

**Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)
Draft Meeting Minutes, May 13, 2020
Teleconference**

Attendees	Organization
Jody Pellissey	CMA Chairperson/Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board
Doug Doan	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
William Koe	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Kaytlin Cooper	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Amy Amos	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Jozef Carnogursky	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Deborah Simmons	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Tina Giroux	Athabasca Denesųliné
Jessica Hurtubise	North Slave Métis Alliance
Bruce Laurich	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Natural Resources
Karin Clark	Environment and Natural Resources
Troy Ellsworth	Environment and Natural Resources
Suzanne Carriere	Environment and Natural Resources (only for agenda item 17)
Jodie Maring	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Rob Gau	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Larry Carpenter	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Rosemin Nathoo	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Stephanie Behrens	Tłjchų Government
Petter Jacobson	Tłjchų Government
Meghan Buckham	Acho Dene Koe First Nation
Allie Mayberry	Acho Dene Koe First Nation
Nicole Hardisty	Dehcho First Nations
Patrick Riley	Kát'odeeche First Nation
Claire Singer	Species at Risk Secretariat
Michele Grabke	Species at Risk Secretariat

1. Introductions – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Roundtable introductions.

2. Agenda – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Review of draft agenda.

Agenda approved. Note that agenda item 17 - NWT General Status Ranking (presentation by Suzanne Carriere) will start at 1:00pm.

Typically the May CMA meeting is held face-to-face. However, the May 2020 meeting was held using a conference call (video/audio) in order to adhere to social distancing measures as a result of Covid-19.

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3. Minutes from last meeting – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Review and approval of draft minutes from February 19, 2020.

Draft minutes from February 19, 2020 approved with no further changes.

4. Review of action items – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Review of action items from previous meetings and earlier outstanding action items.

5. CMA decisions made since last meeting – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Review of decisions made since last meeting.

D2020051301: Decision to re-appointment Mr. Moise Rabesca to SARC effective March 15, 2020, for a five year term, in accordance with the Species at Risk (NWT) Act.

D2020051302: Consensus agreement accepting the bat management plan was signed April 8, 2020 and submitted to the Minister on April 9, 2020.

D2020051303: Consensus agreement accepting the barren-ground caribou recovery strategy was signed April 8, 2020 and submitted to the Minister on April 9, 2020.

D2020051304: Consensus agreement on the implementation of the wood bison recovery strategy was signed and submitted to the Minister on April 29, 2020.

6. Updates from members – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Updates from members of the Conference of Management Authorities.

In the interest of time, members were asked to send updates via email to the secretariat in advance of the meeting to be incorporated into the May 2020 meeting minutes.

Government of the Northwest Territories

- General: This will likely be Troy Ellsworth's last CMA meeting as he is retiring soon. We will be looking at naming a replacement for Troy. For the time being, Karin Clark will be attending the CMA as a GNWT representative while she is Acting Director of the Wildlife and Fish Division.
 - We published the new 2020 edition of the NWT Species at Risk Booklet. It is available at www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca. The booklet is a collaborative effort of the GNWT, ECCC, DFO and Parks Canada. We have completed a prototype of the *NWT Species and Habitat Viewer*, which is an online mapping tool for accessing spatial data. It includes a tool that generates a report on species at risk that are found in a certain area, a module with specific habitat disturbance calculator tools for boreal caribou, a module that generates reports on barren-ground caribou and Dolphin and Union caribou ranges and habitat features, and a module that produces a report on the biodiversity of a given area (i.e. species lists). (HSP funded project)

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- Participation in federal species at risk initiatives: We participated in ECCC's consultation tour about the Peary Caribou recovery strategy. We provided input on drafts of the Red-necked Phalarope management plan, Horned Grebe management plan, Buff-breasted Sandpiper management plan, Hairy Braya recovery strategy, and Peary Caribou recovery strategy.
- Polar bear: The second field season of the polar bear genetic mark-recapture survey was cancelled due to Covid-19. We will return to this project next spring.
- Hairy braya: The hairy braya survey planned for August has been postponed, primarily due to Covid-19. We will attempt to carry out the survey in August 2021 instead.
- Wood bison: The Slave River Lowlands population was surveyed in February 2020 to estimate abundance. Final results are pending but observations indicate an increasing trend with the herd exceeding 1000 animals. The Mackenzie Bison Working Group met in March 2020 to review the Mackenzie Wood Bison Management Plan along with the 2019 survey results and make recommendations. ENR is considering the possibility of a regulation change to re-open harvest as per the recommendations received. Composition surveys and anthrax surveillance flights are planned for summer 2020, pending ability to conduct the work in compliance with COVID-19 measures.
- Boreal caribou: Two meetings of the Southern NWT and Wek'eezhii boreal caribou range plan working groups were held last fiscal year. Over the summer we had planned to focus on collection and review of local and traditional knowledge of important areas for boreal caribou, but things are on hold right now due to Covid-19 travel and meeting restrictions. We are still planning to form the Sahtú, Gwich'in and Inuvialuit working groups this year, and will likely begin reaching out to organizations in those regions this summer. We are working on finalizing the report for the NWT boreal caribou habitat selection analysis and mapping project and completed some preliminary analyses looking at boreal caribou habitat selection within fires as a function of burn severity. (CIMP project 202) We completed a first draft of new Best Management Practices and Guidelines for Industry in Boreal Caribou Habitat for The Northwest Territories and held a webinar with renewable resource boards, regulatory boards and industry stakeholders to introduce the guidelines at the end of March. Participants were invited to submit written feedback on the draft guidelines by the end of April. (HSP funded project) Population modeling was undertaken to assess sustainable harvest rates for boreal caribou in the South Slave, Dehcho and Wek'eezhii regions. Collar deployment was carried out in the South Slave and Dehcho regions, including some new collars deployed north of Wrigley for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Environmental Assessment. A boreal caribou abundance survey was undertaken in the North Slave region, and spring composition surveys were carried out in the South Slave and Dehcho regions. Wolf abundance surveys were carried out in the South Slave, Dehcho and North Slave regions.
- Dolphin and Union caribou: We are collaborating with WMAC (NWT), University of Calgary and Nunavut on Dolphin and Union caribou work. The work plan is being reworked based on COVID-19 restrictions as originally it involved a lot of community workshops and trans-boundary meetings. This fiscal year the focus is shifting to collecting harvester sample submissions.

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- Barren-ground caribou: In March 2020 we conducted late-winter composition surveys by helicopter of Bluenose-East, Bathurst and Beverly caribou herds. 92 GPS collars were placed on Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou (58 females and 34 males), mostly in March 2020. Some wolf collars were also deployed. ENR will be postponing the planned 2020 calving ground surveys on Bluenose-East and Bathurst barren-ground caribou to 2021 due to Covid19 restrictions, border closures and Government of Nunavut suspension of issuing Wildlife Research Permits. A letter is on its way to co-management partners. Wolf management actions including increased harvest incentives supplemented with aerial removals took place this April/May (to be completed May 15th) on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East ranges.
- Bats: We have temporarily suspended field work that involves directly handling bats, until the risk of transmitting Covid-19 to bats is better understood. This is to protect the bats from the possibility of being infected with the virus. We are preparing a report on the results of acoustic monitoring for bats in the NWT from 2011-2018. ENR Sahtú Region is planning to carry out acoustic monitoring for bats this summer, in and around some Sahtú communities.
- Amphibians: ENR Sahtú Region is planning some acoustic monitoring for amphibians this summer, in and around some Sahtú communities, with a specific focus on looking for boreal chorus frogs.

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board

- General:
 - GRRB staff are all working from home due to COVID-19.
 - We welcomed Steve Andersen to the team as Stakeholder Liaison. Due to COVID-19 he started working remotely in Grande Prairie on 20th April.
 - We hired Laurence Carter as Management Plan Coordinator (Grizzly Bear) (1 year term). Because of Covid-19 and the inability to hold public meetings, her start date has been delayed until 1st August.
 - Our technician, Jordan Norman-Goose, term has ended. We said goodbye to him 31st March.
 - The Board will be holding a teleconference at the end of May
 - Consensus agreement for barren-ground caribou recovery strategy
 - SARC priority scoring, assessment schedule and assessment of northern mountain caribou
 - Review of several federal recovery documents
 - NWT wildlife care committee reviews
 - Submitted GRRB/GTC-DCH TK report on boreal caribou to the National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium online portal
 - GNWT Best Management Practices and Guidelines for Industry in Boreal Caribou Habitat review
 - Continued winter field work related to the Divii (Dalls sheep) community-based program
 - Provided assistance to the Muskrat Project
 - Continue implementing and updating the BNW, BNE, and CB caribou herd MP

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- Rat River Working Group held its Annual Harvest Meeting in March 2020 and made recommendations on the voluntary safe harvest level and research supported for 2020
- Whitefish project did community tour to report back on results so far. We also did school visits in all the junior and senior high schools
- Gwich'in Forest Management Plan steering committee met in March to review its action plan

- Future Plans
 - Consultations on Northern Mountain caribou listing
 - Reviews and consultations on several federal species recovery documents
 - Attend the National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium teleconference
 - Range planning for boreal caribou will start this fall
 - Consultation on Grizzly Bear Management Plan and Dall's sheep Management Plan, hopefully
 - Proceed with summer field work if doable – small mammals, hares, Dall's sheep
 - Continue implementing and updating the BNW, BNE, and CB caribou herd MP
 - Harvest Survey
 - Updated system managing permit reviews
 - Updated system for managing research suggestions
 - Whitefish project (community monitoring)

Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

- Signed consensus agreements for the barren-ground caribou recovery strategy, bat management plan and the wood bison implementation agreement in April 2020.
- Reviewed the Canada Warbler and Short-eared Owl 6-Month Status Reports for COSEWIC.
- Reviewed and approved Batches 1-3 for the NWT General Status Ranking Program.
- Received a joint management proposal from TG and GNWT to consider wolf management actions in Wek'èezhìi in January 2020. Board agreed to a pilot project for 2020. A revised joint management proposal is to be submitted in August 2020 with the expectation of a Level 2 proceeding (outside consultation required but no public hearing).
- Approved statuses for Bluenose-East (Red), Bluenose-West (Orange) and Cape Bathurst (Red) caribou and submit the ACCWM Action Plans and Annual Status Meeting Summary to governments in March and April 2020.

Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)

- Council Activities: The WMAC (NWT) had a regular board meeting March 4-6, 2020 in Inuvik. At this meeting, the Council made the following decisions:
 - To support the NWT barren-ground caribou recovery strategy (Resolution #03/20 #02).
 - To support the posting of the Horned Grebe management plan on the Canada Gazette (Resolution 03/20 #01)

- The WMAC (NWT) also met remotely May 8 to discuss future meeting plans during the COVID-19 situation and Dolphin and Union Caribou conservation issues. The next WMAC (NWT) meeting will be held via teleconference on June 16, 2020.
- WMAC (NWT) completed its annual Species at Risk community tour in March, visiting Ulukhaktok and Sachs Harbour. The following provides some of the topics discussed during this tour.
 - Updated the communities on the Tuk Pen/Cape Bathurst sensitive habitat position paper
 - Updated the communities on the NWT polar bear reassessment and started collecting feedback and/or concerns.
- In April 2019, the WMAC (NWT) and JS applied for POLAR Knowledge funding of \$450,000 over 3 years, between April 2020 and April 2023, to fund the co-design and expansion of the Dolphin and Union coastal population survey in Nunavut. The POLAR Knowledge selection committee is recommending to its board of directors that our project be funded; however, they have asked for more information as to how we will adapt to COVID-19, we are now just waiting for final response from Polar.
- Since the last CMA F2F meeting, the WMAC (NWT) members/staff attended:
 - Beaver Management teleconference (March 25, 2020)

7. Work plan – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Upcoming activities relevant to the CMA's work planning.

The work plan provided by the Secretariat identifies all the species that have been assessed or are scheduled for assessment – this was presented at the February 2020 meeting. It identifies who is responsible for those species, and sets out a timeline for the process for each species. To summarize, upcoming activities relevant to the CMA include:

- **Polar bears:** Re-assessment is scheduled for April 2021. The 6-month review of polar bear status report (re-assessment) will June-November 2020.
- **Hairy braya:** Re-assessment was scheduled for 2021. The 6-month review period for the hairy braya status report (re-assessment) was scheduled for August 2020-January 2021 and was to take place concurrently with the planned August 2020 field work. However, the field season has been cancelled in 2020 in response to Covid-19. The re-assessment has been postponed for an undefined period of time. As a result, the CMA needs to set a new assessment date for SARC based on when field work will take place. The CMA also needs to discuss the development of a consensus agreement to re-list hairy braya without a re-assessment.
- Contracts for 2022 assessments/re-assessments will be issued in spring 2020. This includes updates to the **boreal caribou** and **Peary caribou** status reports (2022 re-assessments), in preparation for their re-assessments, and the development of a new status report for **peregrine falcon** (2022 assessment).
- In April 2020, SARC assessed **northern mountain caribou** as Special Concern (there will be a presentation by SARC on the assessment during agenda item 18). A consensus agreement on listing will be required within 1 year (by April 29, 2021). The CMA has the opportunity to request clarification on the assessment in the first 60 days of receiving the assessment from SARC (June 29, 2020). Within 3 months of receiving the assessment, the CMA will need to

have developed the actions to prepare (by July 9, 2020). The consultation and engagement period will be from August to November 2020.

- June 29, 2020 – deadline for CMA to request clarification from SARC on the assessment (60 day period). SARC will respond within 30 days.
- July 9, 2020 – deadline for the Actions needed to prepare for a CMA consensus agreement on listing (due within 3 months of receiving an assessment)
- August-November 2020 – consultation/engagement period
- April 29, 2021 – deadline for consensus agreement on listing

Action A2020051301: Secretariat will initiate the process to develop a consensus agreement to re-list hairy braya without a re-assessment.

The Secretariat will distribute the written workplan update to the CMA after the meeting.

8. Annual reports – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Review draft 2019-20 CMA annual report. Receive ENR's 2019-20 Species at Risk (NWT) Act annual report.

- (a) 2019-20 CMA annual report approved. Will be submitted to the Legislative Assembly for tabling this fall.
- (b) ENR's 2019/20 *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* annual report
 - The ENR annual report has not yet been submitted but will be sent to the CMA in the next couple of weeks. This annual report is a submission regarding regulations, agreements, permits, and exemptions to regulations or permits.

9. Species at Risk Committee – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Review and approve SARC's proposed 2021-2025 Species Assessment Schedule. Receipt of SARC's revised status report guidelines (TKCK, SK, and general).

SARC submitted the proposed 2021-2025 Species Assessment Schedule on May 4, 2020 to the CMA. The 2021 re-assessment of hairy braya was not included in SARC's proposed assessment schedule due to cancelled field work in response to covid-19 (the field work was to inform the re-assessment). In their letter, SARC requested that the CMA determine when the hairy braya field work can be completed to support a re-assessment. The CMA anticipates that field work can be completed in 2021 and therefore the species will be added to the assessment schedule for a 2023 re-assessment.

In summary:

- 2021 – polar bear (re-assessment)
- 2022 – peregrine falcon, woodland caribou (boreal population) (re-assessment), and Peary caribou (re-assessment)
- 2023 – American white pelican added for assessment in 2023, Dolphin and Union caribou (re-assessment), northern leopard frog (re-assessment) and hairy braya (re-assessment)

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- 2024 – Canadian toad and western toad (re-assessment)
- 2025 – Rock cranberry (lingonberry) (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) added for assessment in 2025

WMAC (NWT) had a council meeting last week and discussed conservation concerns with Dolphin and Union caribou regarding the latest population assessment. Dolphin and Union caribou are currently scheduled for re-assessment in 2023. The CMA discussed shifting the Dolphin and Union caribou re-assessment to 2022 due to concerns with where the population is at right now. The following considerations were discussed:

- The option to switch the re-assessment dates for Peary caribou and Dolphin and Union caribou was considered. This would require a consensus agreement on relisting without re-assessment for Peary caribou. The request for proposal is going out for the 2022 reassessment of Peary caribou this week. Switching Peary caribou and Dolphin and Union caribou on the assessment schedule would mean needing to provide the Secretariat with all contract information requirements immediately, including minimum required contacts and resources.
- Adding the Dolphin and Union caribou re-assessment to 2022 would impact SARC and the CMA's workloads for status reports and consultations as it would group three caribou species and a new assessment (peregrine falcon) together.
- Moving American white pelican to 2024 was discussed however the CMA chose not to pursue this option.

Decision #D2020051305: Decision to approve 2021-2025 Species Assessment Schedule with the addition of hairy braya re-assessment in April 2023.

SARC developed new guidelines for status reports including Indigenous and community knowledge, scientific knowledge, and general guidelines. CMA approval is not required, but SARC is required to regularly review the guidelines with the CMA.

Claire and Deb provided the CMA with an overview of the new guidelines. In summary, the new guidelines include revisions to the Indigenous and community knowledge guidelines along with incidental changes/revisions to the scientific knowledge and general status report guidelines.

Janet Winbourne and Adam Bathe assisted in the review of revised guidelines and they attended the SARC meeting in April. The revised guidelines allow preparers to take a much more flexible approach to the layout to highlight knowledge and support the fulsome articulation of Indigenous and community knowledge. SARC used a biocultural approach in the revised guidelines, recognizing the link between cultural diversity and biodiversity, and linked the approach to article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The guidelines also introduce more room for the inclusion of Indigenous stories; these stories are like databases for Indigenous knowledge, but provide much more context and meaning to the knowledge that is documented. The inclusion of those stories are essential to understand the Indigenous knowledge.

SARC is working on revising the Assessment Process and Objective Biological Criteria. The Secretariat prepared suggested revisions to the Assessment Process and Objective Biological Criteria. Those have been submitted to SARC for consideration. A mock assessment to test the suggested revisions will be scheduled when possible, depending on the continuation of Covid-19 travel restrictions.

10. Species Conservation and Recovery Fund – led by Jodie Maring (WMAC-NWT/SCARF subcommittee member) and Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Report on 2019-20 Stewardship Program projects. Update on interactive map (previous action item).

The call for 2020/21 proposals for the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund (SCARF) opened on January 15 and closed on March 1. On March 1 only three applications were submitted. The SCARF subcommittee decided to extend the deadline to Friday, March 13, 2020. Five applications were received for the 2020/21 fiscal year and four projects were awarded funding.

Total contributions = \$29,900. Program total available was \$60,000.

Recall that the Secretariat was developing an **interactive map** to showcase past projects that have been funded by SCARF. We have encountered some delays in publishing the map, but will inform the CMA once the map has been pushed live.

Action A2020051302: The Secretariat will inform the CMA once the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund Interactive Map is live.

The CMA asked what happens to unused funds. When the total contribution is less than the total amount of funds within the program then Secretariat has some flexibility and are able to reallocate funds to other CMA initiatives including some of the tactics outlined in the communication and outreach campaign.

11. NWT Species at Risk Communications strategy – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Progress update on action item: Secretariat to look into cost/time considerations for re-branding of the NWT Species at Risk program, and the development of an outreach campaign.

At the February 2019 CMA meeting, the Secretariat was asked to look into the cost and time considerations for re-branding the NWT Species at Risk program and the development of an outreach campaign. A number of specific projects were identified by the CMA as priorities under this initiative and two of these ideas have been brought forward to date (expanded upon below).

Collaboration with NWT Brewing Co.

Recall that based on suggestions and interest from CMA members, the Secretariat pursued the development of a species at risk branded beer with NWT Brewing Co. in Yellowknife. The target species for this year will be the 5 ecotypes of caribou in the NWT:

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- Barren-ground caribou
- Boreal caribou
- Dolphin and Union caribou
- Northern mountain caribou
- Peary caribou

In February (pre-Covid), the branded sessional (seasonal) beer was going to be pre-released at the Woodyard Pub in Yellowknife, followed by a release of the branded beer in cans at Folk on the Rocks (FOTR) 2020. However, due to COVID-19 Folk on the Rocks has been cancelled. NWT Brewing Co. and the SAR Secretariat decided to continue with the collaboration and sought to adapt the project. FOTR was only one tactic within the wider project.

- Where the primary platform was going to be FOTR, NWT Brewing Co. is looking at other ways to get the messaging out including: social media, the brew pub (off-sales), and liquor store sales. They are looking at providing their product to liquor stores across the NWT including Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River, and Fort Smith.
- NWT Brewing Co. have suggested developing a video clip to highlight the collaboration with NWT-SAR and to build awareness for our caribou species. They have a videographer that they work with and would develop the video clip. This could be an opportunity for SARC, CMA, or ENR involvement.
- Robbie Craig (local Yellowknife artist) was hired by NWT Brewing Co. to develop artwork for the collaboration. The original deadline for the art was May 8 – the artwork was completed April 20.
- There will be one image to represent our caribou; that image is a stylized caribou. This was a cost effective and time saving decision also meant to simplify a number of the production steps.
- All supporting documents, material, etc. will include the 5 ecotypes of NWT caribou.
- The artwork will be used to develop the design for the beer cans. NWT Brewing Co. is looking at a double layered label for the beer cans – the concept is to have the artwork peel off to expose additional information
- Working group: a working group was developed and met for the first time at the beginning of May. The working group is made up of the CMA, SAR Secretariat, ENR-Wildlife, and ENR-communications. The intent of the working group is to help make decisions on the collaboration.

Conservation in Art

Background: The Yellowknife Guild of Arts and Crafts and the Craft Council of the NWT contacted the Secretariat about a conservation in art proposal for the SCARF program. We advised that it would likely not fit the criteria of the program and suggested that the Secretariat work directly (outside of the SCARF program) with the Guild and Craft Council to create a project that connects artists, art serving groups in the NWT and members of the public with the issues and messages related to conservation and species at risk in the NWT. Although this project did not fit the SCARF program –

their ideas did suit some of the past suggestions for the SAR-NWT outreach and communications campaign. This project works to reach out to a different target audience than the collaboration with NWT Brewing Co.

In short, this project is intended to connect artists, art serving groups in the NWT and members of the public with issues and messages related to conservation and species at risk in the NWT. The project includes a travelling art show that will go to various communities where the conservation message will be shared with interested members of the public. The project is tentatively titled: *custos- the land inspires us*. The show is meant to inspire dialogue about our personal roles in species and land-based conservation.

There will be a call to NWT artisans across the territory for art and craft related to the theme of conservation. Artists and artisans will be asked to focus on NWT species at risk and include a conservation message either within their piece or in the accompanying narrative. Approximately 20 pieces (depending on size and display capacity) will be selected through a jurying process which will evaluate for adherence to the theme and for craftsmanship. Selected works will be presented in a show of works in Yellowknife. This show will be curated and delivered in partnership with YKARCC's mobile gallery and travel to communities (Behchoko, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, and Yellowknife).

Deliverables include physical, mobile, and sound shows. Digital options to accommodate for social distancing and travel restrictions, a large watercolour conservation themed mural created by visitors, a publication of NWT residents and visitors' conservation thoughts, wildlife recording sound loop, an impact report, and a children's conservation take away (i.e. colouring pages or similar).

The secretariat has recommended that the CMA may want to participate in the jurying process. If anyone is interested in participating as a jury member for the selection of art for this project they can let Michele know. The anticipated jurying dates are in the date range of September 2-15. If not, then the Secretariat can participate as a jury member.

12. Bats – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Consensus agreement accepting the management plan was signed April 8, 2020 and submitted to the Minister of ENR on April 9, 2020. Review and approve press release for July 9, 2020. Draft consensus agreement respecting implementation. Actions to prepare.

- Bats management authorities: SRRB, WRRB, TG, GNWT
- The management plan consensus agreement was signed April 8, 2020 and submitted to the Minister of ENR on April 9, 2020.
- The final management plan will be made public through the SAR website on July 9, 2020. This is normally done through a GNWT press release, however the GNWT is not doing any press releases other than those that relate to Covid-19. The GNWT will post the press release to social media pages.

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- The CMA reviewed and approved the press release for the completion of the management plan.
- The draft actions to prepare were reviewed. Revision by management authorities are DUE July 9, 2020.
- The draft consensus agreement respecting implementation of the bats management plan was reviewed. The consensus agreement statements and Annex A's are DUE January 29, 2021 in anticipation of the February 2021 face to face CMA meeting.
- The legal deadline for completion and submission of the implementation consensus agreement is April 9, 2021.

Action A2020051303: The Secretariat will send an email to the CMA to let them know when the press release is live. The Secretariat will also send an email with the deadlines.

Action A2020051304: Management Authorities to submit actions to prepare for the Bats Management Plan Implementation Agreement to the Secretariat by July 9, 2020.

13. Barren-ground caribou – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Consensus agreement accepting the recovery strategy was signed April 8, 2020 and submitted to the Minister of ENR on April 9, 2020. Review and approve press release for July 9, 2020. Draft consensus agreement respecting implementation. Actions to prepare.

- Barren-ground caribou management authorities: WMAC (NWT), GRRB, SRRB, WRRB, TG, GNWT
- The recovery strategy consensus agreement was signed April 8, 2020 and submitted to the Minister of ENR on April 9, 2020.
- The final recovery strategy will be made public through the SAR website on July 9, 2020. This is normally done through a GNWT press release, however the GNWT is not doing any press releases other than those that relate to Covid-19. The GNWT will post the press release to social media pages.
- The CMA reviewed and approved the press release for the completion of the recovery strategy.
- The draft actions to prepare were reviewed. Revision by management authorities are DUE July 9, 2020.
- The draft consensus agreement respecting implementation of the recovery strategy was reviewed. The consensus agreement statements and Annex A's are DUE January 29, 2021 in anticipation of the February 2021 face to face CMA meeting.
- The legal deadline for completion and submission of the implementation consensus agreement is April 9, 2021. Start signatures March 29.

Action A2020051305: Management Authorities to submit actions to prepare for the Barren-ground Caribou Recovery Strategy Implementation Agreement to the Secretariat by July 9, 2020.

[Update on Federal listing process] Barren-ground Caribou - Update on the proposed listing as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*

- **Context:** In 2016, the species was assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as Threatened.
- **Pre-Listing Consultation:** In-person consultations were completed in NWT with all groups who requested them. The Wildlife Management Boards have also provided support/approval to list barren-ground caribou. Numerous communities, HTOs and other organizations also provided feedback and comments.
- **Next Steps:** Consultations are ongoing in Nunavut. Due to Covid 19 the next round of consultations had to be postponed. Once the in person consultations are completed then the feedback will be given to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) to make a decision. At this point, it is possible that the NWMB would like to do their own round of consultations. Given the sensitivity around Covid 19 and spreading it to communities, it is unlikely that consultations will be completed before 2021/2022.
- CWS was also supposed to present to the BQCMB at their meeting in April however, the meeting was cancelled so that presentation will have to be rescheduled.
- Tentative timeline for consultation completion is 2021 or 2022. From there it goes for Ministerial approval. Not allowed into communities until at least October.

14. Dolphin and Union caribou – led by Bruce Laurich (Environment and Climate Change Canada)

Progress update on federal listing (up listing from special concern up to endangered).

[Update on Federal listing process] Dolphin & Union Caribou - Update on the proposed change in status from Special Concern to Endangered under the federal *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*

- **Context:** Dolphin and Union caribou is currently listed under SARA as a species of Special Concern (2011). In 2017, the species was reassessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as Endangered.
- **Pre-Listing Consultation:** In-person consultations with community members and hunters and trappers committees (HTCs) were conducted in April 2019 in both Nunavut (Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay) and the Northwest Territories (Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk). Two WMAC-NWT staff participated in the consultations in NWT. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) and Inuvialuit Land Administration (ILA) were met in person in December 2019.
- **Next Steps:** The Cambridge Bay HTO requested a second public meeting, which was scheduled on March 23, 2020. This meeting had to be canceled due to the covid pandemic and will be rescheduled once the covid restrictions are lifted.
- The four hunters and trappers organizations/committees requested to meet all together to end the consultation in order to address their concerns. This meeting will be scheduled after the public meeting in Cambridge Bay.
- Once the community consultations are complete, WMAC-NWT and the governments of the NWT and NU will be consulted.

15. Peary caribou – led by Bruce Laurich (Environment and Climate Change Canada)

Progress update on the draft federal recovery strategy. Recovery strategy and consensus agreement must be submitted to Minister of ENR by September 30, 2021.

[Update on federal listing process] Peary caribou - Update on the draft recovery strategy for Peary caribou, including the identification of critical habitat

- **Context:** In the 2016 draft document, critical habitat was identified on both the land and sea ice. Under SARA, critical habitat is defined as the habitat necessary for the survival or the recovery of the species. In 2016, several partners expressed concerns about the identification of land-based critical habitat, which represented important habitat rather than critical habitat.
- To address the concerns expressed about the land-based critical habitat, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is now proposing to identify sea ice crossings only as critical habitat.
- **Consultation:** ECCC consultation on the proposed approach started in January 2020. Six HTOs (Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay, Kugaaruk, Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven and Cambridge Bay) and four HTC's (Ulukhaktok, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk) were consulted in person in February 2020. The biologist Tracy Davison with the Government of the Northwest Territories, and Cheryl Johnson with the ECCC Science and Technology Branch participated in the consultations.
- During the in-person consultations, a list of studies to identify critical habitat on the land was developed in collaboration with the HTC's.
- ECCC is currently following up with the HTC's/HTOs to seek formal support on the identification of critical habitat. However, the follow up has slowed/stopped due to the covid pandemic.
- **Next Steps:** Complete the follow-up with the HTC's/HTO.
- Request GNWT, WMAC-NWT, Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) and Government of Nunavut support to post the draft recovery strategy on the Public Registry.
- Post the proposed recovery strategy on the federal Species at Risk Public Registry for the 60-day public comment period.
- Submit the proposed final recovery strategy to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board for approval.
- Email Isabelle Duclos with any specific questions.

The NWT consensus agreement is due September 2021 – the delays in finalization of the federal recovery strategy may have implications on that timeline again. The CMA has already had three extensions on this consensus agreement to accommodate federal processes.

16. Northern mountain caribou – led by Deborah Simmons (Species at Risk Committee)

SARC presentation re: northern mountain caribou assessment results from April 2020 meeting.

SARC provided a presentation summary of the April 2020 assessment results for northern mountain caribou (Special Concern) in the NWT. Prior to beginning the assessment, SARC reviewed and approved the species status report. Status reports are required to present the best available Indigenous, community, and scientific knowledge for the species.

SARC was particularly pleased with this status report – the preparers (Janet Winbourne/Kristi Benson and Deborah Cichowski) presented very strong Indigenous and community knowledge and scientific knowledge components, respectively. Some of the sections that are in the presentation have two titles (e.g., place and distribution – this reflects some of the changes brought in by the new guidelines – discussed previously).

Northern mountain caribou are similar to, but larger than, other types of caribou. Northern mountain caribou in the northern portion of the Mackenzie Mountains are smaller than their counterparts in the southern portion of the mountains, but are larger than the neighbouring Porcupine barren-ground caribou population. Some groups are more sedentary than others, primarily moving up and down in elevation but otherwise travelling little across the landscape, from season to season. Others use major river drainages as migration corridors.

Northern mountain caribou are almost exclusively found in western Canada in BC, NWT, and Yukon, with a small portion of the range overlapping eastern Alaska. In the NWT, northern mountain caribou occupy the western part of the territory in the Mackenzie Mountains area. There are six scientifically defined subpopulation ranges: Bonnet Plume, Redstone, Tay River, South Nahanni, Coal River, and La Biche ranges, all of which overlap both the NWT and Yukon. Northern mountain caribou range in the NWT is continuous, with adjacent ranges overlapping each other and ranges in Yukon. Calving ranges for migrating caribou are found primarily in the western portions of ranges along the NWT/Yukon border. Although caribou from neighbouring populations could possibly move into the NWT in the event of a decline here, the NWT contains the two largest subpopulations in Canada and would more likely act as a source population for those jurisdictions. Further refinement of subpopulation range boundaries and subpopulation structure is needed. There is some evidence that some NWT northern mountain caribou subpopulations could potentially be further divided into migratory and sedentary groups.

Northern mountain caribou move between a variety of widely scattered seasonal ranges: calving, post-calving, summer, and rutting range (all generally in alpine habitats), and winter ranges (typically in forested habitats at lower elevations). Overall, the habitat is considered relatively intact. There is habitat fragmentation and localized habitat destruction from infrastructure and industrial activity, as well as other human activity. The greatest concerns about habitat change are related to climate change and how it might impact habitat availability. Northern mountain caribou have a number of essential habitat components:

- Access to lichens, particularly in winter, is essential for caribou.
- Snow and ice patches to cool down and avoid insects in the summer. This is particularly important because declines in snow/ice patches in the Mackenzie and Selwyn mountains is

already being observed. If this coincides with an increase in insect harassment, it could negatively affect the caribou.

- Winter range is in areas of relatively low snow pack, and considered to be essential habitat by most knowledge holders.
- Wind-exposed ridges and mineral licks are also important.

The density of moose and other prey around northern mountain caribou ranges in the NWT is currently relatively low and unlikely to lead to altered predator/prey interactions.

The northern mountain caribou total estimated population is ~21,800, with mature >17,000, although most scientific subpopulation estimates are outdated. Almost half of the NWT's northern mountain caribou population is represented in the Redstone subpopulation, and Redstone and Bonnet Plume together make up almost 70% of the NWT population. Knowledge holders in the Mackenzie Mountains indicate that urgent action is needed to address declines in the herds they encounter, suggesting that the near future will likely experience continuing declines, if no action is taken. Trends based on scientific knowledge are unknown.

Northern mountain caribou have a relatively low reproductive capacity – population recovery, then, can be slow. A low reproductive rate, coupled with high levels of calf mortality, could result in a slow rate of population recovery following a decline. Predation is typically the leading cause of calf and adult mortality. Northern mountain caribou have a good dispersal ability and terrain is not typically a barrier.

Northern mountain caribou are highly adapted to their environment and cold winter conditions (large feet, prominent dew claws, thick/hollow hair, lichen consumption). Their flexibility in winter range/habitat use could help caribou respond to variable environmental conditions.

A threats assessment was completed by SARC prior to the assessment. Five primary threats were identified, ranging in overall impact from Low to Medium.

- Threat 1 – Climate change (medium) – many of these changes are already occurring and are believed to be causing serious impacts to some populations. The most serious impact of climate change relates to declines in ice patch habitat in the Mackenzie and Selwyn mountains. These ice patches are considered critical habitat components and declines are already measurable/noticeable.
 - Other impacts from climate change include unfavourable snow conditions (depth and hardness), changes in vegetation conditions, increased disease and parasites, degradation of permafrost (slumping), rapid run-off (which creates dangerous river crossings), changes to predator-prey relationships, and changes in the timing of seasonal movements.
- Threat 2 – Predation (low) – This is the leading cause of mortality, and although apparent competition is thought to be low, rate of wolf predation and wolf densities within the range are poorly understood.
- Threat 3 – Resource development (low-medium) – Most of the habitat is relatively undisturbed, but there are localized impacts that could have impacts at the population level.

- The North Canol Road and Canol Trail traverse the Redstone caribou range. Mineral exploration and mining activities are located primarily in the area around the NWT/Yukon border, especially in areas accessed by the South Nahanni Range Road and the North Canol Road.
- Threat 4 – Harvest and recreation (low-medium) – Intensifying local habitat destruction is occurring, exacerbated by ATVs, planes, and road access. Harvest is relatively low overall, but has increased in recent years. Lichens are slow-growing and are poor competitors against other plants and mosses, and grow best where growing conditions for other plants and mosses is poor, and where they are not subjected to physical disturbances.
- Threat 5 – Pollution (low) – Numerous spills and contaminated wastes along CANOL route. Government programs targeted at clean-up in place. Potential for localized impacts to habitat and caribou health.

Positive influences for northern mountain caribou include:

- Cross-regional community conservation planning, including the draft Níó Nę P'ęné Begháré Shúhta ʔepe' Narehǰá – Trails of the Mountain Caribou Management Plan and the Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail Management Plan.
- Two large protected areas (Nahanni and Naats'ihch'oh national park reserves) protect almost 35,000km² in and adjacent to South Nahanni, Coal River, La Biche, and Redstone caribou ranges.
- Land protection is being pursued by the Tu Łidlini (Ross River) Dena Council in the Yukon, and the Tulít'a and Norman Wells ʔehdzo Got'İneę (Renewable Resources Councils) in the Sahtú region of the Northwest Territories, for important northern mountain caribou habitat such as seasonal ranges and calving grounds.
- Clean-up of some contaminated sites in parts of the range.
- A large portion of most ranges are remote and relatively undisturbed (i.e., not accessible by road).
- There are low levels of harvest in most areas of the range.
- In the NWT, northern mountain caribou ranges have low densities of other ungulates. This is positive in contrast to the southern portion of their distribution where higher densities of moose and deer support higher predator densities.

SARC met on April 22, 2020 to assess northern mountain caribou. Special Concern – may become threatened or endangered in the NWT because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

- Criterion for assessment = Special Concern (b) – The species may become threatened if negative factors are neither reversed nor managed effectively.
- Primary reasons for assessment:
 - The range of this species is remote and relatively undisturbed outside of localized areas. However, northern mountain caribou in the NWT are subject to a number of important threats.
 - Northern mountain caribou are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly the already noticeable decline in ice patches in the Mackenzie and

Selwyn mountains. These areas, used to escape insects and cool down in the summer, are considered critical habitat components.

- Other threats include harvesting, recreation activities, resource development, and disrespectful harvesting behaviour. Although most of these threats are localized at the scale of the whole range of northern mountain caribou, they are expected to result in measurable negative impacts in some significant portions of the range, including within the calving and summering range of the Redstone herd, the largest herd in the NWT.
- There is strong local interest and support for management interventions in the range of northern mountain caribou. However, there exists strong concern that this is not being translated into meaningful management actions.
- Northern mountain caribou have a number of limiting biological characteristics that make them particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change in particular (e.g., cold-adapted, reliance on ice patch habitat) and can limit population recovery in the event of a decline (e.g., low reproductive capacity, high levels of calf mortality).
- SARC feels that, based on the available information, northern mountain caribou have the potential to become Threatened if the effects of climate change continue within their habitat and localized threats are not managed effectively.
- Additional factors considered in the assessment:
 - Population declines or displacement have been reported by Indigenous knowledge holders in the Sahtú and Gwich'in regions. This has been particularly noticeable over the last 10-12 years for the Redstone herd. However, much of the scientific population data are outdated.
 - Although rescue from neighbouring population is possible, the NWT contains the two largest subpopulations of northern mountain caribou in Canada and would more likely act as a source population.

As part of the assessment and in its review of the best available Indigenous, community, and scientific knowledge, SARC also submits the following recommendations for consideration by the CMA:

- Much of the available population data in the NWT are outdated. Enhanced monitoring and updated population estimates are essential to understand trends in herd composition and detect possible declines in herds.
- Enhance research on the effects of climate change on seasonal habitat and caribou health and behaviour.
- Further investigation of subpopulation and genetic structure of northern mountain caribou using the northern portion of the Mackenzie Mountains is needed.
- Further scientific and Indigenous knowledge research to document critical caribou habitat, such as calving grounds, is needed.
- Limit access to minimize disturbance to caribou habitat.
- Increase public and hunter education on the status of caribou to reduce damage to habitat and promote respectful caribou harvesting practices.

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- Implement protective measures outlined in applicable management plans, such as the Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail Management Plan, immediately.
- Protect important areas left out of Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve boundaries. Without conservation zoning or other protection, northern mountain caribou could be impacted by mineral exploration and development activities in these areas.
- Promote the use of Indigenous guardians to conduct monitoring of caribou and maintain the important relationship between northern mountain caribou and Indigenous peoples.

The CMA discussed whether **conservation actions** are required immediately (this is an option for the CMA as soon as a species is assessed, even prior to listing, in situations where they feel that actions need to be taken immediately). Conservation action consensus agreements become an available tool as soon as a species has been assessed (these are considered pre-listed species), but can be used at any point in the process. No conservation actions were suggested during the meeting that require action through a consensus agreement on conservation action.

There is a 60 day period in which the CMA can **request clarification** from SARC. If the CMA would like to submit a request for clarification on this assessment, the request should be submitted to SARC by June 29, 2020. SARC will respond within 30 days. This process is available to any management authority or the CMA in the first 60 days of receiving an assessment. The clarification can be on the reasons for the assessment decision, but not the process used for the assessment. The request has to be in writing. SARC's response will be published on the website.

The draft actions needed to prepare for a CMA consensus agreement on listing (**actions to prepare**) document was presented to the CMA. Management Authority revisions to this document are due by July 9, 2020. Recall that the management authorities for northern mountain caribou are the SRRB, GRRB, and GNWT.

With these timelines, the **consultation/engagement** period will be August to November 2020. This year, with Covid-19, social distancing, and uncertainties associated with when restrictions may be lifted – the CMA will need to think about contingencies or alternative solutions if travel and face to face meetings are not yet permitted. The CMA confirmed that they would like the usual consultation/engagement package from the Secretariat (i.e. fact sheet, template presentation, template letters, and newspaper/radio/online ads for ENR's public engagement).

The CMA discussed if or how they might use other plans (i.e. the national management plan and/or community/regional management plans) in the development of a northern mountain caribou management plan. At this time a decision or recommendation regarding the use of other plans has not been made. However, it was decided that the consultation and engagement material will acknowledge existing management plans. The management authorities for northern mountain caribou will further discuss potential use of these existing plans. Management authorities were also asked to provide the Secretariat with titles of existing management plans for inclusion in the consultation and engagement material.

Timelines for northern mountain caribou:

- June 29, 2020 – deadline for CMA to request clarification from SARC on the assessment (60 day period). SARC will respond within 30 days.
- July 9, 2020 – deadline for the actions needed to prepare for a CMA consensus agreement on listing
- August-November 2020 – consultation/engagement period
- September 30, 2020 – CMA check-in regarding consultation/engagement period (optional meeting)
- December 14, 2020 – CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- April 29, 2021 – deadline for consensus agreement on listing. Start signatures on April 19.

Action A2020051306: Management Authorities to submit actions to prepare for the Northern Mountain caribou consensus on listing to the Secretariat by July 9, 2020.

17.NWT General Status Ranking – led by Suzanne Carrière (ENR)

Presentation re: NWT General Status Ranking.

Under the NWT General Status Ranking program the draft species ranks are sent for review in batches. Reminder that these batches were sent to the CMA member organizations. The purpose is to update the general status ranking book. After you receive the batch you have three months to confirm receipt and review. The new NWT book will be published in 2021 (early) and the national report will be published at the same time. Suzanne is also looking for ideas on who to contact for text about mammals and birds and frogs and plants, etc. She would like to include additional Indigenous knowledge information in the report.

Summary of due dates for batch review responses:

- Batch 4 review responses due June 15 (this batch has already been circulated)
- Batch 5 (mammals, birds, etc.) review responses due September 30
- Batch 6 (vascular plants, mosses, insects) review responses due December 1

Let Suzanne know if you would like your logo included in the 2021 publication. This program is used by SARC to help with species prioritization.

18.Commonality analysis – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Progress update on action item.

Update on A2019022003: In February 2019 the CMA requested that the Secretariat complete an analysis of commonalities among management plan and recovery strategy approaches, with an aim of potentially being able to identify areas of efficiency and cooperation and highlight gaps. Approaches were categorized roughly according to the IUCN's classification system for conservation actions. This was presented to the CMA in February 2020.

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- The CMA discussed how best to use the tool.
- It would be helpful to show within the table which approaches have been done (or are being undertaken) versus approaches that haven't (perhaps with colour coding). This could help show which species aren't receiving enough attention, which objectives aren't being met fully, etc.
- The CMA also suggested that approaches that only note threats in a general manner be subdivided further to better show commonalities among threats.

Progress on the commonality analysis has been on hold and this action item will be brought forward to the next meeting.

The Secretariat was also tasked to look into opportunities to optimize the commonality analysis tool by shifting to software designed to track progress on actions using the open standards for conservation by the Conservation Coaches Network. The CMA suggested the Secretariat attend the Conservation Coaches rally in Victoria this spring. The Conservation Coaches Network rally was scheduled for May 17th – May 21st in Victoria, BC – however, due to COVID-19 the rally has been postponed until April 2021 in Victoria. The Secretariat will bring this item forward and look into attending in April 2021.

At this time the secretariat is also looking into alternative training opportunities.

19. Next meetings – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Scheduling for fall/winter 2020 meetings and February 2021 meeting.

- September 30 (GRRB, SRRB, GNWT): check-in regarding consultation and engagement for listing northern mountain caribou.
- December 14 (all CMA): to review consultation and engagement results from fall for northern mountain caribou and to check-in on the barren-ground caribou and bat implementation agreement.
- February 23-25, 2021 in Inuvik: regularly-scheduled meeting, will include in-principle approval of consensus agreements, implementation progress reports, etc.