

Protecting Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou for All Time



Every year, the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds travel between their winter ranges in southeastern Northwest Territories and northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and their summer ranges in Nunavut and the northeastern Northwest Territories. The two herds are very important to the Dene, Inuit, Métis, Cree and non-aboriginal people living in 20 communities on or near the ranges. These people hunt the caribou to feed their families, and the herds are a key part of the economic, cultural, and spiritual life of their communities. The caribou are also important to other Canadians and people around the world.

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board strongly believes the caribou herds should be protected from activities that people, companies or governments do on the land that could harm caribou or the land, lakes and rivers upon which the herds depend. It is especially important to protect the areas that caribou use while giving birth to their calves and other areas they depend on while the calves are very young.

The governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Canada are responsible for looking after the caribou herds, but they haven't done enough to protect them. And we don't know enough about how caribou are using their ranges during winter, spring, summer and fall to be sure that we are making the right choices to protect caribou and their ranges.

This document summarizes part of a technical paper that the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board wrote to explain why governments, and regulatory and planning agencies, need to take action soon to protect Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and their ranges. The Board is a group of aboriginal hunters, biologists and wildlife managers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the federal government that advises governments on ways to protect the caribou herds and their ranges.



Many things are happening across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges that could threaten the herds. Companies have come to the caribou ranges to look for minerals that are worth lots of money, like gold and diamonds. A road might be built from northern Manitoba to communities in the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut, right through the main migration route for Qamanirjuaq caribou. More hydroelectric power might be developed along the Taltson River on Beverly winter range in the southern Northwest Territories. There are already five uranium mines along the southern part of the caribou winter range in northern Saskatchewan.

Many things are changing across the caribou ranges now. If the caribou and their ranges aren't protected soon, the herds will suffer.

All of these developments can disturb caribou or damage their ranges. So can other things people do on the caribou

ranges, such as when pilots fly too close to the ground, when noise made by trucks or snowmobiles changes caribou movements, or when harmful waste is put in the water, on the land, or in the air.

Communities on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges are getting bigger, so more northerners are hunting caribou. Southern hunters arrive by new roads in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, too. Caribou are also used for more than feeding local families. Sport hunters come to hunt caribou, tourists come to watch caribou, and caribou meat is sold to people in Canada and other countries.

It's very important that the caribou herds be protected for all time. The next few pages describe what must be done to help the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou. Planning to improve protection for the caribou herds and their ranges should start right away.

Photo: Caribou News in Brief



Protect areas needed by caribou for calving and taking care of young calves

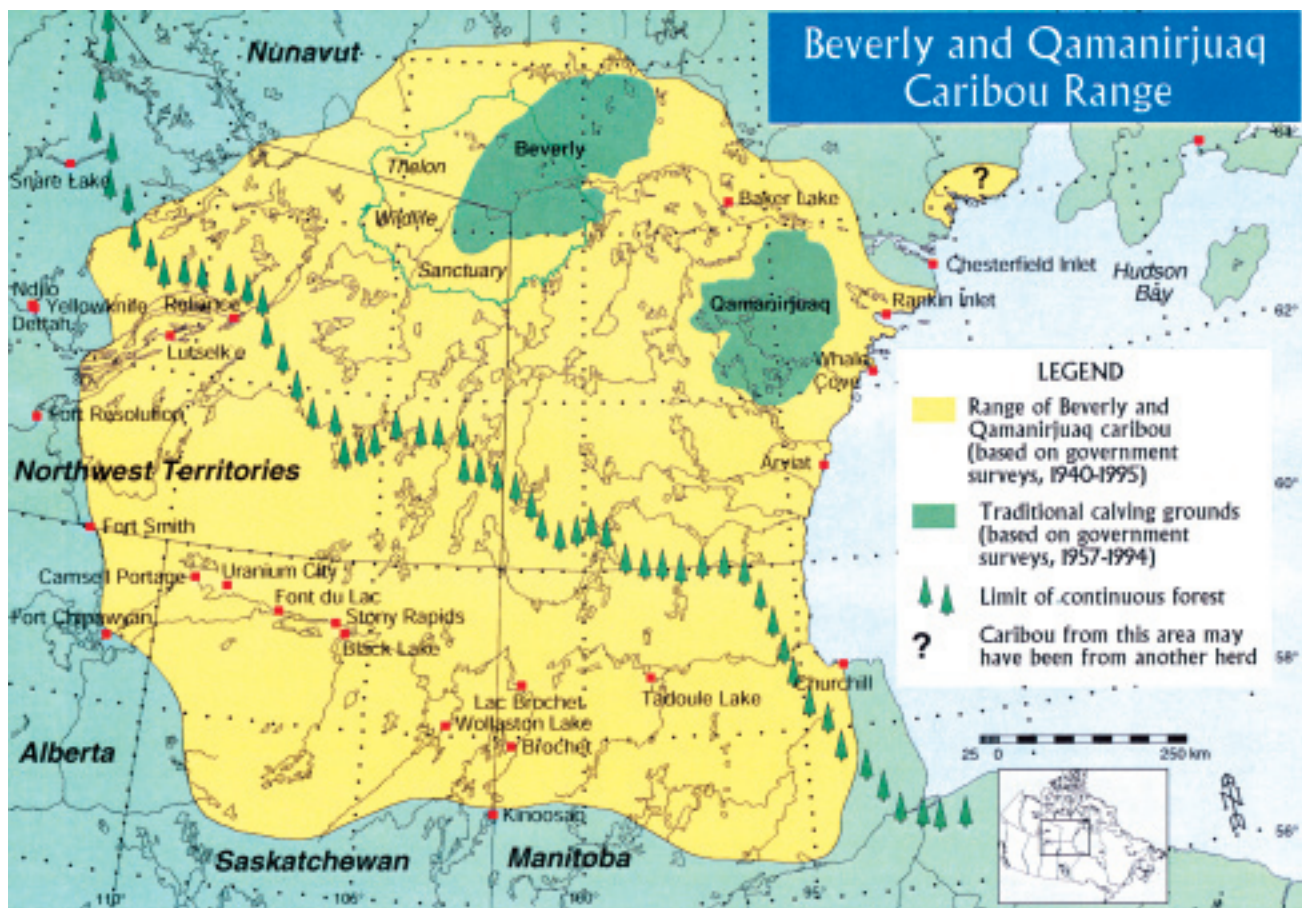
Having special **legally protected areas** with boundaries that always stay the same is one important way to look after lands and waters that Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou need while they are giving birth to their calves and caring for them when they are very young. That's because protected areas would stop industrial development from destroying these important parts of the caribou ranges. They would also prevent caribou cows and their newborn calves from being disturbed while the caribou are there each year between late May and late July. Protected areas would save lands and waters from harm year after year, so the caribou can return to use these parts of their ranges when they need them.

For many years, the Qamanirjuaq herd has used areas in the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut for calving and taking care of their young calves. The Beverly herd has used different areas in the Kivalliq Region and other areas in the eastern Northwest Territories. These areas are very important. Biologists call these areas "traditional calving grounds" and "post-calving

areas." They include all the lands used by each herd for calving and taking care of their young calves over many, many years. These are the areas that need to be looked after in protected areas.

Legally protected areas would protect caribou while they are using these areas, and would also protect lands and waters year after year.

Developers usually don't like protected areas because companies aren't allowed to do things on these lands, such as explore for minerals or build roads. That also means developers might not be spending money in some communities and creating jobs for local people. But having legally protected areas is an essential way to guard the caribou when they are most vulnerable – during calving and for about three weeks after calving. Protected areas are also the best way of stopping these important areas from being destroyed or damaged.



Protect caribou at other times of the year

In addition to protecting areas used by the caribou herds for calving and taking care of young calves, we need to protect Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou at other times in their lives, such as during spring migration, fall migration, and winter. The herds should also be protected when crossing lakes and rivers, especially from May to July.

One way to protect caribou at these times would be to improve and use **Caribou Protection Measures**, which are rules that companies and others have to follow to get permission from the federal government to work on Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges. The Measures were set up in 1978 to protect caribou while they were calving and taking care of young calves, crossing lakes and rivers at specific locations, and moving along certain routes in spring and summer.

Today we know more about caribou in some ways, such as how they respond when they're disturbed by development activities, and how all kinds of changes going on around caribou affect them over many years. With this new

information, governments need to figure out how the Caribou Protection Measures can be improved and used to protect caribou when they are outside of protected areas. These new Measures should protect caribou during spring, summer, fall and winter.

Caribou Protection Measures would protect caribou when they are outside of protected areas, but would not protect the lands and waters on which they depend.

It's very important to monitor the herds every year so that we know what parts of the range they are using at different times of the year. This will help us make the right decisions about where and when development should occur on the caribou ranges. Governments need to pay for monitoring programs, and developers should help pay for these programs, too. Governments also have to make sure that companies actually follow the rules under the Caribou Protection Measures.

Photo: Doug McLarty



Understand what many different changes mean for caribou

The world is changing a lot for Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou. The weather is not the way it used to be. Break-up comes earlier, freeze-up comes later, and sometimes there's a lot more snow or ice than there used to be. Another change is that many more people are coming to the North (by truck, plane or helicopter), digging for minerals, building roads or tourist camps, hunting, and doing other kinds of work on the caribou ranges.

It's important to understand what these changes mean altogether for the caribou herds. Although protected areas would keep places used by caribou for calving and taking care of young calves from being destroyed, we also need to make sure the rest of their ranges are changed as little as possible. Caribou Protection Measures would help to protect caribou while they are outside of protected areas, but the Measures would only deal with activities on caribou ranges one project at a time.

All the different groups that give permission for companies to do work on the caribou ranges ("regulators") can help. Regulators can use information gathered by the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board and governments to decide what might happen to the caribou when people work on their ranges.

We need to learn more about where the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds travel, and how they are using their ranges. We need to find out as much as we can about the Beverly herd especially, because it's getting close to the point of being hunted too much. If a few animals in the Beverly herd were tracked by satellites, like the Qamanirjuaq herd, we could learn important things about Beverly caribou. For example, we would have a much better idea of when they start heading north to their calving area each spring, what migration routes they follow, and where they spend their winters. We could also identify lands and waters that are especially important to the herd.

If we don't take action, the combined effects of all development activities and other changes happening on the caribou ranges over many years may harm the herds.

Both caribou herds should be counted more often. Studies of how many calves are born each year, and how healthy the caribou are, should be done regularly. Knowing whether a herd's population is going up or down helps governments and communities decide if they need to change what they are doing to look after the herds.

Photo: Cameco Corporation Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

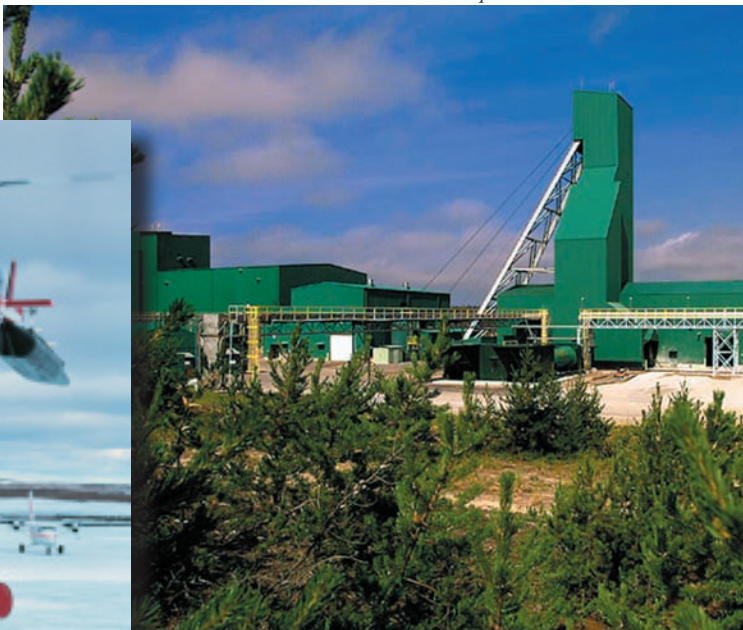


Photo: Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation



Photo: Gov't. of the NWT

Regularly map areas used by caribou for calving and taking care of young calves

We do not have very much information from the past 10 years about what areas the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds have used for calving and taking care of young calves. The federal government stopped funding the monitoring program for the Caribou Protection Measures in 1991, and calving ground surveys have not been done for either herd since 1994. The movements of a few Qamanirjuaq caribou have been tracked using satellites since 1993, but this method has not been used for tracking Beverly caribou. So we have the least information about the Beverly herd.

Mapping the boundaries of the areas each herd uses for calving and for a few weeks after calving is something governments need to do every year or every few years. This information is needed right away to help figure out what places should be protected in legally protected areas.

Governments should map the boundaries of areas used each year for calving and taking care of young calves.

It is also needed to help governments and other groups make smarter decisions about what industrial development projects and other activities should be allowed on the caribou ranges, and where they can take place without harming the caribou herds. The few animals in the Qamanirjuaq herd that are tracked by satellites provide lots of helpful information, but we need to know more to be able to protect the herds well. In order to map the total area used each year by both caribou herds for calving and taking care of their young calves, governments need to carry out surveys at specific times.



Plan how the caribou ranges should be used by people

Land use plans and conservation plans make rules about what activities people are allowed to do on the land. If a company wants to build an airstrip, or a government wants to build a hydroelectric dam or a road, the land use plan will tell them if these activities are possible, and what rules they must follow.

There should be land use plans and other conservation plans covering all of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges. These plans should be the law, and there should be a way of making sure people follow the rules in these plans.

Today there is only the Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan in Nunavut, which should be updated to give better directions for protecting the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds. Up-to-date maps showing what areas caribou use at different times of the year would be especially helpful. There aren't any land use plans for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges in the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, but there should be. Better Caribou Protection Measures should be part of regional land use plans across the caribou ranges.

There should also be one conservation plan for both the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges that explains how all the different groups responsible for land, water and caribou management in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Manitoba will work together to protect the caribou herds and their ranges.

We need *several regional land use plans* and *one conservation plan* for the caribou ranges.

The different groups that write the land use and conservation plans should talk to each other to make sure that they are doing the best job they can to keep track of what people and companies are doing on the ranges. People who write these plans should also check the management plan for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds to make sure they are working together to help protect the herds and their ranges. Caribou from the Bathurst herd also use the Beverly range, so it's important to look at the management plan for that herd, too.

Photo: Caribou News in Brief



Talk to northerners

Before any of these ideas for protecting the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and their ranges can go ahead, the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board will talk to people in the communities, land claim groups and others interested in these two herds. The Board wants to know what people think of their recommendations for protecting the herds and the lands and waters on which the caribou depend.

Governments must work with communities and developers to plan how caribou and their ranges will be protected, and to make sure people understand the changes that will be made.

When governments decide to take action to protect the caribou herds and their ranges, they must tell people about the work they and others are doing, and make sure that people understand the changes that will be made. These are very important recommendations, but people have to understand that putting these recommendations in place will affect economic development, including the number of jobs that mines and other development projects might bring to the North.

Everyone wants jobs for people living in northern Canada. Northerners should be able to earn enough money to eat

well, live in warm houses, and buy the things they need, just like other Canadians. But people from communities on the caribou ranges don't want jobs that could end up hurting the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds.

If we work together to protect the caribou herds and their ranges, the caribou will be available for future generations so that people can continue their traditions and can rely on caribou to feed their families. We have to start working together **now** to protect Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and their ranges, because these herds are important to Aboriginal peoples, other Canadians, and the world.

For more information, ask for a copy of the Board's more detailed technical paper on what needs to be done to protect the caribou herds and their ranges. (Available in English only.)

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