



Caribou & Cumulative Effects

A caribou's life has never been easy. But these days, pressures on caribou resulting from both natural and human-caused effects are adding up, and their combined effects are causing problems for the herds. Effects on caribou that accumulate over time and space are called "cumulative effects". This includes stress on caribou from one source that occurs repeatedly as well as impacts over several years or an animal's lifetime that result from many different factors spread out across the caribou ranges.

Caribou have always faced many challenges, such as predators, parasites, diseases, hazardous water crossings, bad weather and wildfires. But now, in addition to natural challenges, caribou must also deal with the effects of human land-use activities, such as disturbance, pollution, barriers to movements, and damage to vegetation. In addition, climate change is causing changes to weather, snow and ice conditions, frequency and intensity of wildfires, and the plants caribou eat, and some of those changes are harmful to caribou.

During their annual migrations caribou move long distances over large areas, and can come into contact with many natural and human-caused stresses. Any one of these stresses may have relatively little influence on an individual animal, but if many sources of stress are met by caribou each year, and this occurs over several years, these small separate effects can have a much larger combined influence on the animal over time. This can affect the health and body condition of the animals and their ability to get pregnant and have calves. If this situation occurs for many caribou in a herd, it can influence the overall health of the herd, contributing to a decrease in the size of the herd and reducing the chance that it will grow larger again.

We can reduce the cumulative effects that harm caribou and the people who depend on them, if:

- **Companies** working on the caribou range make it a priority to avoid harming caribou and caribou habitat.
- **Decision-makers** reject projects that will cause harmful effects on caribou or habitat.
- **Regulators** place conditions on projects to minimize negative impacts on caribou and caribou range and **make sure conditions are enforced**.
- **Harvesters** follow responsible caribou hunting practices.

We all need to work together to reduce cumulative effects on caribou and their habitat.

You Can Make a Difference - Caribou for the Future

To find out more about the BQCMB and this issue, please contact us at:

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