



Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Quebec

Press Release

9 April, 2009

Groundbreaking science report underscores urgent need to protect Boreal woodland caribou critical habitat

Montreal, April 9, 2009 – The Québec Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) looks forward to the release today of a groundbreaking report from Environment Canada that underscores the importance of protecting large areas of Boreal forest wilderness that are home to Canada's nationally at risk woodland caribou.

This report shows that the long-term survival of this federally threatened species is becoming more uncertain because its Boreal forest habitat has been damaged by industrial development such as forestry and hydro-electricity projects.

Caribou are bellwether for health of Boreal

"The woodland caribou is one of Canada's most treasured animals, and this report shows that it is in worse trouble than we previously thought," says Patrick Nadeau, Forestry and Conservation Coordinator for CPAWS Québec.

"That's why we launched a national campaign last year to protect this species, whose health is indicative of the state of our Boreal forest," says Nadeau.

Time is running out for caribou

The Environment Canada report shows that the woodland caribou is struggling in some parts of the country. It is doing better in Quebec than in some regions. In western Canada especially, Boreal woodland caribou are in a very precarious situation. In the Maritimes the woodland caribou have disappeared entirely from the region.

This bleak situation underscores Quebec's great responsibility for helping the species to recovery, explains Patrick Nadeau, Forestry and Conservation Coordinator, CPAWS Québec.

"Quebec has the largest proportion of Boreal woodland caribou's remaining range in Canada. Quebec's Boreal forest is still largely intact and this is critical habitat for woodland caribou. But ongoing industrial activity threatens to damage and fragment the Boreal habitat the caribou need if they are to survive," adds Nadeau.

The government needs to act before the situation becomes critical. "If not we'll see more situations like in Val d'Or – where the local herd is unlikely to survive over the long-term because its habitat has been badly fragmented," says Nadeau.

Québec needs to act immediately to ensure survival of caribou

CPAWS Quebec is asking the government to take immediate action to protect woodland caribou and its Boreal forest habitat.

"Several other provinces have already issued recovery plans for caribou. Quebec has not yet released its strategy, which is long overdue," says Nadeau. He adds that his organization is ready and willing to work with the government on such a plan.

"We also urge Quebec to establish a network of interconnected protected areas. That's what the species needs to survive. Quebec, with its rich and vast land, can become a leader for the protection of the Boreal forest and woodland caribou," concludes Nadeau.

- 30 -

For more information :
Sophie Paradis
Communications Coordinator
CPAWS Québec
514 603-7627