



NWT CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

CONSENSUS AGREEMENT ON ACCEPTING AND ADOPTING THE *MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR NORTHERN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES*

The Conference of Management Authorities has reached a consensus (hereafter referred to as the "Consensus Agreement") on the following:

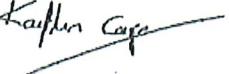
To accept, in accordance with section 66 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the *Management Plan for Northern Mountain Caribou (Woodland Caribou [Northern Mountain Population])* (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) *in the Northwest Territories* and to adopt the *Management Plan for the Northern Mountain Caribou Population of Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou)* *in Canada* as Part 2 in accordance with section 63 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

INTERPRETATION

For greater certainty, terms and processes in this Consensus Agreement are as defined and described in the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

For greater certainty, the Management Authorities for northern mountain caribou in the Northwest Territories are the: Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, Ɂehdzo Got'ıne Gots'é Nákedı (the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board) and Government of the Northwest Territories.

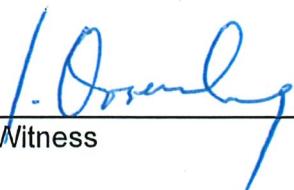
WE THE UNDERSIGNED, having reached consensus, provide this Consensus Agreement on this **29th day of April 2023** to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Government of the Northwest Territories and the undersigned Management Authorities.



Witness



Robert Charlie-Tetlichi, Chairperson
Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board



Witness



Donna Schear, Acting Chair
Ɂehdzo Got'Iné Gots'é Nákedí
(Sahtú Renewable Resources Board)



Witness



Dr. Brett Elkin, Assistant Deputy Minister
Dept. of Environment and Climate Change
Government of the Northwest Territories

ANNEX A

REASONS FOR THE CONSENSUS AGREEMENT

On July 29, 2021, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Government of the Northwest Territories (NWT), acting on the direction provided by the Conference of Management Authorities in their *Consensus Agreement on Listing Northern Mountain Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou) as Special Concern in the Northwest Territories*, added northern mountain caribou to the NWT List of Species at Risk as a species of Special Concern. If a species is listed as Special Concern, the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* provides a two-year period for the Conference of Management Authorities to prepare and complete a management plan for that species.

The *Management Plan for Northern Mountain Caribou in the Northwest Territories* (management plan) was prepared by the Management Authorities responsible for northern mountain caribou, in accordance with the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. The management plan is made up of two parts: the federal *Management Plan for the Northern Mountain Caribou Population of Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou) in Canada* and NWT information on positive influences, community-led planning and knowledge gaps in the NWT (NWT addition).

Part 2 of the management plan, the federal *Management Plan for the Northern Mountain Caribou Population of Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou) in Canada*, was developed by Environment and Climate Change Canada through an inclusive process whereby the responsible agencies and jurisdictions invited participation from all governments and First Nations within the range of the northern mountain caribou. A technical team (the Technical Working Group) with expert knowledge researched and drafted the management plan while receiving guidance and assistance from a steering committee (the Steering Committee) comprised of representatives from responsible agencies, jurisdictions and governments. A subgroup of the Steering Committee (the Co-chairs Committee) was responsible for coordination, ensuring the most inclusive and timely process possible. After the draft management plan was completed, formal consultations occurred with all governments, boards and agencies within the range of northern mountain caribou. A complete list of participants in the Technical Working Group and Steering Committee is found in Appendix 1 of the federal management plan.

Part 1 of the management plan, the NWT addition, was developed by the Conference of Management Authorities with input from the necessary parties. It was developed to include information required by the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* that was not found in the federal management plan, as well as other recent information important to the management of northern mountain caribou in the NWT.

The entire management plan was reviewed by interested parties through an engagement and consultation process. Comments and concerns that the Management Authorities heard regarding the management plan were meaningfully considered and addressed as described in Annex B.

The management plan includes appropriate recommended objectives and approaches for the management of northern mountain caribou, as well as descriptions of threats and positive influences, as required under section 61 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. The management plan will help the Management Authorities decide what actions to take, how to prioritize their work, and how to allocate their resources in order to manage northern mountain caribou in the NWT.

This Consensus Agreement was informed by the review of the management plan, the Species at Risk Committee's assessment and reasons for assessment, the approved species status report, public input (solicited by the Management Authorities), and the results of consultation. No information was provided to the Species at Risk Committee by the Conference of Management Authorities or a Management Authority under paragraph 31(1)(c) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* and no written clarification was provided by the Species at Risk Committee under section 34. Actions taken by the Management Authorities with respect to the required approvals and their preparation for the development of the Consensus Agreement are described in Annex B of this Consensus Agreement.

The Management Authorities for northern mountain caribou are confident that together, Part 1 and Part 2 of the *Management Plan for Northern Mountain Caribou in the Northwest Territories* satisfactorily address management requirements for northern mountain caribou as required by the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. The Government of the Northwest Territories' assessment is that the action of accepting Part 1 and adopting Part 2 will not infringe on Aboriginal or treaty rights.

For these reasons, the Management Authorities agree to accept Part 1 and adopt Part 2 of the *Management Plan for Northern Mountain Caribou in the Northwest Territories*.

ANNEX B

ACTIONS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES HAVE UNDERTAKEN OR WILL UNDERTAKE WITH RESPECT TO ACCEPTING AND ADOPTING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

As provided for in paragraph 66(3)(b) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, this Consensus Agreement sets out below the actions each Management Authority has undertaken or agrees to undertake with respect to accepting Part 1 and adopting Part 2 of the *Management Plan for Northern Mountain Caribou in the Northwest Territories*:

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board

The GRRB followed its rules and procedures for consultation to prepare a position on the proposed management for northern mountain caribou in the NWT. In summary, this process includes pre-consultation, consultation meetings, opportunity for feedback, and the presentation of the content to the Board, in order for the Board to make a decision.

Pre-consultation

As a general rule, the GRRB provides the Renewable Resources Councils (RRCs) with consultation material at least 30 days in advance of any meeting, to allow the council time to read and discuss the material. The RRCs were sent the final management plan for northern mountain caribou in the NWT, along with a fact sheet for review on August 16, 2022.

Consultation Meetings

As a general rule, when requesting input on board decision items, the GRRB prefers to hold public meetings, but if there are limitations to funding then solely RRC meetings will be attended. Meetings with RRCs were held with Ehdiitat RRC (Aklavik) on January 9, 2023, with Gwichya Gwich'in RRC (Tsiigehtchic) on January 13, 2023, and with Tettit RRC (Fort McPherson) on January 14, 2023, separate to their regular monthly meetings. A separate meeting with Nihtat RRC (Inuvik) could not be scheduled. Digital materials including a PowerPoint presentation were provided for their regular RRC meeting on January 17 and printed materials were for their January 26 regular RRC meeting, although that meeting was not attended by GRRB. A summary of comments received from RRCs was sent to the RRCs on January 31, 2023.

Opportunity for Feedback

The general rule is for the GRRB to allow the RRCs at least 30 days after a consultation meeting to provide additional written comment. All the comments received at these meetings were summarized by GRRB staff. After the consultation meetings, each RRC was requested to submit a written position on the proposed management plan for northern mountain caribou in the NWT. However, no RRCs provided written responses.

Community Comments

Community comments included:

- People from the GSA no longer harvest northern mountain caribou;
- The main concern was regarding harvest levels, particularly from big game hunters/outfitters. Questions were raised regarding if they would have limits imposed if population numbers decreased (and how these population thresholds and harvest limits would be decided);
- The need for information on updated population numbers (particularly SK) was viewed as important, as was accurate harvest data; and
- The management goal, objectives and recovery measures were supported.

Changes were made to the draft management plan based on comments regarding big game hunters.

Board Decision

During the February 7-9, 2023 Board meeting in Inuvik, the Species at Risk Secretariat and GRRB staff provided an overview of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* process, a summary of the reasons why northern mountain were assessed as 'Special Concern' in the NWT, an overview of the contents of the management plan including the goal, objectives and approaches, a summary of community consultation results and main concerns, and provided staff recommendations. The GRRB made a motion (**GRRB #2023-04**) "To approve in principle the Northern Mountain Caribou Management Plan in the Northwest Territories, provided no further concerns are received."

No further concerns were received within GRRB's consultation policy timeframe.

Pehdzo Got'ı ne Gots'é Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board)

Letters of invitation were sent to the RRCs and other leadership organizations in October/November 2022 informing them about the management plan and offering opportunities for an engagement meeting and/or written input. Materials (including the draft management plan, fact sheet, and presentation slides) were shared with RRCs and other community leadership organizations. Follow-ups and social media (Facebook) posts were published regarding community meetings/engagements. Post-presentation discussions on the management plan were held with RRCs and other community leaders.

In December 2022 and January 2023, comments/questions from the engagement were compiled with appropriate clarifications made. An additional 30 days were allowed for RRCs, community leaders, and stakeholders to provide additional information or comment on the draft management plan.

In February 2023, the SRRB met to discuss the info and passed a motion to accept/adopt the revised management plan.

Government of the Northwest Territories

The Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) position on the management plan was formed through review of the management plan and engagement with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, as well as the public. The Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) also worked with other GNWT departments through the Inter-departmental Species at Risk Committee.

Public Engagement

The GNWT provided an opportunity for members of the public and interested organizations to comment on the proposed draft management plan for northern mountain caribou. The comment period was August 8 - October 31, 2022. The GNWT invited comments using a news release, print ads, fact sheets, radio announcements, social media posts, an online survey, the GNWT public engagement portal, the NWT Species at Risk website and an email distribution list.

Eleven respondents provided comments on the proposed management plan through this process. Most stated overall support for the goal and objectives in the management plan. The comments included several suggestions for improving the management plan and advice on its implementation. Issues raised include but are not limited to: the status of the caribou, the importance of monitoring, ideas for harvest management measures,

managing human activities on the land to conserve habitat, Indigenous involvement, and addressing predators and competitors. All comments were fully considered when drafting the final management plan.

Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations

The Government of the Northwest Territories' assessment is that the action of accepting Part 1 and adopting Part 2 will not infringe on Aboriginal or treaty rights. Completing the management plan does not result in any automatic prohibitions or protections for species or habitat, or automatic harvesting restrictions for anyone.

The GNWT engaged with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations (IGOs) through letters. IGOs located in or near the NWT range of northern mountain caribou were invited to comment on the proposed draft management plan. No responses were received.

The IGOs engaged are listed below. Full records of engagement are on file at the Wildlife and Fish Division, ECC, Yellowknife.

- Dehcho First Nations
- Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation
- West Point First Nation
- Jean Marie River (Tthets'éhk'édéł) First Nation
- Sambaa K'e First Nation
- Pehdzéh Kj First Nation
- Deh Gáh Got'ie First Nation
- Łíídlj Kjé First Nation
- Fort Providence Métis Council
- The Métis Association Local 52 – Fort Simpson, NWT
- Nahanni Butte Dene Band
- Acho Dene Koe First Nation
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Déljne Got'jne Government
- Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated
- Dene Tha' First Nation
- First Nation of Na-Cho Nyák Dun
- Kaska Dena Council