

**Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)
Meeting Minutes
May 2-4, 2017
Fort Smith, NWT at Roaring Rapids Hall**

In attendance:	Representative for:
Jody Pellissey, Chairperson	Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board
Earl Evans	Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (Day 2, afternoon)
Dawn Andrews	Environment and Climate Change Canada (Days 2 and 3)
Fred J. Mandeville	Environment and Natural Resources (Day 2)
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Natural Resources
Brett Elkin	Environment and Natural Resources
Amy Amos	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Kaytlin Cooper	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Shin Shiga	North Slave Métis Alliance (Days 1 and 2)
Arthur Beck	Northwest Territory Métis Nation
Don Aubrey	Parks Canada
Joe Tetlichì	Porcupine Caribou Management Board (Days 1 and 2)
Leon Andrew	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
Allice Legat	Species at Risk Committee (Day 2)
Suzanne Carrière	Species at Risk Committee (Day 2)
Sjoerd van der Wielen	Tłìchq Government (Days 1 and 2)
Larry Carpenter	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Rob Gau	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Jodie Maring	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Lisa Worthington	Management Plan/Recovery Strategy Preparer
Claire Singer	Species at Risk Secretariat

[In-camera session call to order: 9:00am]

- Management Authorities (WMAAC (NWT), GRRB, SRRB, WRRB, Tłìchq Government, and GNWT) conducted a short in-camera session. Government of Canada absent. Notes and action items from that session are not presented here.

[Meeting called to order: 10:30am]

1. Introductions – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
2. Agenda - led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Review of draft agenda

Decision #D2017050201: Decision to approve agenda.

3. Minutes from last meeting – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Review of draft minutes from January 2017.

Decision #D2017050202: Decision to approve January 2017 minutes with no changes.

4. Review of action items - led by Claire Singer, Species at Risk Secretariat
Review of outstanding action items from past meetings and action items from previous meetings.
5. CMA decisions made since last meeting - led by Claire Singer, Species at Risk Secretariat
Review of decisions made since last meeting for incorporation into the minutes.

Decision #D2017050203: Decision to appoint Lynda Yonge, Joanna Wilson, and Kaytlin Cooper to the Species at Risk Committee.

Decision #D2017050204: Consensus to add wood bison to the NWT List of Species at Risk as a threatened species.

Decision #D2017050205: Consensus to adopt the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) Polar Bear Joint Management Plan and Framework for Action.

6. CMA letters sent and received since last meeting - led by Claire Singer, Species at Risk Secretariat
Review of letters sent and received since January 2017.
7. Member updates – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Updates on actions taken since last CMA meeting and changes in representatives.

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

- Polar bears - ISR polar bear management partners are working collaboratively to develop a plan for implementation of the ISR Polar Bear Joint Management Plan and Framework for Action.
- Boreal caribou -
 - Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has established a contract to help move range plans forward. Working to develop a proposed approach to the range plans. Intention is still to have a draft proposed approach for engagement and consultation by the fall.

- The federal government has to publish a report on implementation of the federal Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy by October 2017. ENR has been asked to provide input into that report.
- Bats – Trying to get a project underway this summer in Sombaa K'e (Trout Lake) to investigate reports of bats that may be maternity colonies.
- Amphibians – Hopefully bringing in an expert this summer to deliver training on survey methods and amphibian identification to help build NWT capacity for monitoring. Also working with the Department of Transportation on some materials for their staff when they're out doing work in the range of the western toad.
- Barren-ground caribou –
 - Attending a Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) meeting later this month. Looking ahead for a survey on the Qamanirjuaq herd.
 - Currently out for engagement on a draft Bathurst caribou range plan that involves the NWT, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan. Hope to come out with a draft in the fall. Looking to have a range plan in place by 2018.
 - Recently established an advisory committee for the Bathurst Caribou Management Plan. Terms of Reference to go out to partners shortly.
 - ENR is working with co-management partners to implement recommendations and determinations contained in final reports from two separate public hearings on Bluenose-East herd management conducted by the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) and Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (SRRB). Management of the Bluenose-East herd is also guided by the 2014 Taking Care of Caribou management plan. The Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) also submitted an annual action plan for the Bluenose-East herd in March 2017.
 - ENR continues to work with communities and co-management partners to monitor herd size, trends and demographic rates, and harvest.
- Wood bison – Trying to finalize herd-specific management plans. Section 35 consultation is currently taking place on the Mackenzie herd plan. Nahanni and Slave River Lowlands plans still being worked on.
- Question – What are the plans for grizzly bear work in the mountains?
 - Answer – Approval for a pilot project on a hair snagging study. Work will be done with outfitters and communities around Mile 222. Logistics and funding still need to be finalized, but the pilot project is currently on track to proceed. May consider expanding the pilot project in the future if this project is successful and funding is available.

Parks Canada

- A UNESCO World Heritage Site has been proposed by the Mikisew Cree First Nation to address cumulative impacts on the Peace-Athabasca Delta. The mission to address the proposal has come to Wood Buffalo National Park. Proposal report now available on World Heritage Site website.

Thcho Government

- With the GNWT and WRRB, came to consensus to list wood bison as threatened in the NWT.
- Working on the barren-ground caribou range plan. This is a bit of a difficult situation as some parties don't feel that barren-ground caribou are sufficiently protected while others feel that protection is more than adequate.
- Wolf harvesting program coming to an end. A total of 16 wolves were harvested.
 - Question – Was there a target for harvest? Is there a feeling that the program was successful?
 - Answer – The original harvest target was 40 wolves but there was recognition that it was a pilot program as well. Harvest progress was slowed down because the Beverly and Ahiak herds came very close, which detracted from wolf harvesting. Did learn that training was more costly than had been anticipated. People didn't get out in the field as much as they had been hoping for. However, fairly successful – results not quite as good as they had hoped for, but the pilot program did come in under budget.
 - Question – What is the wolf abundance like now as a result?
 - Answer – This analysis hasn't yet been completed.
 - Question – Will there be a program report?
 - Answer – That was the intention, but given staff changes, the report might not be formal. It will be shared with the boards and as a result will be made public.

Wildlife Management Advisory Council (WMAC) (NWT)

- Met in March in Inuvik and reviewed the Species at Risk Committee's (SARC) assessment of grizzly bears as well as the polar bear and amphibian implementation tables.
- Sent a letter to ENR regarding Bluenose-West harvest. Discussions will be ongoing with ENR.
- Joint Secretariat has a new Executive Director – Mike Harlow.
- Next meeting is June 6-8, 2017 in Paulatuk.
- Participated in COSEWIC workshop in Whitehorse in April. Workshop was very helpful. Suggested that Appendix E5 (steps for how to engage with COSEWIC)

should be circulated to all the boards. The COSEWIC Chair also indicated a willingness to resume board/COSEWIC co-chair conference calls followings COSEWIC assessment meetings.

Action #A2017050201: Secretariat to circulate Appendix E5 (steps for how to engage with COSEWIC) to all CMA members.

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB)

- Kaytlin is still their term Species at Risk Biologist. Still waiting to hear back regarding permanent funding for this position.
- Their Wildlife Biologist (Kristin) is leaving in June. The GRRB is in the process of filling this position.
- Moose and Dall sheep surveys are coming up this summer. Funding for this is in part from Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk (AFSAR). Also looking at doing a review of the Dall sheep management plan.
- Continue to be involved in caribou files and associated ACCWM file.
- Continuing to collect harvest numbers.
- Monitoring activities will now include bats and insects.
 - Question – Will the bat surveys include Aklavik?
 - Answer – Yes. Will communicate with WMAC (NWT) on this.
- Insect traditional knowledge workshop and verification session included good discussions as well as mixed age groups.

Action #A2017050202: Secretariat to circulate Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge of Insects report to the CMA.

- Have scheduled a workshop in fall 2017 to look at research priorities and strategic planning.
- Also attended the COSEWIC workshop in Whitehorse.
- Applied for AFSAR funding to conduct a species at risk workshop this summer to improve Renewable Resource Council (RRC) understanding of federal and territorial species at risk processes. The hope is that improved education will help improve community engagement in these processes.
- Dolly Varden char is going to be listed federally soon. Currently conducting a review of the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan.

Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (SRRB)

- Working on a mountain caribou plan with Tulít'a, Norman Wells, and Ross River. A workshop about this is scheduled for the last week of July. Have applied for Stewardship Program funds to support this.

- Planning a board meeting on June 5, 2017 with Colville Lake to discuss issues related to barren-ground caribou.
- A cultural camp with one of the schools is planned for August.
- Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum has been renamed. It is now called Living Off The Land.

Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB)

- Participating in Bathurst caribou range planning work and provided comments on the planning document. Also part of the advisory committee for the Bathurst herd; hoping to get management planning in place sooner rather than later.
- Carefully monitored the harvesting of barren-ground caribou this winter. The Beverly and Ahiak herds came unexpectedly close this year, which made monitoring the harvest of Bathurst caribou quite a bit more difficult.
- Attended the COSEWIC workshop in Whitehorse. It was a positive experience.
- Still have Moise and Boyan attending SARC meetings.
- With the GNWT and Tłchq Government, signed the consensus agreement to list wood bison as threatened in the NWT.

NWT Métis Nation

- No substantive updates. People were very interested in wood bison being listed as threatened since the wood bison they hunt aren't in decline. However, people are nonetheless trying to hunt bulls only.

North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA)

- Attended Nunavut Planning Commission meeting. Interested in transboundary caribou harvest. There will be two more public hearings in Cambridge Bay (for the Kitikmeot region) and Rankin Inlet (for the Kivalliq region).
 - Question – Are these meetings focused only on the region or are they Nunavut-wide?
 - Answer – Nunavut-wide for the most part.
 - Question – Who will be attending the Kitikmeot region meeting in Cambridge Bay?
 - Answer – WRRB will not be, Tłchq Government and ENR will be, and the NSMA are looking for funding to permit their attendance.
 - Question – Has WMAC (NWT) been involved at all from the perspective of Dolphin and Union caribou?
 - Answer – No, not for the land use planning process. ENR will provide them with the background information to help determine whether they should be involved.

- Question – So it's a land use plan for all of Nunavut? Could it consider any Nunavut species?
 - Answer – Yes. It also addresses marine transportation, so will be of interest to polar bear managers.

Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB)

- Attended the COSEWIC workshop in Whitehorse as well. 14 years after the first such meeting and COSEWIC has finally recognized the PCMB as part of a land claim agreement.
 - Haven't been able to count Porcupine caribou since 2013 although they try to get a count every 2 years. 2015 survey efforts were unsuccessful because the herd scattered before they could get the count. Tried again in 2016 but that also didn't work. Trying again for a photo census in July this year.
 - Had their annual harvest meeting as recommended in their Harvest Management Plan. They are still considered to be in the green zone.
 - Not many communities harvested Porcupine caribou this year. Most of the herd was in Alaska this winter.
 - Still working on a Native User Agreement for the NWT and Yukon.
8. Stewardship Program – led by Amy Amos, Stewardship Sub-committee
Update on 2017/18 projects, new member nomination, and edits to the CMA Rules of Conduct.

Four projects were approved for funding in 2017/18 from a total of four applications. Approved funding reflects the earlier CMA decision to expand funding beyond \$5,000 per project. Now the whole pot of funding (\$30,000) is allocated based on project needs.

Grant resigned from the Stewardship Sub-committee – discussed filling this vacancy as the Terms of Reference for the Sub-committee stipulate that four people must sit on the Sub-committee.

Decision #D2017050206: Consensus for Shin Shiga to fill vacancy on Stewardship Sub-committee, effective immediately.

Discussed scope of the Stewardship Program. Confirmed that it includes federal and territorial species at risk but that it doesn't include species not currently considered at risk (e.g., moose). Confirmed that the Sub-committee can consider multiple applications from a single region.

9. Annual reports – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Review and approval of draft text for 2016/17 CMA annual report.

Decision #D2017050207: Consensus to approve draft text for 2016/17 CMA Annual Report with no changes.

10. Submissions from SARC – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Review of proposed 2018-2022 assessment schedule as well as Current State of Knowledge report.

SARC's proposed 2018-2022 assessment schedule was reviewed by the Management Authorities in the in-camera session that preceded this meeting. This in-camera session discussion was revisited with all members at the table. The proposal is as follows:

2018 – no species

2019 – bumble bees (gypsy cuckoo bumble bee, western bumble bee, yellow-banded bumble bee)

2020 – no species

2021 (reassessments) – hairy braya, polar bear

2022 (reassessments) – boreal caribou, Peary caribou

The proposal reflects the reality of resource constraints on the part of the Management Authorities, but also reflects a desire to focus the resources of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* on species whose needs are not being met through current wildlife management mechanisms. Under the above proposal, SARC would also be directed to annually submit an assessment schedule populated just with species that urgently need assessment. A separate list of lower priority species would also be submitted annually, for the CMA to add to the assessment schedule as resources allow.

It was noted that there is a fair amount of community concern surrounding the status of mountain caribou. The inclusion of mountain caribou should therefore be considered as a second proposal. In these proposals, note of the purpose of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* should also be included to help Management Authorities focus their discussions.

Action #A2017050203: Secretariat to draft two proposed 2018-2022 assessment schedules (one including mountain caribou and one not). Management Authorities to discuss these proposals with their boards before the June conference call (specific date TBD). If boards would like to put forward alternate proposals, they are to inform the other Management Authorities of the proposal as soon as possible.

11. Guidelines and template for management plans and recovery strategies – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Review and approval of revisions to template. Bring forward item from January 2017 meeting.

Decision #D2017050208: Consensus to approve revised template for management plans and recovery strategies without any changes.

Action #A2017050204: Report preparer to work on consequential revisions to guidelines for management plans and recovery strategies.

12. Contact information and distribution lists – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Verification and update to email distribution lists and contact information.
13. Joint SARC/CMA workshop on assessment and status report guidelines – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Discussion of proposal for joint workshop with SARC.

General support for holding a joint SARC/CMA workshop on assessment and status report guidelines in the fall (September-November). Secretariat will work to find an agreeable date for this workshop.

14. Amphibians – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Discuss results of initial review of implementation actions by boards/leadership. Actions to prepare for consensus agreement on implementation. Implementation agreement due on November 25, 2017.

The Management Plan for Amphibians in the NWT was released publicly in February 2017. Management Authorities now have until November 2017 to develop and submit a consensus agreement on implementing the management plan. Although the GNWT will be the only Management Authority signing the consensus agreement (because the consensus agreement only applies to western toad and northern leopard frog), the implementation agreement will include the commitments of management partners for other amphibians.

ENR notes that extensive internal approval processes are still required prior to approval of the implementation agreement. GNWT implementation commitments will need to be finalized by the end of July to process through approvals before the deadline. GNWT also suggested that the implementation agreement be laid out as short-term, long-term, and ongoing implementation commitments, rather than the strict 5-year implementation window currently included. This will allow them to commit to more actions. Caveat

wording will also likely be necessary; that is, that any actions over and above work that is already being undertaken will be subject to budgetary appropriations.

Action #A2017050205: Management Authorities for western toad and northern leopard frog (as well for boreal caribou, little brown myotis, northern myotis, grizzly bears, Dolphin and Union caribou, polar bears, and barren-ground caribou) to complete ‘actions to prepare for consensus agreement’ tables by the June 2017 CMA conference call.

15. Boreal caribou – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Discuss results of initial review of implementation actions by boards/leadership. Actions to prepare for consensus agreement on implementation. Consensus agreement on implementation due November 25, 2017.

As with amphibians, suggestion to reframe the implementation agreement actions as short-term, long-term, and ongoing, rather than the 5-year implementation window currently included. May also need to include additional statements about land management as well as other factors that may need to be weighed in addition to boreal caribou.

Finalization of Management Authority implementation commitments will be included in the June conference call (date TBD).

Actions to prepare for a consensus agreement on implementation to be completed by the Management Authorities for boreal caribou (see #A2017050205 above).

16. Wood bison – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Confirmation of the CMA’s process for preparing a recovery strategy.

Respecting the preparation of a recovery strategy for wood bison, the report preparer is proposing amending the NWT Wood Bison Management Strategy to include all the mandatory components of a recovery document. The requirements for a recovery document are: goals and objectives (already covered in Key Strategies), approaches (already covered in text boxes in Key Strategies), threats (already covered under Challenges), and positive influences (will need to be added).

Updates to the document include: addition of positive influences, update the dates, expansion of goals to include other management partners, addition of species at risk status information, removal of actions already taken, update to population numbers and distribution map, updates to Challenges section (add declining barren-ground caribou herds to this section since this increases hunting pressure on wood bison), updates to

section on agriculture given completion of the NWT Agriculture Strategy, and removal of financial summary.

This recovery document would then replace the existing NWT Wood Bison Management Strategy, which is due to expire in 2020 anyway. The format used for the recovery document will be at the discretion of the preparer. Because the information used in the document will largely be drawn from the SARC status report and the existing NWT Wood Bison Management Strategy, no citations will be included in the recovery document.

The preparer indicated that even at this early stage of preparation, it would be helpful to hear from CMA members about the changes they think need to be made to the current NWT Wood Bison Management Strategy to make it suitable for a recovery strategy. This feedback should focus on significant changes needed to the management plan, not editorial comments or things we're already aware need to change (e.g., population numbers, past dates).

Action #A2017050206: CMA members to review NWT Wood Bison Management Strategy and submit initial comments on required changes to the preparer by the CMA's June conference call (date TBD).

17. Assessment of bats (big brown bat, little brown myotis, northern myotis, long-eared myotis, long-legged myotis) – led by Joanna Wilson, SARC member
Presentation of assessment results by SARC.

Presentation slides included in members' meeting binders. Questions and answers from the presentation are as follows:

- Question – Why are the little brown myotis, northern myotis, long-eared myotis, and long-legged myotis referred to as 'myotis' rather than 'bats'?
 - Answer - This represents a change in the naming convention. All four species used to be called bats (e.g., little brown bat) but now the genus *Myotis* is used for the common name of these species. The big brown bat is different because it is not from the *Myotis* genus, but rather part of the *Eptesicus* genus.
- Question – Why is there a noticeable gap in the Alberta distribution of the big brown bat?
 - Answer - Good search effort in this area suggests that this is an actual gap in the distribution but we're not sure why it's there.
- Question – What's generation time?

- Answer – One way of thinking about it is the average age of reproducing females. We use it in determining the status of the species. If the species is in decline we look at that trend over the last three generations.
- Question – Does it get dark at all in the summer in Yellowknife? Just wondering about continued nocturnal behaviour at latitudes that don't really get dark.
 - Answer – In Yellowknife in the summer it gets dusky but not really dark. Nonetheless, bats do appear to maintain nocturnal behaviour. Studies in the southern NWT and Yukon indicate that bats will wait for the darkest time of night to come out to hunt, but perhaps further north they settle for coming out during the dusk.
- Question – With respect to white nose syndrome, are the bats in Europe okay?
 - Answer – The fungus that causes white nose syndrome does occur in Europe but the mortality there doesn't appear to be as pronounced as in North America.
- Question – Only two hibernacula are identified in the NWT and this is noted by SARC as a limiting factor. What would be the ideal number of hibernacula?
 - Answer – It's not that there's an ideal number of hibernacula (and there may be many more hibernacula in the NWT that we're simply not yet aware of), but it means that these two hibernacula likely need special attention.
- Question – How would you know if white nose syndrome made it to the NWT?
 - Answer – Monitoring at the hibernacula has been taking place regularly. Also, when people start to report strange bat behaviour (e.g., bats out flying in the winter), that's a sign of infection.
- Question – SARC's status report indicates that there's a strong likelihood of rescue from neighbouring populations, but how's that possible with white nose syndrome?
 - The possibility of rescue only applies if the population in the NWT has declined as the result of some localized factor (e.g., destruction of roosts). If white nose syndrome appears in the NWT then it's likely that neighbouring jurisdictions are also infected. In this case, rescue effect would likely not apply.
- Question – Before white nose syndrome arrived in North America, was there already a downward population trend in bats?
 - Answer – No, but in general, there's not good trend information available for bats.

Following the presentation and question/answer period, some additional discussion took place regarding the identification of Management Authorities and the approach that might be taken with a future management plan.

Management authority would be triggered where the range of a bat species occurs within a given region. Extralimital sightings on their own would likely not trigger the identification of a Management Authority. The Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) currently includes only extralimital sightings. However, they will be undertaking bat surveys this summer. If the results of those surveys indicate that the GSA likely includes part of the actual range of a bat species, then the GRRB could identify as a Management Authority at that time.

The approach for a future management plan will need to be discussed in further detail following listing. General support was voiced for taking the same approach as was taken for amphibians though; that is, a single NWT-wide management plan for all bats.

18. Bats – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Discussion of requests for clarification, need for immediate conservation actions, and actions to prepare for consensus agreement. Consensus agreement on listing little brown myotis and northern myotis due April 11, 2018.

SARC assessed little brown myotis and northern myotis as special concern and big brown bat, long-eared myotis, and long-legged myotis as data deficient. Because species assessed as data deficient are not considered 'at risk' under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, only little brown myotis and northern myotis will be considered for listing. Requests for clarification can be requested for any of the five assessed species however.

Requests for clarification are due by no later than June 11, 2017. Requests for clarification from participating and observing organizations should be processed through the GNWT.

Decision #D2017050301: Consensus that no immediate conservation actions are required for little brown myotis and northern myotis.

Actions to prepare for a consensus agreement on listing must be completed by the Management Authorities for little brown myotis and northern myotis (see [#A2017050205](#) above). Draft consultation and engagement materials for listing will be circulated to the Management Authorities by the Secretariat. Comments on the draft fact sheets must be submitted to the Secretariat by no later than May 15, 2017. The Secretariat will ensure that final consultation materials are provided to Management Authorities by May 19, 2017.

19. Assessment of grizzly bears – led by Suzanne Carrière and Aalice Legat, SARC members

Presentation of assessment results by SARC.

Presentation slides included in members' meeting binders. Comments, questions and answers from the presentation are as follows:

- Comment from SARC – Hybrid polar-grizzly bears are not included in the assessment, although they could be considered either a threat to grizzly bears or an adaptation.
- Question – The reports notes local increases in some areas. Is the implication that the barren-ground population of grizzly bears is not experiencing any increase? Except that the report notes that Baker Lake and Kugluktuk populations are also showing an increase. So what's left?
 - Answer – The science on the barren-ground population is less clear. Studies that have been conducted aren't really structured to allow for trend analysis. People seeing more bears doesn't necessarily mean that the population is increasing, it might just mean that bears are moving around. It may also indicate that bears aren't getting what they need from their regular habitat so are moving closer to communities. Ultimately, SARC didn't feel like there was enough information to determine either an increasing or decreasing trend. The assessment is based on the threats, which SARC felt to be quite severe, rather than on population trends.
- Question – If you don't have enough scientific information on population trends but you do have traditional and community knowledge indicating that there are more grizzly bears and increasing numbers of interactions, why wouldn't you go with the information that is available rather than saying you don't know?
 - Answer – Yes, people are saying there are more grizzly bears, but the assessment isn't based on that. It's based on threats and limiting factors.
- Question – The presentation of grizzly bear threats was very much in contrast with the presentation of threats in the bat status report. With bats, there's a clear and serious threat associated with white nose syndrome, whereas the immediacy and seriousness of the threats in the grizzly bear report seems somewhat less clear. With respect to likely future threats to grizzly bears, how far in the future did SARC look? It certainly doesn't seem as though there will be significant increases in development or interactions in the next 10 years or so.
 - Answer – The threats SARC considered are current threats that will likely increase in the future. Because of limiting factors and threats acting together incrementally over time, the species was assessed as special concern. This is consistent with the category definitions used by the SARC.

- Question – SARC considered increasing development in the central barrens as a threat to NWT grizzly bears. But the central barrens are not really in the NWT so why were these threats considered?
 - Answer – Threats outside the NWT that impact NWT grizzly bears were also considered.
- Question – Human-caused mortality is considered to be sustainable at current levels. However the report notes that even a small increase could become a threat. Are we expecting human-caused mortality to increase?
 - Answer – If nothing changes, current human-caused mortality is sustainable. But things are changing. We're thinking that interactions and thus human-caused mortality are going to increase. The limiting biological characteristics of grizzly bears (e.g., low reproductive rate) make them very vulnerable to threats.
- Question – It seems that grizzly bear populations in the NWT are stable or increasing and there doesn't seem to be a firm connection to any clear, present threats. In this context, grizzly bears don't really seem to be a 'species at risk'.
 - Answer – The special concern definition includes 'may become threatened or endangered'. SARC felt that grizzly bears could become threatened or endangered in the future given the threats and limiting factors.
- Question – Aside from some development pressure, the population trend is stable and human-caused mortality is sustainable. So you're essentially saying that the grizzly bear is just naturally a species of special concern all the time because of its biological characteristics?
 - Answer – Threats are increasing though. By the time you see a decline in the grizzly bear population, you'll already be in the threatened or endangered category. After that, because of their biological characteristics, recovery becomes very difficult. So yes, this kind of species could be special concern by nature.
- Comment – Development pressure in the past was quite a bit higher in some regions than it is now. And yet the grizzly bear population remained stable to increasing. Development doesn't appear to have had a significant impact on them in the past.
- Question – With respect to the definition of special concern ('may become threatened or endangered if not managed effectively') how do you gauge management effectiveness across regions with different management processes?
 - Answer – SARC looks at the status of a species throughout the NWT. Like with a national assessment by COSEWIC, a species considered to be nationally endangered may be doing just fine in the NWT. It doesn't mean that it's not in trouble in other parts of its range.
- Question – What's the projected population trajectory?

- Answer – SARC feels that grizzly bears may become threatened or endangered (decline) if they're not managed effectively.
- Question – Why were grizzly bears even assessed? There's no decline, decreases in development pressure, etc. It doesn't seem like the species belongs here.
 - Answer – Species are brought forward for prioritization from the General Status Ranks (e.g., vulnerable or may be at risk species) and from NWT species assessed by COSEWIC. SARC prioritizes those species and then, depending on their prioritization score, includes them in an assessment schedule that is submitted to the CMA for approval.
- Question – What are the negative factors that SARC considered? There don't seem to be any substantial current threats.
 - Answer – Threats are not just negative factors happening now. SARC also considered realistic predictions of future threats.
- Question – SARC's status reports include the identification of threats, but they don't seem to include a clear assessment of the threats, including the probability of a threat occurring and its consequences. Without a threats assessment, how does SARC consider the probability and consequences of threats?
 - Answer – SARC does not currently use a threat assessment calculator. These tools, while useful, can sometimes be intimidating and difficult to use. Currently, SARC assesses probability and consequences based simply on their interpretation of the status report.

Decision #D2017050302: Consensus to ask SARC to include threat assessments in all future status reports.

Following the question and answer period, the CMA discussed options for moving forward. Unlike the federal species at risk system, the CMA cannot send an assessment back to SARC for re-consideration. Grizzly bears have been assessed as special concern and the CMA must proceed with a listing decision. However, the CMA is not required to list at the level suggested by SARC (special concern). They can choose to not list the species at all, or they could choose to list at a different level. Clear rationale is required for any listing decision though.

20. Grizzly bears – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Discussion of requests for clarification, need for immediate conservation actions, and actions to prepare for consensus agreement. Consensus agreement on listing grizzly bears due April 11, 2018.

Requests for clarification are due by no later than June 11, 2017. Requests for clarification from participating and observing organizations should be processed through the GNWT.

Decision #D2017050303: Consensus that no immediate conservation actions are required for grizzly bears.

Actions to prepare for a consensus agreement on listing must be completed by the Management Authorities for grizzly bears (see [#A2017050205](#) above). Draft consultation and engagement materials for listing will be circulated to the Management Authorities by the Secretariat. Comments on the draft consultation materials must be submitted to the Secretariat by no later than May 15, 2017. The Secretariat will ensure that final consultation materials are provided to Management Authorities by May 19, 2017.

21. Assessment of barren-ground caribou – led by Aalice Legat, SARC member

Presentation of assessment results for Porcupine and barren-ground caribou by SARC.

Presentation slides included in members' meeting binders. Comments, questions and answers from the presentation are as follows:

- Comment from SARC – Although there is a single status report for all barren-ground caribou herds in the NWT, Porcupine caribou were assessed separately on the basis of geographic distinctness. The other barren-ground caribou herds (Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula, Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East, Bathurst, Beverly, Ahlak, and Qamanirjuaq) were assessed together.
- Comment – There's an error in the Qamanirjuaq population. The decline isn't 4%, it's 23% and dropping.
 - Answer – The difference is because the decline in the status report was calculated over a 27 year period (1989-2016).
- Question – What's the likelihood of development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?
 - Answer – Development likely won't take place there for many years given the timelines in place for the legal proceedings.
- Question – The first main factor in the assessment report is interpretive (10% likelihood of extinction over 75 years). How did you determine that?
 - Answer – These are derived from SARC's Assessment Process and Objective Biological Criteria. The probability and timeframe parameters are from a population model analysis. These parameters are really used as guidelines, not hard and fast rules.
- Question – Overharvesting seems to be missing from the threats. Why isn't it considered a main threat?

- Answer – Overharvest isn't a real threat now in the NWT given the management currently in place, although certainly management is only as good as its implementation.
- Question – How did you arrive at population trends for the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula, Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-East, and Bluenose-West herds since the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula herd was only recently identified and the other three used to be grouped together?
 - Answer – The population trend was derived from as far back as we have available data. So for the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula herd, the trend is since 2006.
- Question – Are the population trends all based on a Monte Carlo analysis?
 - Answer – No. The Monte Carlo analysis was only available for six of the herds. The estimated trends used in the status report are based on the current population estimate and the population estimate from three generations ago, so the trend over a 27 year period (1989-2016). When survey data were not available for these particular years, the estimates were extrapolated to these years. This is explained on pages xix and 128 of the status report.

22. Porcupine caribou – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Discussion of requests for clarification and next steps.

Porcupine caribou were assessed by SARC as not at risk. As such, they will not be considered for listing. Requests for clarification can still be requested though. Requests for clarification are due by no later than June 11, 2017. Requests for clarification from participating and observing organizations should be processed through the GNWT.

23. Barren-ground caribou – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Discussion of requests for clarification, need for immediate conservation actions, and actions to prepare for consensus agreement. Consensus agreement on listing barren-ground caribou due April 11, 2018.

Requests for clarification are due by no later than June 11, 2017. Requests for clarification from participating and observing organizations should be processed through the GNWT.

Decision #D2017050304: Consensus that no immediate conservation actions are required for barren-ground caribou.

Actions to prepare for a consensus agreement on listing must be completed by the Management Authorities for barren-ground caribou (see #A2017050205 above). Draft consultation and engagement materials for listing will be circulated to the Management Authorities by the Secretariat. Comments on the draft consultation materials must be submitted to the Secretariat by no later than May 15, 2017. The Secretariat will ensure that final consultation materials are provided to Management Authorities by May 19, 2017.

Coordination of consultation and engagement on federal and territorial listing processes will be pursued. Although Environment and Climate Change Canada wouldn't normally start their consultations on the proposed federal listing until January 2018, they've received permission to begin earlier so they can more easily coordinate their consultation with the CMA. Given the profile of the species, this will likely require community tours throughout the NWT. As much as possible, a single set of joint consultation material should be pursued. The GNWT has to start consultation advertising shortly. To accommodate this timeline, the fact sheet will be amended to include some mention of the federal assessment, and then the remaining consultation materials will be developed jointly with Canada. The consultation material will also need to recognize that a federal listing comes with automatic prohibitions and protections on federal land while the territorial listing has no such automatic prohibitions or protections.

Expected new survey results can be considered during both listing and subsequent recovery planning.

24. Next meetings – led by Jody Pellissey, Chairperson

Discussion of meetings scheduled in 2017/18.

- Conference call at the end of June 2017 – date TBD by Secretariat (assessment schedule finalization, implementation agreements for amphibians and boreal caribou, consultation plans for the listing of grizzly bears).
- Joint SARC/CMA workshop on assessment – date TBD (September-November likely)
- October 19, 2017 – conference call
- December 4, 2017 – conference call
- February 20-22, 2018 – Inuvik

[The below agenda items applied only to species in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Attendees included only: Jodie Maring, Larry Carpenter, Lisa Worthington, Dawn Andrews, Don Aubrey, Rob Gau, Joanna Wilson, Brett Elkin, and Claire Singer. Rob Gau was nominated as Ad-hoc Chairperson.]

25. Dolphin and Union caribou – led by Rob Gau, Ad-hoc Chairperson

Progress report and actions to prepare for consensus agreement accepting management plan. Consensus agreement must be submitted to the Minister by December 31, 2017.

The draft management plan is currently posted on federal and territorial species at risk websites for public comment until May 29, 2017. Once comments are received, the preparer will work with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and the Government of Nunavut to integrate them into the management plan. This work is scheduled for June and July. The management plan will be provided to management partners after this integration is complete, in time for the September meeting of WMAC (NWT) and WMAC (North Slope). GNWT approval will also be solicited at this time.

The consensus agreement accepting the management plan is due December 31, 2017. Hoping that the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) will provide final approval by then. If the NWMB doesn't approve, then the Government of Nunavut will also not be able to approve. We'll then have to either remove their logo from the management plan, or extend the timeline to provide them with the additional time they require. A clearer idea of the path forward should emerge after the September meeting when it's presented to them for approval.

Actions to prepare for a consensus agreement accepting the management plan must be completed by the Management Authorities for Dolphin and Union caribou (see [#A2017050205](#) above).

26. Peary caribou – led by Rob Gau, Ad-hoc Chairperson

Progress report. Recovery strategy and consensus agreement accepting the recovery strategy due to be submitted to the Minister by November 27, 2017.

The first jurisdictional review ended in August 2016 and resulted in substantial changes to the recovery strategy. Given the substantive nature of these changes, ECCC has chosen to send the recovery strategy back to communities for comment before the second jurisdictional review. This community review is finishing up now. The second jurisdictional review will begin sometime this month and partners will be asked for formal support to post the recovery strategy. Tentatively, the recovery strategy is scheduled to be posted in November 2017.

From a federal perspective, the final recovery strategy would also have to be presented to the NWMB before it could be finalized. They are anticipating presenting it to the NWMB in March 2018. The NWMB would then undertake consultations in fall 2018.

Finalization in December 2018 at the earliest. A further extension will therefore be required. Assuming finalization in December 2018, WMAC (NWT) would be able to approve it at their March 2019 meeting. The GNWT would likely have to conduct consultation following finalization as well. In this context, a two year extension will be required (December 2019), although even this is based on fairly ideal review periods.

Action #A2017050401: Secretariat to draft notice of extension for completion of a management plan for Peary caribou (to December 2019).

27. Polar bears – led by Rob Gau, Ad-hoc Chairperson

Preliminary review of table of actions for implementation and actions to prepare for consensus agreement on implementation. Consensus agreement on implementation due to be submitted to the Minister by March 27, 2018.

The consensus agreement accepting the management plan was submitted to the Minister of ENR in March 2017. The Minister will make the management plan and consensus agreement public on June 27, 2017.

The working group for polar bears held a conference call in February 2017 to complete an initial draft of an implementation plan. This was sent to other management partners in March for their review. An additional teleconference will be organized to complete the implementation plan. The GNWT will need to start its internal approval processes for the implementation agreement in fall 2017.

Actions to prepare for a consensus agreement on implementation must be completed by the Management Authorities for polar bears (see #A2017050205 above).

[Meeting adjourned: 11:50am]