

Attendees	Organization
Jody Pellissey	CMA Chairperson/Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board
Larry Carpenter	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Jodie Maring	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Robert Charlie-Tetlichì	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Kaytlin Cooper	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Leon Andrew	ʔehdzo Got'ìnè Gots'è Nákedì (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board)
Catarina Owen	ʔehdzo Got'ìnè Gots'è Nákedì (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board) – by videoconference
Don Beaulieu	Salt River First Nation
Heather Sayine-Crawford	Environment and Climate Change (ECC)
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Climate Change (ECC)
Bruce Laurich	Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Kelby Ogryzlo	Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Michele Grabke	Species at Risk Secretariat
Joslyn Oosenbrug	Species at Risk Secretariat

## MAY 16, 2023 – 9:00AM – OPENING PRAYER AND CALL TO ORDER

### 1. Introductions – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Roundtable introductions*

### 2. Agenda – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Review of draft agenda*

Agenda approved without changes.

### 3. Minutes – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Review and approve draft minutes from February 2023*

Minutes approved without changes.

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

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

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There were 10 actions/decisions identified in the February meeting that have been completed including steps to finalize consensus agreements, revise management plans (northern mountain caribou, Peary caribou), progress reports (Dolphin and Union caribou) as well as providing feedback on the communications plan and social media strategy.

There are a couple of items that continue to be deferred including the analysis of commonalities, as well as education initiatives and other public outreach activities.

## 5. General Updates – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*General updates from Management Authorities and participating organizations. Opportunity for input/discussion on implementation actions*

### Sahtú Renewable Resources Board:

- SRRB is still working on hiring for an Executive Director and the position has been advertised again. SRRB is also working on hiring more planners.
- SRRB has submitted a report on the Deline public listening session, the GNWT-ECC Minister has time to provide feedback. SRRB is hoping to restart public listening sessions.

### Environment and Climate Change Canada:

- ECCC are holding wolverine workshops for management planning progress. And they held an Indigenous knowledge workshop on grizzly bears about a year ago - the report is going out for validation. The management planning process is continuing.
- ECCC does not have any updates for barren-ground caribou and we are still waiting to hear back from the Minister.
- ECCC started staffing species at risk positions in Iqaluit (x2) – this will increase capacity and cover more of the territory.

### Salt River First Nation:

- No updates.

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### Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board:

- **Staffing:** Still without a fisheries/forestry biologist. This has been vacant for almost a year and a half. Most fisheries/forestry work has been put on hold. We do have some required consultations coming up on the NWT Forest Act. No ED since August. Steve and I spent several months purely on ED / finance tasks. We are still doing some. No environmental coordinator since September. Steve coordinated the last harvest survey, and we have a contractor doing the research application reviews. Unless we can hire someone soon, the next harvest survey will not be going ahead. I have handed in my notice, and will be moving the DFO Inuvik office next week, working on Marine Conservation. Robert Charlie-Tetlichí's Chair appointment was finalized in September. He has taken on a lot of the urgent ED task. Cheryl, our finance manager returned to work in September. I have been helping her catch up and fix the finances, do the budget and variance. Sam Bullocks' Board member appointment expired at the beginning of February. He was also the alternate Chair for the CMA and the Chair of the IFMP Steering Committee. He has been appointed to SARC by GNWT. We have 5 GTC Board positions vacant (2 full and 3 alternate) – names have been submitted. We were able to keep one of our summer students on as an Admin Assistant until the end of December which was extremely useful. Hopefully we will be able to hire her again for the summer.
- **General:** Strategic planning and research interests workshops have been postponed until the fall (probably September) of 2023. Our conservation calendar was created and distributed at the beginning of the year. It includes messages encouraging reporting observations, provides updates on research and management planning, and other conservation messages.
- **Shih Grizzly Bear** - Working with partners to plan the management of grizzly bears at the Inuvik landfill. (ongoing). Completion of consultations and signing of the new Shih (Grizzly Bear) Management Plan for the GSA. Will hopefully be doing some education on it this coming summer if time permits.
- **Divii Dall's Sheep** - Worked with community members from Aklavik to service our camera array in the Richardson Mountains during the winter. Interviewed by several media outlets about detections of orf disease in Dall's sheep by our camera array. Conducted an aerial survey of Dall's sheep in the northern Richardson Mountains with

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YG, ECC, ERRC, and TRRC. Took part in school visits and a community open house in Aklavik organized by Sydney Goward as part of the Divii (Dall's Sheep) Project.

- tsè' Beaver - Attended meeting of WMAC, HTC's, and ECC to discuss growing beaver population in the Mackenzie Delta. Organized the logistics for Helen Wheeler's beaver project which occurred this past summer.
- Conducted small mammal surveys with ECC summer.
- Vadzaih Barren-ground caribou - Sat in on Inuvik HTC/WMAC meeting on proposed changes to harvest zones for Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-West caribou herds. Interviewed harvesters of Cape Bathurst / Bluenose-West caribou to collect data for the ACCWM. Hosted ACCWM meeting in Inuvik. Took part in ACCWM working groups. (ongoing).
- Harvest survey - Provided harvest survey results to PCMB. Coordinated the Gwich'in Harvest Survey.
- Took part in Gwich'in Forest Management Plan and NWT Forest Act meetings. (Sept-Oct)
- Moose survey consultations, Aerial moose survey with ECC. (March)
- Consultations in June for lesser yellowlegs listing, barn swallow reassessment/listing and short-eared owl reassessment/listing (FEDERAL).
- Consultations in January for NWT boreal caribou reassessment, northern mountain caribou management plan, peregrine falcon not at risk. Discussed dolly varden briefly – the federal management plan is almost ready for consultation.
- Consultations for barn swallow recovery strategy (may) federal.
- Reviewed several status reports for both federal and territorial SARA.
- Management planning has started for wolverine (federal oct) and GSA boreal caribou range planning restarted (March).
- Waiting for insect results. Did more collections over the summer with Rosemin and the etymologist from BC. Blue vane traps and transects. Also held a Bio-Blitz. I know some SAR were found, gypsy cuckoo bumble bee.
- Bat data (acoustic recordings) have been sent to GNWT and will be included with their data when it gets sent for analysis.

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- Because of taking on several ED and finance tasks I haven't been able to participate much in Wildlife Care Committee or national boreal caribou knowledge consortium work since August.
- Kristi Benson from GTC\_DCH was up at the beginning of the year to do dzan muskrat interviews. This will be used in the assessment of muskrat in 2026. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to participate due to my workload.
- Participated in SARC's assessments of Dolphin and Union caribou and American white pelican.

### Government of the Northwest Territories:

- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Department of Lands have merged and are now the Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC). The ECC Minister is Shane Thompson; the Deputy Minister is Erin Kelly; and the Assistant Deputy Minister, Wildlife and Forest Management is Brett Elkin.
- Last week staff attended the North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference in Alaska. GNWT will host the next North American Caribou Workshop in Yellowknife which is planned for 2025.
- ECC-Wildlife has hired two new range planning biologists: Jonathan Gillingham and Amanda Weltman.

### Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT):

- WMAC-NWT met from February 28 – March 2 in Inuvik. The next meeting is planned for June 6-8 in Yellowknife.
- WMAC-NWT Wildlife Biologist Rosemin Nathoo is coordinating caribou surveys with the OHTC. Ethnobotanist Hannah Currie is working on sensitive habitat paper on Cape Bathurst caribou.
- Last fall there was supposed to be a polar bear range meeting in Alaska but it has been postponed to this October in Iqaluit.

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## Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board:

- WRRB has a board meeting next week in Behchokò, NT This is the first meeting back in a community (i.e., not in Yellowknife) since before COVID.
- WRRB attended the 2023 North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference in Alaska last week and presented on the adaptive co-management framework.
- The next photo survey of Bluenose East caribou will happen in June and WRRB staff will be participating.

## 6. Annual Reports – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Review draft CMA and SARC annual reports. Receive ECC annual report.*

### Review draft 2022-23 CMA Annual Report

Under subsection 16(1) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Conference of Management Authorities (the Conference) must submit an annual report to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change by September 30 each year. This annual report covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

2022-23 CMA Annual Report was approved with changes including moving the list of participants to the same section as the list of Management Authorities.

### Receive draft 2022-23 SARC Annual Report

Under subsection 23(1) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Species at Risk Committee must submit an annual report to the Conference of Management Authorities by July 1 each year. This annual report covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

Sections 16(2) and 23(2) require that the Minister lay the CMA and SARC Annual Reports before the Legislative Assembly, however as this is an election year there will be a GNWT transition/blackout period between the beginning of September and the end of October, therefore the reports will be tabled at in August rather than in the fall. Also note, that during this time the GNWT will not issues news releases and public and stakeholder consultations,

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planning sessions, or public surveys should not begin or continue to be held or deployed (excluding routine surveys conducted by the Bureau of Statistics) during the transition period.

### Receive ECC's 2022/23 *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* annual report

Under sections 79(8), 82(3), and 84(8) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) must provide an annual report to the CMA by July 1 each year respecting:

- Agreements and orders made under Section 79;
- Exemptions made under Section 82(1)(a) and the reasons provided to the Minister under Section 82(2)(a); and,
- Permits issued under Section 84(1), and of those refused, including the reasons for issuing or refusing to issue a permit.

The CMA received ECC's 2022/23 *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* annual report on May 2, 2023.

**7. American White Pelican Assessment – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)**  
*SARC presentation on American White Pelican assessment outcome. Conservation actions, requests for clarification.*

### Presentation – led by Kaytlin Cooper (SARC)

SARC provided a presentation summary of the April 2023 assessment results for American White Pelican (Special Concern) in the NWT. GNWT requested in the future, species presentations be provided in advance as there is a lot of detail for review.

SARC met on April 18-21, 2023 and assessed the biological status of American White Pelican in the Northwest Territories. The assessment was based on this approved status report. The preparer for the American White Pelican report was Bryce Olson from Blyth and Bathe Inc. The Species at Risk Committee (SARC) determined that there was not enough available documented Indigenous and Community Knowledge (ICK) to prepare an ICK component of the status report. Therefore, the status report is based almost exclusively on Scientific Knowledge (SK). The assessment process and objective biological criteria used by the Species at Risk Committee are based on SK and are available at: [www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca).

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**Assessment: Special Concern in the Northwest Territories**

*Special Concern - The species may become Threatened or Endangered in the NWT because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.*

**Reason for the assessment: American White Pelican fits criterion SK(d) for Special Concern. The species qualifies for Threatened status but there is clear indication of rescue effect from extra-limital subpopulations.**

Status Category	Criterion	
Special Concern	SK(d)	The species qualifies for Threatened status but there is clear indication of rescue effect from extra-limital subpopulations.

Main factors:

- American White Pelican qualifies for Threatened under SK(D2) because the area of occupancy is less than 20 km<sup>2</sup> (the nesting colony is 8 km<sup>2</sup>), and it has only one known nesting location, such that it is prone to the effects of diseases within a very short period of time in an uncertain future.
- However, in the NWT and elsewhere, populations of American White Pelican have been increasing in numbers and there is clear indication of rescue effect (immigration) from southern populations.
- American White Pelicans are susceptible to a variety of diseases and parasites that have the potential of wiping out entire colonies because of their colonial breeding behaviour. Diseases include avian botulism, West Nile virus, H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI or avian flu), and Newcastle disease. Disease outbreaks appear to be increasing in many parts of the White Pelican range.

Positive influences on American White Pelican and their habitat:

- White Pelicans are highly mobile birds with significant gene flow throughout the North American population. White Pelicans can change where they breed and/or forage if local conditions are no longer suitable. Further, they are likely able to colonize new areas and recolonize an area following local extirpation. They have been reported nesting in the





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Oracha Falls area on the Taltson River, NWT in the past, but current information is not available.

- Some climate change modeling suggests an expansion of White Pelicans at the northern edge of their range which represent breeding areas. This may result in population increases over time. High genetic diversity in White Pelicans, largely due to constant movement and mixing of individuals from different parts of the range, suggest they may be adaptable to a changing climate.
- White Pelicans are protected through various laws and regulations. In Alberta, the Slave River nesting islands are designated as a seasonal wildlife sanctuary in the Alberta Wildlife Act and Wildlife Regulations. In the NWT, the Wildlife Act prevents destroying or disturbing or taking an egg of a bird, the nest of a bird when the nest is occupied by a bird or its eggs, and the nest of a prescribed bird.
- The Pelican Advisory Circle provides educational resources and recommendations on safely viewing the Slave River Rapids colony.

### Recommendations:

- Increased public education on the sensitivity of White Pelicans to disturbance has and will continue to help protect nesting colonies.
- Collection of Indigenous and community knowledge of White Pelican in the NWT and Alberta.
- Research to fill knowledge gaps identified in the status report on diseases and parasites, possible additional nesting area locations, feeding areas and diet, dispersal, migration, and immigration in the NWT.
- Further research on the effect of climate change on White Pelican and its habitat including modelling.
- Further research on the downstream effects of oil extraction operations on water, fish, and White Pelican.

### Comments/Discussion

There was discussion on threats (diseases, climate change, ice free days, wildfires), and clarifications on the 0-degree isotherm, the location of the Slave River colony and nesting area

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(current and historical, as well as knowledge gaps), population trends (i.e., increasing throughout their range).

Kaytlin (SARC member) noted that Pelicans have historically nested at Oracha Falls and they currently forage there. However, we don't know if they currently nest there because no one has gone to check it out. This may indicate that Pelicans may have a larger nesting area in the NWT. It was also noted that identifying a Pelican nest is difficult unless the bird is actually sitting there, because Pelican nests are basically a scrape in the ground.

There was also a discussion on the impacts from and research on climate change. If climate change increases ice free days, could we see more colonies established and range expanded? Perhaps, but in addition to ice free days and potential range expansion, climate change also impacts Pelican chick mortality due to extreme weather (floods, fires, storms, etc.), so the benefits of more ice-free days may be weighed against the negatives. We have already seen nests abandoned due to flooding.

CMA members also discussed SARC's recommendations and whether or what type of water quality monitoring happens. ECC clarifies that there is water quality and quantity monitoring, as well as fish monitoring. ECC water quality monitoring on the Slave River, Slave River Delta and in Great Slave Lake near Fort Resolution includes the NWT Community-based Monitoring Water Quality Monitoring Program and biological monitoring (i.e., fish and benthic invertebrates). Environment and Climate Change Canada monitors water quantity.

### Request Clarification

There is a 60-day period in which the CMA or individual Management Authorities (GNWT is the only Management Authority) can request clarification from SARC. If the CMA/Management Authorities would like to submit a request for clarification on this assessment, the request should be submitted to SARC by July 1, 2023. 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 must be in writing. The request and SARC's response will be published on the website.

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## Conservation Actions

The CMA may discuss whether **conservation actions** are required immediately (this is an option for the CMA (section 56) 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.

## Next Steps

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 10, 2023. Recall that the management authority for American White Pelican is the GNWT.

With these timelines, the **consultation/engagement period** will ideally be July to August 2023 (due to GNWT blackout period for election) but may have to be pushed forward into January. The Management Authority (GNWT) confirmed that they would like a consultation/engagement package from the Secretariat including fact sheet, community posters, engagement letters, public survey, FB posts – shared with Fort Smith’s bulletin board, and paid advertising (print/online and community radio).

## Timelines

- **May 1, 2023:** SARC provided the assessment of American White Pelican to the Management Authorities.
- **July 1, 2023:** Deadline for the CMA to request clarification from SARC regarding the assessment.
- **July 10, 2023:** Management Authorities develop actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement on listing.
- **August-November 2023:** Consultation/engagement period (earlier for GNWT).
- **December 2023:** CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.

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- **January 26, 2024:** Consensus Agreement Annex B's (Actions the Management Authorities have undertaken or will undertake with respect to listing) are due in anticipation of the February 2024 CMA meeting.
- **April 10, 2024:** Start signatures for consensus agreement.
- **May 1, 2024:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on listing.
- **May 2024:** CMA meeting – Secretariat to draft press release for adding another 10-year term.
- **August 1, 2024:** American White Pelican legally listed as a species of Special Concern. Press release.
- **May 1, 2025:** Consensus Agreement on accepting the management plan.
- **August 1, 2026:** Management plan must be completed.
- **May 1, 2027:** Consensus Agreement on Implementation due.

### 8. Dolphin and Union Caribou Assessment – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

*SARC presentation on Dolphin and Union caribou assessment outcome. Conservation actions, requests for clarification.*

#### Presentation – led by Kaytlin Cooper (SARC)

SARC provided a presentation summary of the April 2023 assessment results for American White Pelican (Special Concern) in the NWT.

SARC met on April 18-21, 2023 and assessed the biological status of Dolphin and Union caribou in the Northwest Territories. The assessment was based on this approved status report. The preparers for the Dolphin and Union caribou status report were Dr. Thomas Dyck and Megan Spencer from Integral Ecology Group (IEG) for the ICK component, and Deborah Cichowski for the SK component. The assessment process and objective biological criteria used by the Species at Risk Committee are based on Indigenous and Community Knowledge (ICK) and Scientific Knowledge (SK) [www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca).

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**Assessment: Endangered in the Northwest Territories**

*Endangered – The species is facing imminent extirpation from the NWT or extinction.*

**Reasons for the assessment: Dolphin and Union caribou fit criteria ICK (c) and SK (A2 a) for Endangered.**

Status Category	Criterion	
Endangered	ICK(c)	It is generally agreed that the species is observed less frequently than in the past in a large portion of its range AND is understood by knowledge holders to be very sensitive to natural or human-caused threats AND knowledge holders express high concern about widespread threats impacting the species.
Endangered	SK(A2 a)	Based on direct observations, the species has experienced a population size reduction $\geq 50\%$ over the last 3 generations where the causes of the reduction may not have ceased and may not be reversible.

The Species at Risk Committee determined that Dolphin and Union caribou fit ICK and SK criterion for Endangered.

Main factors (ICK):

- The decline in the population of Dolphin and Union caribou is a serious concern for local communities.
- Ulukhaktok has implemented a voluntary maximum harvest of 50 Dolphin and Union caribou per year and a voluntary closure in the spring to allow pregnant cows to migrate and calve. Strict harvesting limits for Dolphin and Union caribou have also been implemented in Nunavut. These restrictions are significantly impacting the traditional and



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cultural connections to the land and to Dolphin and Union caribou for all communities sharing the range of this species.

- Climate change is a high concern because of the impacts to Dolphin and Union caribou habitat as well as caribou body condition and survival.
- Important threats during migration of Dolphin and Union caribou include dangerous ice crossings, and increased ship traffic leading to increased drownings and inability to migrate across the sea ice.
- Unseasonably warm temperatures due to climate change can cause rain in the winter or freeze-thaw cycles that can create an ice crust on the snow, and delay ice formation on lakes, rivers and the sea. This makes migration and foraging difficult for Dolphin and Union caribou.
- Communities are very concerned about potential increased shipping traffic and impacts on ice conditions and migration across the sea ice.
- Access to forage is reduced by icing on snow and vegetation events, heavy precipitation, and changes in vegetation. These threatening events are linked to climate change and are predicted to increase in the future.

### Main factors (SK):

- There has been an 89% decline in the total population of Dolphin and Union caribou over a 23-year period from 1997 to 2020 (approximately 3 generations [24-27 years]).
- The Dolphin and Union caribou population is currently estimated at about 3,815 caribou and has experienced a continued decline since the late 1990s. If the population continues to decline, at some point there may be potential for a genetic bottleneck.
- The decline is due to a combination of factors including some that can be managed (e.g., predation, harvest). However, threats related to climate change are extremely difficult to manage or reverse (e.g., changes to sea ice, icing events, snow cover, and extreme weather events).

### Additional factors:

- Interactions with predators and increases in goose populations are also threats to Dolphin and Union caribou. Community members are very concerned about grizzly bears as a new

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predator establishing itself on Victoria Island. An overabundance of geese is leading to the elimination of vegetation in some areas important to Dolphin and Union caribou.

- Community members have expressed concerns regarding the impacts of future mining projects and possible expansion of current mining activities on caribou migration routes and winter-feeding grounds.

### Positive influences to Dolphin and Union caribou and their habitat:

- The Olokhaktomiut Community Conservation Plan identifies a calving area for Dolphin and Union caribou in the Colville Mountains as a Wildlife Area of Special Interest.
- Recommendations from an icebreaking workshop in Cambridge Bay in October 2019 developed solutions to proactively mitigate the risks of icebreaking activities. In 2020 a Notice to Mariners (NOTMAR) for Vessels Intending to Navigate the Kitikmeot Region in Canada's Northern Waters was developed to mitigate the risks of icebreaking to wildlife and people traveling on ice.
- The draft Nunavut Land Use Plan recommends protection measures for sea ice crossings and calving areas for Dolphin and Union caribou.
- In 2020/21, restrictions were implemented on harvest of Dolphin and Union caribou by the OHTC (voluntary annual harvest of 50 and spring harvesting closure) and Nunavut (total allowable harvest of 105).
- Proposed implementation of mandatory sampling and reporting will reduce uncertainty in harvest levels and provide information on the impact of harvest on Dolphin and Union caribou population dynamics.
- WMAC (NWT) and GNWT implemented a program in 2021 to increase financial incentives for wolf harvesting in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.
- Harvesters continue to advocate for prioritization of harvester education, covering topics from proper harvesting techniques, etiquette around meat sharing, and specialized predator knowledge, and focusing on hands-on activities that connect harvesters who want to learn with harvesters who want to teach.
- Increased plant productivity resulting from climate change may increase the availability of quality forage during the growing season.

### Assessment History:

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- The NWT Species at Risk Committee met in December 2013 and assessed Dolphin and Union caribou as Special Concern in the NWT.
- In 2015, Dolphin and Union caribou were listed Special Concern in the NWT under the Species at Risk (NWT) Act.
- The Government of the Northwest Territories, Government of Nunavut, in cooperation with co-management partners developed a management plan for Dolphin and Union caribou in 2018.

### Recommendations:

- Implement and enforce protection measures for calving areas.
- Enforce ice breaking restrictions during migration periods.
- Improve communications on ship traffic and shipping management amongst data providers, NWT communities and organizations.
- Encourage and support communities to continue harvest education based on cultural teachings of Elders.
- Implement harvest sampling, monitoring, and reporting. Improve sharing of information between jurisdictions.
- Support monitoring and financial incentives for predator harvesting.
- Canada and the NWT must uphold and, if possible, exceed international climate change agreements including reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the local level. Climate change in the NWT must be addressed by implementing the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework and Action Plan.

### Comments/Discussion

The CMA discussed ship traffic and the need for access to shipping information, industrial activity increasing on Bathurst Inlet, and predator management actions taking place in Nunavut in addition to the NWT. The CMA also discussed what a listing of Endangered will mean including the need for a recovery strategy within 1-year of listing and the differences between a management plan and a recovery strategy.

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## Request Clarification

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 July 1, 2023. 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 must be in writing. SARC's response will be published on the website.

## Conservation Actions

The CMA may discuss whether **conservation actions** are required. Under section 56, the CMA may develop consensus agreements respecting the conservation of a pre-listed species or a listed species and its habitat or the area in which the habitat is located or the surrounding area, and such agreements may include provisions respecting actions Management Authorities agree to undertake to conserve the species, habitat or area; the preparation of a management plan or recovery strategy for the species; and any other matter that the CMA considers necessary or advisable to conserve the species, habitat or area.

No conservation actions were suggested during the meeting that require action through a consensus agreement on conservation action. GNWT and WMAC are already taking additional actions. In particular, WMAC-NWT is working with OHTC on mandatory sampling and reporting.

## Next Steps

As this is a reassessment, a consensus agreement on re-listing must set out the following information:

- That the CMA has reached a consensus
  - (a)(i) To remove the species from the List if the CMA considers the species not at risk,
  - (a)(ii) To add another 10-year term to the current expiration date for the species in the same category, or



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- (a)(iii) To list the species in another category
- If the CMA has reached a consensus on subparagraph (a)(ii) or (iii), the actions Management Authorities agree to undertake with respect to adding another 10-year term or listing the species in another category, as the case may be.

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 10, 2023. Recall that the management authorities for Dolphin and Union caribou are the WMAC (NWT) and GNWT.

With these timelines, the **consultation/engagement period** will be August to November 2023 (earlier for GNWT). The CMA confirmed that they would like the usual consultation/engagement package from the Secretariat (i.e., fact sheet, template presentation, template letters, survey, and newspaper/radio/online ads for ECC's public engagement).

### Timelines

- **May 1, 2023:** SARC provided the assessment of Dolphin and Union caribou to the Management Authorities.
- **July 1, 2023:** Deadline for the CMA to request clarification from SARC regarding the assessment.
- **July 10, 2023:** Management Authorities develop actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement on listing.
- **August-November 2023:** Consultation/engagement period (earlier for GNWT).
- **September 2023:** CMA check-in regarding consultation/engagement period (if necessary).
- **December 2023:** CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- **January 26, 2024:** Consensus Agreement Annex B's (Actions the Management Authorities have undertaken or will undertake with respect to listing) are due in anticipation of the February 2024 CMA meeting.
- **April 10, 2024:** Start signatures for consensus agreement.

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- **May 1, 2024:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on listing in another category.
- **May 2024:** CMA meeting – Secretariat to draft news release for listing Dolphin and Union caribou as Endangered.
- **August 1, 2024:** Dolphin and Union caribou listed as an Endangered species. News release.
- **May 1, 2025:** Consensus Agreement on accepting recovery strategy.
- **August 1, 2025:** Recovery strategy must be completed.
- **May 1, 2026:** Consensus Agreement on Implementation due.

### 9. Progress Reports and Reviews – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)

*Update on progress reports and reviews as per the Species at Risk (NWT) Act sections 73 and 74.*

#### Update on Progress Reports and Reviews

A progress report and review are required every 5 years under section 73 and 74 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* after an implementation agreement is signed. The Dolphin and Union caribou progress report and 5-year review are due in December 2023.

Input on the first draft and progress table has been received by ECCC, GNWT and IGC/OHTC.

Draft 2 of the progress report was provided to CMA and other management partners (in Nunavut) on May 12, 2023. The Secretariat provided an overview of the updates to the progress report. The progress report now also includes updates made available when the 2023 SARC status report was published. All revisions must be received by June 30, 2023.

The 5-year review was paused pending the outcome of the assessment by the Species at Risk Committee in April 2023. As an up-listing could affect the current management plan for Dolphin and Union caribou (a recovery strategy would be required), the Secretariat requires direction from the CMA on how to proceed with the review of the management plan.

A meeting for all management partners has been proposed for the last week of May to give partners an opportunity to discuss the second draft of the progress report and next steps for the review.

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**Decision/Action 20230516-01: Management Authorities will defer the review of the Management Plan until after a decision is made on listing. This is intended to reduce duplication of efforts in the event that a recovery strategy is required.**

### Timelines (Dolphin and Union Caribou Progress Report)

- **Late May 2023:** Management Partners to meet by videoconference to discuss Draft 2 and other considerations for the development/publication of Progress Report and/or Review.
- **June 30, 2023:** Deadline for Management Partners to provide input on Draft 2.
- **July 2023:** Draft 3 of Progress Report provided to Management Partners for a final opportunity to make edits.
- **August 2023:** Proposed Progress Report (final draft) provided to Management Partners for approval by their respective organizations. Provided to Management Authorities for approval as part of the CMA material for the September 2023 CMA Meeting.
- **September-October 2023:** Management Partners discuss and approve Progress Report at their respective Fall board meetings. (Management Authorities provide final approval on Progress Report during the September 2023 CMA Meeting.)
- **November 2023:** Draft news release and supporting materials to publicize the release of the Progress Report.
- **By December 19:** CMA publishes the approved Progress Report.

### 10. Species at Risk Committee – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

*Membership updates and Species Assessment Schedule*

#### Membership

Upcoming memberships expiring include: Aimee Guile, WRRB appointment (July) and GNWT appointments on the advice of NWTMN for Arthur Beck and Daniel Beck (September). Kaytlin Cooper's membership (appointed as alternate by GRRB) will also be vacant with her departure from the GRRB.

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The vacancies on SARC for regular and alternate members include:

- One alternate member to be appointed by SRRB
- One regular member to be appointed by GRRB
- One alternate member to be appointed by GRRB
- One alternate member to be appointed by WMAC-NWT

SARC also sent a letter to the CMA on May 4, 2023 (*Species at Risk Committee Membership Request* – included in the meeting binder) requesting that the CMA recommend to the Minister of ECC up to three additional appointments with specific experience in “the appropriate collection, validation, interpretation, and use of Indigenous and community knowledge.”

In addition to candidates needing to meet the qualifications of SARC membership in the legislation (significant expertise of species, habitat, northern ecosystems or conservation), SARC notes the following criteria or skill sets:

- an Indigenous knowledge practitioner;
- enhanced expertise in Indigenous knowledge at the SARC table;
- experience and expertise in doing Indigenous and community knowledge research; and
- ability to critically evaluate the SARC Indigenous and community knowledge reports and the information sources in them.

All of these are important, but the last two bullets are specific skill sets that SARC has lost with recent membership departures.

[Decision/Action item 20230516-02: The CMA will solicit nominations to fill membership positions on SARC with practitioners that have experience and expertise in doing Indigenous and community knowledge research; and have the ability to critically evaluate the SARC Indigenous and community knowledge components of status reports and the information sources in them.](#)

[Decision/Action item 20230516-03: Secretariat to request names from the CMA table to be provided to Secretariat by June 30 to be forwarded to the GNWT \(cc'ing the CMA\).](#)

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### 2024-2028 Species Assessment Schedule (review/approve)

SARC submitted the proposed 2024-2025 Species Assessment Schedule on May 1, 2023 to the CMA. There were no changes to the dates presented in 2023-2027. However, SARC added Endemic Arctic NWT Plants and Lichen species to the schedule for 2028.

In the submission letter SARC also provided recommendations regarding monitoring and management of red-sided garter snake, rock cranberry (lingonberry), muskrat, rusty blackbird and short-eared owl.

SARC also recommends gathering information on species that have already been assessed as Data Deficient or Not at Risk. Knowledge on these species and the threats they face will help inform future prioritization and assessment recommendations. Species previously assessed by SARC as Data Deficient include: Long-legged Myotis, Long-eared Myotis, Big Brown Bat, Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee, McKay's Bumble Bee (formerly Western Bumble Bee).

To inform the 2028 Endemic Arctic NWT Plants and Lichen report, SARC recommends gathering information on endemic Arctic NWT plants and lichen species including: Banks Island Alkali Grass, Bigspore Arctic Granite Moss, Drummond Bluebell, Arctic Orangebush Lichen, Desert Rockscab Lichen, Beringian Hairy Potentilla, and Sand Bluegrass.

The proposed 2023-2027 Species Assessment Schedule follows. The updated priority scores were provided in the meeting binder for your information.

- **2024:** hairy braya (reassessment) and red-sided garter snake
- **2025:** Canadian toad, western toad (re-assessment) and northern leopard frog (reassessment)
- **2026:** wood bison (reassessment), common muskrat and rock cranberry (lingonberry)
- **2027:** Northern myotis (reassessment), little brown myotis (reassessment), barren-ground caribou\* (reassessment)
- **2028:** Endemic Arctic NWT plants and lichen species

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\* Note that SARC will be initiating the RFP process and writing of the barren-ground caribou status report a year in advance (starting in the spring of 2024 rather than in 2025) to ensure that there is ample time to include the wealth of new information and research that has been completed over the last number of years into the next status report. This does not change the assessment schedule; the intent is to provide plenty of time to prepare this report.

The CMA had a discussion on SARC's proposal for an **Endemic Arctic NWT plants and lichen species status report and assessment**. Members and participants were concerned that without information, an assessment may return as data deficient. They were also concerned about whether it makes sense to bundle all these plants together, when they may have quite different distributions, biology and threats. In response, the CMA determined that a report from SARC on Endemic plants and lichen species identifying the current state of knowledge and literature available would be warranted and would help determine whether these species need a detailed assessment. This type of report would also help identify whether these plants and lichens should be bundled together in a multispecies status report. The GNWT agreed to prepare this report.

The CMA discussed which other species might be worth prioritizing for assessment in 2028 and decided to add muskoxen to the assessment schedule in 2028. According to SARC's priority scores, three groups of muskoxen were identified: muskoxen (all NWT), muskoxen (mainland), and muskoxen (Arctic islands). These populations are geographically distinct and have very different trends. The CMA would like to request that SARC recommend, and provide rationale, whether a muskoxen assessment should be done for the species as a whole, or whether it should be done at another appropriate grouping (i.e., distinct population). The GNWT noted that they recently completed a report on Indigenous and community knowledge of muskoxen and are finalizing a scientific knowledge report on muskoxen.

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The approved assessment schedule is as follows:

- **2024:** hairy braya (reassessment) and red-sided garter snake
- **2025:** Canadian toad, western toad (re-assessment) and northern leopard frog (reassessment)
- **2026:** wood bison (reassessment), common muskrat and rock cranberry (lingonberry)
- **2027:** Northern myotis (reassessment), little brown myotis (reassessment), barren-ground caribou\* (reassessment)
- **2028:** Muskoxen

After discussion and review, the CMA accepted SARC's assessment schedule with revisions.

Decision/Action item 20230516-04: The species assessment schedule was approved with revisions.

Decision/Action item 20230516-05: The Secretariat will ask SARC if they can share the prioritization background document with the CMA.

#### Status Report Updates

There are currently two status reports in progress and one coming up.

- **In revision ahead of public review:**
  - Hairy braya (2024 reassessment)
  - Red-sided garter snake (2024 assessment)

Request for proposals for the following multispecies status report will go out spring 2023:

- Amphibians (includes western toad, northern leopard frog and Canadian toad)

### MAY 17, 2023 – 9:00AM – CALL TO ORDER



## 11. Species Conservation and Recovery Fund – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)

### *Call for applications and subcommittee membership*

Ten applications were received in 2023-24 for the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund (SCARF) following the extension of the application period to March 15, 2023. Seven applications were approved for a total of \$59,360.00 in funding. Descriptions of approved projects are provided and will help support the conservation and recovery of barren-ground, boreal and Dolphin and Union caribou, as well as improve monitoring of several other species including bats and amphibians in the North Slave and Sahtú regions.

SCARF subcommittee member Jessica Hurtubise (NSMA) left NSMA in April and is unable to continue with the subcommittee. The Secretariat received one nomination for the position. NSMA nominated Noah Johnson with Al Harman as his alternate.

The CMA suggested that the Secretariat consider checking in with SCARF recipients in February to see if projects will be completed and funds used. If projects cannot be completed then those funds can perhaps be used for new projects that were not granted funding.

## 12. Species at Risk Communications – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)

### *Discussion and input into: Communications Plan, Social Media Strategy and Website update for NWT Species at Risk*

#### Communications Plan and Social Media Strategy

New drafts of the Communications Plan and Social Media Strategy were provided to the CMA by email in early March 2023. Comments were received by the WRRB and GNWT and incorporated into the final draft provided in the May meeting binder. A content calendar for July-September was also provided for approval.

Communications on species at risk include those required under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* as well as those guided by the mandates of SARC or CMA members. The communications



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plan—including key messages, approaches and tactics for communications—will help set direction for proposed education activities, the upcoming website refresh and social media, as well as help to guide and prioritize communication and outreach activities CMA and/or SARC going forward. The Social Media Strategy provides guidance on a 6-month pilot project for the NWT Species at Risk program (CMA and SARC) to establish a Facebook page to support communications on species at risk.

[Decision/Action item 20230516-06: The Species at Risk Communications Plan and Social Media Strategy are approved. Deadline for comment and approval of content calendar for July-September is extended to May 31, 2023.](#)

### Update on Website Migration

Secretariat provided an update on the NWT Species at Risk website migration and a sneak peek of the staging site.

### Background

The NWT Species at Risk website is built on a Drupal 7 framework. The end of life for Drupal 7 is set for November 1, 2023. This means the Drupal community will stop supporting this version and there will be no more bug fixes or feature updates to modules and Drupal core. Some limited security fixes will continue through November 2025 through the GNWT.

The NWT Species at Risk website will need to migrate to the Drupal 9 platform. At minimum, this will require transferring the current content onto a modern web framework. However, this is also an opportunity to make a more public friendly, plain language website in addition to making it useful for the CMA/SARC as a “library” for documentation.

### Update

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Joslyn provided an overview of the work done to date on the new website and showed the CMA what the website looks like so far. Feedback was positive and the Secretariat will aim for completion by the fall and will keep the CMA updated on progress.

Work has been underway with Kellett Communications over the last few months (January-May) to build the new site. Most of the work is now complete; however, a cost for migrating current site content has not yet been established and some aspects of the site still need to be tested. Direction from the CMA, provided through the communications plan, will help guide the rebuild.

The new site will be very visual. Secretariat requested that CMA members identify any photos they can provide for use on the site (with or without credit). WRRB has already provided a number of excellent photos of species at risk. Photos depicting the relationship people here have with the land and species at risk would also be extremely useful to site development. Secretariat will follow up with an email request.

### Upcoming Communications

There is a need for communications identified by the Species at Risk Committee around the new assessment criteria and process for assessing species at risk. Boards, renewable resource councils, communities and researchers need to understand the criteria and how their knowledge and work may be applied by the Species at Risk Committee. In particular, SARC noted that in order for the criteria to be successfully applied, the Indigenous and community knowledge must be available to the preparer of the status report. As a result, communicating what information SARC needs to complete an assessment is a priority. New plain language materials, summaries and graphics are contemplated over the next year and will be reflected in communications planning.

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### 13. Northern Mountain Caribou – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat) and Jody Pelligsey (Chairperson)

*Consensus agreement for acceptance/adoption of final management plan, News Release and Consensus agreement for implementation.*

The Consensus Agreement to accept/adopt NMC management plan was submitted to the Minister on April 28, 2023. The final management plan will be released July 28, 2023 accompanied by a news release. Actions to prepare for a consensus agreement on implementation are due to the Secretariat on July 10, 2023.

#### Northern Mountain Caribou Management Plan Timelines

- **April 29, 2021:** Consensus Agreement on Listing provided to the Minister of ECC.
- **July 29, 2021:** Northern mountain caribou legally listed.
- **June 9, 2022:** Management Authorities developed actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement to accept/adopt the Management Plan.
- **July 2022:** Proposed draft management plan provided to Management Authorities.
- **August to November 2022:** Engagement period.
- **September 27, 2022:** CMA check-in regarding consultation/engagement period.
- **December 9, 2022:** CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- **January 2023:** Final version of the NWT management plan provided to Management Authorities ahead of the February 2023 CMA Meeting.
- **January 27, 2023:** Consensus Agreement Annex B's (Actions the Management Authorities have undertaken or will undertake with respect to listing) are due in advance of the February 2023 CMA meeting.
- **April 10, 2023:** Start signatures for consensus agreement.
- **April 29, 2023:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on Accepting/Adopting the Management Plan.
- **May 2023:** CMA meeting – Secretariat to draft news release for Management Plan.
- **July 10, 2023:** Actions to prepare document due to Secretariat.

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- **July 29, 2023:** Management plan is finalized and made available to the public. News release.
- **April 29, 2024:** Consensus Agreement on Implementation due.

[Decision/Action 20230221-07: Secretariat to update news release on May 17 and send to CMA for revision and approval by May 31, 2023.](#)

### 14. Peary Caribou and Boreal Caribou Re-listing – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Consensus agreement for additional 10-year terms. News release.*

#### [Consensus Agreements Re-listing Boreal Caribou as Threatened](#)

Consensus agreement to add another 10-year term was submitted to the Minister May 9, 2023.

#### [Re-listing Boreal Caribou Timelines](#)

- **May 9, 2022:** SARC provided the reassessment of boreal caribou to the Management Authorities.
- **July 9, 2022:** Deadline for the CMA to request clarification from SARC regarding the assessment.
- **August 9, 2022:** Management Authorities developed actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement on relisting.
- **August-November 2022:** Engagement period.
- **September 27, 2022:** CMA check-in regarding engagement period.
- **December 9, 2022:** CMA meeting to review the results of engagement.
- **January 27, 2023:** Consensus Agreement Annex B's (Actions the Management Authorities have undertaken or will undertake with respect to listing) are due in advance of the February 2023 CMA meeting.
- **April 10, 2023:** Start signatures for consensus agreement.

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- **May 9, 2023:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on adding another 10-year term.
- **May 2023:** CMA meeting – Secretariat to draft news release for adding another 10-year term.
- **August 9, 2023:** Boreal caribou re-listed as a Threatened species. News release.

### Re-listing Peary Caribou as Threatened

Consensus agreement to add another 10-year term was submitted to the Minister May 9, 2023.

### Re-listing Peary Caribou Timelines

- **May 9, 2022:** SARC provided the re-assessment of Peary caribou to the Management Authorities.
- **July 9, 2022:** Deadline for the CMA to request clarification from SARC regarding the assessment.
- **August 9, 2022:** Management Authorities developed actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement on Listing.
- **August-November 2022:** Engagement period.
- **September 27, 2022:** CMA check-in regarding engagement period.
- **December 9, 2022:** CMA meeting to review the results of engagement.
- **January 27, 2023:** Consensus Agreement Annex B's (Actions the Management Authorities have undertaken or will undertake with respect to listing) are due in advance of the February 2023 CMA meeting.
- **April 10, 2023:** Start signatures for consensus agreement.
- **May 9, 2023:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on adding another 10-year term.
- **May 2023:** CMA meeting – Secretariat to draft news release for adding another 10-year term.
- **August 9, 2023:** Peary caribou re-listed as a Threatened species. News release.

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[Decision/Action 20230221-08: Secretariat to update news release for both species re-listings on May 17 and send to CMA for revision and approval by May 31, 2023.](#)

### 15. Peary Caribou – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)

*Update, discuss and provide direction on the recovery strategy*

#### Background

Peary caribou were listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* in February 2014. For efficiency and to avoid duplication, the CMA has agreed to adopt the applicable portions of the federal recovery strategy for Peary caribou. The current completion deadline for the NWT recovery strategy is September 30, 2024.

#### Draft NWT Recovery Strategy

A second draft of the Peary Caribou Recovery Strategy was provided to the CMA on April 14, 2023. One comment was received by ECCC, modifying section 2 on critical habitat. Final comments on the recovery strategy must be received by **May 31, 2023**. Engagement on the recovery strategy will take place starting in July 2023 due to the GNWT's blackout period, which does not allow for engagement leading up to the election period.

[Decision/Action 20230221-09: CMA members to send in final comments on the second draft of the Peary caribou recovery strategy by May 31, 2023. Engagement materials and a final draft of the recovery strategy will be provided to the CMA for engagement in June 2023.](#)

#### Timelines (Peary caribou recovery strategy)

- **April 2023:** Second draft of NWT recovery strategy provided to CMA for review in advance of the May 2023 CMA Meeting.
- **June 2023:** Final draft and engagement materials provided to Management Authorities.
- **July 10, 2023:** Management Authorities identify actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement to accept/adopt the recovery strategy.

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- **July to November 2023:** Engagement period.
- **January 2024:** Final version of the NWT recovery strategy provided to Management Authorities ahead of the February 2024 CMA Meeting.
- **April 15, 2024:** Start signatures for Consensus Agreement.
- **April 29, 2024:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on Accepting/Adopting the Recovery Strategy.
- **May 2024:** May meeting - CMA discusses and approves in principle the news release for recovery strategy.
- **July 29, 2024:** Minister of ECC provides the adopted recovery strategy to the Management Authorities and makes it public. News release.
- **September 30, 2024:** Legally required completion date for Peary Caribou Recovery Strategy.
- **April 29, 2025:** Consensus Agreement on Implementation due.

### 16. Next Meeting – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

#### *Overview of upcoming meetings*

- There will be no September meeting. CMA will approve the Dolphin and Union Caribou progress report via email.
- December 8, 2023 (Zoom - morning) – review consultation/engagement results
- February 20-22, 2024 (Inuvik)

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### Species at Risk Workplan – At a Glance

The table below outlines the CMA/SARC workplan and includes type of activity and species

Year	Activity	Species
2023	Assessment	American White pelican
		Dolphin and Union caribou (reassessment)
	Listing	Boreal caribou (assessed as Threatened 2022)
		Peary caribou (assessed as Threatened 2022)
	Progress Reporting and Review	Dolphin and Union caribou (2018-2022)
Management Plan/Recovery Strategy	Northern mountain caribou (management plan)	
2024	Assessment	Hairy braya (reassessment)
		Red-sided garter snake
	Listing	American White Pelican (assessed Special Concern 2023)
		Dolphin and Union Caribou (reassessed Endangered 2023)
	Management Plan/Recovery Strategy	Peary caribou (adoption of federal recovery strategy by September 30, 2024)
Implementation	Northern mountain caribou (management plan)	
2025	Assessment	Northern leopard frog (reassessment)
		Western toad (reassessment)
		Canadian Toad
	Management Plan/Recovery Strategy	Dolphin and Union caribou (recovery strategy)
	Implementation	Peary caribou (recovery strategy)

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	Progress Reporting and Review	Wood bison
<b>2026</b>	Assessment	Wood bison (reassessment)
		Common Muskrat
		Rock cranberry (lingonberry)
	Management Plan/Recovery Strategy	American White Pelican
	Implementation	Dolphin and Union caribou (recovery strategy)
	Progress Reporting and Review	Northern myotis
Little brown myotis		
Barren-ground caribou		
<b>2027</b>	Assessment	Northern myotis (reassessment)
		Little brown myotis (reassessment)
		Barren-ground caribou (reassessment)
	*SARC will be initiating the RFP process and writing of the barren-ground caribou status report a year in advance (starting in the spring of 2024 rather than in 2025)	
Implementation	American White Pelican (management plan)	
<b>2028</b>	Assessment	Muskoxen

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