

GNWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy and Interim Measures

Yellowknife (February 20, 2006) - A strategy to guide the management of barren-ground caribou herds in the Northwest Territories (NWT) was released today by Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Minister, Honourable Michael Miltenberger.

"Evidence from traditional and scientific sources show that barren-ground caribou herds are declining," said Minister Miltenberger. "Given this trend, the Government of the Northwest Territories, along with co-management boards and harvesters must act in the best interests of conserving our barren-ground caribou populations."

The NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy outlines approaches that can be taken during the next five years to conserve the herds in the NWT. It includes conservation measures, both immediate and long term, to ensure the sustainability of the barren-ground caribou herds.

"When wildlife population trends suggest there is a serious concern ENR applies the "Precautionary Principal." This means that management decisions err on the side of caution," added Minister Miltenberger. "We know that caribou numbers are declining and we must take reasonable conservation measures now to prevent serious or irreparable damage to this resource."

Immediate actions, to be applied throughout the Northwest Territories during the next six months, include:

- reducing caribou tags for resident harvesters from five to two;
- allowing resident harvesters to hunt bulls only;
- reducing caribou tags for outfitters on the Bathurst herd fall range to 1999 levels;
- increasing wolf tags for non-resident harvesters from one to two;
- delaying the public release of maps showing the locations of satellite collared caribou by two weeks;
- increasing enforcement patrols; and,
- developing a major public education campaign.

The NWT co-management boards have also recommended specific actions to reduce harvesting of herds within their settlement regions. The Government of the Northwest Territories accepts the voluntary harvest limits proposed by co-management boards and will continue to work with those boards on any further necessary actions. The actions and overall caribou management strategy draw on management planning initiatives conducted with co-management boards, caribou management boards and NWT communities.

A copy of the Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy can be found on the ENR website at: www.enr.gov.nt.ca.

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