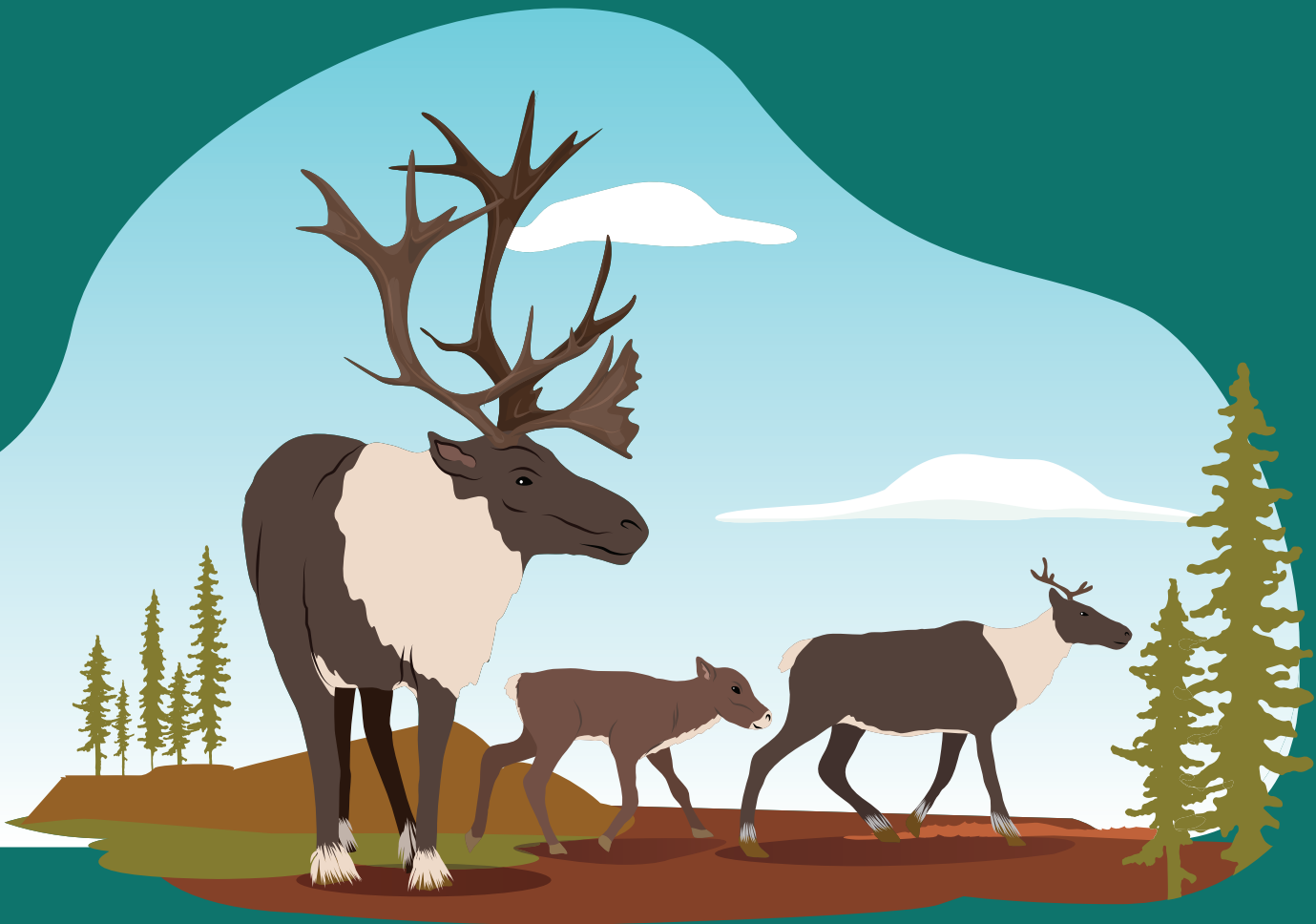




BEVERLY & QAMANIRJUAQ  
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT BOARD

# CARIBOU IS LIFE



Beverly and Qamanirjuaq  
Caribou Management Plan  
2023-2032

## DEDICATION

*This Management Plan is dedicated to:*

**Albert Thorassie**  
**Sayisi Dene First Nation, Manitoba**  
**1946 - 2022**

Albert was a long-standing member of the BQCMB and served as Chair for five years. He is greatly missed by his family, community, and friends at the BQCMB.

*"We're trying to work with these kids to try to do more than play games. You have to go out on the land, learn how to track, and live off the land like our ancestors did."*

**August Enzoe**  
**Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation, Northwest Territories**  
**1938 - 2023**

August served on the BQCMB on several occasions, most recently from 2017 until 2023. He will be missed by many, including the BQCMB members and staff who benefited from the knowledge he shared with us over more than two decades.

*"My grandfather told me, one day you'll go up the hill and look out on the land and see an old caribou trail, and you'll have tears in your eyes."*

**Joe Marten**  
**Fond du Lac Denesųliné First Nation, Saskatchewan**  
**1935 - 2023**

Joe was an alternate member of the BQCMB since 2014 who rarely missed a meeting. He was a passionate board member who was dedicated to caribou conservation. We will miss his friendship and laughter at our meetings.

*"The land is our table, and the caribou is our food."*

**Ernie Bussidor**  
**Sayisi Dene First Nation, Manitoba**  
**1957-2024**

Ernie became a BQCMB member in 2017. His wisdom, songs and drumming were a beloved part of each meeting he attended. His passion for the caribou and the land will live on in his grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

*"Caribou are the litmus test on the health of the environment."*

\*\*\*

We express our deep gratitude to these Elders for their unwavering commitment to caribou conservation and collaborative management of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds. Their invaluable guidance, wealth of knowledge and profound wisdom have enriched our efforts over the years and they will be missed greatly.

## SUMMARY

Barren-ground caribou are more than an iconic Canadian wildlife species that holds a special place in our nation's hearts. The relationship between Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and Indigenous communities has developed over thousands of years. Caribou are a reliable source of healthy food, and they also feed the spiritual, social, and cultural needs of communities.

This Management Plan describes how the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) works with Indigenous governments, organizations, and communities, public governments, other organizations, and people across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges to help safeguard the two herds for present and future generations.

When gathering input from BQCMB members representing public governments and First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments and organizations, two guiding principles emerged: The need to share responsibility for the herds and actions to support them, and the need to put caribou first in the caribou-human relationship.

These principles are important because both herds are in decline. Based on the latest survey results the Beverly herd is about one-third of the size it was in the mid-1990s, while the Qamanirjuaq herd is about half the size it was then. An ongoing concern is that without careful monitoring and management, the declines may worsen, and the herds may not rebound as they have in the past. Even when the herds are doing well, we need to continue to take collective responsibility and actions to support the herds and allow them to thrive.

This Management Plan identifies four main priorities, and includes a set of goals and objectives for each:

### **1. Watching the Caribou**

Many environmental and human-caused factors may be contributing to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds' decline, including climate change, diseases and parasites, disturbance, predators, wildfires, and cumulative effects. These factors can create stress for the herds, which makes them more vulnerable to additional stresses. The BQCMB aims to conduct "vulnerability assessments" of each herd every five years so we can make recommendations to conserve the herds. Based on each herd's vulnerability level, we will make recommendations about monitoring (what type and how often), sustainable harvest, educational programs and products, and communications about what actions are needed to support the caribou. The BQCMB takes actions to better understand the factors affecting the herds, to be able to decrease the threats they are facing and reduce their vulnerability.

### **2. Respecting the Caribou**

This priority is two-fold. First, there is a need for everyone to work together to ensure harvest of caribou is respectful, that regulations are upheld when necessary, and that Indigenous harvest protocols are promoted and supported. Second, that the harvest is sustainable so there are barren-ground caribou for current and future generations.

The BQCMB will support Indigenous governments and organizations' efforts to create and implement their own barren-ground caribou stewardship plans. The shared goal of the BQCMB and these communities is to safeguard these herds for future generations, in part through ensuring that harvest does not contribute to population decline. If the herds were to become highly vulnerable, the BQCMB would work with its members and communities to discuss harvest management strategies.

### 3. Respecting the Land

Human activities can disrespect the land, the caribou, and the Indigenous peoples that rely on them. Land use across the range needs to be carefully monitored and managed. Potential solutions include wildfire management, land use planning, and establishing protected areas, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs). But we need to learn more - about how the herds use the range, the specific habitats they use, how climate change, human land use activities and wildfires negatively affect these habitats, and how we can reduce these effects.

### 4. Community Connections

Modern times have made the life of the caribou, and the people who depend on them, much more challenging. For this reason, strong connections are needed between Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Holders and youth, between non-Indigenous people and Indigenous knowledge-keepers, between the BQCMB and the Indigenous communities it represents, and among all caribou peoples across the caribou ranges. More outreach, more support to our members, more youth-elder mentorship, more on the land experience for youth, and more communication overall needs to happen across the ranges of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds.

#### What We Can Do

The BQCMB cannot accomplish the goals of this plan on its own. A collective approach is needed if we truly hope to help safeguard the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds for present and future generations. That is why this Plan includes a specific focus not just on what the BQCMB can do, but what a wide range of other parties can also do, including:

- Community and regional organizations
- Individuals
- Public governments
- Regulatory bodies
- Indigenous governments
- Industry
- Non-government organizations
- Outfitters and tourism organizations

The BQCMB understands not everyone has the same mandates and roles regarding the BQCMB's recommendations for caribou conservation - these are suggested actions to apply when feasible.

However, we urge anyone whose actions or decisions may affect the caribou herds or their habitat to support the Plan's goals and objectives. We ALL have an important role to play.



**In order for us to protect our caribou, we need to come together.**

**- Sayisi Dene First Nation, Tadoule Lake, MB**

## PREFACE

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) began work on the 2023-2032 BQCMB Management Plan in early 2022. The BQCMB has built a solid initial foundation through 40 years of co-management, and current board members were ready to tackle the challenge of updating and improving the Management Plan. However, we knew we needed in-person engagement and communication with Indigenous peoples across the ranges of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds to inform and strengthen the plan and support co-management of the herds. Meetings were held as follows:

- Athabasca Denesųłiné communities of Fond du Lac, Wollaston Lake, and Black Lake – February 2022
- Manitoba Dene communities of Tadoule Lake and Lac Brochet – August 2022
- Łutsël K'e Dene First Nations Wildlife, Lands and Environment Committee, Northwest Territories – January 2023
- Kivalliq Hunter and Trapper Organizations in Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, Arviat, and Whale Cove, Nunavut - February 2023

Meetings focused on sharing information, discussing community concerns on issues facing caribou, and gathering input to help the Board develop an updated and improved Management Plan. The Plan will be used by the BQCMB and its Indigenous and public government partners and other parties to identify actions to support conservation and recovery of the caribou herds and their habitats.

In addition, the BQCMB assisted in coordinating Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou Traditional Knowledge interviews with Elders from Ghotelnene K'odtjneh Dene communities in Tadoule Lake and Lac Brochet, Manitoba throughout February 2023. The information was requested by the leadership in the communities to develop Caribou Protocols for education and communication purposes. An agreement with Ghotelnene K'odtjneh Dene allowed the BQCMB to use some of the information gathered to help develop this Management Plan.

The BQCMB formed a Working Group of BQCMB board members which met during the Board's November 2022 meeting. Follow-up with both the Working Group and members of the BQCMB Executive Committee also took place to provide status updates and gain feedback on progress. All BQCMB board members participated in development of this Management Plan during 2022 and 2023 board meetings and through their reviews of draft documents.

The BQCMB is grateful for the time the community organizations, individuals and board members devoted to this process. The resulting Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Plan truly highlights the shared responsibility we all have toward these herds, and the need for reconciliation between each other, the land, and the caribou.

**Project funding for this Management Plan included 50-50 matching funds from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk (ECCC-AFSAR) and the BQCMB, and additional ECCC funding provided through the Species at Risk Act (SARA) Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project administered by the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER).**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THE CARIBOU MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Purpose

This Management Plan (the Plan) describes how the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) will work with others to help safeguard the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds for present and future generations. The Plan includes actions the BQCMB has identified to address caribou conservation issues. This will apply to both the herds and their habitats in two territories (Nunavut and the Northwest Territories) and two provinces (Saskatchewan and Manitoba).

The BQCMB will use the Plan to make recommendations to communities, individuals, governments, regulatory boards, land use planning organizations, industry, and others whose actions or decisions may affect conservation of the caribou herds or availability of caribou for harvest, now and in the future.

The Plan will guide the BQCMB throughout its current 10-year term, but also adapt to changing conditions. It will be an annual agenda item during regular BQCMB meetings, when the BQCMB will identify priority actions for certain time periods. This will include a “reality check” on specific actions, as well as their timelines and budgets, which will be adjusted as needed.

The BQCMB will conduct a complete review of the full plan every five years.

### Who Will Use this Plan?

Public government agencies and Indigenous communities and organizations are encouraged to use this Plan for identifying actions required to take care of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds and their habitats. Anyone whose actions or decisions may affect the caribou herds or their habitat is urged to support the Plan’s goals and objectives.

The BQCMB also hopes individuals, environmental organizations, industry, and others use the Plan as a reference to identify what they can do to help safeguard the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds for present and future generations.

### How to Use this Management Plan

This Management Plan is designed to be user-friendly. It identifies four main priorities for the life of the Plan:

1. Watching the Caribou
2. Respecting the Caribou
3. Respecting the Land
4. Community Connections

Each priority has a set of goals and objectives, with background information about related issues.

#### Our Mission:

To ensure the long-term conservation of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds for Indigenous peoples who wish to maintain a lifestyle that includes the use of caribou, as well as for all Canadians and people of other nations.



Because conservation of barren-ground caribou is a collaborative process, this Plan suggests recommended actions (“What we can do”) for all key parties, including:

- The BQCMB
- Community and regional organizations
- Individuals
- Public governments
- Regulatory bodies
- Indigenous Governments
- Industry
- Non-government organizations
- Outfitters and tourism organizations

For those interested in more detail, the Plan also includes a Supporting Document that includes more information about selected topics. The Supporting Document can be found at <https://arctic-caribou.com/>.

For convenience we have compiled the suggested actions for all parties into tables at the end of sections 4-7, and individual action lists in the Supporting Document. The BQCMB encourages all parties to share activities that they are doing for tracking and implementation purposes.

## ABOUT THE BOARD

### The Role of the BQCMB

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) was created in 1982 to include both Indigenous and scientific knowledge in the management of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds. About 20 Inuit, Métis, Dene, and Cree communities across the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Saskatchewan, and northern Manitoba depend on these migratory herds for their nutritional, cultural, spiritual, and economic needs. Over the past 40 years, the BQCMB has successfully brought Indigenous people from across the herds’ vast range together with government agencies to work towards a common goal – safeguarding the herds for current and future generations.

The BQCMB is an advisory board. We make recommendations to public and Indigenous governments, regional organizations and communities for the conservation and management of the caribou herds. The *Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Barren Ground Caribou Management Agreement for 2023-2032* outlines the BQCMB’s mandate for the following signatories:

- Government of Canada (Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs)
- Government of Manitoba (Department of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources)
- Government of the Northwest Territories (Department of Environment and Climate Change)
- Government of Nunavut (Department of Environment)
- Government of Saskatchewan (Ministry of Environment)
- Athabasca Denesųłiné (Hatchet Lake, Black Lake, Fond du Lac First Nations)
- Ghotelnene K’odtįneh Dene (Northlands Denesųłiné and Sayisi Dene First Nations)
- Inuit of the Kivalliq Region (Kivalliq Wildlife Board)
- Łutsël K’é Dene First Nation
- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- Tįjchų Government

## Who is the BQCMB?

The BQCMB includes up to 17 board members representing the signatories. The governments of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan each confirm up to three members nominated by communities on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges and appoint one government member from the department responsible for caribou management, while the Government of Canada appoints one government member. All BQCMB Indigenous members live in communities on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges and all government members live and work in the North.



The BQCMB contracts three part-time staff: Executive Director, Wildlife Biologist, and Communications Specialist.

## The BQCMB and Reconciliation

The BQCMB is built on the strong relationships forged between our members and the organizations they represent, both government and Indigenous. We resolve to advance reconciliation by continuing to listen to, learn from, and work in partnership with our members representing public governments and First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments and organizations. This will require that we strengthen our understanding of, and respect for, the rights, histories, traditions, cultures, languages, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples.

In this Management Plan, the BQCMB commits to:

- Being an inclusive and supportive space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
- Continuing to increase our knowledge and understanding of the rights, histories, heritage, cultures, and diverse perspectives of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges.
- Promoting respect for Indigenous peoples' rights and perspectives and the importance of advancing reconciliation.

Reconciliation extends beyond just human relationships; it encompasses reconciliation with the natural world as a path forward. Reconciliation must be achieved among all beings, including barren-ground caribou, as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples need to heal their damaged relationships with each other and with the land and the caribou.

### What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.

Reconciliation must support Aboriginal peoples as they heal from the destructive legacies of colonization that have wreaked such havoc in their lives. But it must do even more. Reconciliation must inspire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to transform Canadian society so that our children and grandchildren can live together in dignity, peace, and prosperity on these lands we now share.

Source: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC 2015)



## 2. BACKGROUND

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds' annual ranges have historically extended from the boreal forest in northern Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta, north to the taiga, lakes, and tundra of the eastern Northwest Territories and mainland Nunavut (see map on p. 19).

### Who Manages Land Use on the Caribou Ranges?

Most of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges are found on Inuit owned lands, Treaty 5, Treaty 8, Treaty 10, and Treaty 11 territories as well as public lands administered by the federal, territorial, or provincial governments.

There are also private settlement lands found within the ranges of the two herds, which were selected during land claim negotiations. For example, the Tłı̨chǫ Government administers Tłı̨chǫ Lands in the Northwest Territories and Regional Inuit Associations administer Inuit-owned lands in Nunavut. These and other lands are owned and managed by Indigenous corporations or associations created under various land claim agreements. Northwest Territories First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations, and Athabasca Denesų́iné (Saskatchewan) and Ghotelnene K'odtineh Dene (Manitoba) are also negotiating claims for land in the South Slave Region of the Northwest Territories and southern Kivalliq region of Nunavut.

Resource development, land claims, devolution, self-government agreements, and climate change are creating many changes for governments and communities on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq ranges.

Economic development is a priority for both public and Indigenous governments, and discussions about the type of economic development needed and environmental protection required have been ongoing for a long time. Opinions often differ, creating long-standing disagreements between public governments and northern communities, who often raise caribou conservation issues when considering the pros and cons of economic development.

See Supporting Document for more information.

#### The Importance of Treaties

Treaties are nation-to-nation agreements made between the Government of Canada, Indigenous groups and often provinces and territories that define rights and obligations of all parties to the agreement.

Treaty rights and Indigenous rights are recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Treaties with Indigenous peoples include both:

- historic treaties with First Nations
- modern treaties, also called comprehensive land claim agreements.

Through these historic and modern Treaties, the rights of Indigenous peoples to hunt, fish, trap and gather were enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. For this reason, Indigenous peoples continue to exercise the right to harvest caribou freely, without infringement.

We are all Treaty people.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Shared Responsibility

The BQCMB is a co-management board, meaning Indigenous and public governments need to work together. Shared use requires shared responsibility.

The BQCMB will work together with Indigenous governments and communities, local government organizations, and Indigenous peoples that live and/or work on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges. Each of these parties need to be fully engaged in the management of the two herds, and actively participate in carrying out, where possible, the recommendations found in this Plan.



**Lose caribou, lose culture, lose everything.**

**- Black Lake Denesų́liné  
First Nation, SK**

### Value of Caribou

Barren-ground caribou are more than an iconic Canadian wildlife species that holds a special place in our nation's hearts. The relationship between Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and Indigenous communities has developed over millennia. Caribou are a reliable source of healthy food, and they also feed the spiritual, social, and cultural needs of our communities.

Barren-ground caribou is a cultural keystone species, which means they are essential to sustain a culture's ability to be on the land and maintain a relationship with the land. Quotes from harvesters across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges are found throughout this Plan, highlighting the cultural and spiritual value of caribou.

Words describing barren-ground caribou in Indigenous languages of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges:

- atihk (Cree)
- etthén (Denesų́liné)
- tuktu (Inuktitut)
- aen kariboo (Métis)
- ekwò (Tłı́chò)

Barren-ground caribou are also an ecological keystone species, meaning they are needed to keep northern ecosystems healthy. Caribou are a crucial part of the glue that keeps the ecosystem together and functioning.

Caribou also have huge direct economic value from harvest, mainly for sustenance use. The economic value of harvesting barren-ground caribou through licensed hunting (Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut) and meat sale allocations (Nunavut) is also important to the individuals, businesses, and governments that benefit from them.

The BQCMB commissioned a study that estimated the net annual economic value of caribou harvested from the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds in 2005-06 was about \$20 million (\$5 million for Beverly caribou; \$15 million for Qamanirjuaq). It is likely that this number would be much higher now due to inflation. The BQCMB is working on collecting new harvest data to update this estimate.

Caribou also contribute to the northern economy through non-harvest wildlife tourism.

See Supporting Document for more information.

## PRIORITIZING CARIBOU IN THE CARIBOU-HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

One of the guiding principles that came up when talking with communities and governments about this Plan was that “caribou should come first.” A recurring theme is the need to focus more on caribou in situations where conflicts come up between:

1. Indigenous harvesting rights and responsibilities.
2. Economic development proposals and protecting the land for caribou (especially when development projects are proposed on important caribou habitats).
3. Potential restrictions on caribou harvest and on development projects.

### Indigenous Harvesting Rights and Responsibilities

Indigenous peoples across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges value their Indigenous right to harvest barren-ground caribou. They also understand the responsibility they have with this right, and how they must look to their communities to make sure traditional protocols are followed.

**If you limit hunting, there's other things that have to give.**

**- Arviat HTO Board, NU**

In the past, Inuit and Denesųliné lived a nomadic lifestyle, which involved following the caribou herds throughout the seasons and across the range. Their knowledge comes from harvesting caribou for thousands of years and going through times of feast and famine.

With modern times, severe hardships are less frequent, with faster snowmobiles, high powered rifles, and the ability to travel further to harvest caribou. Community lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic followed by sky-rocketing grocery prices mean communities are turning to the land to feed their families. There is tremendous pressure for harvesters to practice their rights, culture, and way of life while also making good decisions and being responsible for ensuring that herds are healthy and large enough to provide for future generations as well.

### Community-led Solutions

Indigenous communities across BQCMB jurisdictions have completed or are working hard to complete stewardship and management plans that will ensure barren-ground caribou harvesting practices reflect traditional values, knowledge, and protocols, and that their Guardians programs will help provide stewardship.

Indigenous Guardians programs are also growing throughout the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq ranges as communities continue their long-standing practice of being stewards of the land. Guardian programs may prove to be very important for Indigenous communities by allowing for more monitoring of development activities, management of land and water and ensuring traditional protocols are being followed.



See Supporting Document for more information.



**What makes you proud is when you are having tea, and caribou are still walking about. You did that. They are alive because of you. Tell them you'll see them next year. Instead of having them dead on the ice, wondering what you are going to do with them.**

**Traditional ways need to be used, not just talked about.**

**- Dennis Larocque, Indigenous Harvester and BQCMB Member from Camsell Portage, SK**

Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Holders possess knowledge about their relationship with the caribou and the land that has been shared intergenerationally throughout time. Past colonial policies such as residential schools and displacement of communities reduced the passing on of that knowledge. Today, through the transfer of knowledge from Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Holders to youth, in culture camps and other activities, Indigenous communities are reconnecting youth to traditional protocols that were lost due to these past policies.

While some communities are struggling to harvest enough caribou, community members note that some are taking more than they need. Although the sale of caribou is allowed in some land claim agreements, Indigenous communities across the range have raised concerns about this issue (see [Sec. 5 Sustainable Harvest](#)). The BQCMB believes it needs to be addressed at a local level, and harvesters of barren-ground caribou should hunt wisely, respectfully, and responsibly. The BQCMB will continue to work with communities to assist in whatever way is appropriate (see [Sec. 5 Respecting the Caribou](#)).

### **Economic Development and Protecting the Land for Caribou**

Economic development is important for communities across northern Canada. Economic growth through mineral exploration and mining in areas with limited opportunities can provide good jobs and benefits. However, these jobs and benefits should not remove the ability of communities to practice their traditional ways of life.

The BQCMB strongly believes that providing adequate protection to barren-ground caribou and their habitat is essential to maintain healthy caribou populations. Without enough high-quality habitat, the herds will not be healthy and productive, and may not be able to support current and future generations of Indigenous communities who share them.

The BQCMB will continue to make recommendations to influence decisions about caribou and habitat protection through restrictions for specific land use activities, land use planning, and protected areas planning (see [Sec. 6 Respecting the Land](#)).

The BQCMB seeks and uses Indigenous Knowledge from Indigenous organizations through data-sharing agreements. These agreements outline how information will be used and managed, as well as who will be allowed to use it.

The BQCMB considers any for-profit land use activity as commercial development, including industrial development (mineral exploration, mines, roads, and other infrastructure) and non-industrial land-use activities such as tourism (hunting and fishing lodges, aircraft flights, etc.)

### Potential Restrictions on Barren-ground Caribou Harvest and on Development Projects

Communities and regional organizations have brought up the issue of commercial development being allowed to move forward while at the same time harvest restrictions on Indigenous harvesters are being discussed. Communities feel that regulatory bodies place commercial development over the need for Indigenous peoples to harvest barren-ground caribou.

To date, Indigenous harvest of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds has not been restricted or closed anywhere, as it has for some other caribou herds in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Those restrictions were developed through a collaborative process involving Indigenous governments, boards, and communities.

However, caribou harvesters often say that governments and regulators must take a more balanced approach to ensure other land uses do not negatively affect caribou and caribou habitat. At a minimum, regulatory agencies should consider imposing stronger restrictions on mineral exploration and development proposals on important barren-ground caribou habitats at the same time governments are talking about caribou harvest restrictions (see [Sec. 6 Respecting the Land.](#))

See Supporting Document for more information.



**Mining produces work for a handful of locals. What about the rest of us? 20% work at the mines, 80% are still harvesting for our families.**

**- Arviat HTO Board, NU**



**With both herds declining, we have to be more vigilant than ever to ensure the important cultural, spiritual, and economic relationships between northern peoples and barren-ground caribou are protected.**

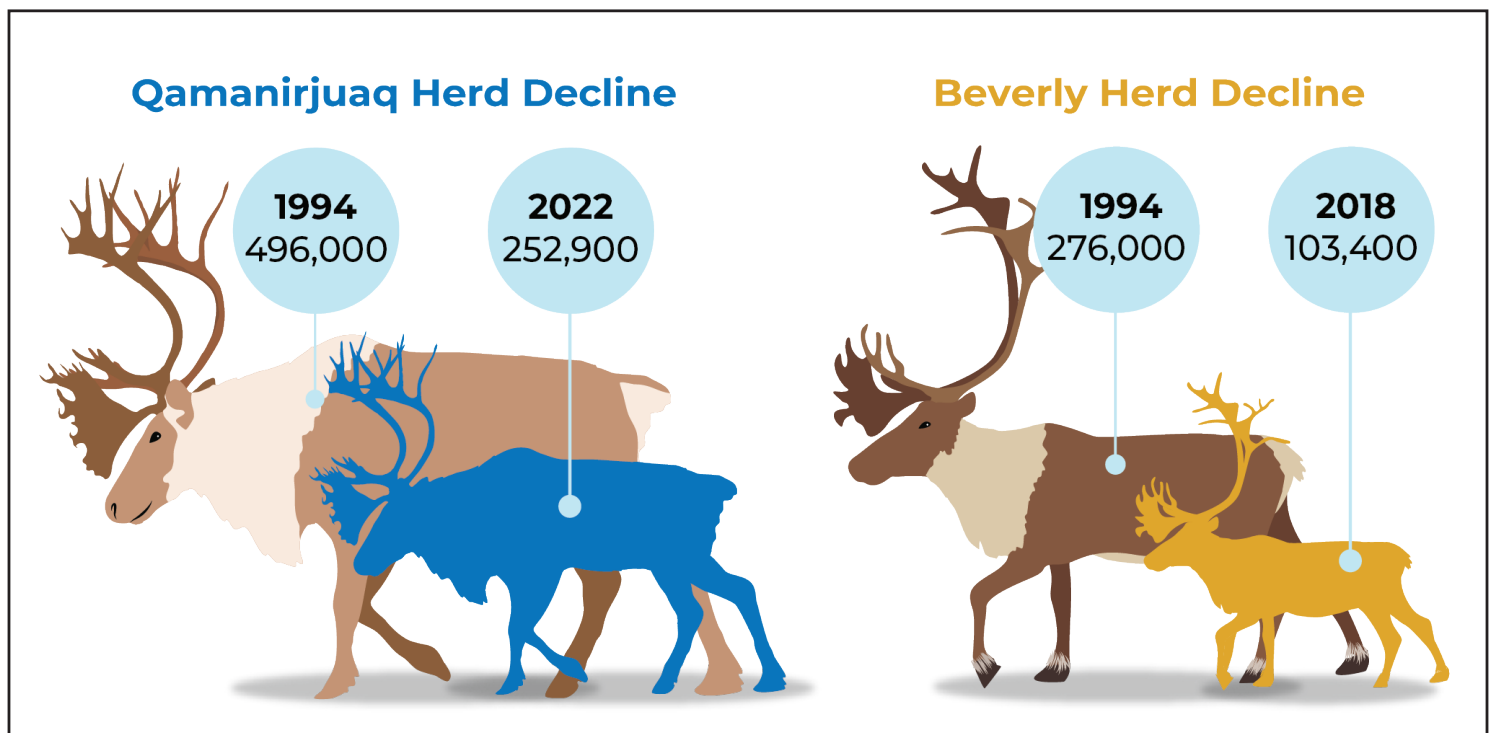
**- BQCMB Chair Earl Evans, Northwest Territory Métis Nation**

# 3. CARIBOU HERDS AND RANGES

## HOW ARE THE CARIBOU DOING?

For several decades, Indigenous caribou harvesters across the southern portions of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges have needed to travel farther and farther to reach barren-ground caribou for harvest. This has been a major issue for the Dene and Métis harvesters living in communities in northern Saskatchewan, northern Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories, causing hardship for many families and reducing their ability to provide food and maintain their cultures. Inuit caribou harvesters have also become concerned about changes they see in availability of caribou in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut.

Research by the governments of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories support these observations. While the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq are still two of the largest barren-ground caribou herds in Canada, their numbers have decreased substantially over the last 30 years.



Most caribou herds, including the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds, are much smaller than they were 25 years ago. If this trend continues the herds may reach a point where they can't bounce back, which would create a crisis for Indigenous peoples across the caribou ranges.

- BQCMB Chair Earl Evans, Northwest Territory Métis Nation



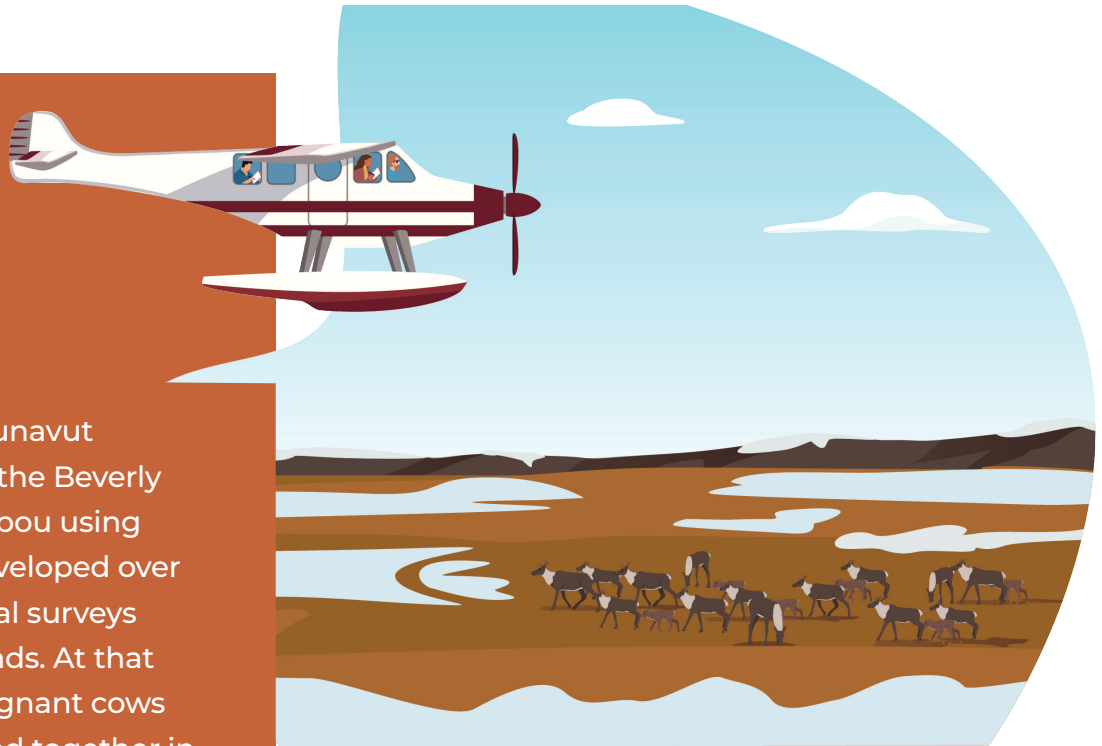
# Caribou Surveys

The Government of Nunavut estimates the sizes of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou using scientific methods developed over many years using aerial surveys over the calving grounds. At that time of year, most pregnant cows in the herd are grouped together in one area, so that is when they are easiest to count, both with visual and photographic aerial surveys.

Aerial surveys are also conducted in late winter (March and April) to estimate the numbers of calves and cows, and to find out how numbers of each group have changed over the winter. The numbers of calves, bulls and cows are also estimated periodically in the fall (usually late October).

Knowing the numbers of males, females, yearlings, and calves in both fall and spring helps us to see how the herds are doing at different times of year and what changes occur between years.

See Supporting Document for more information.



Based on the latest survey results, in 2018 the Beverly herd's population was approximately 103,000, about one-third of the size it was in the mid-1990s. The Qamanirjuaq herd's latest population estimate of about 253,000 shows there were approximately half as many caribou in 2022 as there were 28 years earlier.

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds were at their highest known population levels in the 1990s. Both herds have been decreasing in size since then, but at different rates. The Beverly herd has been declining more intensely than the Qamanirjuaq herd.

See Supporting Document for more information.

In 2018, eight barren-ground caribou herds, including Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou, were listed as a "Threatened" species in the Northwest Territories by the Conference of Management Authorities (CMA), a group of wildlife co-management boards and governments that share management responsibility for the conservation and recovery of Northwest Territories species at risk. The CWA has developed a strategy to promote recovery of the herds.

Federally, most barren-ground herds in Canada, including the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq are being considered for designation as a "Threatened" species, which would result in a recovery strategy for all herds. Neither the Northwest Territories listing or a federal listing automatically results in harvest restrictions, and Indigenous governments and organizations would be involved in any federal recovery planning processes.

The BQCMB believes that the declines in the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds should be taken very seriously, and all users of these caribou and their ranges need to do whatever is possible to avoid causing additional negative effects to the caribou and their habitats.

## RANGE USE BY BEVERLY AND QAMANIRJUAQ CARIBOU

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds' seasonal ranges extend over a huge area of northern Canada, including portions of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Manitoba and northern Saskatchewan (see map on p. 19). Up to the early 2000s, the total area of the combined year-round ranges of these two herds was about 1.25 million km<sup>2</sup>, only slightly smaller than the combined area of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Government surveys since the 1940s and telemetry studies since the early 1990s show that parts of the traditional Beverly and Qamanirjuaq winter ranges overlap. Indigenous knowledge and surveys tell us that the caribou winter range extended much farther south in the past, well into the forested areas in the southern Northwest Territories, northern Saskatchewan, and northern Manitoba. During the rest of the year the herds usually used separate ranges, with the Beverly herd in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to the west and northwest of the Qamanirjuaq range.

Until the early 2000s, Beverly cows gave birth to calves in the area around Beverly Lake in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, migrating into the southeastern Northwest Territories in the fall, and returning north from winter range in the Northwest Territories and northern Saskatchewan in the spring. More recently, calving and post-calving ranges have been farther north, near the coastline of Nunavut's Kitikmeot region (see maps on p. 20 and 21). Most Beverly caribou spend the winter north of Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and part of the herd has wintered farther northwest than from 1993-2012 (see map on p. 22). The herd's range from 2012 to 2023 extended about 800 km from the northern core calving grounds to both the southern and western edges of the winter range.

The Qamanirjuaq herd's range use patterns have been more predictable, although some variation occurs from year to year. Traditionally the herd mainly used seasonal ranges in the southern Kivalliq region of Nunavut and northern Manitoba, calving in the area around Qamanirjuaq Lake and up to 200 km inland from Hudson Bay. In recent years, calving and post-calving have been farther northeast and closer to the coast. Most Qamanirjuaq caribou use winter range in northern Manitoba, northeastern Saskatchewan, and the southeastern Northwest Territories. Use of areas farther west into the Northwest Territories have been documented in recent years during fall, winter and spring. From 2012 to 2023, the herd's year-round range extended up to 850 km from the Hudson Bay coast inland, and approximately the same distance from south to north, from Churchill MB to Chesterfield Inlet NU.

### The Decline of the Bathurst Caribou Herd

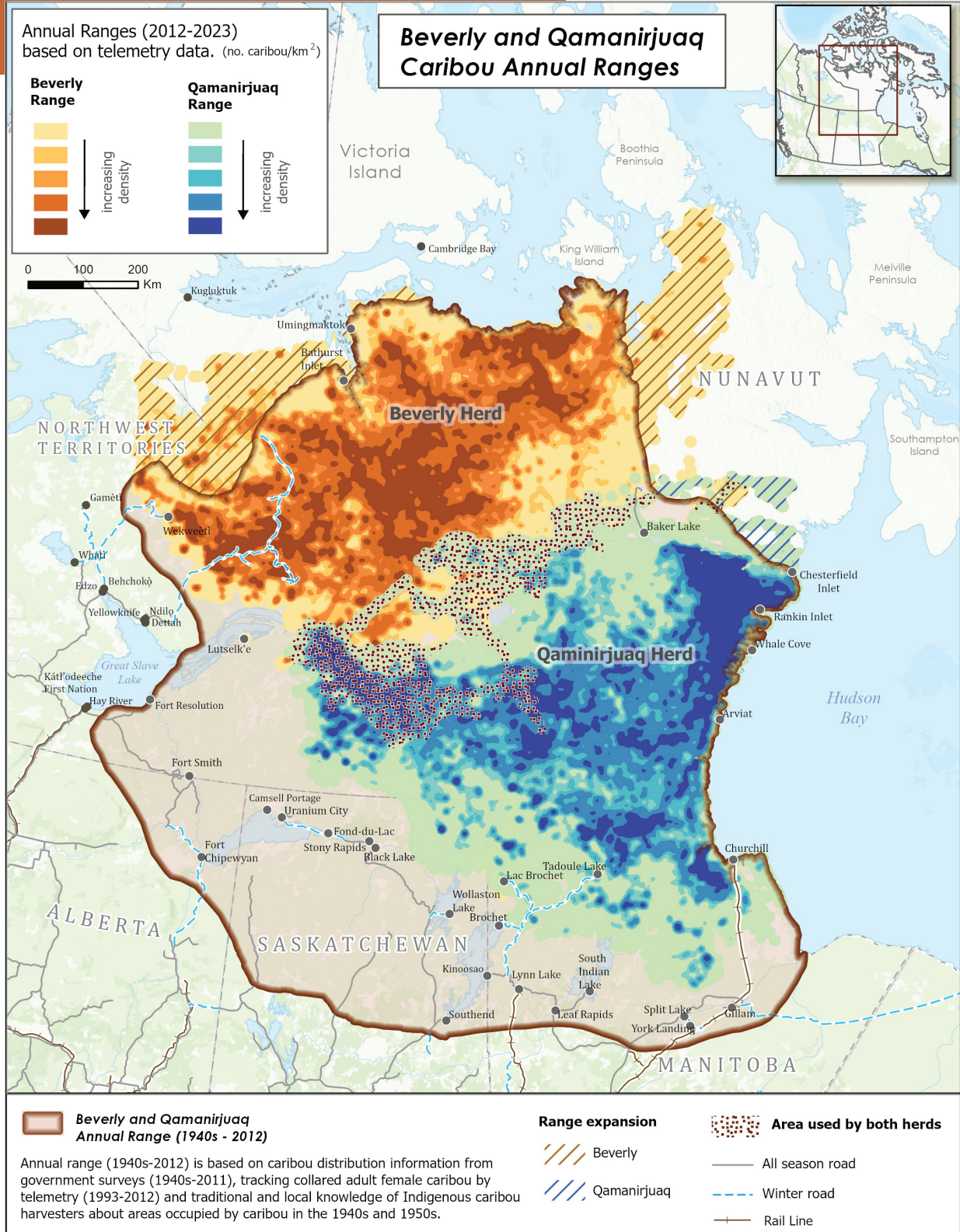
A recent example of population decline is the Bathurst barren-ground caribou herd, which sometimes shares parts of its winter range with the Beverly herd (and to a lesser extent with the Qamanirjuaq herd). The Bathurst herd has experienced a 99% decline in numbers, from a high of about 470,000 in the mid-1980s to 186,000 in 2003, and to 6,240 in 2021.

The status of the Bathurst herd is considered "critical low" by the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee. No harvest of Bathurst caribou has been permitted in the Northwest Territories since 2015, and only a very small harvest (10 caribou) is allowed in Nunavut. Other strong management actions, including increased incentives for harvest of wolves on the caribou winter ranges (since 2020), are in place to attempt to increase caribou survival and support recovery of the herd. Despite these efforts, it is unclear whether the herd can regain the large size that it had in the past.

**No stone will be left unturned. We are bracing ourselves to see what's happening with the Beverly herd over the next five years.**

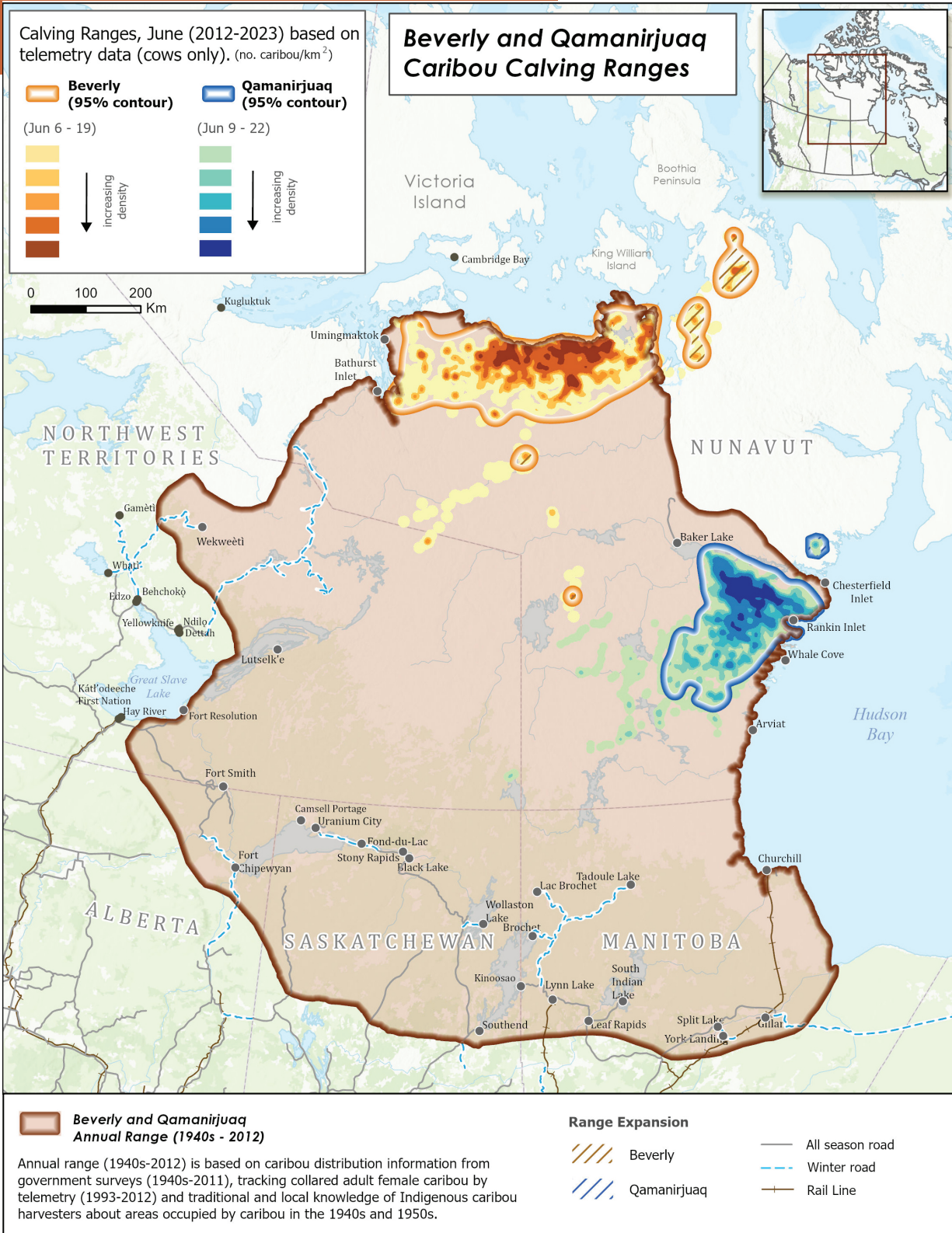
**- Mitch Campbell, BQCMB member, Government of Nunavut Department of Environment**

# Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Annual Ranges Map

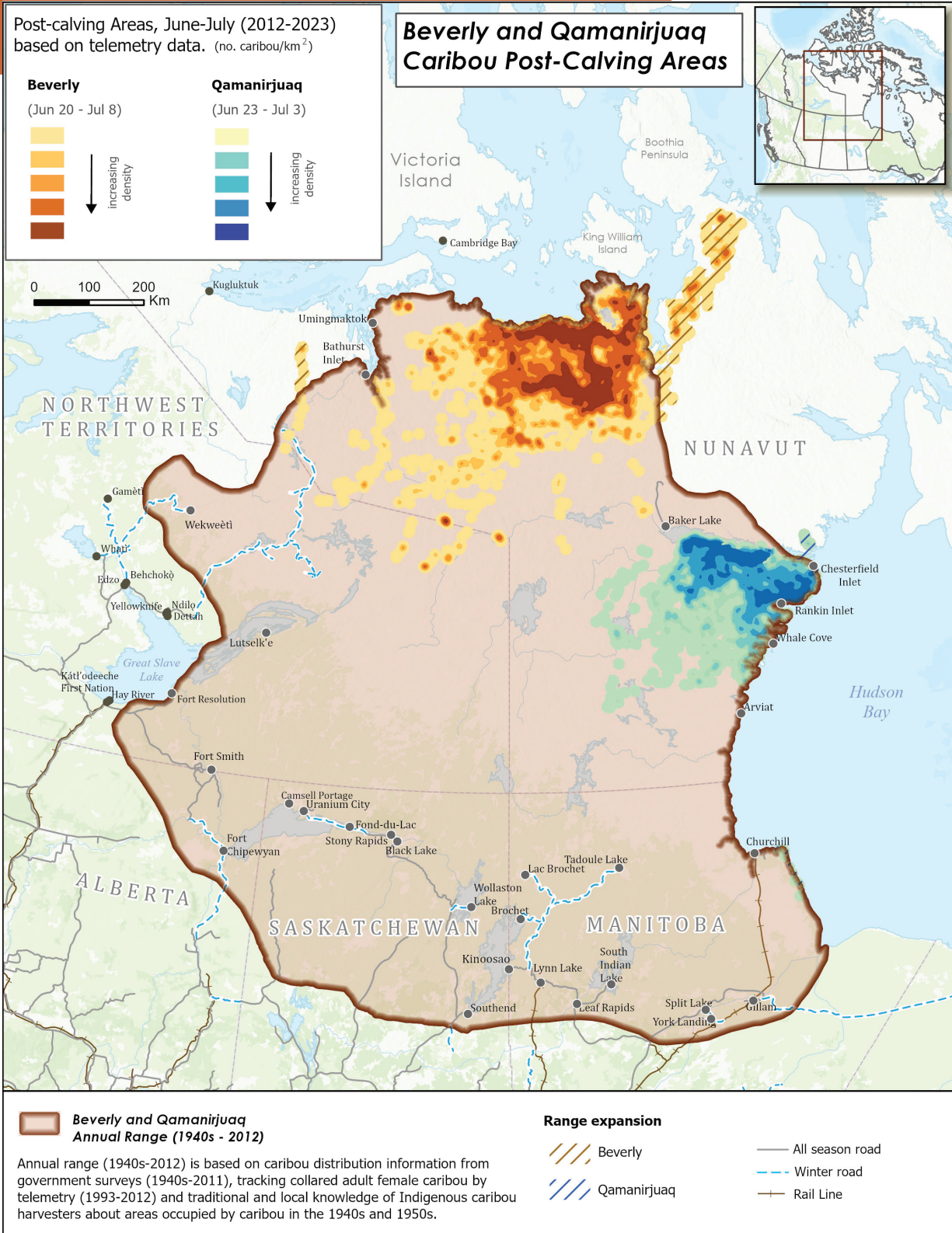


Annual range (1940s-2012) is based on caribou distribution information from government surveys (1940s-2011), tracking collared adult female caribou by telemetry (1993-2012) and traditional and local knowledge of Indigenous caribou harvesters about areas occupied by caribou in the 1940s and 1950s.

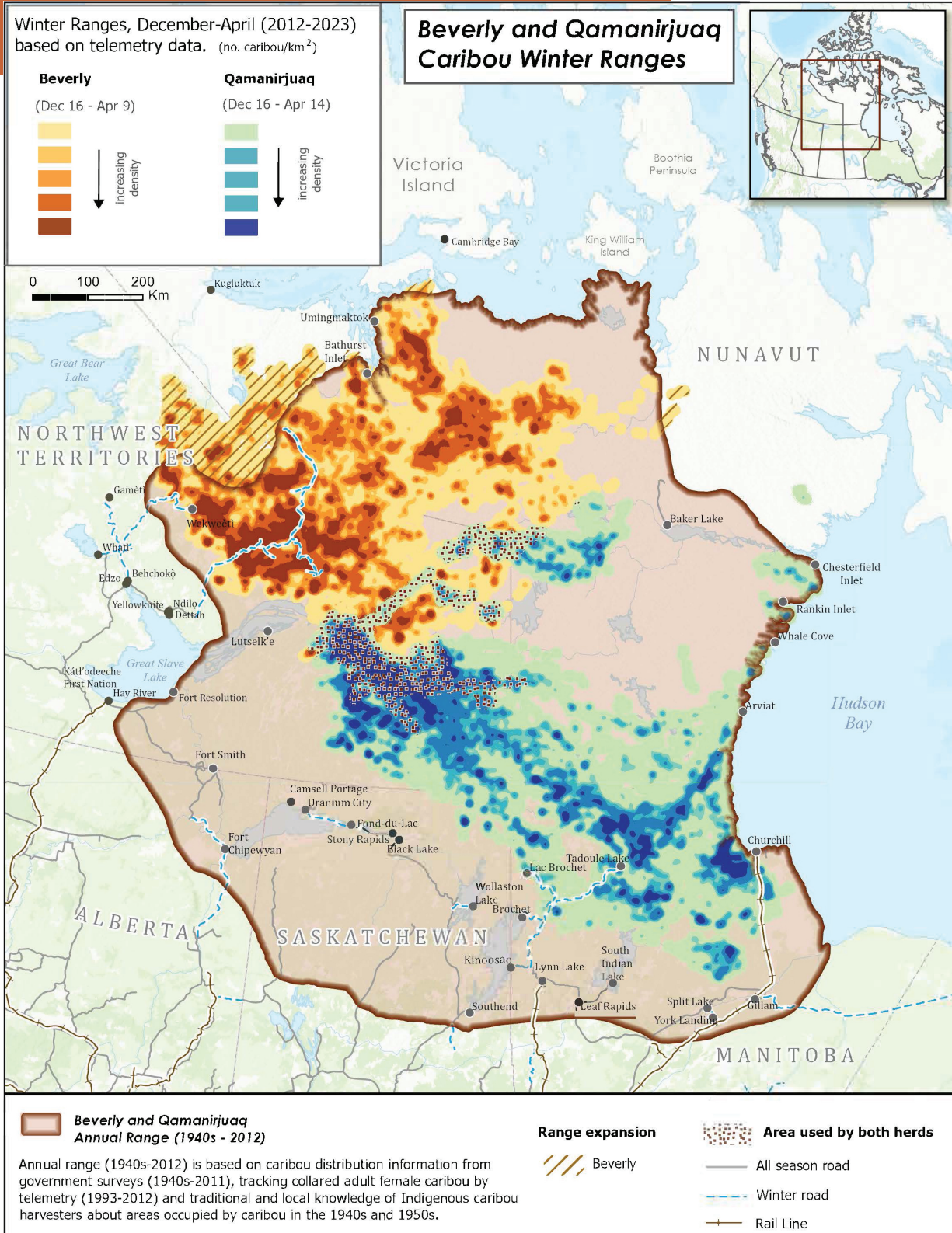
# Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Calving Ranges Map




# Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Post Calving Ranges Map



# Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Winter Ranges



# 4. WATCHING THE CARIBOU



## CARIBOU HERD VULNERABILITY

- very low
- low
- medium
- high
- very high



## THE ISSUES

With the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds in decline, many people are concerned about the future of both the herds and the people who depend on them. Indigenous peoples know that caribou numbers naturally change over time, and that in the past, a cycle of high and low numbers occurred repeatedly.

Today, we are less certain that the cycle will repeat and that low caribou numbers will increase again, or that caribou will remain strong and healthy. One challenge for caribou conservation is to make sure that herds do not decrease so much that they cannot come up again. There is no guarantee that present-day herds will recover like they did in the past, particularly with a rapidly changing climate and increasing human influences on the landscape.

**We can't survive without caribou. We have to protect our caribou – there is no other way.**

**- Arviat HTO, NU**

## WHY ARE THE HERDS DECLINING?

Negative effects from human activities, including increasing mineral exploration and development, roads, harvest, wildfires, environmental contaminants, and the effects of climate change are potential threats to barren-ground caribou. So are negative effects from natural factors, such as weather, disease, parasites, and predation.

Some of the environmental and human-caused factors that may contribute to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds' vulnerability and their decline include the following ([see also Sec. 5. Respect the Caribou – Respectful and Sustainable Harvest](#)).

### Climate Change

Climate change is considered one of the most important issues of our time by many people. Increasing carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels is believed to be a major reason for ongoing change across the caribou ranges. It is negatively affecting the land, the wildlife, and the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples and their traditional livelihoods.

Changes in weather due to climate change may have both positive and negative effects on caribou and their habitats. For instance, warming temperatures could increase foraging opportunities for caribou in some cases. On the other hand, earlier green-up may lead to caribou arriving at calving grounds too late to access enough food for newborn calves and nursing mothers. Climate change can also cause greater insect harassment during summer, increasing stress to caribou and sometimes loss of condition.





## Diseases and Parasites

Diseases and parasites can occur in any wildlife population. Most are not dangerous to people who handle or eat that animal. Some of the more common parasites that can infect caribou include the following: warbles, nasal bots, *Besnoitia*, lungworms, tapeworms, and brucellosis.

One disease that is getting more attention lately is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal, infectious wildlife disease that affects the central nervous system of deer, elk, and moose in North America. While there is currently no overlap with the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds, there is concern that if it continues to move north and east caribou may come in contact with it. The governments of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories are monitoring CWD and encouraging hunters to help prevent spread of CWD by educating themselves about regulations, reporting observations of sick/injured/dead wildlife, and submitting samples (heads) for testing from harvested white-tailed deer, caribou, moose, and elk.

## Disturbance

Human-caused disturbance may also contribute to herd declines. Vehicle traffic on roads and low-flying aircraft cause animals to spend less time feeding and use more energy trying to get away from the disturbance. Roads, pipelines, and transmission lines can create barriers for caribou, and roads also allow access to previously remote areas for hunting. Caribou are also very sensitive to new elements introduced by human activities, because of their unfamiliar appearance, smells, and sounds. These new elements can create disturbances that cause changes in behaviour that are less obvious to humans but significant to caribou.

Effects on caribou can be most severe during spring migration when cows are moving north to the calving ground, or during calving and post-calving periods when cows need to feed constantly to produce enough milk for their calves and to regain their own energy. Disturbance during the calving and post-calving period may also cause cows to abandon their calves.

## Predators

Predator-prey relationships are part of a healthy ecosystem. Wolves, grizzly bears, and wolverines are major predators for barren-ground caribou. Indigenous peoples of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges have hunted and trapped wolves for many generations, and many believe this helps decrease the numbers of predators and increase numbers of caribou.

The BQCMB understands that predator management is a tool that has sometimes been used to try to help declining caribou populations recover. However, we do not know how many predators would need to be killed over what period to have an effect, or what effect a reduction in predators would have on the size of the Beverly or Qamanirjuaq herds over time. The impact of fewer predators would vary depending on status of the herd, habitat conditions, other prey species, and which predators are active on caribou ranges at different times of year.

## Wildfires

Larger, hotter, and more frequent fires due to climate change are creating concern about loss of forested winter range. The Northwest Territories wildfire season of 2023 was the longest and most severe on record, and much of the areas burned over the last 50 years have experienced slow regeneration due to their location in the Taiga Shield.

The BQCMB considers these areas to be able to support fewer wintering barren-ground caribou because they have less productive caribou feeding areas. For decades Indigenous harvesters have been concerned that loss of high-quality feeding habitat on the winter range resulting from large wildfires has contributed to a shift in caribou range use away from northern Saskatchewan and the southern Northwest Territories. Reduced use of the southern portion of historic caribou range may also reflect reduced herd size, as smaller herds use smaller ranges.

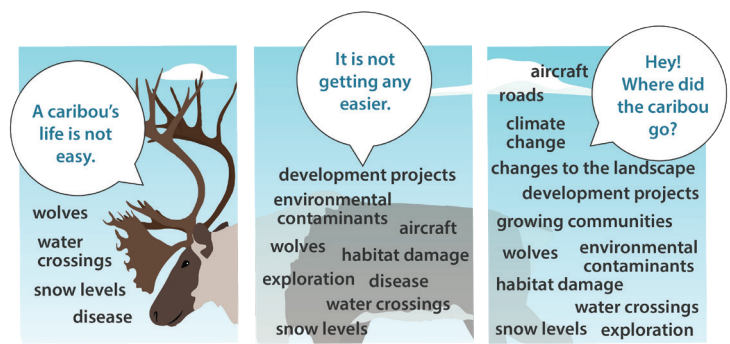
### Cumulative Effects

The combined and increasing effects from multiple factors over time are known as “cumulative” effects. Caribou are very likely to experience cumulative effects because they migrate over large areas, but how they affect barren-ground caribou is not well understood.

When the natural environmental factors that have always influenced the size and health of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds combine with human-caused factors, the caribou are less able to cope with stress, the herd’s health can be affected, and its population can decrease more quickly than expected. This leaves the herd even more open to threats and less able to deal with stress. The herd becomes increasingly vulnerable over time if the negative effects continue or if new threats appear.

The BQCMB believes that increasing cumulative effects are a serious issue that pose a threat to the herds, and that land use plans and environmental assessment processes should always include requirements for taking the possible contribution of projects to cumulative effects on caribou into consideration.

See Supporting Document for more information.



## CARIBOU HERD VULNERABILITY

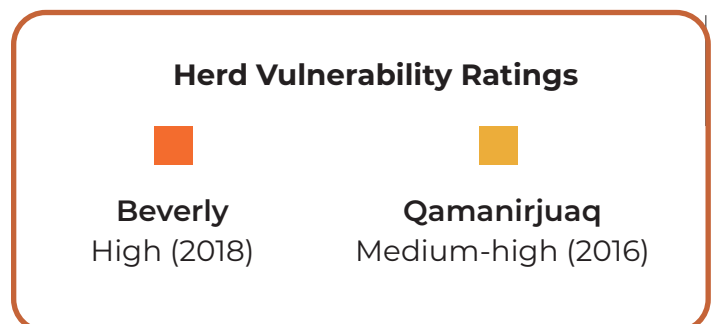
When a caribou herd is “vulnerable”, the herd is more likely to be negatively affected by natural and human-caused factors that would have less impact if the herd was in better shape. Caribou in declining herds are more likely to be in poor condition and more vulnerable to negative effects. In contrast, when most caribou in a herd are in good condition, they can use their fat and muscle reserves to deal with natural and human-caused disturbances, so the herd is less vulnerable to stress.

The BQCMB has developed a system for Board members to determine how vulnerable each herd is. Using this system, the BQCMB conducted vulnerability assessments of the caribou herds for the first time at its May 2015 (Qamanirjuaq) and November 2017 (Beverly) meetings. Government and community members individually used their knowledge to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, various “indicators” of each herd’s health (herd size, numbers and condition of calves and cows), habitat (availability and condition of the range), harvest level, and environment (predators, human-caused disturbance). The combined ratings by all members were used to score the overall vulnerability level of the herd: very low, low, medium, high, and very high.

This method produced an average vulnerability score of “medium” for the Qamanirjuaq Herd, and “medium-high” for the Beverly Herd. However, because this was a newly developed assessment method, the need for a few adjustments was identified. Following a review of the methods and preliminary results, and the weighting of selected indicators, the Board subsequently approved a revised vulnerability assessment of “medium-high” for the Qamanirjuaq Herd, and “high” for the Beverly herd.

Knowing the herd’s vulnerability level allows the BQCMB to recommend actions to governments, communities, and others to manage negative effects on caribou and improve conditions so the herds can recover. It also helps the BQCMB to develop its own programs for actions that will help the herds become stronger and larger again.

The BQCMB will aim to conduct a new assessment for each herd every five years or earlier if significant new information becomes available.



## MONITORING

There is a close link between monitoring and vulnerability assessment. Monitoring the caribou herds and factors that affect them is always needed, but the intensity and frequency of monitoring should be greater for declining herds.

Our ability to manage these factors is limited by knowledge and resources available. We need to document more Indigenous and scientific knowledge based on research and monitoring results about caribou and the many factors that affect them. While some threats to caribou can be managed to a certain extent (e.g., over-harvest, human land use activities, wildfires, predation, and environmental contaminants), we don't have enough knowledge about how to manage other factors (e.g., parasites and disease), and we cannot manage certain threats directly (e.g., weather and climate change, cumulative effects from all factors).

Over time with continued Indigenous knowledge, research, and monitoring results, the BQCMB will be better able to determine herd vulnerability, understand the actions that can be taken to improve conditions for barren-ground caribou, and make stronger recommendations to decision-makers.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – WATCHING THE CARIBOU

**Goal 1:** Understand the factors that are affecting the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds, particularly their abundance.

### Objectives:

1. Conduct frequent, regular monitoring of caribou herds to determine population size and trend and track migratory movements.
2. Monitor and assess caribou health and identify any new or increasing health threats.
3. Monitor human activities and disturbance impacts on the caribou ranges that can affect caribou directly.
4. Monitor and assess the effects of predators on caribou populations.

**Goal 2:** Determine how vulnerable the caribou herds are based on all available information.

### Objective:

1. Assess herd vulnerability every five years or more frequently if significant new information becomes available (for instance following each population survey).

**Goal 3:** Decrease vulnerability of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds by reducing threats to the caribou.

### Objectives:

1. Make recommendations about actions required to reduce threats which have direct impacts on caribou, including:
  - Reducing impacts to caribou (direct and indirect) from mineral exploration, mining and other land use activities that create noise, dust, disturbance and damage to habitat, and result in changes to caribou behavior and migration patterns.
  - Avoiding development of new roads and reducing impacts of existing roads within important caribou habitat to prevent increased hunting access, disturbance to caribou, and barriers to movement.
  - Avoiding disturbance from low-flying aircraft.
  - Preventing introduction of new diseases to caribou (e.g., Chronic Wasting Disease), as well as spreading of existing diseases, through preventative measures.
  - Reducing caribou deaths from predators if predation is determined to be at a higher level than in a natural ecosystem that is ecologically balanced, and it has been established that predator reduction will be an effective way to increase caribou productivity.
  - Promoting respectful hunting practices by all hunters and discouraging selling of caribou (**see also Sec. 5 Respectful and Sustainable Harvest**).

## Watching the Caribou: What We Can Do

Actions	BQCMB	Community & Regional Organizations
Monitor commercial land uses on the caribou ranges and assess cumulative effects of human activities on caribou.	✓	✓
Research and develop mitigation measures and best practices to reduce disturbance effects of their activities on caribou	✓	✓
Monitor land use activities and, where necessary, apply effective penalties for non-compliance with permit conditions.		
Oppose, restrict, or deny proposed projects that will have significant negative impacts on caribou that cannot be fully mitigated.	✓	✓
Support caribou research and monitoring programs related to climate change impacts, disease and parasites, predator management programs and contaminants.	✓	✓
Involve Indigenous communities in monitoring, research, and if applicable, management decisions about conservation of barren-ground caribou and their habitat.		✓
Invite and engage with Indigenous Knowledge-holders to discuss their knowledge on caribou and caribou habitat	✓	✓
Encourage youth to participate in land-based programs and learn from Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Holders about respectful caribou harvest	✓	✓
Promote, support and/or participate in community-based monitoring programs including Guardians programs and other monitoring /research that studies what affects caribou health, productivity, and abundance.	✓	✓
Support your region's BQMCB member and provide them with observations about how human activities are affecting the caribou herds, speak up at community or public meetings.		✓
Support and fund community initiatives and educational programs directed at reducing effects of human activities on caribou.	✓	✓
Support and/or participate in community harvest monitoring programs, including harvest for meat sales.	✓	✓

Individuals	Indigenous Governments	Public Governments	Regulatory Bodies *	Industry	NGO's	Tourism
	✓	✓	✓			
	✓	✓	✓	✓		
		✓	✓			
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓					
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
✓	✓					
	✓	✓		✓		
✓	✓	✓				

## Watching the Caribou: What We Can Do

Actions	BQCMB	Community & Regional Organizations
Develop and promote a respectful harvest protocol for your community/communities.	✓	✓
Hire local, Indigenous guides who can share proper protocols and ensure they are followed.		
Provide information to non-resident hunters about the status of the herds and the need for respectful hunting.		
Research and develop a position on whether incentives for harvest of predators or other predator management options should be considered for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds.	✓	✓
Participate in predator-harvesting programs for Indigenous harvesters of wolves, bears, and wolverines, when these programs are necessary.		✓
Encourage plans for forest management that includes maintaining high-quality barren-ground caribou winter range.	✓	✓
Include wildfire reduction as a priority for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in climate strategies.		
Inform and learn about territorial/provincial wildlife and barren-ground caribou harvest regulations	✓	✓
Plan and conduct population surveys according to the schedule outlined in this Plan.		
Conduct vulnerability assessments of the herds at least every five years.	✓	
Provide local, traditional, and scientific knowledge about caribou and environmental and human-cause factors that affect caribou directly to the vulnerability assessment.		✓
Implement BQCMB vulnerability assessment recommendations and encourage others to do the same.	✓	✓
Provide, distribute, and follow educational materials that educate people about vulnerability of the herds, how to avoid disturbance to caribou and their habitat, and ways to prevent the spread of disease.	✓	✓

	Individuals	Indigenous Governments	Public Governments	Regulatory Bodies *	Industry	NGO's	Tourism
	✓	✓				✓	
							✓
							✓
		✓	✓				
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓				

# 5. RESPECTING THE CARIBOU





## RESPECTFUL HARVEST

### The Issues

BQCMB members talk about respectful harvest of barren-ground caribou at every board meeting. Disrespectful hunting, including wastage, overhunting (taking more than needed), and harvesting cows when herds are declining, creates another threat for caribou herds. Hunting caribou disrespectfully also disrespects Indigenous peoples, who identify with caribou not only as a source of healthy food, but on a spiritual and cultural level.

This issue is closely tied to education, as some hunters – especially those who are not traditional caribou harvesters – may not understand why they are hunting disrespectfully. The ongoing legacy of residential schools and displacement of communities prevented people from passing on traditional knowledge and skills. Fewer Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Holders today mean important lessons that have been passed down through many generations are being lost, and fewer youth are being taught traditional ways of life.

The use of drugs and alcohol while hunting is also increasing, which can lead to disrespectful hunting and potential injury or loss of human life.



In addition, industrial development across parts of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges and the expansion of roads has opened a door to hunters who otherwise would not be hunting caribou in those areas. This easier access to caribou as well as modern technology (such as improper use of high-powered rifles and snowmachines) has led to more wastage and overhunting.

A collective approach is needed to educate about the need for respectful harvest, compliance of regulations, promotion of Indigenous harvest protocols, maintaining a sustainable harvest of caribou, and helping to ensure there are barren-ground caribou for current and future generations.

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal:** Ensure respectful harvest is conducted by all harvesters of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds.

### Objectives:

1. Reduce overhunting and wastage.
2. Discourage use of drugs and alcohol while hunting.
3. Promote the harvest of bulls instead of cows.
4. Support Indigenous initiatives to strengthen, teach, and share protocols and to adapt protocols to new situations where needed.



**Take what you need is what my grandpa always told me. In my travel in the springtime, when you go out harvesting caribou, I saw firsthand neighbours from the southern parts that just cut up the hindquarters and left the caribou like that. Not just one but several, I saw it all piled up into one area. If there is a way to educate other community members not to overhunt, and just take what you need?**

- Northlands Denesūliné First Nation, Lac Brochet, MB

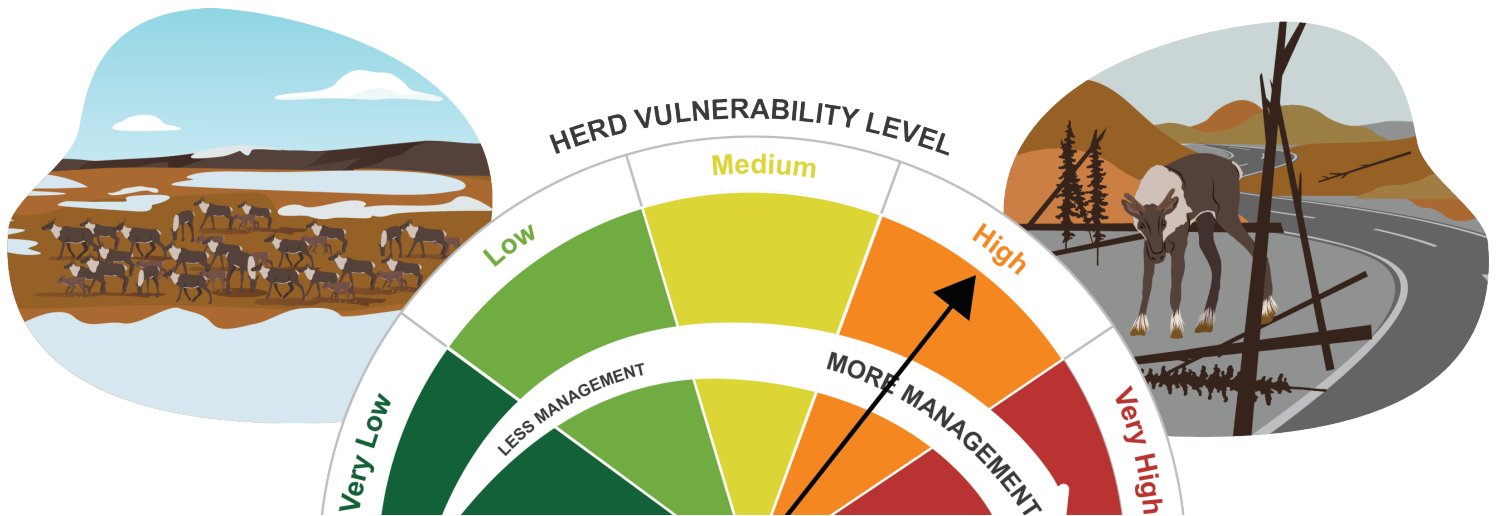
## SUSTAINABLE HARVEST

### The Issues

#### *Indigenous Harvesters Perspective*

Indigenous harvesters and communities are worried that ongoing harvest of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds will be increasingly unsustainable if the following activities continue:

- disrespectful harvest, especially wastage;
- harvest for meat sales, some of which is unmonitored and unregulated;
- increased harvest pressure by people from outside the caribou ranges who were not traditionally hunters of these herds; and
- harvest of cows when herds are declining.



### Management Perspective

Harvest reporting is important. Knowing how many animals are being harvested will help everyone to decide if and when actions are needed to protect barren-ground herds. Experience has shown that too much harvest from herds that are declining or at very low numbers can make the decline worse and recovery more difficult. Monitoring of harvest is especially important for declining herds.

The BQCMB understands that Indigenous communities need to harvest barren-ground caribou to maintain their cultures even if herds are declining. But harvesting the same number of caribou each year while the herd decreases in size can make the decline steeper and faster. The most serious risk is that a herd will become so small that it can no longer recover and increase in size again.

The current level of harvest is only sustainable if the herd is large and healthy enough to produce many calves each year, and a large portion of those calves survive to become adults who are healthy enough to produce their own young. In this situation, the herd continues to be strong and healthy, and will be able to meet the needs of current and future generations of harvesters.

However, if the numbers of barren-ground caribou dying are greater than the number being born and going on to produce their own young, the herd will become smaller over time. Continuing to harvest at the same level year after year will not be sustainable, because the caribou herd will not be large enough to support that amount of harvest over the long term.

## HARVEST MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Communities and governments must agree there is a problem before harvest restrictions are considered.

### BQCMB Harvest Management Guidelines

The BQCMB recognizes the use of barren-ground caribou by Indigenous peoples to support their families as the most important use of caribou, and that other kinds of uses should never threaten Indigenous harvest of caribou for sustenance use.

When herds are declining and their vulnerability is increasing, some types of harvest may not be advisable, or limits on some harvesters may be required to protect the herd for the future. When everyone agrees that harvest management is needed to protect the herd, the BQCMB will make recommendations based on the herd's vulnerability level:

- For herds with higher vulnerability, more restrictions on harvest will be recommended.
- When herds are at a lower vulnerability level, few restrictions will be recommended.
- At exceptionally low herd size, harvest could be limited to only a very small number of animals for social/ceremonial purposes.

## Indigenous Government Initiatives

Some Indigenous governments and organizations on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges are developing or have developed barren-ground caribou stewardship plans that include guidelines for a time when a herd is declining and harvest restrictions may be required. The BQCMB supports Indigenous-led stewardship plans that identify community self-regulation of harvest as part of their rights and responsibilities as stewards of their lands and wildlife. The BQCMB also encourages development of stewardship plans that take the vulnerability levels of herds into account.

Many Indigenous governments and organizations also have their own protocols to encourage respectful and sustainable harvest, many of which have been shared with the BQCMB. Some protocols developed by the BQCMB are:

- Harvest only what you need.
- Shoot bulls instead of cows, when possible, during periods when caribou herds are declining or small.
- Recover your kill and all wounded animals.
- Handle and store caribou meat and parts carefully.
- Leave the land and waters clean and tidy.
- Make use of all parts of caribou.



## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES - RESPECTFUL AND SUSTAINABLE HARVEST

**Goal:** Ensure that harvest does not threaten the future of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds.

### Objectives:

1. Promote and support harvest reporting programs by communities and regional organizations.
2. Estimate the annual harvest of the caribou herds.
3. Support efforts to address issues related to licensed harvest and harvest for meat sales.
4. If necessary to protect the future of the herds, provide harvest recommendations for licensed hunters.
5. Promote development of guidelines for self-regulation of harvest in Indigenous-led caribou stewardship plans.
6. Advance respectful people-caribou relationships across the caribou ranges.



**...do we want to kill the last caribou? Do we set a quota? Someone needs to start with a protocol or something.**

**- Arviat HTO Board, NU**

**People need to understand that the only way for the caribou harvest to be sustainable is to hunt respectfully.**

**We all share in this responsibility to make sure there are caribou for the next generation.**

**- BQCMB Chair Earl Evans,  
Northwest Territory Métis Nation**

## Respecting the Caribou: What We Can Do

Actions	BQCMB	Community & Regional Organizations
Establish, support, and/or participate in harvest reporting programs in all jurisdictions to ensure sustainable harvest levels are developed and maintained	✓	✓
Establish, comply with or report violations of community protocols and by-laws, including wastage, harvesting more than needed, etc.		✓
Inform about territorial/provincial wildlife and barren-ground caribou harvest regulations, and ensure field offices are fully staffed with trained conservation officers.		
Support efforts to address issues related to harvest for meat sales.	✓	✓
Inform communities and hunters about the status of the herds, respectful hunting, the need to use caribou wisely, and potential impacts of selling caribou on future harvest.	✓	✓
Develop communication materials to use in educating youth, local hunters, and others about the need for respectful hunting.	✓	✓
Share respectful hunting information on social media and with peers.	✓	✓
Develop Indigenous-led caribou stewardship plans and/or support them	✓	✓
Teach youth and inexperienced hunters appropriate and respectful hunting practices.	✓	✓
Fund youth and Elder programs to assist communities in educating their young people about respectful harvest	✓	✓
Hire local, Indigenous guides who can share proper protocols and ensure they are followed		
Make recommendations about harvest limits, if required, based on the BQCMB vulnerability ratings for the caribou herds and giving highest priority to the needs of Indigenous people who depend on them.	✓	✓
Implement a “bulls only” harvest for resident and non-resident licensed hunters.		

	Individuals	Indigenous Governments	Public Governments	Regulatory Bodies *	Industry	NGO's	Tourism
	✓	✓					✓
	✓	✓					
			✓				
	✓	✓	✓				
	✓	✓	✓				
		✓	✓				
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓					
		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
							✓
		✓	✓				
			✓				

# 6. RESPECTING THE LAND



## THE ISSUES

### The Issues

The land provides everything caribou need to survive. The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds have migrated long distances between different seasonal ranges at certain times each year for millennia. They have also relied on the habitats and food sources that are provided on those seasonal ranges.

Some human activities can disrespect the land, the caribou, and the Indigenous peoples who rely on them. These include activities that damage barren-ground caribou habitats or create barriers that prevent caribou from getting to seasonal habitat or cause changes to migration, which can reduce availability of food.

The BQCMB has been making recommendations to governments and regulatory agencies in support of caribou habitat protection for more than 40 years and will continue to do so. The main tools available for protecting important caribou habitats are:

1. restrictions on development in specific areas, established through land use planning and protected areas;
2. protection of forested winter range through wildfire management; and
3. conditions imposed on how projects are conducted, determined, and applied through environmental assessment processes, project monitoring and enforcement.



### Ongoing Major Concerns

The BQCMB and communities across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges are concerned about increasing amounts of development activities. These activities and the effects of extensive wildfires can damage caribou habitat and increase vulnerability of the herds. Both the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds have been decreasing in size partly due to new infrastructure on the range, climate change, and other environmental factors. Roads and airstrips provide greater access for activities including mineral exploration and development onto the caribou ranges. These activities can have effects on caribou and habitat that add to the direct impacts of the infrastructure itself.

Unless land use is carefully monitored and managed, greater human use of caribou range for economic development and other activities such as exploration and development, tourism, and harvest, combined with habitat loss due to extensive wildfires, will have negative effects on caribou.

Much work remains to be done to gain a better understanding of impacts of human activities on barren-ground caribou and actions that can be taken to avoid or reduce them. Although there are many threats to barren-ground caribou and their habitat, by working together we can reduce the risks we have control over, and therefore promote caribou recovery.



**Development of roads, mines, the hydro-fibre line. . .**

**in the long run will damage the relationship with the land and caribou.**

**- James Laban, Indigenous Harvester and BQCMB Member, Black Lake Denesųłn  First Nation, SK**

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

The BQCMB has spoken up frequently since its early years about the need to protect the most important habitats across the ranges, so the caribou herds are able to move freely and find high quality food during all seasons. Some ways to protect habitat include:

### Wildfire Management

Governments should consider important caribou habitats when assessing options for managing wildfires, and make efforts to maintain corridors of unburned forest to connect areas of productive caribou habitat.

### Land Use Planning

The BQCMB remains hopeful that the final Nunavut Land Use Plan will establish meaningful caribou habitat protection, and that its implementation will provide protection for key caribou habitats, including calving grounds, post-calving ranges and important caribou water crossings.



### Protected Areas

The BQCMB also supports the creation of protected areas, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) to protect caribou habitat and give herds the opportunity to adapt to changes in habitat by adjusting their seasonal range use patterns. IPCAs are lands and waters where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting, conserving, and managing these ecosystems.

### More Research Needed

More information is needed to fully understand the potential impacts of environmental and human activities on barren-ground caribou and their habitat, and determine how to address the issues.

We need more scientific and Indigenous monitoring and research about each herd's seasonal range use patterns, habitat use by caribou, activities that damage caribou habitat, how much time is required for recovery of disturbed areas, and ways to avoid or reduce negative effects on habitats.

We also don't fully understand the role climate change has on caribou habitat, and how it contributes to cumulative effects from all factors on caribou.

Effective conservation actions will need cooperation between governments and land users of all types.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – RESPECTING THE LAND

**Goal 1:** Learn about how Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou use the caribou range throughout the year and what areas are the most important at different times.

### Objectives:

1. Record Indigenous knowledge about seasonal distribution of the caribou herds and changes that have occurred in range use patterns over the last few decades.
2. Track movements of caribou using the best available technology causing the least stress to the animals using Indigenous knowledge and the results of scientific research.
3. Encourage development of methods for tracking caribou movements that do not require collars.



**Goal 2:** Learn about specific habitats used by Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and why they are important.

**Objectives:**

1. Record Indigenous knowledge about the relationship of caribou with their local environment, including which habitats and plants are most important at different times of the year.
2. Promote scientific research on seasonal habitat use by caribou and collaboration with Indigenous communities.

**Goal 3:** Learn about how climate change affects caribou habitats and range use by the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds and how those effects could be reduced.

**Objectives:**

1. Promote scientific and Indigenous Knowledge research on how climate change affects caribou and habitats.
2. Identify ways to reduce changes to caribou habitats that result from climate change effects and negatively affect caribou.

**Goal 4:** Learn about how industrial development activities negatively affect Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou habitat and how to avoid impacts and reduce these negative effects.

**Objectives:**

1. Record Indigenous knowledge about how human activities harm caribou habitat.
2. Encourage scientific research on impacts of land use activities on caribou habitat and ways to avoid or reduce those impacts.
3. Monitor human activities that may have negative effects on key caribou habitats across the caribou ranges.
4. Make recommendations about actions required to reduce threats which have potential negative impacts on key caribou habitats, including:

- Preventing disturbance from mineral exploration, mining and other land use activities that damage food and water resources in key caribou habitats, especially calving grounds, post-calving ranges, spring migration ranges and important water crossings;
- Reducing damage to caribou habitat (direct and indirect) from mineral exploration, mining, and other land use activities on all seasonal ranges; and
- Avoiding development of new roads and reducing impacts of existing roads to prevent loss and disturbance of habitats.

**Goal 5:** Learn about how wildfires negatively affect Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou habitat and how to avoid impacts and reduce negative effects of wildfires.

**Objectives:**

1. Record Indigenous knowledge about how wildfires harm caribou habitat.
2. Encourage scientific research on impacts of wildfires on caribou habitat and ways to avoid or reduce those impacts.
3. Monitor wildfires on forested winter ranges.
4. Reduce loss of boreal winter range and damage to caribou food and water resources resulting from wildfires.
5. Protect large areas of connected caribou habitat from wildfires to maintain key migration corridors and mitigate climate change effects on caribou.

**For this Board, connectivity is a crucial aspect – we need to give these caribou herds the freedom to keep moving between areas and adapting to vegetative changes.**

**- Jan Adamczewski, BQCMB member,  
Government of the Northwest Territories,  
Environment and Climate Change**

## Respecting the Land: What We Can Do

Actions	BQCMB	Community & Regional Organizations
Endorse, support, and participate in programs that monitor, and research caribou habitat use and seasonal range use, incl. Guardians programs.	✓	✓
Conduct, fund and/or participate in research about caribou habitat and seasonal range use, factors that can have negative effects and cumulative effects on caribou habitat, and actions that can be taken to reduce those effects.		✓
Promote protection of calving grounds, post-calving ranges, spring migration range, important water crossings and key forested winter ranges through land use planning, protected areas, and environmental assessment, and wildfire suppression.	✓	✓
Not propose and/or oppose developments proposed on calving grounds, post-calving ranges, spring migration range, and important water crossings.	✓	✓
Work with industry and governments to develop mitigation methods and best practices to reduce the negative effects of human activities on caribou habitat and recommend these actions to regulatory agencies, project proponents, communities, and others.	✓	✓
Monitor commercial land uses on the caribou ranges, including mining and mineral exploration, tourism, and flights by air charter companies and apply penalties for non-compliance re: permit conditions (where mandated).		✓
Provide communications materials to educate people about the need for habitat protection and the importance of not disturbing sensitive habitats. .	✓	✓
Assess land use activities proposed on the caribou ranges for their potential effects and cumulative effects on key caribou habitats.	✓	✓
Not approve proposed projects that will contribute to cumulative effects on key caribou habitats.		
Collaborate on initiatives and educational programs directed at reducing effects of human activities on caribou habitats.	✓	✓
Encourage Canada and the provincial/territorial governments to uphold international climate change agreements, such as the Paris Agreement commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.		✓
Encourage provinces and territories to implement climate change strategies.		✓

Individuals	Indigenous Governments	Public Governments	Regulatory Bodies *	Industry	NGO's	Tourism
✓	✓	✓				
✓	✓	✓		✓		
	✓	✓	✓			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓		✓	
		✓	✓			
	✓	✓			✓	
✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

# 7. COMMUNITY CONNECTION



## THE ISSUES

### The Issues

The connections between Indigenous peoples and barren-ground caribou have been unbreakable since time immemorial. However, changes in climate and human activities On-the-Land, and their cumulative effects, have made the life of the caribou – and the people who depend on these animals for their nutritional, spiritual and cultural needs – much more difficult. Now is the time for the BQCMB to strengthen the bonds with and between Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou-using communities to ensure they can continue to maintain a way of life that includes caribou.

For this reason, connections must be strengthened throughout the life of this Plan between Elders and youth, between non-Indigenous people and Indigenous Knowledge Holders, between the BQCMB and the Indigenous communities it represents, and among all caribou peoples across the caribou ranges. We ALL have a role to play to keep these connections strong for today, and for the future.

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES – COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

**Goal 1:** Ensure Indigenous community and regional organizations and the BQCMB are working together toward a shared goal.

### Objectives:

1. Provide strong support to BQCMB members.
2. Increase in-person outreach with caribou-using communities.
3. Facilitate Elder/youth mentorship.
4. Support and promote On-the-Land programs for youth.
5. Support and promote caribou stewardship plans, management plans, and traditional protocols created by Indigenous communities.
6. Support and facilitate communication among all communities across the caribou ranges.

**“Nowadays that knowledge is not there for the young people. If that knowledge can be brought to the schools, to land-based teachings, to the youth, so they would know which type of caribou to shoot when they’re out hunting, that would increase the herd and decrease the decline of the caribou. To young people a caribou is just a caribou.”**

**- Northlands Denesuline First Nation, Lac Brochet, MB**

## Community Connections: What We Can Do

Actions	BQCMB	Community & Regional Organizations
Provide support to BQCMB members before, during and after Board meetings so they can share information with their communities.	✓	✓
Post BQCMB information in public buildings and schools	✓	✓
Invite and/or support Elders, and Indigenous Knowledge Holders, BQCMB members and others to present at schools, youth groups and/or community meetings and share BQCMB information.	✓	✓
Support and/or participate in community initiatives such as feasts, On-The-Land camps, or survival training.	✓	✓
Support hunters taking youth and inexperienced hunters hunting and provide training on respectful hunting.	✓	✓
Support and/or continue to fund youth and elder attendance at each BQCMB meeting.	✓	✓
Fund, promote, and/or apply for On-The-Land camp funding to educate youth about traditional knowledge.	✓	✓
Continue to provide scholarships for students doing research to learn about barren-ground caribou and their habitat	✓	✓
Encourage non-Indigenous hunters and outfitters to visit local Band offices or Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO) to ensure they follow local hunting protocols.	✓	✓
Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into caribou management plans, strategic plans, wildlife monitoring and management plans, operational and mitigation planning, and others as appropriate.	✓	✓
Provide adequate, long-term funding to the BQCMB to ensure caribou range communities receive enough support to participate in caribou conservation.		✓
Use proper protocols for using Indigenous Knowledge and recognize intellectual property rights.	✓	✓
Air charter companies should maintain minimum flight heights and apply strong penalties for non-compliance.		
Meet with range communities, leadership, and wildlife organizations (such as HTO boards) to exchange information.	✓	✓

Individuals	Indigenous Governments	Public Governments	Regulatory Bodies *	Industry	NGO's	Tourism
	✓	✓				
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓				
✓	✓					
✓	✓	✓				
	✓	✓		✓		
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	✓	✓		✓	✓	
✓	✓	✓				✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓				
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
				✓		
	✓	✓		✓		

# 8. COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Communication and education are the responsibilities of all partners involved in conservation and management of the barren-ground caribou herds. Information needs to flow both ways between local knowledge holders and management agencies for effective communication and education. Even more important is the need to establish a shared culture of responsibility amongst public and Indigenous governments and organizations, to ensure messaging is clear, balanced and collaborative.

The BQCMB's communication and education activities will be ongoing throughout the life of this Plan, with greater emphasis during times when one or both caribou herds are declining and highly vulnerable.

## COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITIES

The BQCMB's communication activities for 2023-2032 will address the key management plan priorities and their associated "What We Can Do" actions. Underlying all activities will be the guiding values of shared responsibility and the need for prioritizing barren-ground caribou (see [Sec. 2 Guiding Principles](#)).

### Priority #1: Watching the Caribou

- Provide communications materials to communities and other land users to educate people about threats to caribou, as well as programs that monitor status of the herds and vulnerability of the herds.
- Provide information to all parties who interact with caribou about action they can take to reduce harm to the herds.
- Encourage caribou hunters, communities, and other land users to share their knowledge and observations about caribou to assist monitoring programs.

### Priority #2: Respecting the Caribou

- Encourage hunters to follow traditional practices by taking only what they need, preventing wastage, and harvesting bulls instead of cows, when possible, especially when herds are declining.
- Develop targeted education campaigns for a wide variety of audiences, including young hunters and Indigenous and non-Indigenous hunters who are not traditional caribou harvesters.
- Provide BQCMB members and caribou-using communities with written materials to use in educating youth, local hunters, and others about the need for respectful hunting.
- Develop and provide generic hunting protocols for communities to adapt and display at band offices, Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) offices, schools, and other locations.

### Priority #3: Respecting the Land

- Promote protection of key caribou habitats that are very important to caribou and sensitive to disturbance, including calving grounds, post-calving ranges and key water crossings.
- Promote protection of key forested winter range through wildfire suppression, land use planning, protected areas, and environmental assessment.
- Provide communications materials to various audiences to educate people about the need for habitat protection and actions they can take to ensure their activities do not disturb sensitive habitats.



### **Priority #4: Community Connection**

- Work with board members before, during and after BQCMB meetings to increase the types and amount of support provided to them so they can more easily share information with their communities.
- Visit local schools as part of member outreach, arrange presentations by board members to schools in communities where they live, and develop materials and information for board members to support their presentations.
- Hold more meetings in communities that harvest Beverly or Qamanirjuaq caribou to provide them with information and discuss their ideas and possible solutions for caribou issues.
- Continue to promote and fund On-the-Land programs for youth.

## **TARGET AUDIENCES**

Following are the BQCMB's target audiences for messaging around barren-ground caribou conservation:

- Harvesters from communities across the caribou ranges
- Hunters who live outside the caribou ranges but are harvesting Beverly or Qamanirjuaq caribou
- Community and regional wildlife organizations
- Indigenous leaders, Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Holders
- Provincial and territorial teachers (grades K to 12)
- Youth from communities across the caribou ranges
- Industries operating on the caribou ranges (e.g., mining, air charter, expediting, tourism)
- Regional land use planning and environmental assessment organizations
- Regulatory agencies

## **COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS**

An effective plan for communication of BQCMB priorities will require targeted communication to key groups of stakeholders (as listed above under "Target Audiences").

Each audience may desire or require a slightly different method of communication. There are many communication and education tools and techniques available to the BQCMB, including posters, presentations, fact sheets, briefings, media releases and backgrounders, newsletters, video, websites, and social media. Face-to-face opportunities include public meetings in communities, visits to schools, on-the-land gatherings, and community workshops. The BQCMB will use tools and tactics appropriate for each intended message and audience, selecting from both traditional communication materials and social media strategies. Translation of communication tools into Indigenous languages will be conducted when appropriate and feasible.

## **COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING**

For each year of the Management Plan the BQCMB will develop an accompanying Communications Plan identifying key messages, target and secondary audiences, and tools to be used throughout the year, dependent on the management priority and/or action item being addressed. The Communications Plan will be evaluated each year and adjusted as needed.

## SHARING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Making recommendations about conservation of the two herds and their habitats using a collaborative approach is the mandate of the BQCMB.

That is why this Plan has been written with a specific focus not just on what the BQCMB can do, but what our target audiences can do. The “What We Can Do” tables throughout this plan invite collaboration. Distribution will occur early in the life of the plan, and follow-up with the audiences will occur on a regular basis.

## TRACKING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Establishing two-way communication, sharing information through regular BQCMB communication channels, and engaging our audiences are key to the success of the Plan, and to conserving the herds and their habitats for future generations.

Prior to distribution of the Caribou Management Plan, the BQCMB will develop a website “landing page” for the Plan. This page will include the “What You Can Do” lists, communication tools (as they are developed), and an interactive map of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges.

The interactive map will be a visual record of the broad range of activities across the caribou ranges taking place to support conservation of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds and habitats. Building on the collaborative nature of the plan, BQCMB partners will be encouraged to share their progress related to their “What You Can Do” statements, through simple forms and/or check lists developed by the BQCMB. These conservation activities will then be added to the interactive map and revised when updated information is provided.

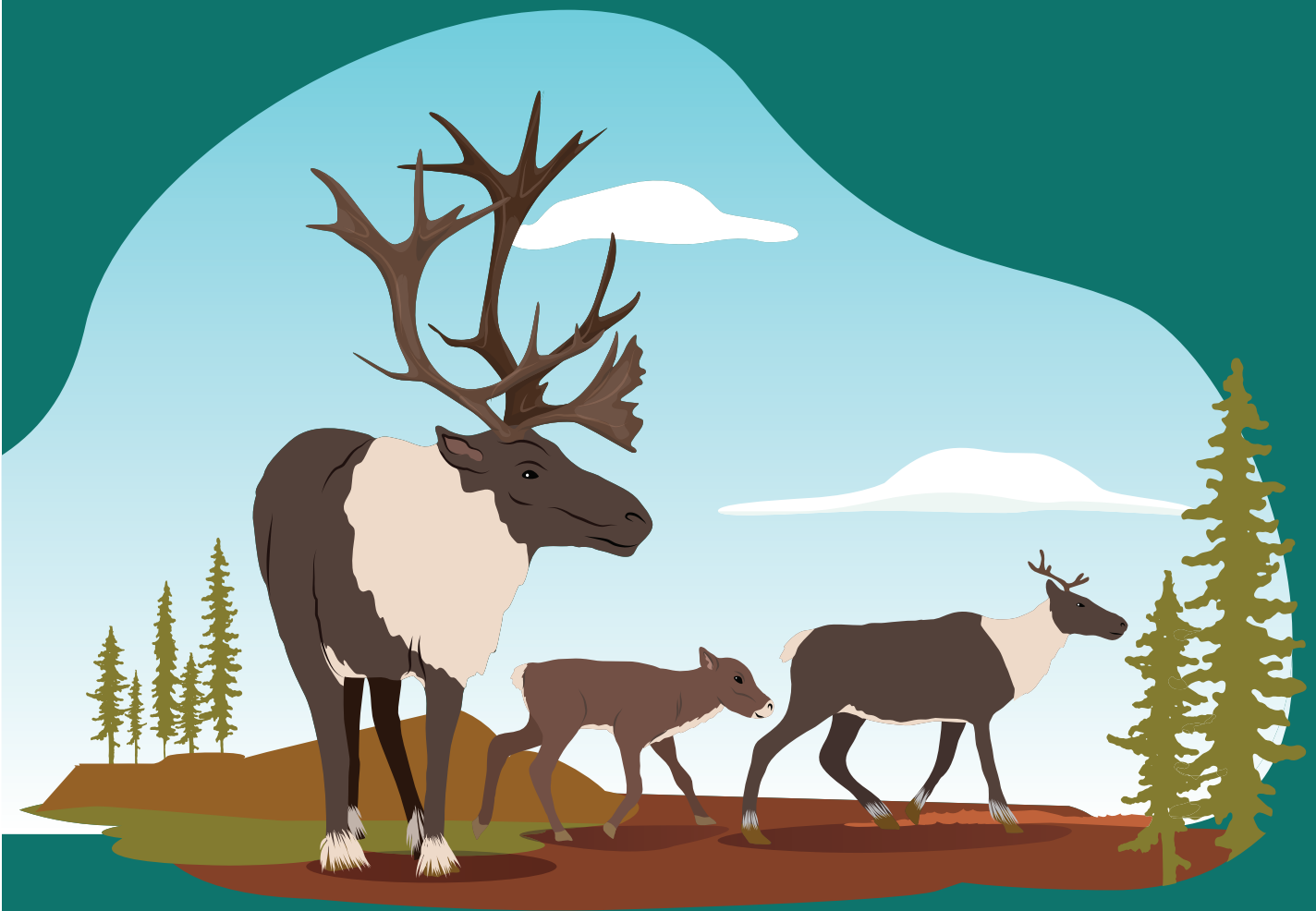
The result will be a living, growing tool to provide inspiration to others, share successes, and identify where gaps remain, while providing an effective way for BQCMB to track the contributions of all parties addressing the BQCMB’s goals and objectives and the overall progress of the plan.







# BEVERLY & QAMANIRJUAQ CARIBOU MANAGEMENT BOARD



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