

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NWT and Nunavut leaders collaborate on barren-ground caribou management

**YELLOWKNIFE, NWT (February 25, 2020)** – The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) for the Northwest Territories, Shane Thompson, together with Nunavut’s Minister of Environment and Premier Joe Savikataaq, hosted a meeting on barren-ground caribou management over the weekend. This meeting was a continuation of discussions held in April 2019 in Kugluktuk, Nunavut.

Also attending from the NWT were representatives from the Tłıchǫ Government, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation and North Slave Métis Alliance. They were joined by Nunavut co-management partners from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Organization and the Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization.

Leaders talked about how to enhance communication and coordination between wildlife co-management partners as they continue to work together to help support the conservation and recovery of shared transboundary caribou herds, in particular the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds.

Discussions included:

- A review of current Nunavut and NWT co-management board proposals and recommendations on caribou management
- An update on Bathurst caribou co-management actions, including the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee and Bathurst Caribou Range Plan
- Harvest management in the NWT and Nunavut
- Wolf management incentive programs and the recent joint proposal for wolf management on the winter range of Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou

- The operational-level Memorandum of Understanding on barren-ground caribou between the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Government of Nunavut (GN)

Both Environment Ministers recognize that protecting barren-ground caribou is a shared responsibility that requires the commitment and action of multiple partners, across multiple jurisdictions. Regular communication and meetings like this are necessary to support the recovery and long-term sustainability of our caribou herds.

## Quotes

“Our barren-ground caribou herds are struggling, and it is up to all of us to do our part to protect them. By coming together as wildlife management partners, we are building on our shared expertise to strengthen the ways we work together to ensure caribou remain an important source of food, culture and livelihood for our future generations.”

- Shane Thompson, NWT Minister of Environment and Natural Resources

“Caribou have incredible cultural and hunting significance in both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories – for many Inuit, caribou allowed us to survive. Both our territories have strong, collaborative wildlife management systems based with Inuit and our co-management partners. We will continue to work together to conserve and oversee our shared caribou herds in the spirit of *Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq.*”

- Joe Savikataaq, Nunavut Premier and Minister of Environment

## Quick facts

- The Bathurst herd was estimated at 8,200 caribou in 2018, a 98 per cent decline since 1986. The Bluenose-East herd has also undergone a significant decline, decreasing 50 per cent in just three years.
- Many factors may be contributing to caribou population declines, including weather and climate change, nutrition, disease, harvest, predators and development. Many of these factors are beyond our control as governments or as individuals. Management actions are focused on factors we can control, including human influences (harvest, development and fire management) and predators.

- The GNWT-GN Memorandum of Understanding on barren-ground caribou supports a coordinated and collaborative approach to monitoring, management and recovery of our shared caribou herds.
- Several management plans and actions have been developed in collaboration with management partners to support recovery of barren-ground caribou, including:
  - *Bathurst Caribou Range Plan*
  - *Taking Care of Caribou* management plan for Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds
  - Mobile conservation zone to prevent harvest of Bathurst caribou
  - Increased incentives for wolf harvesters
  - Proposal for further actions to support wolf monitoring and management
- The next population survey for Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou is planned for June 2020.

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