



**Tłıchǫ Government**

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October 22, 2021

Ms. Tutcho, Chair  
Sahtú Renewable Resources Board  
P.O. Box 134  
Tulít'a, NT, X0E 0K0

Dear Ms. Tutcho:

**Responses to Round 2 Information Requests - Délı̄nę 2021 Public Listening Session on Tı̄h'ádı́ hé Gots'edı́ (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors**

As per the request on July 16, 2020, Tłıchǫ Government - Department of Culture and Lands Protection submit to the ʔehdzo Got'ı̄nę Gots'ę́ Nákedı́ (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board) responses to Round 2 Information Requests for the Public Listening Session.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Michael Birlea  
Manager, Lands Protection and Renewable Resources  
Department of Culture and Lands Protection  
Tłıchǫ Government

Délinę 2021 Public Listening Session on Tıçh'ádií hé Gots'edı (Living with Wildlife) –  
Predators and Competitors

## Responses to Round 2 Information Requests

Tłıchq Government

Department of Culture and Lands Protection

# Responses to Round 2 Information Requests – Tłıchǫ Government

Deadline for responses October 15, 2021

Information Request (IR) 2.1: *Tıch'ádıı he Gots'edi – Ekwò, Predators and Competitors*

2.1.1 The Conservation Picture: Ekwò, People, Planning, and the Public Listening Session

*Fort Good Hope and Tulit'a IRs to all Parties*

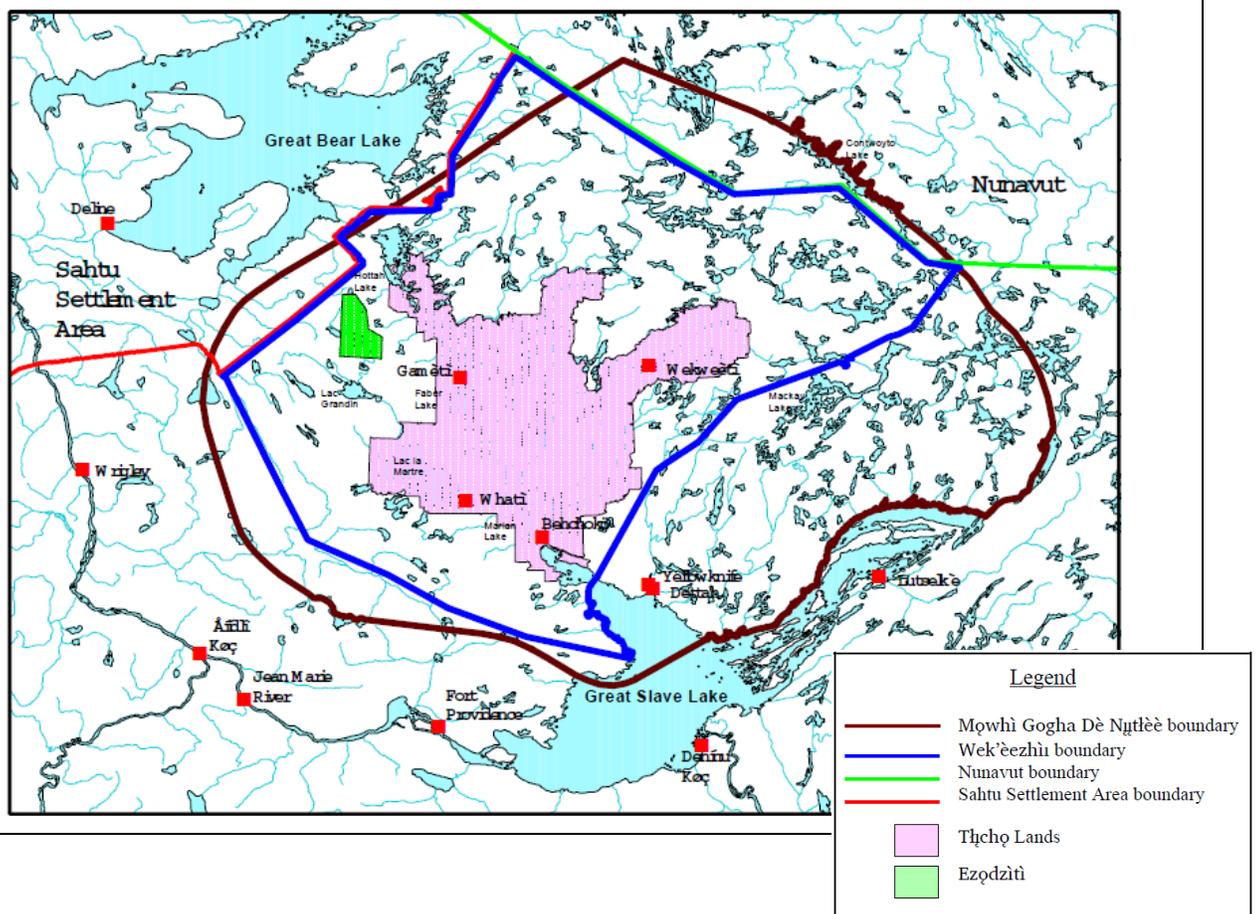
2. ENR and other Parties presenting scientific information at the Déłıne 2021 PLS are requested to prepare a glossary of terms with plain language definitions.

Monfwi Gogha Dè Nıjtłèè - the traditional area of the Tłıchǫ, described by Chief Monfwi during the signing of Treaty 11 in 1921

ekwò - Barrenground-ekwò

dıga – dıga

Wek'èezhıı - the “management area” of the Tłıchǫ Agreement – See illustrative map below



3. Does the concept of conservation and modern western conservation institutions conflict with our Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, and infringe upon our collective rights as Indigenous peoples? If it does conflict, how does it conflict?

The western concept of conservation may conflict with Indigenous knowledge systems and practices if it is allowed to. In other words, Indigenous knowledge and governance systems need to be fully implemented and participate directly through shared decision-making powers such as the co-management systems set out in the Tłıchq Agreement.

The current challenges we face due to ongoing ekwò declines requires Indigenous government and communities to shape policy through their collective knowledge and leadership. For Tłıchq Government, leadership with support of elders have had to remind the GNWT that the Tłıchq Agreement “*makes it very clear that the GNWT is not the final boss of wildlife in the Northwest Territories; they have to share that with the Tłıchq*” in Monfwi Gogha Dè Njıttèè.<sup>1</sup>

John B. Zoe described the Tłıchq Government perspective on addressing challenges of co-management through active implementation of the Tłıchq Agreement in the italicized text below. This perspective continues to provide a basis for how Tłıchq Government engages with GNWT on difficult issues of co-management of ekwò and diga in Wek’èezhìi.

*I think everybody’s learning a lesson from the current ekwò decline. But how can we act on what we’ve learned? That is the big question. It’s no longer possible to do things the same old way, the way it was under the old colonial systems and policies. We need to raise our voices in the aboriginal world. The Revised Joint Proposal on Ekwò Management Actions in Wek’èezhìi that was submitted to the Wek’èezhìi Renewable Resources Board by the Tłıchq Government and Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT, 2010) is a good example.*

*The first version of the proposal was done exclusively by the GNWT – and here we are in the 21st century! We raised enough noise to force them to pull it back. The board realized that they needed our nàowo and the involvement of aboriginal groups to make it work. It’s a two-year recovery plan (2010- 2012). That will give us enough time to put our heads together and move beyond what we’ve done so far. We’ll need to learn from how we’ve come up with this joint proposal, and apply it to a longer-term plan with provisions for adjusting to the changing times.*

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<sup>1</sup> R. Salter in Tłıchq Government. 2007. Official Transcript of Ekwò Workshop, 21-23 February 2007. Tłıchq Government, Whatı, NT.

*The overall intent of the Revised Joint Proposal is to help Tłıchq relearn their traditional ways, their nàowo, and respect and relationship with ekwò. If these traditions are renewed, ekwò will come back, like the elders have always said.<sup>2</sup>*

With respect to the ekwò decline and difficult decisions regarding harvest management and more recently diga management, Tłıchq Government (TG) has worked to influence and shape policy decisions and be active partners in co-management. In this way, TG is working to protect Tłıchq rights through implementing the Tłıchq Agreement. Three recent examples illustrate how TG has demonstrated its leadership and decision-making authority on difficult issues through co-management.

1) On the 2010 recommendation to the WRRB of a harvest target of 300 for Bathurst ekwò and not a total allowable harvest:

*And there's a concern, Mr. Co-Chair, that total allowable harvest as a tool gives the impression that someone, somewhere, and in this case it would be the Board, is the boss and is telling everyone else what they must do and must not do.*

*And there's a danger that resorting to that tool at this stage may be counterproductive because it will make it difficult to really engage people in a real way in understanding the problem and working to continue to analyse and grapple with the problem and develop responses of a consensual kind so that changes in harvesting patterns, industrial activity, use of access roads, changes will really occur.*

*Because if we set up a system in which there are apparently top-down absolute rules, there's a chance that that will do more to engender resistance than it will to engender co-operation and collaboration and adaptive management as a new kind of practice.*

*And it's really that second set of reasons that led to the suggestion that, at this stage, a target approach is going to be more effective than a total allowable harvest approach because one can set numbers of three hundred (300) or four hundred (400) or five hundred (500) but the real question is: Will they work?*

*And so -- and, of course, it's also understood that the two (2) concepts of targets or managed changes in harvesting levels, that that's one (1) approach and the total allowable harvest level approach is set out in the Agreement, the Tłıchq Agreement, in a different way and, in effect, once we move to total allowable harvest, it's the Board that makes the decisions. It's the Board that decides allocation and puts itself in a position to really be the ultimate manager.*

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<sup>2</sup> Zoe, J. B. 2012. Ekwò and Tłıchq Nàowo / Ekwò and Tłıchq language, culture and way of life: An evolving relationship and shared history. Rangifer Special Issue No. 20:69-74

*It may come to that at some point but, in the discussions that led to this proposal, it was agreed that we're not necessarily there yet and we should try this approach and see -- see if it works. And the belief is that this approach will, in fact, cause meaningful engagement by these two parties, Tłıchq Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories, make it easier to engage other parties, other aboriginal parties and others, and so on. That's what lies behind this suggestion of targets, not total allowable harvest. It's not meant to be a way to avoid effective actions to stabilize the herd. It's meant, in fact, to facilitate and promote effective management.<sup>3</sup>*

*And so when we created the joint management proposal it's not a good time -- it -- it wasn't good timing for us to get involved with the joint management proposal. We would have preferred if it was at a time when the ekwò was at its peak, that -- that you -- we would have had some real good collaboration.*

*But when our agreement took place the decline was already happening to the point where measures had to be taken. And our first collaboration is to -- to tell our people that -- that we need to put aside -- not to get -- get rid of our right to harvest, but just put it aside until the ekwò recover because, as landowners, as the traditional users of the area, we are -- we are a recognized custodians of the lands and the animals in the area.<sup>4</sup>*

2) On the TG's support of a 2016 recommendation for a zero harvest of Bathurst ekwò:

*And so when we had the opportunity to - to have some, what are they called, the ceremonial tags, the -- the leadership decided that we -- we should take leadership, we should -- because we're one (1) of the primary users in the area. That it's serious decline, we're in an area that's unchartered territory and that if there's going to be any recovery we need to start right away. And that was one (1) of the reasons that zero tags was probably the best option at the time. Masi.<sup>4</sup>*

*We want to be real partners, and real contributing member of the Joint Management Proposal. That we're doing something that's going to hopefully make a difference. And that's probably the biggest reason that -- that the -- that the leadership decided that rather than be thought of sitting on the sidelines, that we're -- our first action would be zero harvest and -- and decline any ceremonial harvest tags.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> A. Pape in Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board. 2010. Bathurst Ekwò Public Hearing – Transcripts, August 5, 2010, Day 6 of 7. Behchoko, NT

<sup>4</sup> J.B. Zoe in Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board. 2016. Bathurst Ekwò Public Hearing – Transcripts, February 23, 2016, Day 1 of 2. Yellowknife, NT

<sup>5</sup> J.B. Zoe in Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board. 2016. Bathurst Ekwò Public Hearing – Transcripts, February 24, 2016, Day 2 of 2. Yellowknife, NT

3) On the issue of recommending d̄iga management and implementing T̄l̄ch̄q community-based d̄iga harvester training and harvester camps:

*The push to eliminate all harvesting of ekw̄ has very real implications to T̄l̄ch̄q language, culture, and way of life, and needs to be balanced with a serious and respectful consideration of other similarly difficult and controversial management levers. And finally, with respect to d̄iga hunting and predator management, the T̄l̄ch̄q government is embarking on a difficult path, but is doing so in a thoughtful and very serious manner to ensure the continued respectful relationship with ekw̄, the land, and with the d̄iga is maintained.<sup>6</sup>*

*Thank you. It's very good -- a lot of very good information. And all the information that ENR has presented, and talking about how we can best help the ekw̄. We -- we continually have the ekw̄ disappearing on our minds all the time. And as people, we always -- it was our tradition.*

*It was our tradition. All our trails are starting to disappear as the ekw̄ trails are disappearing. And so today let's help each other with the ekw̄. And so as I speak today, I wonder how can I help my people. How can I help future generations, my future grandchildren, their grandchildren, to -- to how far -- how far into the future can we make plans for them.*

*And so that is why it's so important that we attend these meetings. It's good that we collaborate and try to find good answers. And -- and find -- and implement those recommendations. Also, you talked about predation. When we talk about d̄iga, the d̄iga is considered a big animal, and we respect it. But if the d̄iga is also continually killing our ekw̄, we need to do something about it. If there's -- our people -- some people are able to work with d̄iga, then we'll find a way that -- that maybe -- there must be a way we can help the ekw̄.*

*And so how long are we going to continue? We know that we're going to do this management from 2000 -- for three (3) years. How many d̄iga are we going to be collecting? How many d̄iga will we harvest? We don't know exactly how much d̄iga the ekw̄ are also killing.<sup>7</sup>*

*But for some reasons, they don't believe people. They don't believe anything. But in reality, the ekw̄ have been going like this all the way down, as Joseph [Judas] was talking about. And when you talk about predators, the -- especially the d̄iga, Mr. Chair, you and I know that it's a very sensitive, sensitive issue -- animal, rather.*

*I talk to a lot of Elders, and some are saying Joe, make people kill it. Shoot it. But for some of us, we can't. That's what they're saying. There's reasons. And I think there's two (2) individuals*

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<sup>6</sup> J. Nishi in Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board. 2016. Bathurst Ekw̄ Public Hearing – Transcripts, February 23, 2016, Day 1 of 2. Yellowknife, NT

<sup>7</sup> J. Judas in Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board. 2016. Bathurst Ekw̄ Public Hearing – Transcripts, February 23, 2016, Day 1 of 2. Yellowknife, NT

who are sitting in that corner, they know about it as well as I do. For some, maybe not. But a lot of people know what the d̄iga is all about.

So for me -- for me, I -- I would rather kill as many d̄iga as we could. I would say it anywhere. Even people who might not like it. Some people might not. But you compare the d̄iga and the ekw̄ò, like Joseph said.<sup>8</sup>

Through the implementation of the T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Agreement, the T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government and citizens have been undertaking programs that emphasize their role as land stewards within their traditional territory. With an emphasis on direct on-the-land activities by staff and citizens, T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government has implemented two innovative programs in Ekw̄ò monitoring and D̄iga management respectively. The Ekw̄ò Nàxoède K'è (Boots on the Ground) program was initiated in 2016 with the objectives to examine the conditions of individual hoz̄ì ekw̄ò (barren-ground ekw̄ò) as well as the health of the herd in general, on its summer range, focusing on four key indicators: (1) habitat; (2) ekw̄ò condition; (3) predators, and (4) industrial development. The program is a collaboration between the T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government, GNWT-ENR, WRRB and Dominion Diamond Mines ULC (DD) (T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government, 2021). T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government (TG) and ENR submitted a Joint Management Proposal for D̄iga on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Ekw̄ò Winter Ranges to the WRRB in 2019 and then submitted a revised version in 2020 at the request of the WRRB. The main goal of the 2020 Revised Joint Management Proposal for D̄iga was to sufficiently reduce d̄iga predation on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds to allow for an increase in calf and adult ekw̄ò survival rates that would contribute to the stabilization and recovery of both herds. The T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government's community-based D̄iga harvesting program was initiated in the winter 2019/2020 and reflects a key recommendation by the WRRB (Recommendation #4-2020 (Predator\*)) to continue TG's community-based D̄iga harvesting program and the GNWT-ENR's enhanced North Slave D̄iga Harvest Incentive Program. The community-based D̄iga harvesting program reflects T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government's multi-year commitment to provide training and support for T̄l̄ich̄q̄ harvesters to participate in d̄iga management and increase their knowledge and skills for ground-based harvest of d̄iga.<sup>9</sup>

4. Do you think community conservation plans or the *Wildlife Act* affect our rights as Indigenous peoples?

See responses to Question 3 above. T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government works on protecting and T̄l̄ich̄q̄ citizen's indigenous rights through active implementation of the T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Agreement with GNWT and

<sup>8</sup> J. Rabesca in Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board. 2016. Bathurst Ekw̄ò Public Hearing – Transcripts, February 23, 2016, Day 1 of 2. Yellowknife, NT

<sup>9</sup> S. Behrens, 2021. T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government's 2021 Community-Based D̄iga Harvesting Program – Summary Report. T̄l̄ich̄q̄ Government, Behchoko, NT.)

\* Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB). 2019. Reasons for Decisions Related to a Joint Proposal for the Management of the K̄q̄k'èeti Ekw̄ò (Bathurst ekw̄ò) Herd. Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board, Yellowknife, NT. 53 pp. + 8 Appendices.

Canada. In addition to working with the GNWT and Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board on resource and wildlife management, TG has completed and implemented its Tłìchq Wenek'e (Tłìchq Land Use Plan). Tłìchq Government was involved in the important changes to the Wildlife Act that introduced a stronger focus on conservation for future generations, the importance of ecosystems and integration of scientific and traditional knowledge. Hopefully, the future will see a renewed concentration on these matters. Membership on Wildlife Act Working Group allows for important intergovernmental discussions to take place concerning further policy and regulatory development concerning the Wildlife Act.

5. Please share your knowledge about any caribou plans that have been developed outside the Sahtú region.

Tłìchq Government staff and representatives have been active collaborators on the following caribou plans, one of which overlaps with the Sahtú Region:

- Bathurst Caribou Management Plan (draft 2021)
- Bathurst Caribou Range Plan (2019)
- Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management – ACCWM (2014)

Taking care of Caribou: The Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds management plan

- Interim Wek'èezhìi Boreal Caribou Range Plan (2021)

#### *SRRB IRs to all parties*

7. As of the deadline for Round 2 IRs, it will have been eight months since Parties made submissions on the conservation picture (through Round 1 IR responses). Please provide updates on the status of ekwò, people and planning.

Over the past year and a half, the COVID-19 pandemic has had strong impacts on the social, mental and physical health of Tłìchq. The COVID-19 pandemic caused many people to be in self-isolation and away from normal work and social interactions; unexpectedly, it also has provided opportunities for people to be out on the land a lot more. With some people being limited from work due to the pandemic and because government has provided emergency funds or subsidies for people to get out on the land, more people have been spending time on the land as a way to heal from the impacts of the pandemic. The Tłìchq Government has been involved in providing hampers for their citizens, developed subsidy programs that helps people purchase equipment/supplies for them to get on the land as well as provide subsidies for groceries and gas so that people can stay at their cabins during the waves of the pandemic.

Even with the COVID-19 public health restrictions, the Tłıchq Government was able to safely advance its work over this last year on caribou conservation, people and planning. In this regard, the Tłıchq Government's main programs/projects included the following:

- **Tłıchq All Season Road Monitoring Program** – four monitors have been hired and trained to ensure that people are being responsible and are respectfully harvesting along the newly develop Tłıchq Highway.
- **Ekwò Harvest Monitoring Program** – six monitors were hired to monitor the harvest on the Tibbitt to Contwoyto winter road, with the high mixing of herds there was a high abundance of ekwò along the winter road and therefore, the Tłıchq Government developed this program to ensure that Tłıchq citizens are responsibly and respectfully harvesting as well as being safe on the barren-lands. Focus was put on the Tibbitt to Contwoyto winter road because the BNE herd was in the no hunting zone and there were no hunters that went to the Wekweètì area.
- **Community-based Dìga Harvesting Program** – The Community-based Dìga harvesting program was initiated in winter 2019/2020 and reflects a key recommendation by the WRRB (Recommendation #4-2020 (Predator) to continue TG's Community-based Dìga Harvest Program and GNWT-ENR's enhanced North Slave Dìga Harvest Incentive Program. The dìga harvest program reflects Tłıchq Government's multi-year commitment to provide training and support for Tłıchq to participate in dìga management and increase their knowledge and skills for ground-based harvest of dìga. This 2020/2021 harvest season was the second year of the program and resulted in the removal of 32 dìga, which was a ten-fold increase in number of dìga harvested by Tłıchq hunters compared to the first year.
- **Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è (Boots on the Ground)** – this program was initiated in 2016 to observe the health of hozì ekwò (barren-ground caribou) and their habitat. This field-based monitoring program is based on the summer range of Kòk'èetì and Sahtì ekwò (Bathurst and Bluenose ekwò) and is focussed on four key indicators: (1) habitat; (2) ekwò condition; (3) predators, and (4) industrial development. The program is a collaboration between the Tłıchq Government, GNWT-ENR, WRRB and Dominion Diamond Mines ULC (Tłıchq Government, 2021). The Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è 2020 program started late this year due to COVID-19. We began on July 28 and wrapped up on Sept 12. Over the two-month period, 40 Tłıchq participants were hired to fill various positions at two ekwò monitoring camps: Kokètì (Contwoyto Lake) and Deèzàatì (Point Lake). The Tłıchq participants consisted of elders, cooks, bear monitors, camp helpers, researchers, research assistants, boat drivers and youth. This year we had 5 monitoring teams; each monitoring team completed a 3-week rotation. This is an increase from last year which only had 3 teams. For the new camp at Deèzàatì, we built a meeting cabin/kitchen and brought in two boats. At the Kokètì camp, the cabin/kitchen structure was improved upon as well. We have one camp in the Bathurst

Range area and the other going into the Bluenose East Range area. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 the Deèzàatì camp was not used and the program was cut short.

- **Bathurst Management and Range plans** – TG staff have been directly involved in the development of these plans and have held TK workshops to collect essential information from Tłjchq elders and harvesters to incorporate into these plans.
- **Interim Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range** - TG staff have been directly involved in the development of this plan and have held TK workshops to collect knowledge and information from Tłjchq elders and harvesters to incorporate into this plan in a timely manner so that it be done prior to the Tłjchq Highway opening.
- **Taking care of Caribou: The Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou herds management plan, Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM)** – TG staff are members of the ACCWM working groups, and have contributed to a revised and updated management plan.
- **Hunter Education 'Train the Trainer'** – TG and ENR collaborated to hold a hunter education train the trainer course. ENR has a hunter education program that lacks instructors and so TG requested that we train Tłjchq locals to instruct this course. The objective of having these people trained is so that TG can promote respectful harvesting through this course and have it be taught to Tłjchq citizens.

## 2.1.2 Predators

### *Déljné IR to ENR and Tłjchq Government*

1. Can you provide information on where dıga management actions described in the *Revised Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Dıga (Dıga)* are proposed to occur, and what impact these actions might have on dıga in the Sahtú region?

The dıga management actions described in the GNWT and Tłjchq Government Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Dıga on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Ekwò Herd Winter Ranges: 2021 – 2024 apply within the North Slave Region of the NWT. The actions include enhanced support for dıga harvesters and the traditional economy including training and incentives, and monitoring activities to assess and evaluate the program. While the WRRB recommended aerial removals not be undertaken, the GNWT varied that recommendation to allow for aerial shooting of dıga when harvest of dıga does not meet the intended target number in a given season. Aerial removals were not undertaken in 2021.

The North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area is established annually within the North Slave Region based on collar locations of Bathurst and Bluenose-East Ekwò in December and early January reflecting where the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Ekwò herds are expected to winter.

The incentive area was developed and implemented based on discussions at a gathering of North Slave Indigenous leaders/representatives and ENR staff at François Lake in August 2018. Higher financial incentives for harvesters were suggested as a way to reduce dīga predation of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East ekwò herds and help support ekwò recovery. In 2019-20, the incentive for harvesting a dīga (skinned or unskinned) in this new area was raised to \$1200/dīga for both Indigenous and resident hunters, and the cost of a dīga tag was removed throughout the NWT (General Hunting License holders don't require a tag).

The area encompassed by the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area in 2021 is show in Figure 1. It is roughly 63,041 km<sup>2</sup> and somewhat smaller than the 72,129 km<sup>2</sup> area defined in 2020.



Figure 1: 2021 North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area

NWT Indigenous harvesters and General Hunting Licence holders are eligible for an additional \$400 if the pelt is prepared to traditional standards and an additional \$350 if the pelt meets the requirement of the prime fur bonus. Inuit harvesters harvesting within their traditional use area in the NWT and within the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area are eligible for \$900 incentive from GNWT and an additional \$300 from Government of Nunavut.

The existing NWT-wide dīga harvest incentive program will continue to support the traditional economy elsewhere in the territory using the previous financial incentives of \$200 for a skinned dīga, plus \$400 for a pelt prepared to traditional standards and an additional \$350 if the pelt meets the requirement for a prime fur bonus.

With ḏiga removals taking place annually in the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area, it is possible that ḏiga from adjacent areas may move in to replace those taken. In addition, changes in pack structure and formation can also be expected with packs splitting and moving to new areas.

We are still learning about the movements and behaviour of ḏiga in relation to barren-ground ekwò, and how harvest levels may impact that relationship and ekwò populations.

As part of the research and monitoring activities associated with the ḏiga management program, ENR has deployed 32 collars on ḏiga in 2020 and 2021 in the North Slave region, 22 of which are still active. ENR plans to deploy an additional 16 collars to maintain a total of 30 collared ḏiga in the region (accounting for 8 collars anticipated to drop off in May 2022).

2. What consideration is given to overlapping traditional territory crossing the Déḻiṅę and Wek'èezhìi boundary?

The North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area, to our knowledge, does not overlap with the traditional territory of Déḻiṅę, and therefore implementation of the ḏiga management program has been co-led by Ṯìchq̱ Government and GNWT. The WRRB held a level two proceeding for public review of the program in August 2020 upon submission of a “Revised Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Ḏiga on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Ekwò Herd Winter Ranges: 2021–2024” from GNWT and Ṯìchq̱ Government, which provided an opportunity for any interested parties, including Déḻiṅę, to make a submission with input on the proposed program.

#### *SRRB IR to ENR and Ṯìchq̱ Government*

6. Describe the information that ENR and Ṯìchq̱ Government use to target ḏiga that might impact the declining ekwò herds.

ENR and the Ṯìchq̱ Government target ḏiga within the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area, which is defined by collared ekwò on the winter range of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East ekwò herds. An explanation on how this area is derived annually is provided in the response to IR 1 in this section. In addition, the Ṯìchq̱ Government uses Traditional Knowledge captured at elders and harvesters meeting prior to the start of its community-based harvesting program to identify appropriate locations to set up camp in order to target ḏiga on the Bathurst and Bluenose ekwò winter ranges. One of the key components in collecting the traditional knowledge is to focus on

areas where the elders know we have a high chance of harvesting ḏiga. Along with the traditional knowledge that is used, the Ṯicẖo Government hired an experienced ḏiga trapper from the Alberta Trappers Association to share his knowledge in how to target ḏiga. The instructor explained his techniques in harvesting ḏiga which included strategically setting up traps and snares based on the behavior of the ḏiga and setting up bait stations to specifically target ḏiga. Although traps and snares have not been used in the Ṯicẖo Community-based harvesting program, the ideas behind using bait stations were used. The Ṯicẖo hunters also use ekw̱ kill sites to target the ḏiga and the location information from collared Bathurst and Bluenose-East Ekw̱. Being that ekw̱ is the main diet for ḏiga, knowing where the bulk of the ekw̱ are should give an indication where the ḏiga are. ENR provides daily maps of the collared ekw̱ to the Ṯicẖo Government during the operation of the program.

7. Describe any measures taken to minimize impact of wolf management measures on wolves that do not impact the declining caribou herds.

By defining the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area around the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Ekw̱ herds in the winter, we are targeting ḏiga specifically associated with those herds that are most likely to be preying on ekw̱ over that time period (as stated in the response to IR 5 in this section, in 2021, analyses showed that 87% of the ḏiga stomachs that had food contained ekw̱ as a main component). Migratory tundra ḏiga not only associate with barren-ground ekw̱ on their winter ranges, but move northwards with spring migratory movements of ekw̱ ultimately denning south of the ekw̱ calving grounds (Heard and Williams 1992, Musiani et al. 2007, Hansen et al 2013)<sup>10</sup>. In the joint management proposal, GNWT and the Ṯicẖo Government acknowledged that it is not well documented how closely the tundra ḏiga seasonal movements are affiliated with specific barren-ground ekw̱ herds on an annual basis, and whether the association between tundra ḏiga and ekw̱ herds may establish a basis for defining ḏiga populations for management purposes.

As part of the research and monitoring activities associated with the ḏiga management program, ENR deployed 32 collars on ḏiga in 2020 and 2021 (22 collars are still active). Recent analysis of ḏiga movements from the location data of those collared ḏiga (Caslys Consulting Ltd. 2021) shows three distinct movement patterns of ḏiga found on the BATH and BNE winter

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<sup>10</sup> Heard DC, Williams TM (1992). Distribution of ḏiga dens on migratory ekw̱ ranges in the Northwest Territories, Canada. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 70:1504–1510  
Musiani M, Leonard JA, Cluff HD et al (2007). Differentiation of tundra/taiga and boreal coniferous forest ḏiga: genetics, coat color and association with migratory ekw̱. *Molecular Ecology* 16:4149–4170  
Hansen, Ingebjorg & Johnson, Chris & Cluff, Howard. (2013). Synchronicity of movement paths of barren-ground ekw̱ (Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus) and tundra ḏiga (Canis lupus). *Polar Biology*: 36.

range. North-South (23%), East-West (50%) and Stationary (27%). Diga exhibiting North-South movements tended to be associated with a single ekwò herd; diga with East-West movements (the majority of those collared) tended to be associated with two or three ekwò herds and the Stationary diga mainly associate with ekwò of one or more herds on the winter range.

Seasonal movements of non-stationary diga show times of low overlap with ekwò, such as the month of June when ekwò are calving and diga are constrained by denning and pupping and times of high overlap such as summer and winter. Stationary diga showed seasonal overlap primarily in winter. As we continue to collect and analyze information on diga movements, these general movement groups may be revised or confirmed, and can inform changes in the diga management program in terms of how and where we allocate harvest and removal pressure. As the results of the 2021 diga management program are still under review by the Tłı̄chǫ Government, GNWT and WRRB technical staff, it is unknown whether this preliminary information may lead to any revisions and adjustments to the program.

8. Please provide an update on any new evidence that may be subject to consideration for the *Revised Joint Proposal*, including the Clark and Hebblewhite meta-analysis published in December 2020.<sup>11</sup>

The Tłı̄chǫ Government and ENR have committed to produce an annual report on the Diga Management Program, which will include information on what we have learned over the year. The 2021 annual report will be made available to SRRB once it is finalized. In the interim, we have attached a report brief that was submitted to the WRRB in August 2021 (Attachment 2). This information is still being reviewed and evaluated by Tłı̄chǫ Government, ENR and WRRB technical staff and it is unknown at this time what changes, if any, might be made to the North Slave region diga management program in 2022 harvest season based on lessons learned.

The meta-analysis by Clark and Hebblewhite (2020)<sup>12</sup> provides useful context for predator management programs. Their results show that biologically meaningful (8% increase) demographic responses in ungulate populations have been observed in management programs, and that removal programs can be more beneficial for species where predation rates are greater and more destabilizing. Both of these conclusions provide support for a reasonable assumption that the North Slave region Wolf Management Program may lead to positive effects

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<sup>12</sup> Clark TJ, Hebblewhite M. Predator control may not increase ungulate populations in the future: a formal meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Ecology*. 2020 Dec 20.

on Bathurst and Bluenose-East Ekwò. Warnings in the assessment related to effects of predator removal being reduced due to compensatory mechanisms are acknowledged in the Dìga Technical Feasibility Assessment and the current program. They also caution that results can be limited by the ability to remove high numbers of predators due to the spatial and temporal scale of their demography and the potential for immigration to compensate for removals. The five-year timeframe of the North Slave region Wolf Management Program and targeting 60-80% of dìga on the winter range of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds are in response to these limitations. Clark and Hebblewhite (2020) suggest lack of rigor in experimental design increased uncertainty about effect sizes. The North Slave Region Wolf Management Program incorporates extensive data collection, analysis and review on an annual basis to detect and evaluate program outcomes and adaptive management over the life of the program. Considering the scale over which dìga removals are taking place in the North Slave region, unfortunately it would be impractical to lead the type of experimental design suggested by Clark and Hebblewhite (2020) (i.e. randomly assigned, replicated treatments, simultaneous experiment and control or before-after-control-impact design).

9. What is the ENR and Tłìchq Government exit strategy for the five-year approach taken toward dìga control in the *Revised Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Wolf (Dìga)*, and how will evidence of impact be used to inform decisions about this approach in the long-term?

ENR and Tłìchq Government will undertake an evaluation of the Dìga Management Program each year to identify successes, challenges, areas for improvement, and opportunities to adapt procedures to any new information and understandings. WRRB staff and technical advisors collaborate in the annual review, and a summary report is provided to the WRRB through this review process and posted on their website. At the end of the 5-year implementation phase, Tłìchq Government and ENR will conduct a comprehensive analysis of information collected, as well as a full program review with the WRRB and other Indigenous governments and organizations to:

- Assess the effectiveness of dìga reduction actions in achieving program goals and objectives;
- Determine whether dìga reductions should continue based on the effectiveness of the Dìga Management Program; and
- Implement improvements to the overall program, as required.

Attributing ekwò population response to specific management actions will be complex, involving consideration of the interacting effects of harvest, predation and environmental conditions. Ekwò population models will be used to help tease out the contribution of multiple factors affecting ekwò population response, including the effect of predator management.

Multiple factors play a role in influencing ekwò population vital rates, so ekwò-centered metrics may not provide unambiguous evidence that diga removals specifically are effective. However, sustained high levels of cow and calf survival assessed annually and over multiple years may provide indirect evidence that diga removals are effective.

Summaries of a number of Alaskan diga management programs indicated that criteria or targets were set that considered when a diga management program should be suspended. Suspension of diga management in those programs was linked to one of two scenarios: (1) the targets for the ekwò population had been met and diga management was no longer necessary; and (2) the targets for the ekwò population had not been met, the diga management program was ineffective and should be suspended. In consideration of these points, we suggest that, for the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds, a comprehensive assessment be made after 5 years to assess the effectiveness of diga management to that point in time. During that assessment, a number of options could be considered:

- Ekwò and diga-centred objectives have been met through the first 5 years, and further diga management is not required.
- Ekwò and diga-centred objectives have not been met, the diga management program has been ineffective, and should be suspended.
- Ekwò and diga-centred objectives have been met or partially met, and a further or modified diga management program should be considered.

#### 2.1.4 Competitors

##### *Tulít'a IRs to all Parties*

4. Do you know if ʔəjire crossed Dəgho (Mackenzie River) or Sahtú Də (Bear River)?

This area is not in our region and we are unable to provide knowledge on an area we are not familiar with.

5. How might ʔəjire impact shúhta goʔepé (mountain ekwò) and doe (sheep) if they go into the mountains?

This area is not in our region and we are unable to provide knowledge on an area we are not familiar with.

## Information Request 2.2: Harvest Regulation

As described in the SRRB's July 7, 2021, Resumption Notice, the following questions arise from the Colville 2020 Public Listening session on *Sahtú Ragóza (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting*.

### 2.2.1 Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit

*Note: the SRRB provided a draft Hydó Gogha Sénégots 'ízá (Community Conservation Plan – CCP) Guide for review by Parties and the public on September 14, 2021. The deadline for comment on the CCP Guide is November 15, 2021.*

#### *SRRB IRs to all Parties*

1. The SRRB provided a Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit on January 15, 2021. What is missing from the toolkit?

After reviewing the Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit, we noticed that there is no mention of population surveys and how they will be incorporated into the management plans. To figure out if a species is being sustainably harvested, population estimates should be obtained in order to determine if that specie's population is increasing or decreasing. There doesn't seem to be much content on predator and competitor management.

2. Do you think any parts of the Toolkit should be changed?

Reading this for the first time, it was a little confusing in how to interpret the information but overall the concepts were understood.

3. Are there additional components that would be relevant for conservation planning for predators and competitors?

Perhaps some research should be conducted to identify how much of an impact do those competitors have towards ekwò (ex: muskox).

### 2.2.2 Stewardship Roles

#### *SRRB IRs to all Parties*

1. How is the stewardship role of a community that is a primary harvester of a certain ekwò population different from the role of a community that might not have the same access to that ekwò population?

All communities should work together in the conservation of ekwò. In essence, ekwò has a major part of the every day lives for many communities in the NWT, some more than others, but should not take away from the collaborative efforts in ensuring that they are well taken care of. Some communities may barter for ekwò if they aren't able to easily access them and for those instances, as much as we'd like to share with our neighbors, this adds more hunting pressure onto the ekwò. Promoting alternative harvest when ekwò numbers are at a low is one way that all communities can be helping ease the stress and pressure onto ekwò.

We also know that community access to ekwò changes over time. And as ekwò populations change in size and distribution over decadal periods and during our own respective lives, we expect that access will also be variable from one generation of hunters to another. Our lives today – as people living in communities – are very different from our pre-contact ancestors who lived a nomadic life that was tied to the seasonal migrations of ekwò. This highlights the stewardship role of all communities for contributing and collaborating on all the important work to manage our ongoing relationship with each other, the ekwò and Dé (the land).

*SRRB IRs to Colville Lake, Dél'Iné and neighbouring Indigenous Parties (Inuvialuit Game Council, Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association, and Tłı̄chų Government)*

2. Describe efforts to establish agreements or otherwise coordinate conservation measures with neighbouring barren-ground ekwò harvester groups, either within or alongside ACCWM (Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management) efforts. Please share, from your perspective, what works and what does not work as well in coordinating conservation with neighbouring groups.

The Tłı̄chų Government finds that working collaboratively with neighboring barren-ground ekwò harvester groups is essential in ensuring that these species recover from their declines and to ensure a sustainable population so that all interested parties are able to harvest now and in the future. TG participates and is actively involved in the ACCWM working groups as well as the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee and the Caribou Guardian Coalition, all of which include groups from Nunavut, ENR and other NWT indigenous groups.

### 2.2.3 ʔehdzo Got'Iné (Renewable Resources Council) Powers

*SRRB IRs to all Parties*

1. Describe the role of the local ʔehdzo Got'Iné (RRC) in your experience.

Not applicable, we do not have RRC.

2. How does the local ʔehdzo Got'Inę (RRC) manage harvesting?

Not applicable, we do not have RRC.

3. How is the local ʔehdzo Got'Inę (RRC) accountable, and to whom it is accountable?

Not applicable, we do not have RRC.

#### 2.2.4 Hunter Education

##### *SRRB IRs to all parties*

2. Are there harvesters that come from other places to your community's harvesting area? What are the different kinds of harvesters? Describe any protocols for harvesters visiting your area. How do they learn about these protocols?

Legally, Tłıchq Land is open to public access, including access for fishing, hunting, and berry picking, as long as people follow NWT laws and regulations, and the conditions set out in the Tłıchq Agreement. However, harvesting furbearers is the exclusive right of Tłıchq people on Tłıchq Lands (Tłıchq Agreement 10.1.1(b)). For non-Tłıchq people to harvest any furbearers on Tłıchq lands or to hunt more than the NWT regulations allow (e.g. for NWT residents to hunt more than one moose per person), they require

- Permission from Tłıchq Government, and
- A special harvesters licence from GNWT-ENR.

This information is provided by GNWT-ENR when licenses are applied for and the Tłıchq Government's Department of Culture and Lands Protection (DCLP) has advertised for non-Tłıchq harvesters contact DCLP prior to any harvesting excursions to ensure that regulations are being abided by and that permission be given if needed; not only do we ensure that regulations are being abided by but this also becomes a safety net in the case that the harvester encounters an emergency situation on Tłıchq lands.

3. Do harvesters from your community go outside your community's harvesting area to harvest? Describe any protocols for visiting other areas. How do people learn about these protocols?

As per the Tłıchq Agreement section 10.1.1(a), Tłıchq harvesters do have the right to harvest within their traditional territory which is within the Monfwi Gogha Dè Njıttèè boundary; this

boundary includes areas within Nunavut. In those specific areas, Tłıchǫ are not obligated to provide any documents or permits.

In other areas that do not include traditional Tłıchǫ territory, typically a GHL is needed as well as permission from the leadership of those areas. The Tłıchǫ Government encourages and promotes respectful harvesting through social media, the website, and face to face interactions when applicable and would hope that their citizens use respectful practises when harvesting in other areas.