



Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Northwest Territories

Press Release

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Low Chance of Survival for Two NWT Boreal Woodland Caribou Populations

Yellowknife - A landmark scientific review conducted under Canada's Species at Risk Act indicates that the Boreal woodland caribou in two study areas of the NWT may not survive unless immediate action is taken to protect and improve their habitat.

The authors of the Environment Canada study titled "Scientific Review for the identification of Critical Habitat for Woodland Caribou" assessed the status of habitat and current chances of survival for nearly 60 Boreal woodland caribou populations across Canada.

In the Dehcho North and Southwest and South Slave and Southeast Dehcho study areas, Boreal woodland caribou populations are declining. The review's authors concluded for each of these areas that:

- there is a 40 percent chance of survival if nothing is done to protect them;
- protection of their entire current ranges, to ensure no further habitat loss occurs, is required for their survival; and
- immediate action is needed to improve their remaining habitat.

The report also provides information about other Canadian Boreal caribou populations, including the Bistcho and Steen River populations, which range in both Alberta and the NWT. Each of these populations number about 300: the Bistcho has only a 20 percent chance of survival and the Steen River has a 40 percent chance of survival if no management action is taken.

The NWT Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) congratulates the Federal Environment Minister for releasing this important report and encourages the Minister to incorporate the findings into an evolving national Recovery Strategy for the Boreal woodland caribou as soon as possible. "Our mission is to protect the land, water and wildlife in the NWT for current and future generations by working with NWT residents, governments, communities, and organizations," said Lani Cooke, Executive Director, "and we believe that now is the time to work together to save the Boreal woodland caribou populations at risk. "

Cooke noted that the Government of the NWT has drafted an Action Plan for Boreal Woodland Caribou Conservation that complements the federal Recovery Strategy, and that Aboriginal people are continuing to use their traditional knowledge and understanding to ensure that caribou will survive for future generations. "All Northerners must encourage our governments to protect habitats required by these threatened woodland caribou populations. If we lose our caribou we lose the heart and soul of the North, as well as an essential food source for many Northerners," Cooke concluded.

CPAWS NWT is a partner in the NWT Protected Areas Strategy, which is currently working towards the full protection of three areas of Boreal woodland caribou habitat in the Dehcho region: Smbaa K'e (Trout Lake), Ka'a'gee Tu (Kakisa), and Edehzhie (Horn Plateau).

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