

Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)
Meeting Minutes
July 24, 2015
Conference Call 9AM

In attendance:

Jody Pellissey	Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board, Chairperson
Jack Bird	Environment and Natural Resources
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Natural Resources
Stephen Charlie	Environment and Natural Resources
Ron Allen	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Amy Amos	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Kaytlin Cooper	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Bobby Jo Greenland	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Eugene Pascal	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Peter Redvers	Kátl'odeeche First Nation
Shin Shiga	North Slave Métis Alliance
Tim Heron	Northwest Territory Métis Nation
Don Aubrey	Parks Canada
Deborah Simmons	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Leon Andrew	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Sjoerd Van der Wielan	Tł'chǫ Government
Larry Carpenter	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Rob Gau	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Claire Singer	Species at Risk Secretariat
Michelle Ramsay	Species at Risk Secretariat
Kelly Joy	Species at Risk Secretariat

1. **Introductions** – *Led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson*
2. **Agenda** – *Led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson*
Review and approval of agenda, noting that agenda item 18 was expanded to include discussion of all NWT amphibians.
3. **Minutes from last CMA meeting** – *Led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson*
Review and approval of draft minutes from January 2015.

Decision #D2015072401: Consensus to approve agenda with no changes.

Decision #D2015072402: Consensus to approve January 2015 minutes, as amended.

4. **Review of action items** – *Led by Claire Singer, Secretariat*
Review of outstanding action items from past meetings and actions items from previous meeting.
5. **CMA decisions made since last meeting** – *Led by Claire Singer, Secretariat*
Review of decisions made since January 2015 meeting.

Decision #D2015072403: Addition of northern leopard frog and Dolphin and Union caribou to NWT List of Species at Risk (March 2015).

Decision #D2015072404: Appointments of SARC members and alternates (spring 2015).

- James Firth (Chairperson)
 - Cindy Allen – Alternate
- Dr. Suzanne Carrière (Alternate Chairperson)
- Moise Rabesca
- Joanna Wilson
- Dr. Nicholas (Nic) Larter
- Leon Andrew
 - Dr. Deborah Simmons – Alternate

Decision #D2015072405: Species at Risk Stewardship Program subcommittee awarded Stewardship Program funding to six recipients for the 2015/16 program year:

- Moose Kerr School, Aklavik – Richardson Mountain Hike
- Deninu Kue First Nation, Fort Resolution – Traditional Use Study, Woodland Caribou Habitat and Habitat Use
- Ecology North, Yellowknife – Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee Awareness Campaign
- Ecology North, Hay River – Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee Awareness Campaign
- Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, Délı̨nę - Délı̨nę Barren-ground Caribou Conservation Initiative
- Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resources Council, Tsiigehtchic – Bank Swallow Survey, Mackenzie and Arctic Red Rivers

Decision #D2015072406: Invitation for ongoing participant status issued to Kátł'odeeche First Nation (June 2015).

Decision #D2015072407: Approval of SARC's proposed 2015-2020 Species Assessment Schedule (June 2015).

6. **CMA letters sent and received** – *Led by Claire Singer, Secretariat*
Review of letters sent and received since January 2015.

7. **Updates on actions taken since last CMA meeting and changes to representatives** – *Jody Pélissey, Chairperson*
Roundtable of status updates from Management Authorities, participants and standing observers.

GNWT (ENR)

- Update on Barren-ground caribou surveys: Ideal survey conditions for both herds (Bathurst and Bluenose-East). Department is currently analyzing and assessing the data and ENR expects to be getting preliminary results within the next week. Too early to comment on the trends observed but should be a very accurate report.
- Range planning for boreal caribou for SARA critical habitat identification: Range planning is required for the National Recovery Strategy. Workshops have been held in the Dehcho and South Slave regions.
- Management and recovery planning: Working on management plan and recovery strategies for polar bear, Peary caribou, boreal caribou and hairy braya. ENR expects that extensions will be needed for the Polar Bear Management Plan and Peary Caribou Recovery Strategy.
- Fall transition period: There will be restrictions on government business during October – January because of the upcoming territorial election. ENR has asked for exemptions for species at risk-related decisions so timelines can stay on track.
- Staffing update: Hiring of Kelly Joy as Michelle Ramsay's maternity leave replacement until August 2016.

Parks Canada

- 2014 bison survey results in Wood Bison National Park: The survey produced minimum count and a population estimate. Results indicate a 30% decline since the last survey. It is normal to see some variation over time, but the reasons for this decline are still unclear at this time. Parks Canada staff will conduct another survey in 2016 and will collaborate with ENR. Expect a similar decline as has occurred outside the park boundary.

Tłı̨chǫ Government

- Staffing update: Sjoerd Van der Wielan replaces Marjorie Matheson-Maund as CMA representative.

WMAC (NWT)

- Management and recovery planning: Public engagement and consultation sessions and open houses (Inuvik and Ulukhaktok) for the Batch 1 species (polar bear, Peary caribou, boreal caribou and hairy braya). WMAC (NWT) has been engaging the Inuvialuit Game Council and the Hunters and

- Trappers Committees via written engagement and will be reviewing feedback at the next regular meeting in September.
- Funding/capacity issues: WMAC (NWT) concerns regarding capacity and funding remain, in part because species at risk issues are taking up more of WMAC (NWT)'s time and implementation funding is not sufficient to cover this increasing workload. WMAC (NWT) is struggling to fulfill species at risk-related responsibilities and is considering wholly deferring this work to ENR, particularly for species that are lesser known or for which there is little community concern.

GRRB

- Funding/capacity issues: Board is presently working to secure funding for Species at Risk Biologist position with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). The GRRB expects to be entering into a multi-year funding agreement on April 1, 2016, and hopes to secure permanent funding that way.
- Research projects:
 - **Dall Sheep Pilot Project:** Community-based monitoring program with people in the mountains to observe sheep in between survey years. The population is just below 500 animals. A voluntary zero harvest has been implemented already.
 - **Fisheries establishment project assessment in Rat River and Arctic Red River headwaters.**
 - **Muskrat Research:** Traditional knowledge work focused on muskrat habitat.
- GRRB meeting: October 6-7, 2015 in Fort McPherson (regular board meeting).

SRRB

- SARC Appointment: Leon Andrew appointed as a SARC member and will also sit on the CMA.
- Community projects:
 - **Community Caribou Conservation Plan:** Déljne Renewable Resource Council is partnering with the Species at Risk Stewardship Program to build a community caribou conservation plan for Déljne. The first workshop was held last week in Déljne, which established an aggressive timeline to develop a draft plan for community review and approval. SRRB hopes to share the draft plan with other Management Authorities before September.
- SRRB meeting: October 6-8, 2015 (focus: caribou planning)

WRRB

- Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy: WRRB and the Tłı̨chǫ Government conducted joint consultations on the Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy.
- Research projects:

- **Boreal caribou fire response (traditional knowledge):** Ongoing TK project on boreal caribou and their response to wildland fires. Project is headed by Allice Legat and the Community of Whatì. Associated scientific work is through Wilfrid Laurier University in selected areas of the NWT.

NWT Métis Nation

- Research projects:
 - **Garter snakes/amphibians:** Helping out with some studies on garter snakes and other amphibians (disease work) (wood frog and northern leopard frog) around Salt River and Fort Smith.

KFN

- Reviewing status reports: Reviewed wood bison status report.
- Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy: Submitted comments on Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy (support for the Strategy) and is taking an active role in providing input into the process.
- Capacity issues: Internal capacity an ongoing concern.

8. Meeting schedule – Led by Claire Singer, Secretariat

Review of proposed draft 3-year schedule to shift consultation period from summer to fall.

There was general consensus to approve the new proposed meeting schedule, which permits a shift in the annual consultation period from summer to fall. The Secretariat will need to provide consultation materials by July each year (one month before Management Authorities commence community consultation).

By accepting the new schedule, the CMA will have to direct SARC to change its assessment schedule.

Decision #D2015072408: Approval of fall consultation schedule with progress review in April 2017 (bring forward).

Date of Barren-ground Caribou Assessment:

The approval of the 3-year meeting schedule results in shifts to the timing of species assessments. While most of these shifts are minor, barren-ground caribou could be assessed in either March 2016 or March 2017 (shifting from December 2016).

Concern was expressed that advancing the assessment date of barren-ground caribou to March 2016 would overburden Management Authorities' workloads, given that work on the Peary Caribou Recovery Strategy and Polar Bear Management Plan would still be ongoing, and implementation for the boreal caribou and hairy braya recovery strategies will have just started. It was noted that barren-ground caribou is a complex and important species and that it may be better to finish work

associated with [some of] the year 1 species before beginning work on barren-ground caribou.

Additionally, it was felt that the current management of barren-ground caribou across the NWT would continue regardless of the date of assessment. Delaying the assessment by 3 months from the current schedule will not negatively impact the species. It was however noted that a decision to postpone the assessment of barren-ground caribou may be perceived negatively by the public.

Ultimately, although there was general support to defer the assessment of barren-ground caribou to March 2017, Management Authorities requested time to discuss the matter further before making a final decision.

Action #A2015072401: Management Authorities to discuss the timing of the barren-ground caribou assessment (March 2016 or March 2017) and to come prepared to make a final decision on the matter at the September 3, 2015 conference call.

9. **Barren-ground caribou** - *led by Suzanne Carrière, SARC Alternate Chairperson*
Discussion of potential herd splitting for assessment and initial discussion of potential timelines, methods of consultation and anticipated drafting challenges.

Splitting of herds during SARC's assessment:

SARC's rules clearly state that only species, subspecies, or biologically or geographically distinct populations can be identified by SARC for assessment. Under these rules, SARC can either assess all nine herds together or can separate the Porcupine herd based on geographic distinctness.

The CMA, under section 26(2) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, has more flexibility. The CMA is allowed to identify a distinct population other than a biologically or geographically distinct population, and direct SARC to assess that distinct population.

SARC asked that the CMA provide direction on this matter, cautioning that the more a group is split, the more 'at risk' the assessment is likely to be because of the smaller size of the unit being assessed and the possibility of the degree of threat varying among herds. SARC also noted that COSEWIC has similar rules as SARC, so would likely also be assessing all nine herds together or separating the Porcupine herd on the basis of geographic distinctness.

Although support was generally mentioned for assessing the eight central/eastern herds together and assessing the Porcupine separately, Management Authorities requested additional time to discuss the matter.

Action #A2015072402: Management Authorities to come prepared to October 2015 face-to-face meeting with positions on how to assess the nine barren-ground caribou herds (split or lump).

Status report update:

The review period for the draft barren-ground caribou status report closes on September 15, 2015. Management Authorities noted that the 2015 caribou photo survey results are expected this fall and requested that these results be integrated into the status report. SARC and the Secretariat indicated that this would be possible depending on when that information can be made available. Discussion and direction on this matter will be brought forward to the October 2015 face-to-face meeting.

Action #A2015072403: Addition of 2015 barren-ground caribou photo survey results to the status report will be included in the October 2015 meeting agenda as an item for discussion and direction. At this meeting, Management Authorities will provide the Secretariat with direction on the inclusion of this new information in the status report.

10. ENR: *Species at Risk (NWT) Act Annual Report 2014-15* - led by Joanna Wilson, GNWT

Submission of ENR's 2014-15 Annual Report on the implementation of the Act to the CMA.

11. CMA 2014-15 Annual Report – led by Jody Pélissey, Chairperson

Review of draft CMA Annual Report.

Decision #D2015072409: Consensus to approve the 2014-15 CMA Annual Report with identified changes.

12. SARC documents – led by Jody Pélissey, Chairperson

Receive the 2014-15 SARC Annual Report. Review the Current State of Knowledge for Species Status Reports document. Review the Checklist for Establishing Assessment Priority document. Review and discuss path forward to respond to the SARC's letter regarding COSEWIC-assessed species.

COSEWIC-Assessed Species

SARC requested direction from the CMA on how to treat species that have or will be assessed by COSEWIC, but that do not receive a high prioritization score in the NWT. Should SARC continue to prioritize species that receive a very low score and/or have little/no identified threats in the NWT?

Management Authorities were supportive of SARC choosing to not assess species that receive a low prioritization score, regardless of whether or not the species is at risk nationally, but did see the value in SARC continuing to prioritize these species.

Action #A2014072404: Management Authorities to discuss SARC's approach to assessing COSEWIC-ranked species and come prepared to provide formal advice on the matter at the October 2015 meeting.

13. Lesser known species – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

This was a bring forward item from the January 2015 meeting. Review of options moving forward based on position statements previously submitted to and summarized by the Secretariat.

Action #A2015072405: Management Authorities to review the summary of options prepared by the Secretariat, and come prepared to determine a path forward at the October 2015 face-to-face meeting.

14. Species at Risk Stewardship Program – Led by Amy Amos, Stewardship

Subcommittee Chairperson

Species at Risk Stewardship Program update.

The Species at Risk Stewardship Program subcommittee met in March 2015 to review applications and award funding for projects to be completed in the 2015/16 fiscal year. Eight applications were received and the maximum funding was distributed to six projects. Projects must be completed by March 31, 2016.

Action #A2015072406: Secretariat to follow-up with KFN about geographic scope of Deninu Kue First Nation's Boreal Caribou Traditional Knowledge project.

15. Media Tracking – Led by Claire Singer, Secretariat

Report on media occurrences.

16. Next Meeting – Led by Michelle Ramsay, Secretariat

Review of upcoming meeting dates.

September 3, 2015 teleconference

Next face-to-face is currently scheduled for October 14-15, 2015

- Management Authorities should expect a request for slight date change via letter from ENR.

17. Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy – Led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Touch base on actions each Management Authority agreed to take to prepare for consensus agreement on accepting the recovery strategy.

November 27, 2015 is the final deadline to sign the consensus agreement and submit to the Minister of ENR.

Consultations have taken place over the last several months. Management Authorities are encouraged to identify any concerns raised during consultations:

GNWT

- Still in the process of completing section 35 consultation with groups, although the public comment period has closed. Staff has begun compiling comments and is discussing best ways to address them.
- Behind schedule getting comments to the report preparer. Concerned about mid-August deadline for the next draft given the types of comments being received. It's going to be very tight to meet this deadline.
 - Harvest Management: Many comments on how harvest is addressed, and that more focus on harvest management is needed; particularly, that level of harvest may be being underestimated. Possible changes could include more detail about regional concerns and review of resident hunter provisions in the *Wildlife Act*.
 - Other management tools: Suggestions to include predator management and alternate prey issues in the strategy.
 - Managing human-caused landscape disturbance: Strengthen language pertaining to land use targets and legal obligations.

WRRB

- Joint consultations with Tłı̨chǫ Government in Gamèti, Whatì and Behchokǫ occurred during the summer.
- Meeting September 9-10 to review input received and make the decision on signing consensus agreement. Needs to receive the final recovery strategy prior to that meeting in order to prepare for the consensus agreement.

GRRB

- Half of scheduled consultations are completed. The summer consultation schedule is challenging, but GRRB hopes to complete final communities within the next couple weeks.
- GRRB has concerns about meeting the mid-August deadline.

NSMA

- Want to be considered a Local Harvesting Committee under the *Wildlife Act*, which would allow them to decide harvest levels for their members. NSMA also expressed interest in becoming more involved in the Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy and range planning processes so they can participate in sustainable harvesting discussions.

KFN

- Have submitted comments on the Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy, and also have a consultation meeting with ENR scheduled for August 5, 2015. Would like ENR to provide funding for harvesters' honoraria to attend the consultation meeting (if the meeting is considered section 35 consultation).

Break in proceedings. Species-specific discussions that follow did not require the attendance of all Management Authorities. Updates to attendance are provided in the below notes, as appropriate.

18. Northern Leopard Frog (changed to Amphibian Management Plan) – Led by

Rob Gau, Ad-hoc Chairperson

Discussed possibility of preparing a more general NWT amphibian management plan, rather than species-by-species management/recovery planning.

Attendees: Ron Allen (GRRB), Kaytlin Cooper (GRRB), Rob Gau (WMAC (NWT)), Larry Carpenter (WMAC (NWT)), Tim Heron (NWT Métis Nation), Don Aubry (Parks Canada), Joanna Wilson (GNWT), Stephen Charlie (GNWT), Lisa Worthington (GNWT), Claire Singer (Secretariat), Kelly Joy (Secretariat).

Northern leopard frog is currently listed as Threatened and western toad is currently being considered for listing, and was assessed by SARC as Threatened. Because both these species, as well as other amphibians in the NWT, all have similar general management needs, the GNWT proposed the development of an NWT Amphibian Management Plan, in lieu of recovery strategies for individual species. The sections pertaining to northern leopard frog and western toad could then be approved by the CMA under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

The suggested approach was generally met with approval, although it was noted that requirements under land claim agreements would still need to be met.

Renewable Resources Boards will still need to formally approve the plans for the listed species. It was also noted that including a widespread species like wood frog may necessitate the involvement of other Management Authorities. The CMA can be used as the venue to ask Management Authorities to be involved.

The GNWT will solicit participation interest from Management Authorities and CMA participants and observers and will then set up a teleconference for these parties to discuss the outline that's included in the agenda and to discuss the goals and objectives.

19. Dolphin and Union Caribou – led by Rob Gau, Ad-hoc Chairperson

Status update on management plan progress, including discussion of the schedule to completion.

Changes to attendees: Kaytlin Cooper (GRRB) signed off the call.

Dolphin and Union caribou has been listed under both the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* and the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Both Acts require a completed management plan by March 2017. Nunavut does not need a management plan, but wants to be involved in producing the management plan.

Initial meeting took place in Kugluktuk earlier this year to start work on the framework for the plan. Comments on draft framework due July 28, 2015. WMAC (NWT) will be visiting communities in early September to discuss framework.

Formed a working group that has met twice, and has developed an outline for the management plan. The outline will meet the Act's information requirements, but the format may deviate from the CMA's template in order to meet all organizations' information requirements. There is currently some disagreement regarding whether to include harvest management in the plan. Presently considering including different levels of population status with corresponding actions for each of those levels.

Management Authorities need to find a common vision for the plan; whether something that is very high-level (as is typical of Environment Canada's management plans) or something more specific that deals with herd dynamics.

Moving forward, harvest management discussions will continue. Plan will be produced using NWT, NU and federal sources. Currently drafting the background section (Species Description and Biology). WMAC (NWT) will report back after its September meetings if it has any additional comments. The timeline to completion still needs to be determined. The nature of joint planning means it takes longer to work through the processes, but will hopefully have more agreement in the end. Working group is also planning a second workshop for Management Authorities and harvesters to review the draft management plan. Date to be determined.

20. Polar Bear – Led by Joanna Wilson and Lisa Worthington, GNWT

Status update and discussion of tentative schedule to completion for the NWT management plan.

Changes to attendees: Tim Heron (NWT Métis Nation) signed off the call.

Many comments were received on the draft management plan that was circulated for review in May 2015. Some comments were contradictory and many could not be addressed in the short timeframe.

There is general acceptance by the Management Authorities that an extension is required to give sufficient time to address the concerns of all partners. Revised draft plan will be discussed August 2015. Working group will reconvene in September to review the comments together and agree on how to address the comments.

Management plan preparer recommended a 2-year extension (February 2018 completion date).

Some frustration was expressed regarding the length of this potential extension and the influence other jurisdictions are having on these timelines. It was noted that the NWT has the option of moving forward without the buy-in from neighboring jurisdictions.

The next management plan working group meeting will take place September 2015. WMAC (NWT) will also be meeting September 2015. Targeting having an updated draft management plan completed in advance of these meetings; then will evaluate progress made to-date, decide whether to continue to proceed collaboratively or move forward with an NWT-only management plan and decide on length of extension.

Secretariat indicated that a Notice of Extension should be released before October 8 (the GNWT transition period for the upcoming territorial elections).

21. Peary Caribou – *Led by Joanna Wilson and Lisa Worthington, GNWT*
Status update and discussion of tentative schedule to completion for the recovery strategy.

The recovery strategy is still going to dovetail with federal recovery efforts and an extension will certainly be required.

Recovery strategy preparer proposed a 2-year extension (February 2018 completion date), informed by the anticipated length of draft reviews, consultation and approvals. The preparer did note though that even this extension is a best-case scenario and doesn't account for delays due to the upcoming federal election.

Action #A2015072407: Secretariat to provide reminders about need for Notices of Extensions for polar bear, Peary caribou, and boreal caribou.

22. Hairy Braya – *led by Rob Gau, Ad-hoc Chairperson*
Touch base on actions each Management Authority agreed to take to prepare for consensus agreement on accepting the Hairy Braya Recovery Strategy.

WMAC (NWT) has completed open public engagement sessions in Inuvik and Ulukhaktok. Excellent participation, but some of the comments appear to be about a different species. Question about whether/how new actions/ideas are to be included in the recovery strategy (i.e., Inuvialuit-led initiative to install on-the-land

greenhouses) at this stage. Preparer noted that it was possible to make changes to the recovery strategy still, but the problem that then arises is getting it out to the boards in time for their approval.

The GNWT did not receive many comments and anticipates being able to complete this recovery strategy on time. The public review period is still open, but GNWT is not anticipating delays.

Changes to attendees: Rob Gau (WMAC (NWT)), Larry Carpenter (WMAC (NWT)), and Lisa Worthington (GNWT) signed off the call.

23. Western Toad – Led by Joanna Wilson, Ad-hoc Chairperson

Touch base on actions each Management Authority agreed to take to prepare for a consensus agreement on listing western toad.

The GNWT is the only Management Authority for western toad. The public comment period closed earlier this week. ENR is currently seeking input from other GNWT departments on the proposed listing and completing section 35 consultation with groups that have established or asserted Aboriginal treaty rights in those areas. Received a small number of comments on the proposed listing. Will be summarizing input and proposing a listing decision through internal GNWT channels.

Expect to be able to sign the consensus agreement at the October 2015 meeting.

[Meeting Closed at 1:43pm]