



# Northern Mountain Caribou Management Plan

*Newsletter of the  
Northern Mountain Caribou Management Team*

**Issue 1 – May 2008**

## **What are Northern Mountain caribou?**

Northern Mountain caribou is the collective name given to the 36 herds that make up the population of woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) living in southern and central Yukon, the western Northwest Territories, and northern British Columbia. Woodland caribou are one of the four recognised subspecies of caribou found in Canada. Others include barren-ground caribou, Peary caribou and Grant's caribou.

## **Why is a Management Plan needed?**

An assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in 2002 designated Northern Mountain caribou as a species of *Special Concern*. This designation means COSEWIC believes this population of caribou is at risk of becoming a threatened or an endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

In January 2005, the Government of Canada listed Northern Mountain caribou as a species of *Special Concern* under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). Once listed, the *Act* requires the development of a management plan within three years.

## **What is the scope of the Management Plan?**

The Plan will be general in nature. It is not specific to any particular herd in the population. It is an “umbrella” plan that will be used to guide the development of management plans and management actions for specific herds.

## **Who are the members of the Northern Mountain Caribou Management Team?**

Under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, Environment Canada is responsible for co-ordinating the development of a management plan for Northern Mountain caribou. Regional responsibility for the management of wildlife, including woodland caribou, and their habitat is shared by several different groups and agencies. These groups and agencies also have a role in the development of a management plan.

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The Plan will not directly change any existing third party rights, including harvesting rights. It will not directly change any existing regulations or management plans that apply to any herd in the population.

It is intended to guide future caribou management practices through the decision-making processes of First Nation, territorial and provincial governments, and of wildlife boards and councils.

In late 2007, the federal, territorial and provincial governments invited all First Nations, boards, and councils with responsibilities for the management of lands and wildlife within the range of this caribou population to form a team to draft a management plan. The involvement of all these groups early in the process is important because each of them will have a key role in implementing the recommendations of the Plan once it is finalized.

The *Northern Mountain Caribou Management Team* is made up of the parties who expressed an interest in participating in drafting the Management Plan. Team members currently include representatives of the BC, Yukon and NWT governments, First Nations governments, wildlife Co-management Boards, the Treaty 8 Tribal Association, the Northern Nations Alliance, Environment Canada and Parks Canada. All members of the Team are contributing to the draft Plan. The work of the Team as a whole will be done when the draft Plan is finished.

The Team is made up of three groups or committees. Each one has different responsibilities.

- ☛ The Steering Committee oversees technical work, guides the development of the Management Plan and liaises with the bodies they represent.
- ☛ The Technical Working Group gathers information and drafts the Plan.
- ☛ The Co-chairs Committee (a sub-committee of the larger Steering Committee) coordinates and oversees the entire process.



### **Which First Nations are represented on the Steering Committee?**

Liard; Little Salmon/Carmacks; Champagne and Aishihik; Kluane; Kwanlin Dun; Carcross Tagish; Taku River Tlingit; Ross River Dena; White River; Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; and Ta'an Kwäch'än.



### **Are Northern Mountain caribou an endangered or threatened species?**

Not at this time, but planning is needed so that the caribou herds and their habitat are carefully monitored and managed in the future. Under SARA, Northern Mountain caribou are recognised as being of *Special Concern* and **at risk** of becoming a threatened or endangered species, but not in danger of becoming extinct.

Factors such as development, variable weather, increases in recreational and hunting activity associated with greater access to caribou range, and changing predator-prey relationships, are all contributing to Northern Mountain caribou being **at risk**.

### **What will a Management Plan for the Northern Mountain caribou include?**

The Management Plan will provide general guidelines for the management of the whole population. It will set out population and habitat goals and objectives, as well as identify key knowledge gaps and general research and management needs. The Plan will also summarize the current knowledge of the herds that make up the population, including recent and historic status, monitoring history, and threats to herds and their habitats.

The Management Plan will respect the provisions of existing and future land claims agreements. It will be used to guide the development of various regional or herd specific plans by the responsible jurisdictions and will include recommendations for management actions for individual herds. It will not change any existing Management Plans.

## Where is the information about the caribou coming from?

The Northern Mountain Caribou Management Team is using information from many sources to prepare the draft of the Management Plan. These sources include wildlife managers, biologists and the staff of Lands and Resources departments working for BC, Yukon, NWT, and First Nations' governments. Community surveys and discussions with people who hunt caribou are some of the other sources.

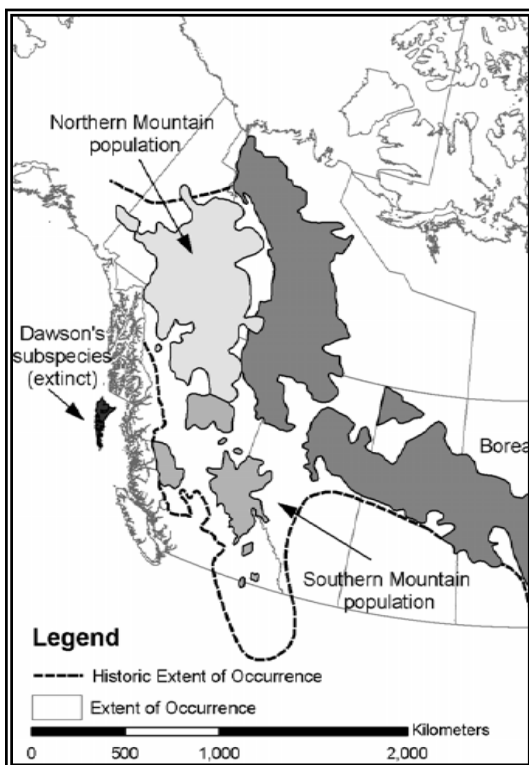
## What are the key steps in developing a Management Plan for Northern Mountain caribou?

- 🕒 September 2007 to July 2008 - The *Northern Mountain Caribou Management Team* develops the draft Plan. During this time, Team members gather relevant information from communities, First Nations, individuals and government wildlife managers.
- 🕒 October 2008 - The *Northern Mountain Caribou Management Team* submits the draft Management Plan to Environment Canada, as required by the *Species at Risk Act*.
- 🕒 January 2009 - Environment Canada begins the formal national consultation process. At the beginning of this step, the draft Management Plan will become available on the SARA Public Registry website ([www.sararegistry.gc.ca/about\\_e.cfm](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/about_e.cfm)).
- 🕒 July 2009- Environment Canada revises the draft Management Plan based on input from the consultations.

Legal responsibility for the management of caribou and their habitat is shared by federal, territorial, provincial, and First Nation governments with final agreements. These agencies will jointly implement the Management Plan once it is completed.



## Woodland caribou herds that make up the North Mountain caribou population



- |                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Aishihik (YT)                  | LaBerge (YT)                        |
| Atlin (Atlin East) (BC/ YT)    | LaBiche (YT/ NWT)                   |
| Bonnet Plume (YT/ NWT)         | Level-Kawdy (BC)                    |
| Carcross (Atlin West) (BC/ YT) | Liard Plateau (Crow River) (BC/ YT) |
| Chisana (YT/ AK)               | Little Rancheria                    |
| Clear Creek (YT)               | Moose Lake (YT)                     |
| Coal River (YT/ NWT)           | Muskwa (BC)                         |
| Edziza (BC)                    | Nahanni (YT/ NWT)                   |
| Ethel Lake (YT)                | Pelly (YT)                          |
| Finlay (BC)                    | Pink Mountain (BC)                  |
| Finlayson (YT)                 | Rabbit (BC)                         |
| Frog (BC)                      | Redstone (YT/ NWT)                  |
| Gataga (BC)                    | Spatsizi (BC)                       |
| Hart River (YT)                | Swan Lake (Jennings) (BC)           |
| Horseranch (BC/ YT)            | Tatchun (YT)                        |
| Ibex (YT)                      | Tay River (YT)                      |
| Klaza (YT)                     | Tsenaglode (BC)                     |
| Kluane (Burwash) (YT)          | Wolf Lake (YT)                      |

In the Management Plan, the term **population** refers to the COSEWIC designated Northern Mountain caribou population. **Local or sub-populations** within the population are called **herds**.

### How can the public provide input to the Plan?

Anyone who wants to contribute information or make comments on the Plan has two opportunities.

- 1. During the drafting of the Plan, if you have any questions or information on caribou, please contact one of the representatives listed below **or any First Nation Lands and Resources Department**.
- 2. Once the Plan is posted to the SARA Public Registry, the formal consultation period begins. During this time, comments may be submitted to [SARAreistry@ec.gc.ca](mailto:SARAreistry@ec.gc.ca) or by mail to Director General, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0H3.



For more information on the Northern Mountain Caribou Management Plan or the *Northern Mountain Caribou Management Team* go to:

[www.yfwmb.ca/northernmountaincaribou](http://www.yfwmb.ca/northernmountaincaribou) or contact

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#### Government of the Northwest Territories

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#### Government of Yukon

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#### Any First Nation Lands and Resources Department

