



# Around the Range

For information on Chronic Wasting Disease, visit:

- **Manitoba:** [www.gov.mb.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife/cwd.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife/cwd.html)
- **Saskatchewan:** <https://bit.ly/3cdiTi5>
- **NWT:** <https://bit.ly/3wjeGAg>

## Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

Chronic Wasting Disease is a fatal, infectious wildlife disease that affects the central nervous system. In North America, CWD has infected deer, elk, and moose—not caribou. However, there is concern that if it continues to move north and east caribou may become infected. The disease is spread when an infected animal sheds cells in their scat or saliva, and another animal ingests them.

The risk of CWD infection of barren-ground caribou was a topic of much discussion during the May 2022 BQCMB meeting. Government board members provided updates from their jurisdictions.

- Manitoba had its first case of CWD in a mule deer in fall 2021. There has been no testing on caribou in the province to date.
- Saskatchewan saw its first case of CWD 10-15 years ago. It is a challenging disease to study and much remains unknown about it. Saskatchewan has a monitoring program and is in the early stages of working on a vaccine with the government of Alberta.
- The Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) has a wildlife health expert on staff in Yellowknife who tracks CWD. They have a sampling program and keep a close eye on what's happening in the provinces and whether there is any sign of cases further north.

At the November 2021 BQCMB meeting, board members were encouraged to help prevent spread of CWD by educating themselves about CWD regulations, reporting observations of sick/injured/dead wildlife to government disease specialists, and submitting samples (heads) for testing from harvested white-tailed deer, caribou, moose, and elk.

Communities across the caribou range were encouraged to do the same, in the March 2022 issue of this newsletter (Vol. 25 No. 1).

## Saskatchewan Highway 914 Extension

The Highway 914 Extension is a proposed 50 km long all weather roadway between Cameco's McArthur river and Cigar Lake mine sites in northern Saskatchewan.

The BQCMB submitted comments during Saskatchewan Environment's public review period in January 2022, stating that the proposed project would affect the winter range of barren-ground caribou, and that the Board does not believe that the information provided in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is complete and accurate, and therefore it should be revised. These comments can be viewed at: <https://arctic-caribou.com/development-issues/>.

## Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan

The BQCMB has participated in the Nunavut Land Use Plan (NLUP) process for 12 years, and the 2021 draft plan is under review now.


The BQCMB's position is that caribou are shared by many Indigenous peoples, and some of the most important places for caribou are in Nunavut. The board is not trying to stop mining in Nunavut but has strong concerns about harm that mineral exploration and mining could have on caribou over time. We are looking for clear rules and careful management of land use across the caribou ranges, especially for calving grounds and post-calving areas.

The 2021 NLUP proposes to protect large areas of the most important caribou habitats by designating them as "Limited Use" areas. Many types of land uses would be prohibited from these areas year-round, and there would be additional restrictions during calving and post-calving seasons. The BQCMB supports these proposals for protection of important habitats.

However, the BQCMB does not support Nunavut Planning Commission proposals to give development higher value than caribou in some parts of calving and post-calving areas by overriding "Limited Use" protections for caribou where there are existing mineral rights, or in a corridor prioritizing roads or a hydro-fibre link.

BQCMB Chair **Earl Evans** and Executive Director **Tina Giroux-Robillard** will make presentations on behalf of the BQCMB at the September public hearings in Rankin Inlet, NU and Thompson, MB.

The BQCMB's comments to date on the NLUP can be viewed at: <https://arctic-caribou.com/land-use-planning/>.



**The BQCMB's position is that caribou are shared by many Indigenous peoples, and some of the most important places for caribou are in Nunavut.**



# Harnessing the Power of BQCMB Photos

Submitted by Marion Soubliere



A feeling of nostalgia struck me recently while looking through a box of archival photos detailing the history of the BQCMB.

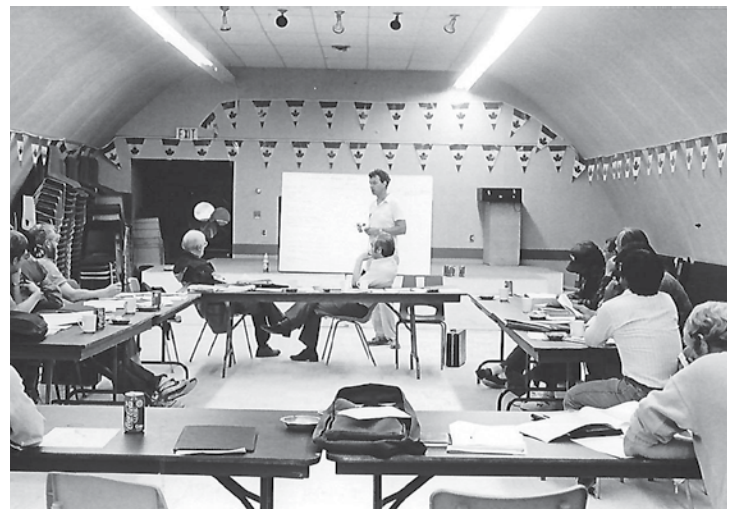
I had the honour of being the BQCMB's communications consultant between 1993 and 2011, with much of that time spent as editor of Caribou News and, later, Caribou News in Brief. Working with the BQCMB changed my life, for the better. I witnessed

a lot of history in the making, although it never felt like that in the moment. For BQCMB members and staff, it was simply doing what was necessary to ensure the future of the herds.

The box of old photos—which are now in their rightful place with the Board—consisted of photos from me and other newsletter contributors. There were also black and white images that predated my time. Some could be traced back to the board's infancy in the early 1980s. Glimpsing former chairman Ross Thompson, the late Jim Schaefer of Fort Smith (another former chairman) and other board members hammering out the BQCMB's first Caribou Management Plan in a community hall reminded me of the key role that photos play (see photo at right.)

Younger generations will be able to see from photos how hard Northerners fought to protect the caribou. They can discover what their communities looked like decades ago. They will spot amazing images of relatives as their younger selves, and cherish photos of those who have since passed away.

We live in a social media world that is dominated by visuals. Digitizing these photos and sharing them will help more people learn about the BQCMB. I've made a small donation to assist that project, because it's an important one. The BQCMB is a family bound by 40 years of history, diligence and an unyielding commitment to safeguarding the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds. Everyone should be able to explore these family photos. •



Survey - Continued from page 1

The crew leads are then responsible for collating the data and working with a statistician to map relative densities of caribou. This data is then used to map out the areas and transects to be used for the “abundance phase”, when the counting occurs at much higher survey effort and coverage.

The second plane takes numerous aerial photographs which are helpful for obtaining accurate counts in areas with high densities of animals. The data from both the visual survey and photographs will be used to obtain a fairly accurate estimate of the size of the herd—that is, “as long as the photos turn out and the technology doesn't let us down,” said Campbell.



L to R: John Ringrose (GN-DOE), Mitch Campbell (GN-DOE), David Lee (Nunavut Tunngavik), John Boulanger (Integrated Ecological Research), and Vicki Trim (Government of Manitoba)

## Results take time

The GN is trying to fast-track the results. With the caribou being tightly grouped, 500-700 fewer photos needed to be taken, meaning less analysis is required than in previous surveys. Campbell is hopeful results of the photo survey will be available by the end of October. Then, it takes at least a month to analyze the data. “If everything goes well, we might have results sometime in November,” he said. “But if the numbers are higher or lower than expected (based on the reconnaissance assessment), we will want to triple-check everything to be certain, and won't have results until the New Year.”

What Campbell *can* say right now is the herd generally looks very good. “There were lots of short-yearlings (last year's calves), which meant they had a good winter,” he noted. “The caribou seemed to be in good shape this year.”

A population survey of the Beverly herd is scheduled to occur in 2023. •

# People and Caribou



## Honourary Life Member

On May 3, 2022, BQCMB members unanimously agreed to name former Executive Director **Ross Thompson** an Honourary Board Member. Ross is a former BQCMB member (representing the Government of Manitoba), Vice-Chair and Chair who went on to become the Secretary-Treasurer in 2004, and Executive Director in 2011.

Ross (pictured at left) retired in spring of this year, and was celebrated at a dinner in his honour on May 4.

## BQCMB Meets in Winnipeg

The BQCMB meeting in Winnipeg from May 3-5, 2022 was the Board's first in-person meeting since November 2019. BQCMB members from Inuit, Dene, and Métis communities, as well as government members from across the range of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground herds travelled from northern Manitoba, northern Saskatchewan, the Kivalliq region of Nunavut and south-eastern Northwest Territories to discuss the many issues facing both the herds and the communities that depend on them.

Several Saskatchewan and Manitoba First Nations chiefs and community members and representatives of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nunavut partner organizations attended as observers also.

*The top issues affecting the two herds, identified by BQCMB members, included the abundance of predators (especially wolves), development of roads, and loss of caribou habitat.*

Board members continued to raise concerns about key factors affecting the two caribou herds, which are declining in numbers. The top issues identified included the abundance of predators (especially wolves), development of roads, and loss of caribou habitat.

**Jan Adamczewski**, BQCMB member representing the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT), explained: "If you look at all the caribou populations across North America, the tundra migratory herds are the only ones that reach hundreds of thousands in size. It's that migratory lifestyle that allows them to reach those numbers.

When we build roads and other infrastructure that start to take away that freedom of movement, the herds' ability to reach those great numbers may be affected."

*Below: The BQCMB gathered for a group photo during its meeting May 3-5, 2022, in Winnipeg. Pictured L to R: Matthew Tokaruk, Government of SK; Mitch Campbell, Government of NU; Leslie Wakelyn, BQCMB Biologist; Dennis Larocque, Camsell Portage, SK; Harry Aggark, Kivalliq Wildlife Board; Napoleon Denechezhe, Northlands Denesuline First Nation; Jimmy Laban, Black Lake Denesuline First Nation; Vicki Trim, Government of Manitoba; Archie Gahdele, Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation; Joannie Kennah, Government of Manitoba; Stanley Adjuk, Kivalliq Wildlife Board; Jan Adamczewski, Government of NWT; Earl Evans, Northwest Territories Métis Nation; Lynne Bereza, BQCMB Communications Specialist; Tina Giroux-Robillard, BQCMB Executive Director; and Ernie Bussidor, Sayisi Dene First Nation.*

*Front row: Elder Joe Marten, Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation*

*Missing from Photo: Simon Enuapik, Kivalliq Wildlife Board*





# Meet the BQCMB Secretariat

The BQCMB's Board of Directors is supported by three part-time contractors who are dedicated to the Board and the conservation of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds for the people who rely on them.

## **Tina Giroux-Robillard - BQCMB Executive Director**

The BQCMB's newest Executive Director has only been in the role for five months, but the first woman and first Indigenous person to fill the position was already a familiar face, having attended BQCMB meetings for many years as technical advisor to the Athabasca Denesuliné board members. Tina Giroux-Robillard also spent the 18 months prior to becoming Executive Director leading the development of a modernized Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Barren-Ground Caribou Management Agreement.

For over 15 years, Tina has been working with First Nation communities as a wildlife biologist, regulatory officer, policy analyst, and advocate. This has been primarily with her work for the Athabasca Denesuliné on barren-ground caribou stewardship, using Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a primary source of data in various studies and monitoring programs; assisting communities in the protection of Treaty and aboriginal rights; and as project manager with Ya'thi Néné Lands & Resources.

Tina and her husband Ron live near Paddockwood, SK with their dogs. In their spare time they love being on the land and spending time with their children and four year old granddaughter. •



## **Leslie Wakelyn - BQCMB Wildlife Biologist**

In 1996, Leslie Wakelyn was hired by the BQCMB on a 6-month contract to help produce the board's first official set of maps for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds—and she has been with the board ever since. Originally from Alberta, she discovered the North and moved to Yellowknife, NWT in 1986 to work as a wildlife technician and biologist for the Northwest Territories (NWT) Wildlife Division before joining the BQCMB.

As Wildlife Biologist for the BQCMB she provides technical and administrative support for a diversity of BQCMB projects. This has included acquiring project funding, coordinating new projects, preparing submissions to environmental assessment and land use planning processes, preparing technical briefings and presentations for the Chair and ED, and assisting with communications and education materials. She will always treasure the opportunities the BQCMB has provided to work with and learn from board members and staff, as well as other caribou people and biologists, which have enriched her life immeasurably.

Whenever she can get away from her computer, Leslie and her husband Brad spend time on the land and waters of the NWT boreal forest and taiga, and look forward to spending more time exploring both new and familiar places farther from home soon. •



Photo by Brad Heath

## **Lynne Bereza - BQCMB Communications Specialist**

Lynne Bereza has been the BQCMB's Communications Specialist for 10 years. Prior to that she worked for the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), before starting her own business, Breeze Communications, providing communications consulting services to various non-profit organizations, including the BQCMB.

Lynne's role includes producing the *Caribou News in Brief* newsletter and the BQCMB's annual report, maintaining and updating the BQCMB website and Facebook page, recording minutes of BQCMB meetings, and working on special projects and initiatives to ensure the BQCMB's image is well-represented across the North. She lives in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba with her husband Jeff. They have two adult daughters and two grandchildren who live nearby.

In her spare time Lynne is a yoga teacher, gardener, and avid football fan with season tickets to the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Coming from southern Manitoba, "I knew little about the North before joining the BQCMB," she says. "Learning about barren-ground caribou, and the people who depend on them, has enriched my life in ways I couldn't have imagined." •



# Youth and Caribou

## Athabasca Denesųliné Youth and Elder Camp

In April 2022, the Athabasca Denesųliné Ne Ne Land Corporation organized a youth culture camp at Firedrake Lake Northwest Territories for the purpose of developing culture, language, life skills and proficiency in the barren-ground caribou hunt.

Youths in grades 9 to 12 were selected from each community of Black Lake and Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan to take part in the 8th annual winter culture camp based on their academic performance and interest in the culture camp.

Along with Elders, hunters, organizational staff, and peers, ten youth were accompanied by chaperones from their community to the culture camp site. There, upon arrival by plane, and despite a storm on the second day, the youth had the opportunity to safely observe and assist in setting up camp, accompany hunters on their hunting expeditions, and listen to oral stories.

The youth took part in assigned daily activities such as fishing/fish net set-up, preparing caribou meat, setting up survival camp, making camp fires, and traditional land mark identification sites. These activities were delivered by Elders, hunters, rangers, and two community land technicians from the Ya'thi Néné Land and Resource Office and one of the Rangers.

The goal of the camp was to inspire, motivate, and engage the youth to stay connected to their culture, language, and traditional way of life through application, skill development, and knowledge they acquired from the Elders, hunters, educators, and their peers.

The youth learned about survival, preserving, and utilizing only what is needed to sustain life on/within their ancestor's territorial lands according to the guidelines stated in the "10 Traditional Protocols for Hunting Caribou" that were outlined by the Elders of the territory.

The youth returned home with a greater understanding of the importance of respect, honour, and the significance of hunting, trapping, fishing, tool handling/making, and its value to the Denesųliné way of life.♦

*The BQCMB was pleased to provide sponsorship to the camp through its "On The Land Camp" fund. Apply at [arctic-caribou.com/education/](https://arctic-caribou.com/education/).*

## BQCMB Youth and Elder Engagement Project

Youth and Elder engagement and participation is a priority at bi-annual BQCMB meetings. The transfer of knowledge between Elders and youth is key in ensuring longevity of the traditional Indigenous lifestyle that includes caribou.

Elders **Johnny Clipping** from Sayisi Dene First Nation in Tadoule Lake and **Donald Tsesseaze** from Northlands Denesuline First Nation in Lac Brochet attended the spring BQCMB meeting in Winnipeg. The two elders were invited, along with their youth counterparts—**Dezmond Sayazie** from Tadoule Lake and **Dallas Dettanikkeaze** from Lac Brochet—to participate in the meeting, discuss their observations with each other, and continue the discussion upon their return home. The youth and elders were nominated by their respective band leadership to participate, and were excellent representatives of their communities.

Sayazie, a recent high school graduate, felt the meeting was beneficial. "Coming here, I've now realized the importance of our relationship with the caribou...our drums, our songs, our way of life. There's a lot of addiction in our communities, and I think bringing this way of life back to our youth can help with that, and help with our identity. After this meeting, I want to learn more about the caribou and about myself as a Dene

Visit [arctic-caribou.com/education/](https://arctic-caribou.com/education/) to:

- Apply for On The Land Camp funding
- Apply for the BQCMB scholarship
- Download posters, fact sheets, and videos
- Learn interesting facts about the caribou!



**“Coming here,  
I’ve realized the  
importance of our  
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the caribou...our  
drums, our songs,  
our way of life.”**

Dezmond Sayazie  
Sayisi Dene First Nation



Dezmond Sayazie, Sayisi Dene First Nation; Ian Donard, Black Lake First Nation; and Dallas Dettanikkeaze, Northlands Denesuline First Nation performed traditional Dene drumming during the BQCMB meeting.

person. I want to bring that up to my peers and the younger ones and show them that this is who we are—we follow the caribou, and we’ve got to respect the caribou and protect them.”

Dettanikkeaze agreed. “There’s a lot of tragedy, many addictions in the communities, and there’s not much for the youth to do. They don’t know how to hunt, they don’t know how to butcher caribou, and they don’t want to do it anymore – that’s what happened to me. Last time I was on a caribou hunt I was really young. Now, I want to learn. I work with a lot of youth and I’d like to see more of them involved too.”

BQCMB member **Ernie Bussidor** recruited Sayazie for this meeting, and **Napoleon Denechezhe** recommended Dettanikkeaze for the trip. “It’s very important to have youth members,” said Denechezhe. “When you hear the elders and chiefs talk, it inspires everybody. They have knowledge from the past and it’s always interesting to hear the elders talk about how they’ve been brought up and how they used to hunt.

We should be educating these young people; young kids need to learn how to hunt, how to preserve caribou...it’s the only way to make them see where they’re coming from.”

Funding for travel and meeting participation by Sayazie, Dettanikkeaze, Tsessesaze and Clipping was provided to the BQCMB by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) through the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) and their Species at Risk Act (SARA) Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project.

### **Caribou Research and Management Award**

This year’s recipient of the BQCMB’s Gunther Abrahamson Caribou Research and Management Award demonstrates innovation and technology in caribou management. **Galen Richardson**, MSc, Geography at the University of Ottawa receives \$5,000 for his

project: *Classification of lichen percent coverage in Sentinel-2 imagery using multi-scaled AI methodologies*. Mapping lichen availability, which is a primary food source of caribou, is critical for understanding the changing habitat for caribou in northern Canada, and for sustainable land management.

The primary goal of Richardson’s project is to create lichen cover maps of the Labrador-Quebec region, and ultimately to work with the Canadian Centre for Remote Sensing to apply his methods to create lichen maps for all barren-ground caribou ranges to determine whether there has been a change in lichen availability over the past twenty years. This will allow us to better understand the changing food availability for Canadian caribou. Making high quality map products easily accessible via a Google Earth application will provide support for sound decisions about caribou conservation and management, including for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds.

Congratulations, Galen!•

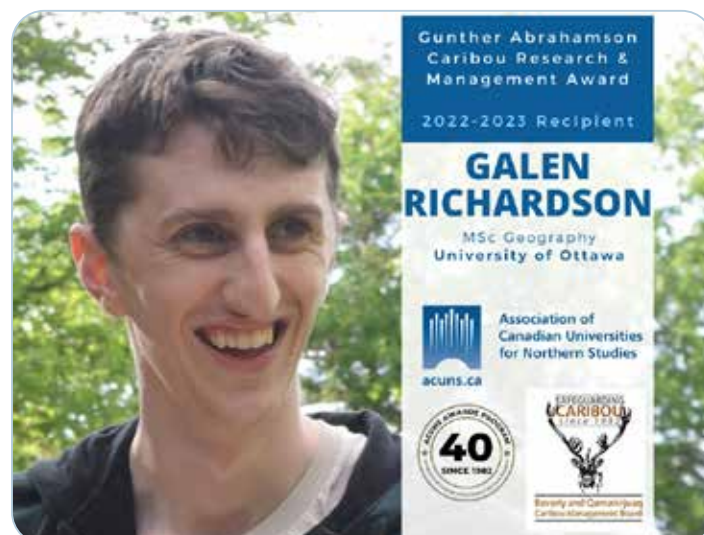


Photo courtesy of Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS)

# BQCMB Management Update

## BQCMB Management Agreement

The 2012-2022 Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Barren-Ground Caribou Management Agreement was set to expire on April 1, 2022, and the Board was hopeful that a new 10-year agreement would be in place by then. However, the parties were not ready to commit to the proposed changes, which included each public government party providing \$50K annual contributions toward operational costs for the BQCMB. As a result, the Board is working with an amended agreement which extended the previous terms and funding for another year, while continuing its efforts to achieve agreement on the terms of a new 10-year agreement. We are hopeful this will occur in the very near future.

## Caribou Management Plan Update

Alongside a “new and improved” management agreement, the BQCMB is working toward an updated Caribou Management Plan which will be our guiding document for the next 10 years. To gather information for the plan, the BQCMB is conducting meetings to engage Indigenous communities, including Elders and youth. The feedback gathered will be invaluable in drafting the updated plan.

The first meetings occurred in February when Executive Director Tina Giroux-Robillard and BQCMB member **Jimmy Laban** hosted met with the Saskatchewan Athabasca communities of Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation, Black Lake Denesuline First Nation, and Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation. Giroux-Robillard and BQCMB Communications Specialist Lynne Bereza then travelled to Sayisi Dene First Nation in Tadoule Lake and Northlands Denesuline First Nation in Lac Brochet in mid-August. Board member **Ernie Bussidor** assisted in Tadoule Lake, and **Benji Denechezhe** assisted and provided translation in Lac Brochet.

Upcoming community meetings will be held in NWT and Nunavut in fall 2022. •

*Clockwise from top left: Young Blair sports his new BQCMB cap won in the draw at the Tadoule Lake meeting.*

*Elder Thomas Duck, Sayisi Dene First Nation*

*Benji Denechezhe (l) serves caribou stew and bannock to meeting participants in Lac Brochet.*

*L to R: Peter Yassie Jr., band councillor; Lynne Bereza, BQCMB Communications; Tina Giroux-Robillard, BQCMB Executive Director; Chief Evan Yassie; Dylan Duck, band councillor; and Jordan Cutlip, band councillor, Sayisi Dene First Nation*

*Chief Simon Denechezhe, Northlands Denesuline First Nation*



## Heard around the BQCMB Board Table

“It cost my grandson \$150 to fill the tank of his skidoo, and it can take 3 or 4 tanks to hunt for caribou to feed your family”.

*Chair Earl Evans, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Fort Smith, NWT*

“Inflation and gas prices are all affecting peoples’ ability to travel to harvest caribou.”

*Joe Danttouze, Northlands Denesuline First Nation, Lac Brochet, MB*

“Any good hunter should understand that caribou are not there to play with.”

*Dennis Larocque, Camsell Portage, SK*

“The drum is a very powerful tool to bring the caribou down. The elders say that’s the heartbeat of the caribou. We can’t let our drums fall silent.”

*Ernie Bussidor, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Tadoule Lake, MB*

“During the midwinter one guy got lost in a blizzard for five days, but survived because he was wearing caribou clothing.”

*Simon Enuapik, Kivalliq Wildlife Board, Whale Cove, NU*

“On Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Manitoba is where Saskatchewan was at 10 or 15 years ago. It is a challenging disease and there is still much we don’t know.”

*Matthew Tokaruk, Government of Saskatchewan, Prince Albert, SK*

## Publisher’s Box

Caribou News in Brief is published by the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board.

Opinions expressed are those of the editor and contributors. Back issues available at [arctic-caribou.com](http://arctic-caribou.com). Comments and suggestions are welcome, and may be sent to:

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