

**Conference of Management Authorities – meeting minutes, approved**

**Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)  
Draft Meeting Minutes, February 19, 2020  
Inuvik, NT – Nihtat Gwich'in Cultural Room**

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Jody Pellissey	CMA Chairperson/Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board
Elizabeth Robertson	Acho Dene Koe First Nation
Tina Giroux	Athabasca Denesuline
Earl Evans	Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board
Bruce Laurich	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Natural Resources
Rob Gau	Environment and Natural Resources
Troy Ellsworth	Environment and Natural Resources
Jozef Carnogursky	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Kaytlin Cooper	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Sam Bullock	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Jessica Hurtubise	North Slave Métis Alliance
Deborah Simmons	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Leon Andrew	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Joseph Judas	Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board
Jodie Maring	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Larry Carpenter	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Marsha Branigan	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Claire Singer	Species at Risk Secretariat
Michele Grabke	Species at Risk Secretariat

Opening prayer by Leon Andrew.

1. Introductions – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Roundtable introductions.*

2. Contact information and distribution list – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Verification and update to email distribution lists and contact information.*

Updated contact information for inclusion in CMA distribution lists should be submitted to the Secretariat by email.

3. Agenda – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Review of draft agenda.*

First day of meeting was lost to flight delays. Order of agenda was therefore altered to ensure coverage of most important agenda items. No agenda items were lost, and all were ultimately able to be covered during the remaining allotted time. Updates for agenda item 8 (updates from members) were submitted to the Secretariat by email and included in the minutes after the meeting.

4. Minutes from last meeting – led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)

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*Review and approval of draft minutes from December 13, 2019.*

Minor edits to the December 13, 2019 minutes were submitted to the Secretariat by email prior to this meeting. Minutes approved with no further changes.

5. Review of action items – led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)

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

A2016051102 (May 2016): GNWT to prepare schedule for Peary caribou recovery strategy adoption by the CMA. Continue to bring forward.

6. CMA decisions made since last meeting – led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)

*Review of decisions made since last meeting.*

No decisions made since last meeting.

7. CMA letters sent and received since last meeting – led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)

*Review of letters sent and received since last meeting.*

No letters sent or received since last meeting.

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

*Updates from members of the Conference of Management Authorities.*

GNWT:

- General: Erin Kelly has been named Deputy Minister of ENR. Currently, Brett Elkin is A/ADM of Operations and Rob Gau is A/Director of Wildlife. We are finalizing the 2020 edition of the booklet ‘Species at Risk in the NWT’, which will be published in March. We have been participating and providing input into federal SARA initiatives including: yellow-banded bumble bee management plan, gypsy cuckoo bumble bee recovery strategy, collared pika management plan, hairy braya recovery strategy, and Peary caribou recovery strategy. We provided information to ECCC about our work related to the national Priority Species at Risk, particularly boreal caribou and barren-ground caribou.
- Wood bison: A survey completed in 2019 estimated abundance of the Mackenzie population at 1,460 bison, but with lower than usual precision resulting in a wide confidence interval (95% CI 914-2,359). No classification survey was completed in 2019 due to inability to find bison and lack of an available helicopter. A composition survey completed on the Nahanni population in July 2019 classified 254 bison and estimated the calf:cow ratio at 47:100 cows, and the yearling:cow ratio at 27:100 cows; both quite good. A composition survey on the Slave River Lowlands population in July 2019 failed because we were able to find and classify only 24 cows, which is far too few to calculate meaningful composition ratios. ENR’s Dehcho region has been responding to complaints of problem bison in Fort Liard. After herding efforts were unsuccessful in resolving the issue otherwise, ENR removed four bulls from the community. Meat was distributed to community members. ENR coordinated the removal of a fifth bull by a

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community member who possessed a tag to harvest a bison. ENR's North and South Slave regions have been busy responding to bison-vehicle collisions on Highway 3. Since August 2019, ENR has received reports of 15 bison-vehicle collisions that killed at least 19 bison on Highway 3. The Mackenzie bison working group will meet in March to receive updates on the population and make recommendations on future work.

- Polar bears: Genetic mark-recapture program for Southern and Northern Beaufort Sea subpopulations was initiated in 2019, in collaboration with the USGS, Yukon, and Nunavut governments. It is a 3-4-year program using biopsy darting. Objective is to obtain updated abundance estimates (last coordinated abundance estimates were based on 2003-2006 work). In the 2019 field season, 162 bears were observed on the Canadian side and genetic IDs determined for 94 individual bears. Planning for 2020 field season is underway with start of work in late March. NOAA is also planning an instrument-based survey of the Southern Beaufort subpopulation in April/May 2020 with colour, thermal, and UV cameras for seals and polar bears.
- Barren-ground caribou: Note that the North American Caribou Workshop will be May 11-15 in Quebec City. For the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula, Cape Bathurst, and Bluenose-West herds, the last population estimate was in 2018. Population surveys are planned for 2021. A late winter composition (recruitment) survey is planned for Tuk Pen/Cape Bathurst. We are also monitoring body condition through hunter sample submissions. June 2019 Calving Ground Composition Surveys: Bathurst 86.6% breeding females, BNE 87.5% (very good); early peak of calving June 4-6 (good sign). Early November 2019 Composition Surveys (March 2020) for Bathurst, BNE, Beverly herds. March 2020 Additional Collar Placement Bathurst, BNE, and Beverly herds. Nunavut Wildlife Management Board hearings March 2020 on Bathurst and BNE herds; ENR will participate. June 2020 Calving Ground Photo Surveys planned for Bathurst and BNE herds.
- Boreal caribou: Range planning has started in the Wek'eezhii and southern NWT regions. There have been two meetings of the Wek'eezhii Working Group (Nov. 2019 and Feb. 2019) and one meeting of the Southern NWT Working Group (Dec. 2019, next scheduled for Mar. 3-4, 2020). Over spring/summer 2020 the working groups will be focusing on collecting and compiling traditional and local knowledge to identify important areas for boreal caribou. Range planning will start up in Sahtu, Gwich'in, and Inuvialuit regions in fall 2020. Working on draft industry guidelines for boreal caribou. Hoping to share a draft of the guidelines and hold a technical workshop with RRBs, review boards, LWBs, and industry/ENGO stakeholder to get feedback at end of March 2020. NWT boreal caribou habitat selection analysis and mapping project – we completed seasonal and annual resource selection function models and predictive maps of habitat selection for the NT1 range using all available boreal caribou collar data from the NWT. Hoping to have a report on this project completed by end of March 2020. Predictive maps will be used to help identify important areas for boreal caribou in range plans. Boreal caribou monitoring programs ongoing in South Slave, Dehcho, and North Slave regions. Wolf surveys planned in South Slave and North Slave regions, wolf collar deployment in the South Slave region.
- Peary caribou: Northwest Victoria Island survey conducted May 2019. Estimate of about 150 caribou – this is more than the previous survey in 2015 where so few caribou were seen that an estimate couldn't be calculated. Banks Island survey conducted summer 2019. Estimate of about

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2,000 caribou, which is similar to the 2014 estimates. ENR is participating in the community tour organized by ECCC for the national recovery strategy in the last week of February.

- Dolphin and Union caribou: 2018 population survey results from Government of Nunavut not released yet. ENR is assisting with the health monitoring program led by the OHTC and University of Calgary.
- Amphibians: The report on the amphibian survey that took place in July 2019 in the Liard valley has been completed and shared. Three new significant west toad breeding sites were documented during this survey.
- Bats: We are working with a contractor to complete a report on our acoustic monitoring results. We are working to finish the printing and distribution of the guide ‘Got Bats? NWT Guide to Managing Bats in Buildings’. We prepared and submitted the recent data from various bat monitoring projects for inclusion in the NWT bats management plan. Joanna attended the North American Symposium on Bat Research in October 2019.
- Bumble bees: ENR and partners did a pollinator inventory around Yellowknife and Daring Lake in 2019. This allowed us to test sites and equipment, and we are hoping to expand the bee monitoring program into the future. Specimens are still being identified, but we did find one very rarely collected species at Daring Lake – the maritime mason bee, *Osmia maritima*. ENR has been working with Ecology North to develop Best Management Practices for Beekeepers in the NWT. These are nearing completion.
- Hairy braya: We are planning for a hairy braya population survey on Cape Bathurst in August 2020, in collaboration with Dr. Jim Harris of Utah Valley University.

### WMAC (NWT)

- WMAC (NWT) had their regular board meeting November 30-December 2, 2019 in Halifax, NS, and also used the opportunity to attend the Arctic Net Conference from December 3-5. At this meeting, the Council made the following decisions:
  - To re-appoint Allison Thompson as SARC member until January 15, 2021, and Rosemin Nathoo, Wildlife Biologist as a SARC alternate.
  - WMAC (NWT) recommends the following statuses: Bluenose-West (orange), Bluenose-East (red), and Cape Bathurst (yellow) based on the information provided by the monitoring tables at the ACCWM annual status meeting for 2020.
- The next WMAC (NWT) meeting is March 4-6, 2020 in Inuvik.
- WMAC (NWT) conducted its annual species at risk community tour in October 2019 and March 2020, visiting all six ISR communities (Aklavik, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, Sachs Harbour). The following provides some of the topics discussed during this tour.
  - Observations and traditional knowledge from community members of Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, Inuvik, and Paulatuk for Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East, Cape Bathurst caribou herds to prepare for the ACCWM annual status meeting (November 2019).
  - Updated the communities on the barren-ground caribou recovery strategy, started collecting feedback.
  - Updated the communities on the Tuk Pen/Cape Bathurst sensitive habitat position paper.
  - Updated the communities on the NWT polar bear re-assessment and started collecting feedback and/or concerns.

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- Since the last CMA face-to-face meeting, WMAC (NWT) members/staff attended: CWS Migratory Bird Sanctuary Workshop (September 22, 2019 – Whitehorse, YT), SARC TK Workshop (October 22-24, 2019 – Dettah), ACCWM Annual Status Meeting (November 19-21 – Inuvik), TP/CB Mapping Workshop (January 22, 2020 – Tuktoyaktuk), PCMB Annual Harvest Meeting (February 11-12, 2020 – Dawson, YT), and ENR Caribou Workshop (February 18-19, 2020 – Yellowknife).
- In preparation for this meeting, an updated version of the implementation tables (hairy braya, boreal caribou, polar bear, Dolphin and Union caribou) was submitted earlier in January.

### North Slave Metis Alliance:

- Last year, the NSMA had confirmed funding from both AFSAR and the NWT-SAR (now SCARF) funds for an eDNA project. eDNA is a fairly new and upcoming sampling technology to determine presence of species in water bodies based on environmental DNA (eDNA). Jess led the project. Members identified areas of interest for sampling, based on (1) knowledge of areas of species diversity and abundance, (2) locations where species at risk are or used to be present, (3) areas of cultural importance to traditional harvesting. NSMA staff and members then sampled lakes and rivers in these locations. The samples are off for analysis. NSMA is hoping to continue this project annually, with the option to collaborate with other indigenous organizations, for eDNA sampling training.
- Boreal caribou (assessed by not listed): Cat Fauvelle (Conservation Planner) sits on the Wek'eezhii Boreal Caribou Working Group and the Southern NWT Boreal Caribou Working Group, and will be the lead on documentation and traditional knowledge projects regarding boreal caribou in 2020-21 fiscal year.
- Barren-ground caribou: Cat also sits on the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee and the Caribou Guardians Coalition. She is involved with the upcoming (pending funding) NSMA guardianship exchange, the establishment of NSMA's own guardianship program. She is the lead on traditional knowledge documentation and information mapping for NSMA. The NSMA submitted a proposed for a project to inform predator management in the Bathurst caribou range, on which she is the lead.
- Bison: Cat also sits on the Mackenzie Bison Working Group and provides insight on behalf of the NSMA.

### WRRB:

- Reviewed and approved WMMP of the Tlicho All-Season Road (TASR) project in August 2019; continued to participate as a member of the TASR Corridor Working Group.
- A new board member was appointed in August 2019 – Stu Niven, who is a federal appointment.
- Conducted joint consultations with Tlicho Government on the barren-ground caribou recovery strategy and bat management plan in October and November 2019.
- Received a joint management proposed from Tlicho Government and GNWT to consider wolf management actions in Wek'eezhii in January 2020.
- Participated as a working group member to develop the Wek'eezhoo boreal caribou range plan in November 2019 and February 2020.

### GRRB:

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- General:
  - We are in the final hiring phase for 2 positions – a one year grizzly bear management planner, and a permanent stakeholder liaison.
  - Grizzly bear – This person will be tasked to update the Grizzly Bear Management Plan and Agreement. Tasks include working with co-management partners and to create education and communication products.
  - Stakeholder liaison – This position replaces the vacant Renewable Resources Manager position. It will focus on building relationships with our stakeholders with an emphasis on our relationship with the RRCs. They will lead the harvest survey, community engagements, and managing our research and land use application reviews.
  - We had our board meetings in September and February where species at risk were on the agenda.
  - This past October we tried a community tour style of consultation like WMAC does, where all staff members go to each community and we talk about GRRB roles and responsibilities, give updated on our work process and do any consultations needed. This included several species at risk items (horned grebe, gypsy cuckoo bumble bee, barren-ground caribou). It was very successful, and we plan on doing it again this year and include going into the schools.
- Kaytlin (Species at Risk Biologist):
  - Worked on 18 different species this past year, mainly for the federal species at risk – at all difference stages of the process.
  - Consultations on gypsy cuckoo bumble bee recovery strategy, horned grebe management plan, barren-ground caribou recovery strategy. Also olive-sided flycatcher down listing and peregrine falcon down listing.
- Sarah (Fisheries and Forestry Biologist):
  - Gwich'in Forest Management Plan Steering Committee met twice to review current status of action items and plan future work.
  - Revised the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Dolly Varden in the Western Arctic and it was signed by all parties (Dec. 31) – listed as Special Concern.
  - Assisted in DFO fall seine program at Rat River fish hole for dolly varden.
  - Logistical and administrative support for Arctic salmon project and community-based whitefish monitoring project.
  - Assisted Species at Risk Biologist with reviewing several documents for DUs for several species of salmon.
- Edouard (Wildlife Biologist):
  - ACCWM working group member – Taking Care of Caribou: the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds management plan.
  - Commercial Use of Wildlife Meat Consultation.
  - Moose – conducted recent consultations engaging resident hunters about possible change from voluntary to mandatory resident reporting and input on possible alteration of resident hunting zone to open up new areas.
  - Continuing Dall's Sheep Research Project – 15 cameras installed around Black Mountain (Richardson Mountains).
- Jordan (Technician): On term until end of March.

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- Led harvest study, organized our community tour, maintaining our equipment, and assisting office manager. Goes into schools to do Nature Days.
- Our conservation calendar is out, and the newsletter should be coming out soon.

### 9. Species Conservation and Recovery Fund – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

*Reminder regarding the 2020/21 call for proposals. Presentation of interactive map (previous action item).*

The call for 2020/21 proposals for the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund (formerly the Stewardship Program) opened on January 15 and will close on March 1. All application and reporting forms can be downloaded from the website ([www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca)). All projects will be assessed based on the new tiered prioritization system, linked to management plans and recovery strategies, in accordance with previous CMA recommendations for the program. The total amount available in the fund is \$60,000.

In February 2019, the CMA suggested that the Secretariat look into building a map of past funded projects. The intent was to raise the profile of the program and to showcase projects that have been funded. The Secretariat completed the map using ArcGIS online (Story Maps). Projects are displayed by project type (e.g., education/outreach). The map displays thumbnails of each project, each of which can be expanded to view additional details. The expanded project details can include links to published documents/webpages to direct readers to additional relevant information.

The CMA approved the addition of the interactive map to the website, but also wants to retain webpages of past project summaries already on the website to ensure communities with slower internet access will still be able to read about past funded projects. The base map being used also needs to be updated to reflect the new national parks in the NWT. The colours may need to be re-evaluated on the page that includes green project tabs on top of green national parks in the background map. The Secretariat will examine the possibility of doing this, recognizing that there are some limitations within ArcGIS online. Currently, organizations/individuals funded under the project are asked if they consent to the release of their organization's contact information so that those interested in the project results can contact them directly for additional information. Most past projects don't have this kind of contact information associated with their online summaries. There was agreement that all past projects led by CMA member organizations should have general organizational contact information added to project summaries to facilitate direct information sharing. The Secretariat also noted that one of the tabs in the interactive map at the moment is a project ideas tab. Some thinking/discussion may be needed to properly populate this tab. It could link to some kind of research priorities document, which renewable resource boards in the NWT often have.

The Secretariat will inform the CMA once the map has been pushed live. The process must be done external to the Secretariat, and therefore no timeline on the map going live could be provided.

### 10. Re-branding of NWT Species at Risk program – led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)

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

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

First, concerns were expressed with respect to the effectiveness and reach of the Stewardship Program. The CMA indicated that they would like the program re-named, as ‘stewardship’ was felt to be an ambiguous term that doesn’t effectively resonate with NWT audiences. Alternate names for the program were solicited from the CMA, and the Stewardship Program was renamed the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund (SCARF). The CMA also agreed that resources should, insofar as is possible, go towards implementation of management plans and recovery strategies. As such, the scope of the funding program was changed to prioritize funding for projects with clear links to published draft or final management plans and recovery strategies. The CMA also requested the development of an interactive projects map showing descriptions of previously funded projects. This was completed per the discussions in the previous agenda item.

Second, the templates used by the Secretariat were re-designed/refreshed (letterhead, status reports, recovery strategies/management plans, presentations, fact sheets). This was primarily functional (i.e., removing recurring document corruptions), but also helps ensure a unified, common theme among all public-facing documents developed under the NWT Species at Risk program.

Finally, based on suggestions and interest from CMA members, the Secretariat pursued the development of a species at risk branded beer. This was originally put forward as an out of the box idea for generating additional revenue. Discussions have been undertaken with NWT Brewing Co. on this matter. They are interested in pursuing this collaboration in 2020. However, for simplicity, the project is being approached simply as an opportunity for outreach at this time. There will be no financial component for the CMA. The branded sessional (seasonal) beer will be pre-released at the Woodyard Pub in Yellowknife, followed by a release of the branded beer in cans at Folk on the Rocks 2020. The plan at this time is to showcase the caribou at risk in the NWT, which will scope in several groups of caribou in one campaign (boreal caribou, Peary caribou, Dolphin and Union caribou, barren-ground caribou, and northern mountain caribou). NWT Brewing Co. is interested in working with local artists on the label design. Visual identity on the labels would be limited to NWT Brewing and the NWT Species at Risk program logo. Additional communications and promotional material are also being considered (e.g., table talkers, fact sheets, coasters). For the cans, there might be five different labels; each showcasing a different type of caribou in the NWT, with a potentially peel-able label that exposes additional information.

This model has been very successfully used in other jurisdictions in helping to build program/species awareness. However, there are constraints. The scope is very limited, primarily targeting Yellowknife, although there’s a possibility of a broader release in other NWT liquor stores. In this context, it’s important that this be just one of many outreach/promotional activities. There may also be concerns about the perceptions associated with pairing caribou and alcohol in communities. It is therefore important to approach the project carefully and with sensitivity and respect. There is interest in also



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ensuring the promotion of indigenous stewardship activities, the Act, and the CMA itself, to showcase this unique, made-in-the-north conservation scenario. It was also suggested that the cans perhaps be colour-coded to show the different risk levels faced by the different caribou. The CMA suggested a possible name of Hoppy Hooves.

Overall, there was support for trying this as a promotional activity. It's important that people understand what the CMA does and the benefit it can have for species. The Secretariat will need to keep the CMA informed as the project progresses, and ensure opportunities for involvement in the development of the communication materials associated with the release.

Potential future projects that could be undertaken in respect of outreach/program promotion include: development of user-friendly species fact sheets, partnerships with other local companies on program outreach (e.g., partnerships with NWT artists), updating the Tools for Industry portion of the website, museum displays, or a festival of nature. The CMA also suggested the development of items suitable for children (e.g., colouring books) and identification books. Additional ideas should be sent to the Secretariat.

### 11. 2020 legislative review – led by Rob Gau (Environment and Natural Resources)

*Progress report on legislative review. Section 147 of the Species at Risk (NWT) Act requires a legislative review of the Act in February 2020 (10 years after coming into force).*

The *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* calls for a legislative review 10 years after coming into force (2020). The review will be conducted by the Legislative Assembly, not by ENR. Administrative corrections needed that have been identified by SARC and CMA over the last 10 years have been compiled by ENR and included in the review messaging.

Standing Committee recently informed ENR that it will be initiating the legislative review of the Act. Although the details of this review are still unclear, it sounds like it could involve a full community tour. Confirmation is still required however. ENR will keep the CMA informed as this progresses and evolves. Development of the Act required a lot of hard work by a lot of people, and the hope is that this review won't involve a complete re-opening of the Act. If it is re-opened, given the collaborative nature of this legislation, this will likely be of interest to co-management partners.

### 12. Work plan – led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)

*Upcoming activities relevant to the CMA's work planning.*

The work plan provided by the Secretariat identifies all the species that have been assessed or are scheduled for assessment. It identifies who's responsible for those species, and sets out a timeline for the process for each species. Upcoming activities relevant to the CMA include:

- 6-month review period for the polar bear status report (re-assessment). This is currently scheduled for July-November 2020. Polar bear are scheduled for re-assessment in 2021. The status report is being updated by Dr. Phil McLoughlin (scientific knowledge component) and Dan Slavik (traditional and community knowledge component).

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- 6-month review period for the hairy braya status report (re-assessment). This is currently scheduled for August 2020-January 2021 and will take place concurrently with the planned August 2020 field work. Hairy braya are scheduled for re-assessment in 2021. The status report is being updated by Dr. Jim Harris.
- SARC will be assessing northern mountain caribou in April 2020. If assessed as at risk, a CMA listing decision will be required within one year, with consultation/engagement on the proposed listing in August-November 2020.
- Contracts for 2022 assessments/re-assessments will be issued in spring 2020. This includes updates to the boreal caribou and Peary caribou status reports, in preparation for their re-assessments, and the development of a new status report for peregrine falcon.

### 13. Cranberries (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) – led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)

*Cranberries were flagged by SARC for possible assessment in 2025. If funding can be accessed, assess interest from members in conducting TK/CK studies. Results needed by 2023 to be included in status report.*

In SARC's 2019 assessment schedule letter, they indicated the possibility of lowbush cranberries (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) being assessed in 2025, owing to concerns raised with declines in berry production in the grizzly bear status report. Without work to compile/collect best available information however, it is unlikely that this assessment will be able to proceed. There may be an opportunity for the Secretariat to apply for some funding to do this kind of work, if the CMA is interested.

Some concerns were raised with doing this work, particularly the extremely large distribution of this species and the lack of baseline information. However, it's clearly an important species, both to people and other species, and reports have been received of possible declines in berry production. Focusing on a species like cranberries may also help bridge the gender bias in identification of valued species; too often, valued species are those harvested by men.

Some information may already be available: harvester surveys conducted by the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op may be able to provide some information from the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit areas. Trevor Lantz also developed a community-based monitoring protocol for berries. A study was done by the Canadian Wildlife Service in 1980-1985 by Dr. Don Thomas, Eric Broughton, and Hank Killion out of their Edmonton office. Although work focused on caribou body condition sampling, vegetation plot surveys were also conducted. The work was conducted along the edge of the treeline, at Tent Lake, Nonacho Lake, Mary Francis Lake, and Halliday Lake. Environment and Climate Change Canada will try to find the report of that work. There's been at least one doctoral thesis that had a big cranberry focus (Brenda Parlee). This material could at least provide an idea of the correct questions to ask.

The CMA was supportive of the Secretariat trying to access funding to conduct a quick compilation of existing materials and a possible scoping exercise. Kristi Benson would be a good possible candidate to do this kind of work. The Secretariat will communicate this to SARC.

### 14. Commonality analysis – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

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*Report on previous action item: Secretariat to prepare an analysis of commonalities among actions in management plans/recovery strategies.*

The CMA requested that the Secretariat complete an analysis of commonalities among management plan and recovery strategy approaches, with an aim of potentially being able to identify areas of efficiency and cooperation and highlight gaps. Approaches were categorized roughly according to the IUCN's classification system for conservation actions. Eight main categories and approximately 25 subcategories were used, with approaches assigned to them based on best fit. Some approaches are included in two or more subcategories. Based on this analysis, it's clearly visible that most of our approaches are related to monitoring rather than on the ground recovery efforts. Further to this analysis of commonalities among approaches, the Secretariat also considered commonalities among monitoring needs and knowledge gaps/research needs. This may help highlight areas where monitoring or research efficiencies could be gained, or could highlight gaps in certain species' management plans/recovery strategies.

Feedback was requested on the analysis and direction was solicited on how best to move it forward. The CMA was generally pleased with the progress made on the analysis, although there were concerns about how best to use the tool. Monitoring activities are clearly essential given information deficits for many NWT species and the need to understand what's happening on the ground. It was thought that it would be helpful to show within the table which approaches have been done (or are being undertaken) versus approaches that haven't (perhaps with colour coding). This could help show which species aren't receiving enough attention, which objectives aren't being met fully, etc. The CMA also suggested that approaches that only note threats in a general manner be subdivided further to better show commonalities among threats. There was agreement that the Secretariat should undertake these actions and then the analysis will be revisited at the May 2020 meeting.

There may also be opportunities to optimize use of the tool itself, by shifting to software designed to track progress on actions (e.g., Miradi). These tools are used for open standards for conservation and by the Conservation Coaches Network. They are able to build in values, plans, documents, and measures of progress. They're also capable of showing intersections among different plans. This could be a way of enhancing visualization of progress. Suggestion for the Secretariat to attend the Conservation Coaches rally in Victoria later this year so they can meet with people who regularly use these tools and make an informed decision about the strengths and weaknesses of different software.

### 15. Annual/periodic reviews of progress – led by Jody Pelligsey (Chairperson)

*Updates on implementation activities will be presented by all relevant CMA members at each February face-to-face meeting.*

Detailed implementation summaries are to be submitted to the Secretariat via email, which will consolidate and circulate the implementation updates to the CMA. High level implementation activities were presented by Management Authorities during the meeting.

Hairy braya:

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- GNWT - One of the approaches in the recovery strategy is to deposit seeds in a seed bank. Jim Harris was trying to germinate some seeds to deposit a portion to a seed bank. Unfortunately, those did not set seed. We hope to collect this seed deposit during field work this summer.

### Amphibians:

- SRRB – Continuing acoustic monitoring work. A community workshop is being organized for 2020.
- GNWT – Organized an amphibian survey in the Liard valley in summer 2019, focused around the Muskeg River and western toad, but collecting information on all amphibians. There was one western toad breeding site that we re-visited and it was dry, but 3 new breeding sites were documented in that area. That report is complete and has been shared with partners. Part of the reason the work was done was in response to gravel pit development, so the results of the survey were shared with the Department of Infrastructure. Also collected skin swabs were used to develop a genetic primer to detect western toad in the NWT; this primer is now available to be used for future eDNA work.
- GRRB/WRRB – Continue education and communication activities.

### Boreal caribou:

- WMAC (NWT) – No update.
- GRRB – Continued work from 2018.
- SRRB – Worked with the GNWT to coordinate a range plan framework workshop last July. Planned a public listening session on the most effective way to regulate the harvest of caribou.
- WRRB – Now in the very initial stages of range planning for the Wek'èezhìi region. The first meeting was in November of last year and another meeting was held last week.
- ECCC – Participated in range planning meetings and will continue to attend those as they progress.
- GNWT – The range planning framework was finalized in summer 2019. The regional range planning process has begun for Wek'èezhìi and the southern NWT.
  - In the information that was shared for this meeting, the GNWT included its population monitoring for boreal caribou and the latest results from that monitoring. Active monitoring is continuing in 6 study areas in the southern part of the NWT. From the latest results, the population trend has been positive in five out of six areas, with a slight decline in one of the study areas. The Yukon Government is planning to put out collars on boreal caribou in the Yukon/Gwich'in Settlement Area portion of the range.
  - Also provided the results of some wolf monitoring work. In those survey blocks, wolf densities have been generally low, with the exception of the Fort Liard and Slave River areas, where there are also lots of bison. But compared to jurisdictions like BC, wolf densities in the NWT are low.
  - The *Wildlife Act* Phase II regulations came into force, including new restrictions on boreal caribou harvesting for resident and GHL hunters.
  - The GNWT has undertaken habitat monitoring for boreal caribou, is updating industry guidelines for boreal caribou, and is developing a NWT Species and Habitat Viewer to help make information available. Concerns were noted in the meeting regarding the impact of exploration on caribou near highways 3, 5, and 6; specifically, that the

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activity is pushing caribou towards the highways. They then continue to return to the area because road salt serves as an attractant. This then increases harvest pressure because people know where to find the caribou. The GNWT noted that they would look into this concern. If members have continuing concerns about harvest pressure, the GNWT is willing to consider additional restrictions, if that is felt to be necessary.

### Polar bears:

- WMAC (NWT) – ENR is going to be doing the second year (of 3 years total) of their North and South Beaufort population surveys. They'll be starting that next month. Regarding a community-based monitoring program, conversations haven't started yet, but we do want to get more information collection from harvested animals. ENR has also been collecting samples for BearWatch.
- GNWT - Under approach 1.1.3, the department has had discussions with communities about adding local information. This may be starting this year. BearWatch is a program that the department is collaborating on that allows us to collect/analyze fecal samples and draw conclusions about health/condition of the bear. People can collect fecal samples and bring them in for analysis. This project is funded through Genomics Canada, which has also been conducting some heavy metal-related work.
  - Under approach 1.3.2, NOAA instrument-based surveys are likely going to be happening this year. Planning is underway for this work in 2020 for the southern Beaufort.

### Dolphin and Union caribou:

- WMAC (NWT) – Meetings were held with the Kitikmeot and Inuvialuit last March. There have been no meetings since then. Had a meeting with NTI and some of the Nunavut members as well. The next meeting is scheduled for the 2020/21 fiscal year.
  - The board applied for funding from Polar Knowledge to do a collaborative survey in 2021. This is in response to concerns that Dolphin and Union caribou are changing their distributions and that current survey methods may be missing some caribou.
  - Cassandra Elliot, Traditional and Local Knowledge Coordinator for the Joint Secretariat, will be going to Ulukhaktok on March 17 for a few days to do a verification on the traditional knowledge information that was collected in 2011/13.

## 16. Wood bison – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Approval of consensus agreement respecting implementation. Must be signed by all Management Authorities and submitted to the Minister by April 29, 2020.*

A draft *Consensus Agreement Respecting Implementation of the Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison in the NWT* was provided in the meeting materials. Management Authorities for wood bison (WRRB, Tłı̨ch̨ Government, and GNWT) should be ready, or nearly ready, to sign the consensus agreement now. The consensus agreement needs to be signed off and submitted to the Minister of ENR by April 29, 2020. Signing circulation will start April 14, 2020 to ensure this deadline is met. The WRRB and GNWT are on track to sign the consensus agreement; they will follow-up with the Tłı̨ch̨ Government about this timeline.

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A draft press release on the implementation agreement was provided in the meeting materials. It is scheduled for release on April 29, 2020. CMA members should review it and submit any concerns with the press release to the Secretariat.

### **17. Barren-ground caribou – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)**

*Approval of recovery strategy. Approval of consensus agreement accepting the recovery strategy. Deadline to sign and submit the consensus agreement is April 11, 2020. Publication and press release scheduled for July 11, 2020. Will review press release at May 2020 meeting.*

The deadline to submit the consensus agreement accepting the recovery strategy is April 11, 2020. All Management Authorities will be involved. All Management Authorities present indicated that they were ready to sign the consensus agreement, with a few minor amendments to the text (citations, wordsmithing, table headings, etc.), which will be provided to the Secretariat for incorporation. The WRRB and GNWT will follow-up with the Tłchq Government. Annex B submissions are required from each Management Authority by March 6, 2020. Signing circulation for the consensus agreement will begin on March 16, 2020. If you will be away for spring break (last two weeks of March), please contact the Secretariat to make alternate signing arrangements. The recovery strategy will be published by July 11, 2020 and will be published alongside a press release. The draft press release will be reviewed at the May 2020 meeting.

Consultation meetings in Saskatchewan were unfortunately cancelled. Although the recovery strategy is now almost finalized, the GNWT indicated that its commitment to consultation is ongoing and would be pleased to return to the community at a future date.

### **18. Bats – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)**

*Approval of management plan. Approval of consensus agreement accepting the management plan. Deadline to sign and submit the consensus agreement is April 11, 2020. Publication and press release scheduled for July 11, 2020. Will review press release at May 2020 meeting.*

Timelines are as for barren-ground caribou (noted above). Annex B submissions will be required from all Management Authorities (SRRB, WRRB, Tłchq Government, and GNWT) by March 6, 2020. All Management Authorities present indicated that they were ready to sign the consensus agreement, with a few minor amendments (citations, table headings, etc.), which will be provided to the Secretariat for incorporation. The WRRB and GNWT will follow-up with the Tłchq Government.

### **19. Peary caribou – led by Bruce Laurich (Environment and Climate Change Canada)**

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

ECCC has been conducting consultation tours on identifying sea ice as critical habitat. Two tours have taken place in Nunavut (Resolute and Cambridge Bay areas) and next week, the department will be going to Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, and Ulukhaktok. Tours will be complete after next week. Once everyone's comfortable with the identification of sea ice as critical habitat, the discussion

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will shift to how to protect it and timelines. Activities identified that could potentially disrupt habitat include only a few activities like icebreaking and shipping. This will be discussed in more detail at the next stage, including period(s) of the year during which these activities should not take place. Some concerns with this process were noted, particularly that activities likely to destroy were not discussed, explicitly, together with the identification of critical habitat components. It could result in disagreements if people don't understand the implications of critical habitat identification.

Following completion of the federal recovery strategy, the CMA is planning on adopting the relevant sections to meet the requirements of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. However, there will still be steps that Management Authorities will need to take in preparation to adopt, including consultation.

20. Next meetings – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)  
*Scheduling for spring/early summer 2020 meeting.*

The next face-to-face meeting of the CMA is scheduled for May 13-14, 2020 in Yellowknife.