

Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)
Draft Meeting Minutes, February 23, 2021
Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm Zoom Teleconference

Attendees	Organization
Jody Pellissey	CMA Chairperson/Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board
Kaytlin Cooper	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Doug Doan	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Sam Bullock	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Amy Amos	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Heather Sayine-Crawford	Environment and Natural Resources
Bruno Croft	Environment and Natural Resources
Brett Elkin	Environment and Natural Resources
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Natural Resources
Allie Mayberry	Acho Dene Koe First Nation
Jessica Hurtubise	North Slave Métis Alliance
Leslie Wakelyn	Bevery Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB)
Bruce Laurich	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Isabelle Duclos	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Rosemin Nathoo	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Alexandrea Inglangasuk	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Stephanie Behrens	Tł'chǫ Government
Deborah Simmons	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Leon Andrew	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Jozef Carnogursky	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Patrick Riley	Kátł'odeeche First Nation (KFN)
Michele Grabke	Species at Risk Secretariat
Joslyn Oosenbrug	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 with changes.

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

Review and approval of draft minutes from May and September 2020.

Review and approve draft minutes from:

- December 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 December 2020 meeting.

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

Updates, if any, from members and participant/observing organizations. Updates were incorporated into the meeting minutes.

GNWT

- Currently, the GNWT's CMA representatives are Heather Sayine-Crawford, Brett Elkin and Bruno Croft. Joanna Wilson provides technical support.
- Updates on GNWT's recent activities related to wood bison, polar bear, boreal caribou, Dolphin and Union caribou, hairy braya, and amphibians are provided under agenda item #10, annual reviews of progress.
- Updates related to barren-ground caribou are as follows:
 - GNWT has been participating in the SRRB's process related to caribou management in the Sahtú. The SRRB held a public listening in January 2020 to address the question "What are the most effective ways to conserve caribou?". A report was released by SRRB on October 30, 2020. A response from the Minister of ENR was provided on January 29, 2021. The SRRB will respond to the Minister by March 30, 2021.
 - GNWT has been participating in the ongoing WRRB process related to wolf management on the winter range of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds. ENR and the Tł'chǫ Government submitted a new joint wolf management proposal to the WRRB on August 25, 2020. The WRRB issued their Reasons for Decision final report on January 8, 2021. ENR and the Tł'chǫ Government have requested an extension and will provide a response by March 12, 2021.
 - ENR's barren-ground caribou monitoring programs are now into the collaring season. ENR is deploying collars on caribou in the Beverly, Bathurst, Bluenose-East, Bluenose-West, Cape Bathurst, and Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula herds.
 - Enhanced monitoring is happening for the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds. This includes an increase in the number of collars, three composition surveys per year and calving ground surveys every 2 years.
 - Composition surveys conducted in fall 2020 for the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds resulted in relatively high bull:cow ratios and calf:cow ratios that suggested little to moderate calf mortality since June/July.
 - The next calving ground surveys for Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds are planned for June 2021. These surveys were originally to take place in 2020 but were postponed due to the pandemic.
 - The next post-calving photo surveys for Bluenose-West, Cape Bathurst and Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula herds are planned for July 2021.

- The next calving ground survey for the Beverly herd is planned for June 2022 and will be led by the Government of Nunavut.
- A Mobile Core Bathurst Caribou Management Zone (or mobile zone) is used to manage and enforce a total harvest closure for the Bathurst barren-ground caribou herd in the NWT. This year, the Bathurst and Beverly herds have been overlapping with portions of the Bluenose-East herd which means that there are reduced opportunities to harvest barren-ground caribou outside of the mobile zone.
- The Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee (BCAC) has updated the 2004 Management Plan. A Draft Plan will be released for consultation and public engagement in March 2021.

WRRB

- Approved the designation of Lesser Yellowlegs as threatened for COSEWIC.
- Approved posting of the Red-necked Phalarope Management Plan, Yellow-banded Bumble Bee Management Plan, and Evening Grosbeak Management Plan to the Federal SARA Public Registry.
- Reviewed and approved Batches 4-7 for the NWT General Status Ranking Program.
- Conducted a Level 2 proceeding (outside consultation required but no public hearing) following receipt of a revised joint management proposal to undertake wolf management actions in Wek'èezhìi from TG and GWNT in August 2020. Submitted a final Reasons for Decision Report in January 2021 to TG and GNWT.
- Approved statuses for Bluenose-East, Bluenose-West, and Cape Bathurst caribou following 5th ACCWM Annual Status Meeting in November 2020.

GRRB

- It has been pretty quiet due to covid, although staff are in the office. There has been no work travel or visiting the communities. RRCs were not meeting until recently, and have new councillors so they are getting orientated and caught up.
- Consultation on northern mountain caribou and 3 federal species (red-necked phalarope, Hudsonian godwit and yellow banded bumble bee)
- This was discussed at the Board meeting last week – virtual (Feb 15-17)
- Started the Gwich'in Range Planning for boreal caribou
- Kaytlin is still a member of SARC, and newly appointed to NWT council on invasive species pests and pathogens
- Have equipment to do insect surveys this summer, focusing on bees, in joint partnership with WMAC and GNWT
- Ed (wildlife biologist) and Laurence (management planner) are in the process of updating the grizzly bear management plan, and are involved in the development of the federal management plan
- Continuation of the Dall's sheep community monitoring program (Ed), ACCWM (Ed) and Dolly Varden Char (Sarah, fisheries biologist), whitefish project (Sarah), Salmon project (Sarah), updating forest management plan (Sarah)

- Steve (community liaison) working on harvest survey, regulatory reviews and coordinating the redesign of our website.
- Continuing defining commercial use
- Laurence (currently on a term position since August) is leaving for a permanent job in Inuvik with Parks Canada
- Ed leaving in a few months too – currently going through the hiring process.

Tłı̨chǫ Government

- Wood Bison – see Item 10 Annual/periodic reviews of progress for updates on Boreal caribou and wood bison.
- Bat Management Plan – no updates
- Barren-ground Caribou:
 - Ekwǫ Harvest Monitoring
 - BCAC
 - Draft Bathurst Management Plan completed; will go out for public consultation until fall
 - Bathurst caribou range plan; meetings on “building consensus on important caribou habitat in NWT”; and on the Caribou Guardian Coalition
 - Wolf Harvesting Program – started on January 22 and will go till end of March
 - ACCWM – finalizing 5-year review of “Taking Care of Caribou” management plan
 - Caribou Guardian Coalition
 - Second meeting on Feb 17, 18 and 19th. Terms of Reference to be completed before next meeting.
 - TASR Harvest Monitoring including Ekwǫ habitat assessment
 - Barren-ground Technical Working Group
 - GWNT-ENR, WRRB and TG meet monthly and at times weekly
 - Ekwǫ Nàxoède K'è – Boots on the Ground caribou monitoring
 - Caribou monitoring will take place during July, August and September 2021
 - The program operates two camps
 1. at Kokèti (Contwoyto Lake) to monitor Bathurst caribou
 2. at Dezahti (Point Lake) to monitor Bluenose east caribou
 - Over 40 Tłı̨chǫ people involved in the caribou monitoring
 - This is the 6th year of the program

7. Species at Risk Committee (SARC) – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Updates to SARC membership and SARC Assessment Process and Objective Biological Criteria (OBC).

SARC memberships currently being considered or upcoming:

- Member/alternate appointed by WMAC (NWT):
 - Rosemin Nathoo, 5-year term (expires January 14, 2026)
 - Allison Thompson, 2-year term (expires January 14, 2023)
- Member appointed by ENR:
 - Alestine Andre – renewed effective February 1, 2021, for a five year term ending January 31, 2026.
- ECCC is revisiting appointing a Government of Canada member.

SARC Assessment Process and Objective Biological Criteria: The *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* requires that SARC periodically review the objective biological criteria with the CMA. The Secretariat provided a brief introduction to the revision in December 2020, and SARC will provide a more thorough update at the May 2021 CMA meeting. Reviewing the revisions at a later meeting will allow SARC time to apply the new process and criteria at their next assessment meeting in April 2021 (Polar Bear re-assessment). However, SARC will be issuing a press release regarding the new process and objective biological criteria in the next couple of weeks and will be sending letters to COSEWIC and IUCN regarding these changes.

8. The Species Conservation and Recovery Fund (SCARF) – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)

General updates. Call for applications January 15 – March 1, 2021

SCARF 2021/22 Application Period: The 2021/22 application period for the fund opened January 15, 2021 and closes March 1, 2021. The Secretariat will discuss with the subcommittee the option of extending the application deadline to March 15. The Secretariat will resend the poster and link to the application material to the CMA and will notify the CMA if/when the application deadline is extended.

Appendix F of the CMA rules of conduct (NWT Species Conservation and Recovery Fund Subcommittee Terms of Reference): The subcommittee met on November 9, 2020 to discuss the 2021/22 application material and to revise **Appendix F** of the CMA rules of conduct (NWT Species Conservation and Recovery Fund Subcommittee Terms of Reference). Revisions are based on the program name change (replace “Stewardship Program with Species Conservation and Recovery Fund” throughout document) and to align content with revised text based on the application package that was updated in 2020/21. The revised Appendix F was provided to the CMA in December for approval in February 2021.

The following revisions were also made:

- Name change throughout rules of conduct.
- Under membership the following (red) text was added: The regular membership is composed of four representatives designated by the CMA, including one representative from the GNWT Department of Environment and Natural Resources. *As much as possible, membership shall include representation from different regions of the NWT. The term shall be designated by the CMA to a maximum of two years and can be renewed.*
- Under Sub-committee Chairperson the following (red) text was added: The Sub-committee Chairperson shall be selected from one of the regular members and designated by the ~~CMA~~ sub-committee. *The Sub-Committee Chairperson will work with the Secretariat to provide the CMA with regular updates on Sub-committee activities. The Sub-committee Chairperson will serve as spokesperson for the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund for correspondence, news media and general public enquiries. The Sub-committee Chairperson will work with the Secretariat and Management Authorities on correspondence related to Species Conservation and Recovery Fund media requests and will provide the CMA with a summary of media activity as required.*

Decision D20210223-01: CMA reviewed and approved the revised CMA rules of conduct – Appendix F: NWT Species Conservation and Recovery Fund Subcommittee Terms of Reference.

9. Species at Risk Communications Strategy – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Progress update.

Status of SAR branded beverage: 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: Barren-ground caribou, Boreal caribou, Dolphin and Union caribou, Northern mountain caribou, Peary caribou)

- **Name:** Five Antlers Ale (available at the NWT Brewing Co./Woodyard, offsales, liquor store sales in cans)
- **Update target release date:** early spring 2021 (delays were encountered)
- The working group came up with a range of **merchandise:** for purchase at the pub (t-shirts, buffs, dish towels), disposable collateral (coasters, tent cards), and product specific give-aways/swag (koozies).
- The Secretariat is working it the NWT Brewing on the release event details.

Status of conservation in art project:

- On Friday, September 25 the jury committee reviewed the Conservation in Art submissions and all pieces of art that were submitted will be included in the art show. There were 11 submissions.
- Professional photos were taken of the work and a photobook is being printed.
- There will be an online art show component of the project that will be posted on Facebook and on the Craft Council website.
- The project coordinator was unable to have the number and reach of shows that was intended although a small private showing was held in Yellowknife. The online show will be broadcast to a territorial wide audience on April 27 where the show will be available during a Women's Leadership Gathering. Janet Dean will email a link to the Gathering closer to the date so you can attend/join if you would like.

What is next for SAR communications? The projects indicated above for species at risk in 2019-2020 are wrapping up. The CMA is encouraged to think of next steps in Species at Risk (NWT) communications. Suggestions so far include:

- Revisions/updates to the website
- Developing short clips explaining the SAR process
- Further defining what Species at Risk in the NWT is
- An initiative to celebrate Indigenous concepts associated with species at risk

10. Annual/periodic reviews of progress – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Updates on implementation activities will be presented by all relevant CMA members at each February face-to-face meeting. Updates should be provided to the Secretariat by **March 5, 2021** for inclusion in the meeting minutes. High level implementation activities may be presented by Management Authorities during the meeting.*

Why do we provide annual/periodic reviews of implementation progress?

Providing updates on implementation activities annually or periodically is not a legislated requirement, however annual or periodic reviews of progress do appear in management plans/recovery strategies and in February 2019 the CMA made the decision that it would provide annual/periodic reviews to help shift the focus from process to implementation. This will also inform the 5 and 10 year progress reports and reviews (which are legally required under the Act).

The February 2019 meeting minutes capture the conversation/intent. A couple of bullet points below:

Shifting focus to implementation:

- CMA meetings should, insofar as is possible, shift focus from process to implementation. Each February face-to-face meeting should include an agenda item to discuss member implementation of management plans/recovery strategies. This time would be used to discuss what we are doing, what we're not doing, and opportunities for collaboration. It should also focus not just on what actions we've taken, but on what we've learned (including species recovery indicator results). All CMA members should come prepared to have this conversation each February. This allows for an annual check-in, and will ensure that the CMA is prepared for the 5 year implementation progress reports. It will also help ensure that lesser known species remain prominent on the agenda.

Next Steps: Implementation summaries should be provided to the Secretariat by **March 5, 2021** for inclusion in the meeting minutes.

High level summary of implementation activities:

Hairy braya – WMAC (NWT) and GNWT

- WMAC (NWT)
 - No updates at this time.
- GNWT
 - We had originally hoped to carry out a survey last year. The first survey was in 2011, and the recommendation was to do them every 10 years. We weren't able to do it in 2020 largely because of COVID and these challenges are ongoing this year with the pandemic. At this point it is more likely that the survey will happen in the summer of 2022.

- There are recommendations in the recovery strategy to put seeds in a seed bank. There were attempts to germinate the seeds that had been previously collected. The seeds germinated, however they did not flower or set seed, likely because they were not mature when collected. We are planning for the next survey to be later in the season in order to collect mature seeds and to take place more broadly across the range.
- The genome has been sequenced and has been shared with the Canadian Museum of Nature and the Inuvialuit archives for long term storage.
- The re-assessment of hairy braya was postponed and the listing was extended due to the delay in carrying out the survey.

Amphibians – GRRB, SRRB, WRRB, GNWT

- GRRB
 - Only have the wood frog in the GSR. We do not have programs, but ask researchers to let us know when they observe frogs. Actions items are the same as previous year.
- SRRB
 - Implementation activities have been minimal. But the SRRB is continuing support for acoustic monitoring with ECCC and University of Alberta.
- WRRB
 - We continue to encourage Tł'chǫ communicates to report observations of amphibians. We have not at this time started or supported collection or reporting of traditional knowledge of amphibians. We are looking at accomplishing this in the future.
- GNWT
 - Acoustic recording units were deployed in the Sahtú and North Slave regions and protected areas in 2020. We have contracted work to analyze and recommend future acoustic monitoring for amphibians to help plan a program.
 - There is a manuscript in development on Boreal chorus frog. As part of that work some new observations were collected.
 - We are working on a field guide on reptiles and amphibians in the NWT. Expecting to publish in 2021.

Boreal caribou – All Management Authorities

- GNWT
 - Range planning was delayed due to the pandemic but it is back underway. There are working group meetings being set up.
 - The southern NWT mapping meetings are occurring and mapping meetings are ongoing. Gwich'in and Inuvialuit working group meetings were held last week and we will go into Sahtú once listening session wraps up.
 - The NWT Species and Habitat viewer will launch in the next couple of months.
 - New industry guidelines have been drafted.

- We are working on releasing the report on sustainable boreal caribou harvesting with a plain language summary.
- Population monitoring continues. 20 collars were deployed in the Yukon/GSA area last March and 6 in Sahtú. Hoping for 6 more collars deployed along the Mackenzie Highway road alignment.
- WMAC (NWT)
 - ISR boreal caribou range planning process has started (the first meeting was last week). Outcomes included planning a traditional knowledge collection project that will go forward this summer to identify what habitat classifications are important to boreal caribou. The first meeting to discuss that will be on March 15.
- GRRB
 - Started doing range planning. We had a teleconference a few weeks ago and a face to face meeting last week. Outcomes were similar to WMAC-NWT (above). We should be having another meeting soon to discuss further with communities and for habitat classification.
- SRRB
 - The SRRB is taking a measured approach to this work. We have been supporting a range planning network, the National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium (NBCKC) that will allow us to learn from other regions. The first meeting happened already. We followed up with a big workshop that happened in Tulít'a in 2019 with another meeting (living on the land forum meeting) to talk about the range planning process. The outcome was that the Sahtú is going to take a community conservation planning approach. Developing a toolbox that is basically a Boreal caribou atlas that can be drawn upon when planning. Communities will be working on plans for their area and combining plans to understand how the individual work fits into the bigger picture. That should happen after the 2021 listening session. This is a delay but gives us more time to work on the atlas. The atlas will provide historical information on peoples' relationship with boreal caribou and wildfire information in a user friendly platform.
 - We also plan on doing more analysis on samples collected by Jean Polfus, this information will be applied in the planning work.
- Tł'chǫ Government
 - Working on getting the Wek'èezhìi range planning on the go. Completed a planning workshop in December. Meeting with ENR to go over the work completed and identify gaps. Will have a verification meeting in March. Hopefully by then the maps will be digitized and ready for ENR.
 - The research division has been working on snow track survey on the TASR. They did one round of the survey last month and they will do it again this month and next month. Goal is to identify where Boreal caribou are frequently travelling through that snow survey.
 - TG also is involved in the National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium (NBCKC).

- TG is working on implementing harvest reporting program on the Tłı̨chǫ All Season Road (TASR). We have hired a wildlife coordinator and established an elders and harvesters committee. They had their first meeting in January with lots of plans to monitor Boreal caribou.
- WRRB
 - Most of the work that the WRRB is part of is the Wek’èezhìi Boreal planning working group. Some work is ongoing between TG and GNWT first. Working group should be meeting again soon.
 - Ongoing work with the TASR: weekly telemetry maps, environmental reports, monitoring impacts, drafting an offset plan, recently reviewed and approved wildlife management and monitoring plan, encouraging harvest reporting in communities, supporting community based monitoring programs.
 - Participate in the knowledge consortium.

Polar bears – WMAC (NWT) and GNWT

- WMAC (NWT)
 - Working with a contractor in Alaska to conduct a literature review of Polar bear traditional knowledge and look into how traditional knowledge can fit into the next assessment for the southern and northern Beaufort subpopulations. Will be designing a study for how to effectively collect that knowledge so that it will feed into the study and have a rigorous quantitative impact on results. The GNWT is doing the mark-recapture studies that will take 3-4 years to get an estimate. Contractors are looking into what kind of TK can fit into this model. Working on a data sharing agreement.
 - The Inuvialuit harvest study (multiple species) was paused in March 2020. A review was completed of the harvest study and it is being re-designed. We have a year of missing data (less relevant to Polar bears since there are mandatory tags).
 - Working on SARC polar bear status report. SARC will re-assess in April 2021
- GNWT
 - Mark recapture survey canceled in 2020 due to COVID but will continue this spring and next. Collecting pictures of stomachs for plastics analysis.

Dolphin and Union caribou – WMAC (NWT) and GNWT

- WMAC (NWT)
 - Meetings are ongoing via tele and video conference.
 - The results of the 2018 survey were published in early 2020 and those numbers were really low. Some management actions were taken in Nunavut including emergency harvest restrictions.
 - Another survey was conducted in 2020. WMAC has been involved in survey planning; communities are involved in planning as well as in surveys.

- Also, conducted some door to door consultation. Hired people in the community to conduct 51 interviews. Feedback on what kind of management actions the community wants to take. Another public meeting to go over those results. Decisions are expected in March after several community meetings. We hope to get started on implementing management actions in next month.
- Harvest is still open but the harvest study was paused. We don't have harvest data since March 2020, but we are communicating regularly with harvesters so we have an idea of what's happening. The 2020 survey was successful, people have trust in it and they covered a lot of area. In February 2020 we held an elder-youth on the land trip and developed communications materials with SCARF funding.
- Disease monitoring in caribou and muskox by University of Calgary. We are working on getting more on the ground observations in March (including scat samples).
- GNWT
 - Nothing to add.

Wood Bison - TG, WRRB, GNWT

- WRRB
 - WRRB is a member of wood bison working group, which proposed a change to total allowable harvest for the Mackenzie herd (from 0 to 40). This change is currently working its way through the regulations.
- Tłı̨chǫ Government
 - In August 2020, Tłı̨chǫ Government – a member of the Mackenzie Bison Working Group (MBWG) – supported a recommendation to re-open harvesting of a limited number of male bison. In February 2021, the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) approved the GNWT's drafted amendments for the Big Game Hunting Regulations, which will re-establish an annual total allowable harvest (TAH) of 40 bulls from the Mackenzie wood bison population until the end of the 2023/24 hunting season and reassessed.
 - In February 2021, Tłı̨chǫ Government reviewed and supported GNWT's application to undertake a 6-year monitoring study using collars on the Mackenzie bison herd. TG emphasized the importance of adaptive co-management and expressed its wish to be engaged more directly as a collaborator on monitoring and research of the herd.
- GNWT
 - There was a Mackenzie working group meeting last March and we will be planning upcoming working group meetings
 - Nahanni population survey is currently being flown.

GNWT encouraged CMA members to read the written progress summaries, since they contain more information and detail than we were able to share verbally at the meeting.

11. Progress Reports and Reviews – led by Michele Grabke/Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)

Progress reports and management plan/recovery strategy review.

Progress Reporting: Under **section 73(1)** of the *Species at Risk (NWT)* Act, the CMA must submit a progress report every five years, or sooner if so required by a management plan or recovery strategy, on the actions undertaken to implement a management plan or recovery strategy and on the progress made towards meeting objectives.

- **November 2021:** Hairy braya
- **November 2022:** Boreal caribou, Northern leopard frog, Western toad
- **March/December 2023:** Polar bear, Dolphin and Union caribou

In preparation the Secretariat developed a draft progress report for discussion using Hairy braya content from the implementation progress update. During the meeting, the CMA reviewed the draft and discussed content. There was a suggestion to link measures (from Section 7. Measuring overall progress) back to the progress table rather than simply restate objectives and approaches.

Next Steps: CMA to provide feedback on the draft progress report structure and format by **March 5th**.

Recovery strategy/Management plan review: **Section 74** states that the CMA shall review a management plan or recovery strategy every five years. The first of these progress and review documents is due in November 2021 for Hairy braya.

Questions to help form the review:

1. What do you see as the goal of this review? (i.e. are you ok with how it has been articulated in the draft document?)
2. What should the scope of the review be? What questions are we trying to address with this review?
3. Who should be involved?
4. How best to proceed with the review?
5. What would trigger an amendment to a recovery strategy/ management plan? What would be the best/most efficient timing to apply amendments? i.e. How significant does new information/changes to approaches need to be to trigger amendments?

Few if any other jurisdictions that have this requirement for this type of formal review of a recovery strategy or management plan after 5 years. The Secretariat has draft the table of questions to guide the review.

[Question to CMA] Do you feel that the draft has been prepared sufficiently meets the goal which is to review the recovery strategy for hairy braya?

GNWT – Guiding questions will be good for CMA to discuss and think about. We thought that the purpose and scope of the review as stated,

The purpose of the review is to identify where actions or approaches may need to be adjusted to achieve the conservation and recovery goal for the species:

Is too specific and should be more high level. Suggest that the purpose of the review should be identifying if the recovery strategy is still meeting the needs of the Management Authorities to advance the conservation of the species. Every time we conduct a review there will be updates to information and likely also improvements to the objectives and approaches that could be made. These are not necessarily triggers for amendment. We want to make a difference between identifying future improvements and making amendments. We don't want to be constantly amending our recovery documents.

Summary of Findings: Current state of knowledge is already covered in the progress report. Assessment of goals, objectives, approaches – we thought this was getting a little specific. The second sentence could be deleted entirely. Bring it up to a broader level.

If we are keeping track of future improvements then that should remain an internal document and not be in a public report.

Next Steps:

- CMA to provide feedback on the draft review structure and format by **March 5th**.
- Hairy braya Management Authorities will meet on **March 11, 2021** to review the hairy braya recovery strategy.

12. Northern mountain caribou – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

Approval of consensus agreement on proposed listing. Discussion on preparation of a management plan.

(a) Consensus agreement on listing

Timelines for northern mountain caribou:

- **August-November 2020** – consultation/engagement period.
- **December 14, 2020** – CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- **March 5, 2021 (formerly January 29, 2021)** – Management Authorities to submit consensus agreement statements and Annex B's to the Secretariat.
- **February 23 & 24, 2021** – CMA Meeting: Decision on consensus agreement on listing Northern mountain caribou.
- **April 29, 2021** – deadline for consensus agreement on listing.
 - Start electronic signatures on March 29.
- **~July 29, 2021** – legal listing of Northern mountain caribou
- **~April 29, 2023** – Consensus Agreement accepting management plan
- **~July 29, 2023** – Management plan must be completed
- **~April 29, 2024** – Consensus Agreement on implementation due

The proposed listing of northern mountain caribou involved GRRB, SRRB and GNWT. All three Management Authorities approved the listing of northern mountain caribou as a species of Special Concern.

Updates from Management Authorities:

- **GRRB:** We did consultation on the listing for northern mountain caribou at the end of last year and discussed it at the board meeting last week. Main comments received from GTC and RRCs – there was recognition that the species was important for the preservation of cultures and livelihoods. Information on locations where caribou are seen. Request for research – what are the population numbers/trends? Indication of decline, but also indication of moving around – so perhaps they are out there somewhere. Indication on what the harvest levels should be. Effects of forest fire. Information on the extent of the range in the GSA. Concerns that there is not enough information for a listing decision particularly on population and trends. Listing may help get that information. Concern that if the species is listed then some residents may think there may be no hunting of the species. Even though the RRC recognized that this is not the case (there are no harvest limitations). Positive impacts of listing are recognized. Relieve stress from the species. Increase numbers, that we should protect this species. In general there was a lot of support despite the concern that there is little info on pop/trends. Listing would increase funding and awareness and help gather that information that is perceived to be missing. Agreement to list under the precautionary principle. Board made a motion to approve the listing.
- **SRRB:** The SRRB's approach to engagement on this has dated back to the Colville 2020 public listening session, since that time we did engage with Norman Wells, Tulita and Fort Good Hope on the proposed listing and requested comments. More emphatic comment was that "it is about time" because there is a lot of concern on the localized impacts. They have been working hard on the Community conservation plan. Fort Good Hope was informed about the listing and we are in the process of now working with them on research in their area. The main concerns are in the Norman Wells area. The board is confident about moving forward with the proposed Special Concern listing. Northern Mountain caribou has been on the back of our minds. We hope for the best all of the time. Mountain caribou has always been something we like to see plentiful, but we have to do our part. Over the years as we travel on the Peel River, caribou don't seem to be in there. Great concern that they have moved somewhere else. They are Special Concern to me. The history of the Mountain caribou along the Keel corridor is not the same anymore. Working on Indigenous protected area. A lot of work is going on.
- **GNWT:** We agree to the listing of NMC to Special Concern. There have been changes seen. But more research is needed on whether those are localized changes or broadly across the range. We added a paragraph to the consensus agreement to include some of this context in the agreement. Also like to note that we would like to adopt the Federal plan and are hoping that will be part of this decision.

Decision D20210223-02: Decision to list Northern mountain caribou as a species of Special Concern.

Next steps:

- Consensus Agreement Statements and Annex B's due March 5, 2021.
- Management Authorities will start signatures on Consensus Agreement March 29, 2021.
- Secretariat will draft press release for the May 2020 meeting.

(b) Preparation of a management plan

As per Section 61(2)(3), the Conference may establish a process for preparing a management plan. (63) The preparer may incorporate into a management plan all or part of an existing plan prepared by any person or body.

The GNWT proposed that the CMA could use a nested approach. The CMA could adopt the national management plan as a high-level umbrella management plan covering the entire NWT range of northern mountain caribou. In addition, the CMA could point to the community-led plan (Nío Nę P'ęné Begháré Shúhta Go̱epé' Nareh̡á) as an important regional initiative that gives applied direction on how to conserve caribou in the area of the Sahtú that is covered by the plan.

Taking this approach would recognize and support the good work that has already been done, and that is underway, to plan for caribou conservation in the NWT. It would mean that time and resources can be focused on implementation of northern mountain caribou conservation actions rather than on developing a new management plan.

The GNWT is not proposing opening up and updating the national plan, but rather adopting it as-is. If the CMA agrees to this adoption approach, we would likely produce a short 1-2 page addition that becomes a 'front piece' to the management plan, describing the adoption and any additional information needed. This addition could explain the important role of the community-led plan (Nío Nę P'ęné Begháré Shúhta Go̱epé' Nareh̡á) and how fits within the over-arching umbrella. The addition could potentially point to the SARC assessment as a source of updated information.

GNWT: The GNWT would like to adopt the national management plan; the actions are still relevant and would cover what is required in the NWT. The nested approach would acknowledge the Nío Nę P'ęné plan. The GNWT is asking if the boards could speak to this approach today.

GRRB: We talked to the RRC's about this during consultation on listing and asked what they thought about it and support was received to adopt the plan. The Board discussed this proposal during their July meeting and no concerns were raised. GRRB supports adopting the national management plan.

SRRB: The SRRB strongly supports the community conservation planning approach to wildlife conservation so the nested approach fits ideally (for both the broader context of the NWT and within a regional context). Looking at the key principles or features of the federal plan it also fits well with the board's mandate in biological conservation and Indigenous stewardship and connects with Indigenous

ways of life. We've been working hard on community projects; this is what we like to see and are happy that habitat is an important part of it.

More information about the two plans:

- [The national Northern Mountain Caribou management plan](#) is a high-level strategic plan, with objectives and recommended management approaches that apply to the entire NWT range of northern mountain caribou. It was developed collaboratively with input from workshops involving Gwich'in, Sahtú and Dehcho participants, as well as a Steering Committee and a Technical Working Group. Co-management partners, including transboundary groups, were brought to the table multiple times from the beginning and throughout the planning process. The process took over 3 years (approx. 2008-2012). The plan acknowledges that herd-specific or regional management plans may be developed if needed.
- [Nío Né P'éné Begháré Shúhta Go̱epé Narehɂá](#) – This Indigenous-led caribou conservation plan covers Shúhtaot'ı nę / Shúhta Dene né né' / kayeh – a large area spanning both sides of the Yukon/NWT border (in the Sahtú region) and encompassing the Mackenzie Mountain barrens – an expansive, high alpine, tundra plateau near the headwaters of the Keele, Mı hcho Tsíé Dá (Caribou Cry), Hess, Turájı Dá (Twichya), and MacMillan Rivers. The plan is rooted in traditional Dene values, principles and knowledge. It outlines a vision, scope, values to be protected and sustained, threats, and ways of monitoring progress. It is currently a draft.

Decision D20210223-03: The Management Authorities agreed to adopt the *Management Plan for the Northern Mountain Population of Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou) in Canada* as a nested approach using the national management plan as a high-level umbrella plan covering the entire NWT range. In addition, the CMA will point to the community-led plan (Nío Né P'éné Begháré Shúhta Go̱epé Narehɂá) as an important regional initiative that gives applied direction on how to conserve caribou in the area of the Sahtú that is covered by the plan.

Action A20210223-01: The Secretariat will look into next steps required to adopt the national management plan.

13.Bats – led by Jody Pelissey (Chairperson)

Approval of implementation consensus agreement.

Timelines for bats:

- **August-November 2020** – consultation/engagement period.
- **December 14, 2020** – CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- **March 5, 2021 (formerly January 29, 2021)** – Management Authorities to submit consensus agreement statements and Annex A's to the Secretariat. The draft consensus agreement respecting implementation of the bats management plan was included in the meeting material and distributed by the Secretariat. In addition, GRRB will submit a statement on GRRB's intentions to implement approaches. Recall that investigations on the northern limit and

presence of bats in the GSR are ongoing, as such GRRB remained and continues to remain involved in the management plan and in implementation activities.

- **February 23 & 24, 2021** – CMA Meeting: Approval of bats implementation agreement
- **April 9, 2021** – The legal deadline for completion and submission of the implementation consensus agreement.
 - Start electronic signatures on March 29

The draft *Consensus Agreement Respecting Implementation of the Management Plan for Bats in the NWT* was provided in the meeting materials. Management Authorities for bats (SRRB, WRRB, Tłıchǫ Government, and GNWT) are on track to sign the consensus agreement.

Next steps:

- Consensus Agreement Statements and Annex A's due March 5, 2021.
- A draft press release on the implementation agreement was presented at the meeting. It is scheduled for release April 9, 2021. CMA members should review and submit any concerns with the press release to the Secretariat by March 12, 2021.
- Management Authorities will start signatures on Consensus Agreement March 29, 2021.

14. Barren-ground caribou – led by Jody Pelissey (Chairperson)

Development of implementation consensus agreement. Approval of implementation consensus agreement.

Timelines for barren-ground caribou:

- **August-November 2020** – consultation/engagement period
- **December 14, 2020** – CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- **March 5, 2021 (formerly January 29, 2021)** – Management Authorities to submit consensus agreement statements and Annex A's to the Secretariat. The draft consensus agreement respecting implementation of the barren-ground caribou recovery strategy was included in the meeting material and distributed by the Secretariat.
- **February 23 & 24, 2021** – CMA Meeting: Approval of barren-ground caribou implementation agreement.
- **April 9, 2021** – The legal deadline for completion and submission of the implementation consensus agreement.
 - Start electronic signatures on March 29

The draft *Consensus Agreement Respecting Implementation of the Recovery Strategy for Barren-ground Caribou in the NWT* was provided in the meeting materials. Management Authorities for barren-ground caribou (WMAC-NWT, SRRB, GRRB, WRRB, Tłıchǫ Government, and GNWT) are on track to sign the consensus agreement.

Next steps:

- Consensus Agreement Statements and Annex A's due March 5, 2021.
- A draft press release on the implementation agreement was presented at the meeting. It is scheduled for release April 9, 2021. CMA members should review and submit any concerns with the press release to the Secretariat by March 12, 2021.
- Management Authorities will start signatures on Consensus Agreement March 29, 2021.

Action A20210223-02: The Secretariat will send the draft press release to Management Authorities for review and comment by March 12, 2021.

February 2021 update on federal listing process from ECCC: We are wrapping up consultation in March in Nunavut, teleconference type consultation. We have motions to list from all NWT boards and GNWT. We do not have a motion to list from the BQCM. The next step will be to work with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB). Material will be submitted to NWMB in June, the NWMB will do consultation hearings themselves. We are not anticipating a decision until December 2021 and on that timeline barren-ground caribou will not be listed until 2022.

GNWT: Confirming/clarifying that the process in the NWT is complete?

ECCC: Yes. We have motions of support from all of the boards and the GNWT as well. The final step is working with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.

15. Dolphin and Union caribou – led by Isabelle Duclos (ECCC)

Progress update on federal listing process.

Background: 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.

February 2021 update on federal listing process from ECCC: We had a public meeting scheduled in Cambridge bay in February – cancelled due to COVID. New board members were elected and they were briefed on DU and Peary caribou. We will be contacting WMAC and regional wildlife boards on the up listing of DU caribou.

16. Peary caribou – led by Isabelle Duclos (ECCC)

Progress update on federal recovery strategy. CMA decision on NWT recovery strategy extension.

Background Peary caribou (WMAC-NWT and GNWT): Peary caribou were listed under the SAR (NT) Act in February 2014. For efficiency and to avoid duplication, the CMA anticipated adopting the applicable portions of the federal recovery strategy for Peary caribou once it was completed. Three extensions were granted (2015, 2017, 2019) with the last one indicating a completion date of December 31, 2021. On that timeline, the CMA consensus agreement to accept the Peary caribou recovery strategy would be due in September 2021. ECCC is hoping for approval by the Nunavut

Wildlife Management Board in September 2021 – this will not leave enough time for the CMA to review the recovery strategy for adoption.

Update on federal recovery strategy from ECCC: ECCC consulted with the HTC and HTOs early in 2020 on the latest version of the Peary caribou recovery strategy and the identification of critical habitat. Only sea ice crossings had been identified as critical habitat for this species. WMAC-NWT, IGC, GNWT and GN supported the posting of the proposed recovery strategy on the federal registry for public consultations. The recovery strategy was officially sent to Ottawa at the end of November, so it should be posted in June or July for a 90 day consultation period. The consultation period will be 90 days instead of the usual 60 days due to COVID. Once consultation is completed, the next step is to submit the recovery strategy to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) and this is anticipated to happen in December 2021. If NWMB does their own consultations then it may delay completion of the recovery strategy by about 6 months (~January to June 2022). Similarly, if the NWMB requests significant changes, then ECCC will go back to the other partners and propose those changes. The CMA will have an opportunity to see those changes before the document is posted as final. Considering all of these steps, the CMA should have the final RS in fall 2022 at the latest (hopefully).

Decision D20210223-04: CMA approved extending the completion date of the Peary caribou recovery strategy to September 30, 2024.

17. Workplan – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

Upcoming Activities.

- Listing decision for northern mountain caribou (April 2021)
- (Re)Assessment in 2021:
 - Polar bear (re-assessment April 2021)
- Upcoming in 2022 (contracts in progress):
 - Peary caribou (2022 re-assessments)
 - Boreal caribou (2022 re-assessments)
 - Peregrine falcon (2022 assessment)
- Upcoming in 2023 (contracts to be issued in spring 2021):
 - Northern leopard frog (2023 re-assessment)
 - American White pelican (assessment 2023)
 - Dolphin and Union caribou (re-assessment 2023)
 - Hairy braya (re-assessment 2023)
- Upcoming in 2024:
 - Western toad (re-assessment 2024)
 - Canadian Toad (assessment 2024)

18. Next meeting – led by Jody Pelissey (Chairperson)

Scheduling for a Hairy Braya review meeting and a CMA May 2021 meeting.

Conference of Management Authorities – meeting minutes, approved

- **March 11, 2021:** Hairy braya Management Authorities to discuss 5 year implementation progress and review of the recovery strategy.
- **May 11-12, 2021:** regularly-scheduled meeting; continue with Zoom teleconference.