

# BLUENOSE EAST CARIBOU HEARING



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PO Box 134, Tulita, NT, X0E 0K0

Phone (867) 588-4040

Mobile 867-446-1104

Skype deborahleesimmons

Fax (867) 588-3324

[INFO@srrb.nt.ca](mailto:INFO@srrb.nt.ca)

[www.srrb.nt.ca](http://www.srrb.nt.ca)

[www.facebook.com/SahtuWildlife](https://www.facebook.com/SahtuWildlife)

Ernie Campbell, Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
[Ernie\\_Campbell@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Ernie_Campbell@gov.nt.ca)

*Delivered via email*

February 15, 2016

## **RE: Round 2 Information Request to ENR**

Thank you for your responses to our first round of information requests. For Round 2, the ᐱᕐᕈᕐᕐ ᑕᑕᑦᑕᑦ ᑕᑕᑦᑕᑦ ᑕᑕᑦᑕᑦ has some additional requests, as follows. Given that we're a little late in delivering these, we would gratefully accept ENR's responses on February 22.

### **1. Predation**

Predation is a major limiting factor that directly affects the number of caribou in a herd and the ability of the herd to recover. Its importance is recognised in a large number of published papers and in the caribou management plans. This issue was identified in detail by the communities in the ACCWM Plan of Nov 3, 2014 (Page 86), for instance. The ENR Plan contains no estimates of the numbers of individuals (adults or calves) that are predated annually in the respective herds. Does ENR have observations, studies or reports on the numbers of caribou, in particular calves, lost to predators annually on the calving ground for the BNE herd and at other times during the annual migration/reproductive cycle?

Does ENR have observations, information or estimates about how predation numbers compare to the estimated numbers that are harvested in the herds?

### **2. Herd distribution**

Some reports in the literature indicate that bulls and cows with calves overwinter in different habitats due to the need for cows to avoid predators.

Does ENR have, or is ENR aware of, any evidence of this type of habitat preference for the Bluenose East (BNE) herd?

Is ENR aware of any documented traditional knowledge that would help define where the herd is distributed during major events, e.g. overwintering, in the annual cycle?

Is ENR aware of any studies conducted on the range use by the most vulnerable individuals in the herd (calves and sub-adults) for these three herds?

### **3. Herd recovery**

Several questions remain as to whether, and when, the herd will begin to recover. A major factor in the ability of the herds to recover is the pregnancy rate, and whether the herd is capable of achieving close to the maximum intrinsic rate of increase. Current studies report the number of calves in terms of calf:cow ratios and replacement by 1+ individuals. ENR indicates in its reports that pregnancy rates are estimated from blood samples taken during community hunts and research studies.

Have these data been compiled for the BNE herd and do they indicate an optimum pregnancy rate for herd recovery?

Does ENR have estimates for losses from numbers or individuals or productivity due to disease?

Has ENR compiled data on body condition from research or community health-monitoring programs?

### **4. Linear feature avoidance**

Recent research in Alaska (caribou) and Europe (reindeer) has shown that during migration some individuals will not cross linear features, such as roads, and may move long distances outside the migration route to go around them. In Europe the studies have shown that some individuals may be delayed in returning to the calving grounds by several days.

Does ENR have evidence of similar splitting within the herd for the BNE herd due to linear feature avoidance?

Does ENR have estimates of the potential impacts of current development in the migration route that might be impacting the current success of calving for the BNE herd?

### **5. Cross-regional variation**

Different regions through which caribou migrate in the NWT are subject to different regional cultures and contexts, including distinct land claim agreement structures and obligations. The BNE herd, for instance, migrates through regions subject to the Sahtú, Tł̨ch̨q and Nunavut land claim agreements and associated collaborative management systems. How would ENR deal with cross regional variation in management approaches, including different approaches to harvest management?

Máhsı cho,



Deborah Simmons  
Executive Director