Backgrounder:

The Survival of Boreal Woodland Caribou in Manitoba

What are the specific concerns in Manitoba?

A 2009 scientific report from Environment Canada delineates 11 identified caribou ranges in Manitoba. Two are classified as not self-sustaining and require habitat restoration, 5 may not be self-sustaining if further degradation occurs, and 4 are deemed self-sustaining and could possibly endure more disturbance.

What is the extent of habitat already disturbed by humans?

The average extent of human disturbance within Manitoba's boreal caribou ranges is higher than that in neighbouring Saskatchewan and Ontario. On average, 17% of the area of boreal caribou ranges in Manitoba is directly impacted by human disturbance. A total of 23,786 km^2 of caribou habitat in this province has been disturbed by humans.

How many caribou are there in Manitoba and how large is their collective ranges?

Approximately 2,481 boreal caribou live in Manitoba, though precise population estimates are not available for some ranges. Boreal caribou ranges cover 211,857 km^2 (81,798 square miles) of Manitoba's land base.

What extent of disturbance would be permissible and still enable caribou to survive?

Four caribou ranges in Manitoba may be resilient to further human disturbance, due to large range size and low human footprint. These include, Wapisu, North Interlake and Atikaki-Berens. However, the level of human disturbance compatible with caribou persistence is not yet known.

How great is the probability that boreal caribou will survive in Manitoba, given the current situation?

Kississing

Not self-sustaining
40% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Low probability of long-term persistence

Naosao

Cannot be definitively categorized as self-sustaining or not self-sustaining
50% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Moderate probability of long-term persistence

Reed

Cannot be definitively categorized as self-sustaining or not self-sustaining
50% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Moderate probability of long-term persistence

William Lake

Not self-sustaining
40% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Low probability of long-term persistence

Wapisu

Self-sustaining
80% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
High probability of long-term persistence

The Bog Cannot be definitively categorized as self-sustaining or not self-sustaining
50% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Moderate probability of long-term persistence

Wabowden
Cannot be definitively categorized as self-sustaining or not self-sustaining
50% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Moderate probability of long-term persistence

North Interlake
Self-sustaining
80 % probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
High probability of long-term persistence

Atikaki-Berens
Self-sustaining
70% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Moderate probability of long-term persistence

Owl-Flintstone
Cannot be definitively categorized as self-sustaining or not self-sustaining
50% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Moderate probability of long-term persistence

Non - delineated ranges in the rest of Manitoba's boreal forest
Self-sustaining
70% probability of attaining self-sustainability under current range conditions
Moderate probability of long-term persistence

CPAWS recommendations for Manitoba:

1. Manitoba must pause logging, road building and other development in intact areas of the commercial forest. This would help "anchor" self-sustaining caribou populations.

   Aboriginal people need to have a meaningful say in the location of these areas.
   Federal and provincial science reports should be compared with Aboriginal traditional knowledge.

2. The Manitoba government should undertake the research necessary to fill gaps in knowledge of caribou populations and trends. In particular, they need to:

   Identify caribou population units, collect population trend data, and identify ranges and their conditions within the remainder of Manitoba's Boreal Forest;
   Undertake ongoing monitoring of caribou habitat use and trends to evaluate the effectiveness of current land use and management strategies, and to plan for the future.

3. Industry and government must act to conserve critical habit and assure survival of boreal woodland caribou.

   Industry leaders and the government should agree to a halt to industrial forestry within Manitoba's remaining intact contiguous range for this species. This would protect against

further range loss while researchers collect data, map particular ranges, and assess range conditions.
Manitoba's "mosaic" or "clear-cutting for caribou" approach to woodland caribou management should be revised to accommodate the best available science, including the new science of this review, and must not be used in remaining intact boreal forest habitat until the critical research gaps are filled and a credible assessment of these impacts can be made.
Planning should focus on maintaining current caribou range first and then strategically recovering range lost to human disturbance.

4. Manitoba Caribou Conservation Strategy

   Manitoba's Conservation and Recovery Strategy for Boreal Caribou needs to be revised to make large-scale boreal conservation its key objective.

   Manitoba's *Conservation and Recovery Strategy for Boreal Caribou* needs to be revised to ensure the protection of caribou habitats, as legally mandated in the Manitoba Endangered Species Act.

For more information including media release, map, national summary, images and B-Roll visit: www.caribouandyou.ca

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