre Bernier

What and who is the BQCMB?

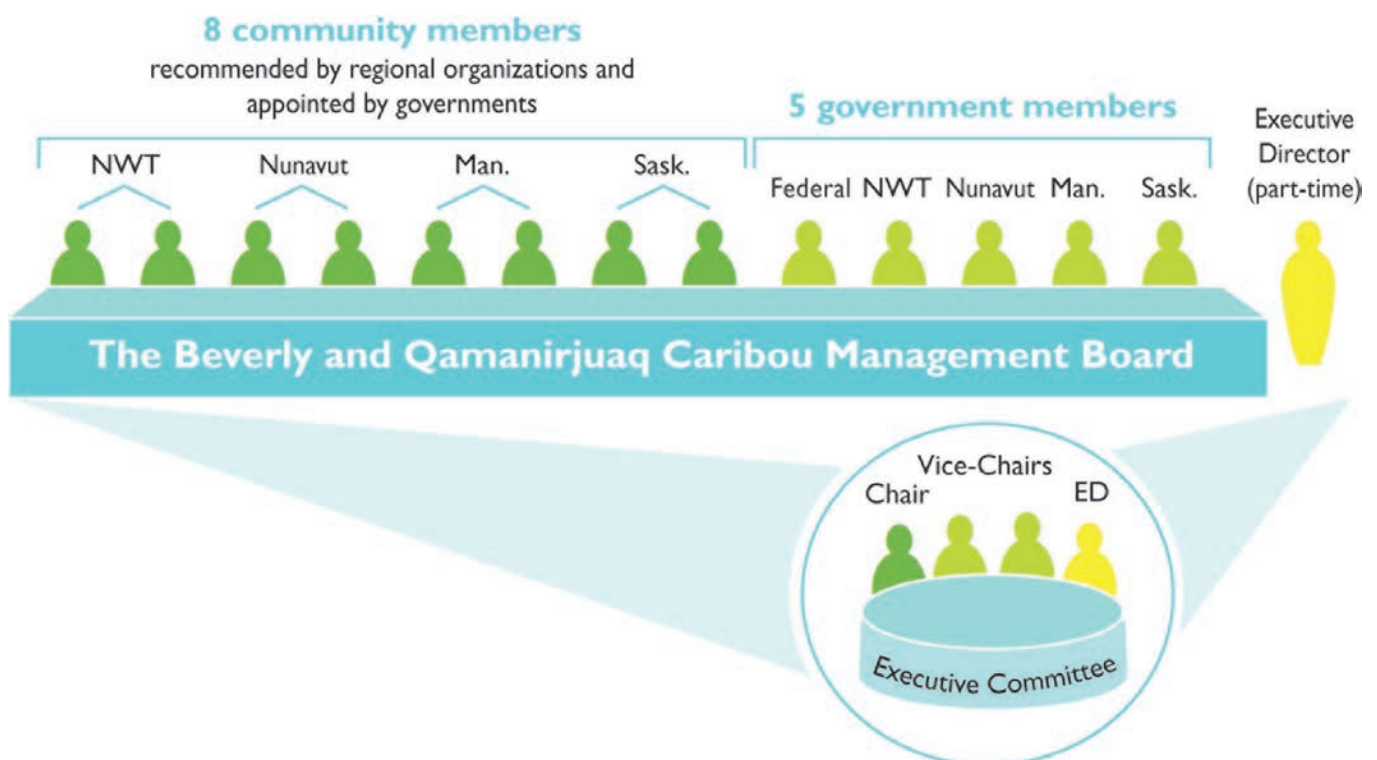
The BQCMB was created to protect the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds for present and future generations. The BQCMB was the first caribou co-management board established in North America. Its strength comes from working cooperatively with various Aboriginal groups, communities and governments.

The Board's main job is to make recommendations to governments and communities to keep the herds healthy, plentiful and available. The Board also encourages governments to make sure there is enough money for caribou management programs, as caribou management is a government responsibility.

The BQCMB's board members all live and work in Canada's North, including eight community members from the following regions: Kivalliq, Nunavut; southern Northwest Territories (NWT); northern Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba. Five members represent the governments of Canada, Nunavut, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and NWT. The Board also has a part-time Executive Director (ED) and hires community members and other specialists as needed.

The mission of the BQCMB:

To ensure the long-term conservation of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds for Aboriginal communities who wish to maintain a lifestyle that includes the use of caribou, as well as for all Canadians and people of other nations.



About this Management Plan

This plan is the fourth in BQCMB history. It will guide the activities of the Board until 2022.

This plan explains how the BQCMB will work with governments, communities and others to protect the caribou herds and address caribou conservation issues. The plan applies to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds, their habitats and caribou harvesters from communities on and near the caribou ranges in Nunavut, NWT, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

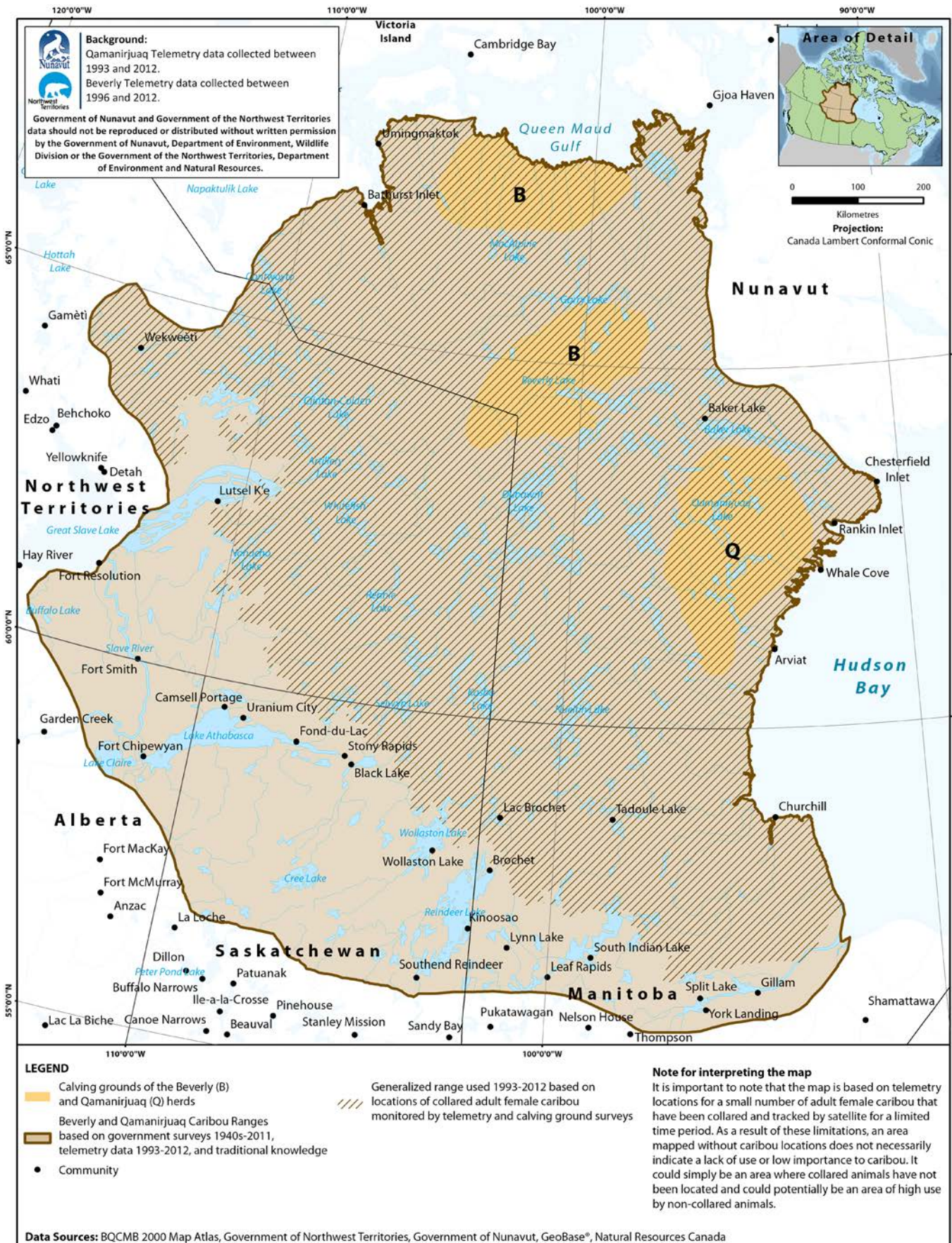
The BQCMB has developed this new Management Plan using a new approach based on regular assessments of the vulnerability of the caribou herds. This new approach will allow the Board to make timely recommendations to those whose actions or decisions may affect the caribou herds or availability of caribou for harvest, both now and in the future.

A technical version of the management plan provides detailed descriptions and additional information that will be used by the Board to conduct vulnerability assessments and make recommendations. The technical version is available at www.arctic-caribou.com. The plan will be reviewed from time to time to identify any changes that need to be made and new issues that may come up.

The federal government and the governments of Manitoba, Nunavut, NWT and Saskatchewan have all declared their support for this latest version of the Caribou Management Plan. The Board encourages any person or group whose actions or decisions may affect the caribou herds, their habitats or their availability for harvest to support it as well.

The Board will use the plan to:

- Develop ways to use all forms of knowledge (local, traditional and scientific).
- Make people aware of the BQCMB and caribou issues.
- Educate youth and others about conservation issues and the importance of caribou to Aboriginal cultures.
- Increase knowledge of caribou ecology.
- Monitor the health of the caribou herds.
- Keep track of harvest.
- Promote protection of key habitats important to caribou.
- Encourage good hunting practices.
- Comment on commercial land use activities that may affect conservation of caribou and habitat across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges.



Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges and calving grounds based on government surveys 1940s-2011, tracking locations of collared cows 1993-2012, and traditional knowledge.

Background

Co-managing the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds

Economic development of the North is a major priority for governments and industries operating on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges. However, these organizations sometimes have different opinions than communities about the kind of economic development that should take place, how fast and where it should happen and how much environmental protection is required. These different opinions can result in long-standing disagreements. Often, caribou conservation issues are a big part of the concerns communities and regional organizations have when considering economic development.

About the herds

The combined historic ranges of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds total an area almost as large as the NWT and two times the size of Saskatchewan!

The historic Beverly and Qamanirjuaq winter ranges overlap, mainly in southeastern NWT and northeastern Saskatchewan. During the rest of the year the herds usually use separate areas, with the Qamanirjuaq herd mainly in the southern Kivalliq region of Nunavut along and inland from Hudson Bay, and the Beverly herd in NWT and Nunavut to the west and northwest of the Qamanirjuaq range.

Status of the herds

In 2011 there were about 124,000 Beverly caribou based on surveys of caribou on calving grounds in June. This was the smallest size known for the herd since the 1980s and less than half the size estimated in 1994 (276,000). There are many questions about the Beverly herd that cannot be answered because very few studies were done on the herd between 1994 and 2006.

As for the Qamanirjuaq herd, a 2008 photo survey estimated its size to be about 349,000. This was about 30 per cent lower than the last estimate in 1994 (496,000). Additional information is needed to see whether the herd is decreasing.



Photo courtesy of Sayisi Dene First Nation

Challenges facing the caribou

Numbers of barren-ground caribou go up and down in a regular cycle. This information comes from Aboriginal traditional knowledge and, since the 1950s, from government surveys. However, there are gaps in the information making it hard to track the numbers properly.

Two of the main concerns for the BQCMB are caribou wastage and mineral exploration and development on the caribou range:

- Wastage of caribou is a serious challenge for all communities. Using all parts of the caribou and treating caribou with respect is very important. Youth need to learn cultural and spiritual connections to the land and traditional customs and values. This has become harder in recent years due to modern distractions and other issues. Caribou are also being sold and traded using social media such as Facebook. This has increased the impact of harvest on the caribou herds even more.
- Mineral exploration and development on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou range has been a major concern of the BQCMB for many years. The Board and many communities have spoken out against exploration and development on key caribou habitats but mineral exploration has continued to grow across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq range. In fact, between 2005 and 2011, the number of rights issued by the federal government for mineral exploration on the Beverly calving ground south of Garry Lake increased five-fold.

There are other threats to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou as well. They include roads, more caribou being harvested, wildfires, pollution, weather, disease, parasites, predators, and the effects of climate change. Over time, the combined effects of all of these threats have been growing in a way that is not easy to understand and manage.



Photo courtesy of Daryll Hedman

Wildfires are required to renew forest. However, large, strong wildfires can cause drastic changes to large parts of the caribou winter range. This can change the areas used by caribou and reduce availability of caribou for harvesters for many years.

Communities and governments disagree about protection of forested winter caribou range from wild fires.

The Value of caribou

Aboriginal people, including Inuit, Dene, Cree and Métis people depend on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds for many things, including a healthy and nutritious food, caribou skin for clothing and bedding, and bones and antlers for handicrafts.

However, harvesting caribou is not important simply for food or income. The true value of caribou for Aboriginal people is in the strong traditional, cultural and spiritual relationship between the people and animals. The caribou harvest as well as ceremonies and community feasts all play a huge part in protecting traditional cultures for both present and future generations.

The annual economic value of caribou harvested from the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds was estimated at about \$20 million, including about \$5 million for Beverly caribou and about \$15 million for Qamanirjuaq animals. This is based on the number of animals harvested in 2005-06.

Ways to help the caribou

With help from caribou range communities, the Board developed six key recommendations on ways that governments, agencies, communities, hunters and others can help the caribou herds:

- Governments and others should protect areas that are very important to caribou, such as calving grounds and migration corridors.
- Governments and regulatory agencies should do more to help protect caribou from mineral exploration and development, and from fires on the winter range.
- Hunters should take only what they need.
- Hunters should not waste.
- Hunters should harvest bulls instead of cows when possible when herds are not doing well.
- Traditional harvest of predators should be encouraged, especially on the calving grounds.

Principles and Goals for Caribou Conservation

The BQCMB will follow a number of principles throughout the life of this plan:

1. Aboriginal and treaty rights and land claims will be recognized.
2. Communities and governments must cooperate and communicate for effective caribou management.
3. Management decisions affecting caribou or their habitats should follow the precautionary principle.
4. All management decisions must consider sustainable development.
5. Caribou management actions will make use of the best information available, including local and traditional knowledge and scientific information.
6. Wildlife organizations, hunters' and trappers' organizations, band councils and individual community members' knowledge will be recognized and valued.
7. The fact that Aboriginal peoples depend on caribou not only for food but also because of their social, economic and cultural benefits to the communities will be taken into account.
8. Caribou conservation will recognize the complex relationship between caribou and their environment.
9. Protecting important caribou habitats is essential.
10. The effects of commercial land use on caribou and key caribou habitats should be limited.
11. Education, awareness and practice of sustainable caribou hunting are needed.
12. Information and advice on caribou-related issues will be freely available to individuals and organizations.

Goals and objectives for the next 10 years

The 2013-2022 Caribou Management Plan aims to help the caribou by:

- Conserving the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds in cooperation with others.
- Strengthening support for caribou conservation.
- Increasing knowledge of barren-ground caribou.
- Conducting long-term monitoring of caribou populations.
- Monitoring the harvest of caribou.
- Conserving the herds within their natural range of abundance.
- Ensuring there is enough high quality habitat for caribou.
- Striving for the wise use of caribou.
- Influencing commercial land use to protect the herds and their habitats.

Objectives and actions are provided in the detailed version of the management plan.

The **Precautionary Principle** means even if there is incomplete information, if there are threats of serious damage to the caribou herds, conservation measures should be used.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs



Photos courtesy of David Vetra, Doug Heard and Marion Soublière

Helping the Herds

When caribou are abundant and doing well, making decisions about caribou is easier. There is enough caribou for everyone, and people don't have to make tough choices about whether more money is needed for surveys or if the harvest should be reduced.

It's much harder to make these decisions when caribou herds are not doing well and when freezers and wallets aren't full. But decisions have to be made and should take into account all of the information about the herds and the state of their ranges.

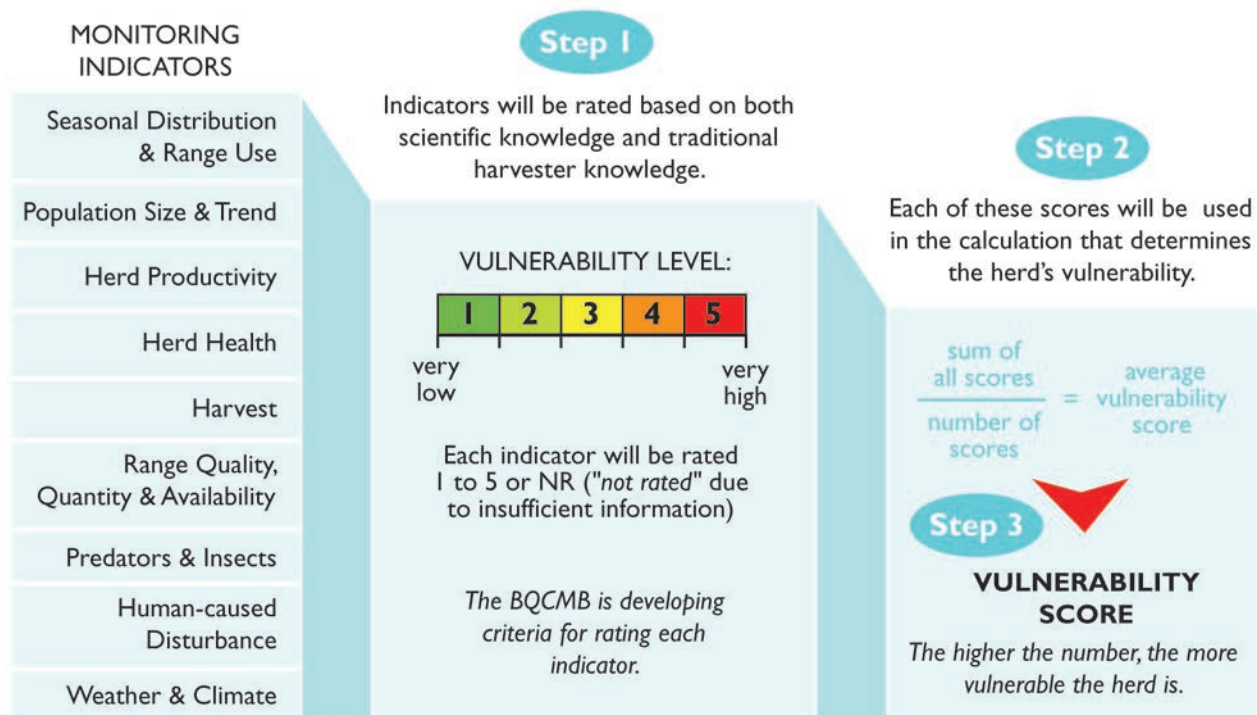
We need to know how large the caribou herds are, whether they are getting larger or smaller, and what stresses they are facing. For this reason, one of the goals of this plan is to monitor caribou populations regularly.

Monitoring programs

Monitoring programs are a very important part of helping the herds. These programs are needed to collect information about caribou movements and range use, herd size, condition of animals, harvest, range condition and available food, predators, human disturbance and other environmental factors.

The BQCMB will encourage monitoring methods that respect the animals while providing the information needed. The Board will also work with governments, communities and others to develop plans for long-term monitoring of both herds.

Community knowledge and skill are very important to the BQCMB. Caribou monitoring programs now include community-based monitoring and observations by caribou harvesters and other community members. Residents of caribou range communities have been involved in aerial surveys, caribou monitoring, interviews, mapping, sampling and reporting on caribou matters such as harvest, movements, distribution, health and numbers of caribou. By gathering a combination of scientific and community information the Board can provide the best advice to governments and communities for caribou conservation and management.



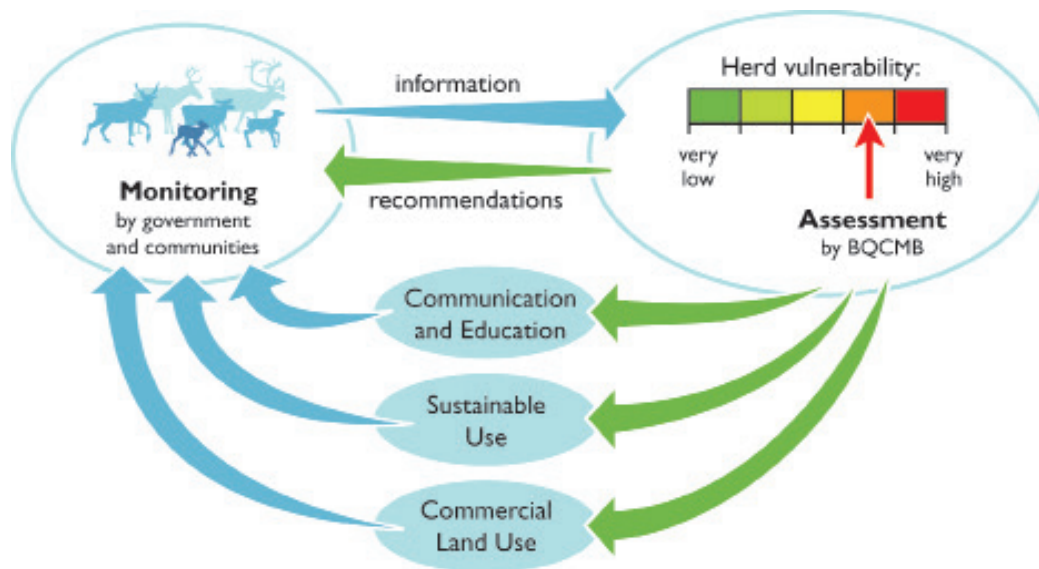
Herd vulnerability

Taking into account many different things about each herd provides information needed to determine how vulnerable it is (see sidebar). Once the Board knows this, it can then decide how to best help the herd and make recommendations to governments, communities and others.

The Board uses local and traditional knowledge and scientific information about the herds to find out how vulnerable they are. Each year the Board will consider all of the information it has from not only its community and government representatives, but also other traditional harvesters, communities, developers, land administrators and wildlife managers. Each type of information (called an “indicator”) will be scored in terms of what it tells us about the herd or threats to the herd, and how this contributes to a healthy growing herd, a herd that is getting smaller, or a stable herd (not increasing or decreasing).

What is caribou herd vulnerability?

When a caribou herd is “vulnerable,” the herd is more likely to be negatively affected by things that would have less impact under better conditions. For example, caribou in declining herds are more likely to be in poor condition and under more stress, so would be considered to be vulnerable at that time. On the other hand, when most caribou in a herd are in good shape they can use their stored energy and strong bodies to deal with stresses caused by natural and human-related events. A growing herd that is producing many healthy calves and enjoying good range conditions may be in less danger from negative effects of stress and considered to be less vulnerable at that time.



Using all of this information, the Board will determine the herd’s vulnerability level. This rating will then be used by the Board for making recommendations for protecting caribou and habitats.

Monitoring and vulnerability assessment are closely linked. The more research and monitoring results and local and traditional knowledge are available, the more confident the Board will be in assessing the vulnerability level of the caribou herds and making recommendations. When a herd’s vulnerability level changes, the Board may make different recommendations about what additional monitoring is needed, how often certain types of information should be collected, use of the herds, commercial land use on the caribou ranges, and priorities for communication and education products.

The overall goal is to make sure caribou herds are healthy and available for the people who share the herd’s annual range.

Using Caribou Wisely

There are many uses of caribou but the BQCMB's main concern in this plan is the caribou harvest. The Board's approach is to tie harvest recommendations to how vulnerable the herd is. This means more restrictions will be considered for harvest when herds are more vulnerable. The Board also stresses the need for respectful harvest of caribou, including the need to use all parts of the animal and to minimize wastage.

Aboriginal peoples are the main harvesters of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds. For the BQCMB, the highest priority users are traditional caribou-using people who harvest caribou for food and clothing. They share with family and friends, and sometimes with other communities. The cost to replace this important food source with southern foods shipped to caribou range communities would be terribly high if caribou were not available.

In the past, lack of caribou resulted in hardship and occasionally famine. Even in modern times, hardship can result when caribou do not return to areas near communities that traditionally hunt them. Recently there have been fewer caribou in some parts of the NWT, Saskatchewan and Nunavut and hunters have had to travel farther to harvest caribou.

Caribou should always be accessible to people from the caribou range communities, and the opportunity to harvest caribou should be part of their future. The BQCMB recognizes the use of caribou for food as the most important use that must not be threatened by other kinds of uses, including trophy hunting and other commercial harvest.



Photo courtesy of Lynne Rollin

Value of harvest information

One of the BQCMB's responsibilities is to provide a summary of harvests in its annual reports. This has been hard to do because there is no range-wide system for recording Aboriginal harvest.

It is important for communities to understand the value of harvest information. This information is used for many things, including:

- Protecting herds from serious declines.
- Determining numbers of caribou that communities need.
- Figuring out the economic value of caribou.
- Telling the difference between traditional and non-traditional uses of caribou.
- Making sure caribou-range communities are involved in caribou conservation.

The Board knows it is important to be sensitive and respectful when collecting harvest data from traditional caribou hunters, and will continue to provide information to communities about the value of this important information. When communities support harvest data collection programs it helps the Board to identify below what herd size traditional hunters will experience hardship.

How harvest affects the herds

Several things influence how harvest affects a caribou herd, including:

- The herd's trend (growing, staying the same, or becoming smaller).
- Harvest level in relation to herd size (harvesting 5,000 caribou from a herd of 350,000 affects the herd less than harvesting that number from a herd of 50,000).
- The number of cows versus bulls (harvesting a cow removes not only the cow but the calf she is carrying and any other calves she might have in the future).
- Respectful hunting practices (less wastage usually means fewer caribou harvested).

Importance of respectful harvest

The BQCMB has always supported respectful caribou harvesting practices. This includes fewer wounding losses, taking only as many caribou as needed, making use of all parts of harvested caribou, reducing harvest when caribou numbers are low, and taking bulls rather than cows when possible when herds are vulnerable. Poor shooting, meat wastage and harvesting more animals than needed add to the numbers of caribou killed. Poor handling and storage of caribou parts puts more pressure on the herds, and on communities, which must spend more time and effort finding their supply of caribou.

In this plan, the BQCMB places a high priority on educating hunters, particularly younger hunters, about the need to respect caribou and to harvest caribou in respectful ways.

Recommendations on harvest

The BQCMB's approach in recommending harvest options is to identify total acceptable harvest for each herd's current vulnerability level. The Board can then decide whether harvest recommendations should be changed.

Communities and governments need to agree there is a problem before harvest restrictions are considered. The size of caribou herds will likely continue to rise and fall over time, and harvest recommendations will also change. If a herd is highly vulnerable then recommendations for smaller harvests will be considered. On the other hand, if a herd's numbers are increasing then a larger size of harvest and a mix of bulls and cows may be more acceptable. The size of caribou populations can change quickly, so good management will always include monitoring of harvest and caribou herd status.

The BQCMB has developed “rule of thumb” guidelines for making recommendations about harvest in relation to the vulnerability levels of herds as they change over time. Acceptable harvest levels will also be limited by herd size and follow the Board’s priorities for assigning harvest to different user groups (see detailed management plan for more information).

Herd Vulnerability Level	Recommended Acceptable Total Harvest (% of herd)	Recommended Aboriginal Harvest	Recommended Resident Harvest	Recommended Commercial Harvest
Very Low	5 % or higher	Unrestricted, Either Sex Harvest	Limited tags/hunter	Limited commercial tags
Low	3-5 %	Unrestricted, Promote Bull Harvest	Limited tags/hunter	Limited commercial tags
Medium	2-3 %	Unrestricted, Promote Bull Harvest	Limited tags/hunter; possible limit on tags	Either no commercial tags or small numbers of tags
High	<2 %	Promote Conservation, Voluntary Bulls Only Harvest	Limited tags/hunter; possible limit on tags	No commercial tags
Very High	<1 %	Consider Mandatory Bulls Only Harvest	No resident tags	No commercial tags

Effects of Commercial Land Use on Caribou

Caribou need plenty of high quality habitat in order to survive and thrive. The BQCMB and communities are concerned about the commercial land use activities that are taking place across the caribou ranges because they pose a threat to caribou and habitat. Of great concern are the accumulating effects of these activities on the caribou herds (see “Cumulative Effects” sidebar).

The Board believes that mineral exploration, mining development and roads, along with increasing harvest and the effects of climate change, all pose a threat to the future of caribou. The threat is greater when herds are highly vulnerable. However, the Board considers these threats over the long-term, so considers their effects when herds are strong and healthy as well as when they are more vulnerable. For this reason, one of the BQCMB’s main goals is to influence commercial land use in a way that protects Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and their habitats.

Protecting caribou and key habitats

The BQCMB works to influence commercial land use by commenting on proposals for mineral exploration and mines, roads and other development on key parts of the herds' ranges. The Board has raised concerns related to caribou and habitat many times over the past decade to make sure the possible negative effects of commercial land use are considered. The Board has also tracked exploration and development activities on the ranges. Although the Board's input has influenced decision-making for the benefit of caribou, permits continue to be issued for exploration work on key habitats, including the calving grounds.

Mineral exploration and mining development

Mineral exploration and mining development are the most common commercial land use activities on Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges. Frequent low-level aircraft flights, construction of roads and airstrips, travel by supply trucks on all-weather and winter roads, mine construction and operation, and pollution of land and water can all have negative effects on caribou. These activities can disturb caribou and affect caribou behaviour, habitat and food.

Unfortunately, negative effects of mineral exploration and mining on caribou are hard to predict and measure. This makes tracking and reducing the cumulative effects from mining and other land use activities more difficult.

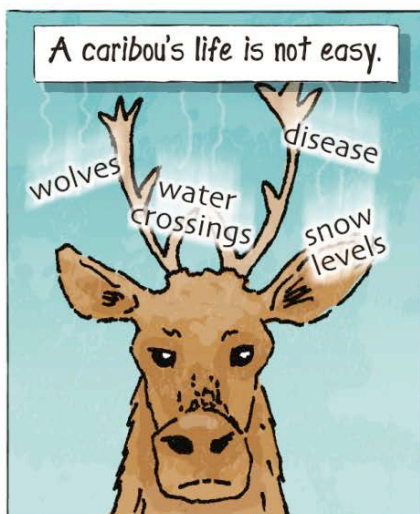
Roads

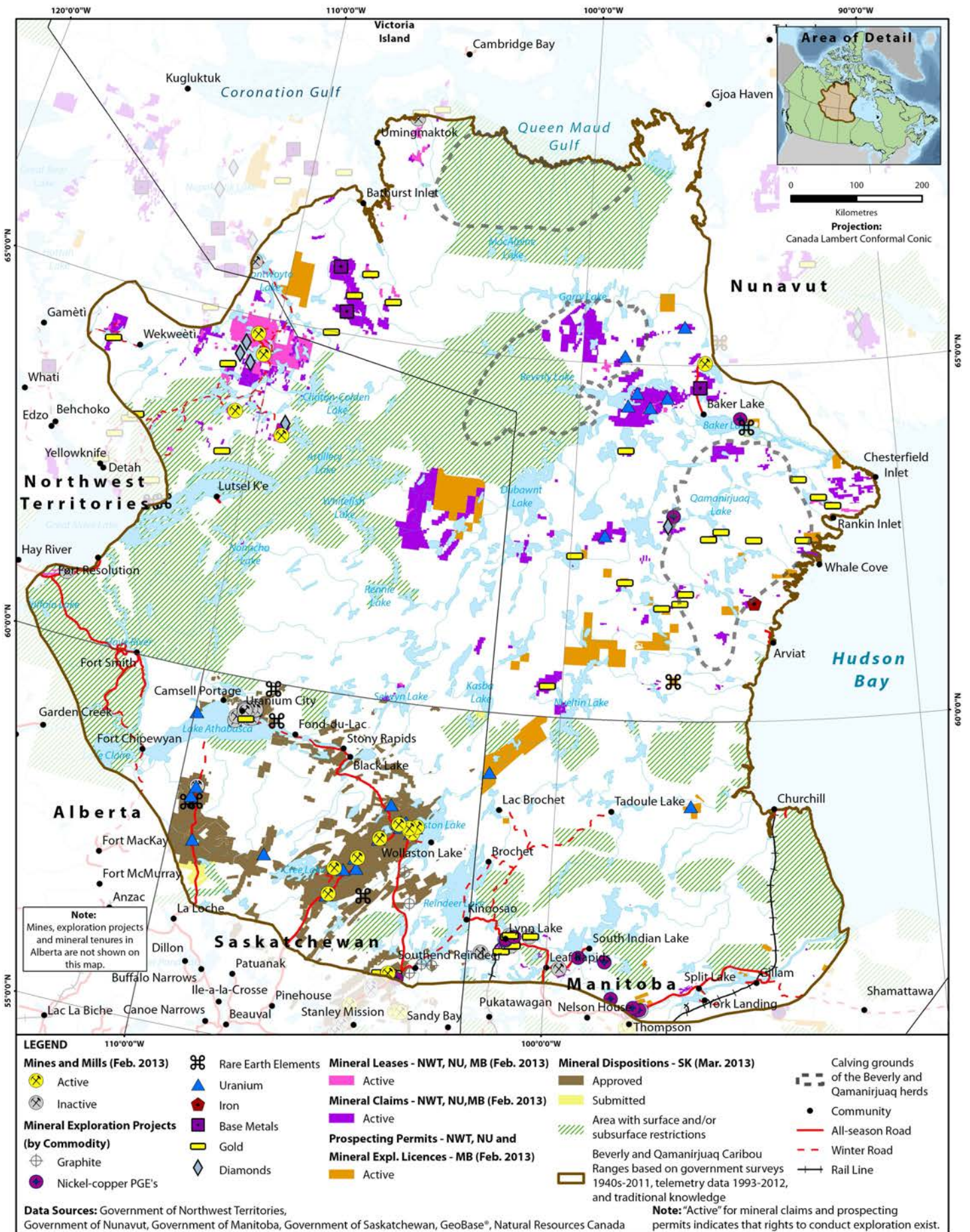
Much of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou range is currently roadless. However, new and proposed roads are a serious concern for the BQCMB because they provide easier access to previously remote areas of caribou range for industry and hunters. Permanent all-season roads tend to create more problems for caribou than temporary winter roads.

The Board believes that no new all-season roads should be allowed on the caribou ranges, no new winter roads should be allowed on calving and post-calving areas or key migration corridors, plans for any new roads should include plans for de-commissioning, and public access to project-related roads should be limited.

Cumulative Effects

Combined effects on caribou and habitat from a series of events accumulate over time. Human-caused effects include wildfires and disturbance and habitat loss from exploration and development projects. Effects from environmental factors such as disease, parasites, predators, natural wildfires, contaminants and climate change also accumulate and combine with human-caused effects. Because caribou migrate over long distances each year, they can experience effects from many activities in different habitats and across regions. More information is needed to better understand how these effects interact and when they become harmful to caribou.





Mines, exploration projects and areas where companies have rights for mineral exploration within the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges south in 2013.

Land use activities on calving and post-calving areas

A major concern for the BQCMB is the potential effects of commercial land use activities on caribou calving and post-calving areas. Exploration activities have been allowed in these important habitats even though the BQCMB, communities and regional organizations have spoken against them. Although Caribou Protection Measures (CPM) are included as conditions in the permits issued for mineral exploration on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq calving grounds, the Board believes CPM do not protect caribou and should be updated and improved.

The Board believes that calving and post-calving grounds should be protected from exploration and development by not allowing any new activities to occur in these areas and by requiring existing operations (including roads and camps) in these areas to be shut down during calving and post-calving seasons. As well, no-activity buffer zones should be established around caribou during calving and post-calving periods and during other periods when a herd is considered to be highly vulnerable.

What are Caribou Protection Measures (CPM)?

CPM were developed in 1978 to minimize disturbance to caribou by controlling mineral exploration activities on calving and post-calving grounds during periods when animals are very sensitive. Unfortunately, CPM provide limited protection for caribou because they do not protect habitat or prevent mineral development. Also, not enough effort has been made to make sure that permit conditions are being met.

Communication and Education

Communication and education are the responsibilities of everyone involved in conservation and management of the caribou herds. The BQCMB's communication and conservation education activities are ongoing, but will be strengthened during times when one or both caribou herds are highly vulnerable.

The BQCMB's communication priorities are based on input provided by community members and caribou harvesters from across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq ranges. These community representatives have stated repeatedly that the Board should increase its efforts to communicate with children, youth and hunters about caribou issues and good hunting practices. As a result, the Board focuses a great deal of its communications on these groups across the caribou ranges. Hunters who live outside the caribou ranges but are harvesting Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou will also be targeted, along with Aboriginal leaders and Elders, community and regional wildlife organizations, regulatory agencies, industry, government, politicians, and others. A variety of communication tools will be used for different groups.

The BQCMB's educational programs will focus on:

- Increasing knowledge of barren-ground caribou ecology.
- Explaining how land use on the range impacts caribou and their habitats.
- Educating about the cumulative effects on caribou, habitats and caribou users.
- Highlighting and promoting sustainable hunting practices.
- Providing information about the value of harvest information.

The BQCMB will also work to increase awareness and support for the Board and caribou conservation issues among various groups.

***“We the Aboriginal people rely on caribou
for what it provides us, mainly food.***

***We need to protect these calving grounds
and the land for our future generations
to use for many years to come.”***

Dennis Larocque

Camsell Portage, Saskatchewan



*The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Plan 2013-2022
is dedicated in memory of:*

Jerome Denechezhe (1953-2013) of Lac Brochet, Manitoba

Billy Shott (1929-2014) of Uranium City, Saskatchewan

and

David Vetra (1963-2014) of Arviat, Nunavut