

# Interim Emergency Measures Conserving the Bathurst Caribou Herd

***Interim emergency conservation measures are in place to conserve the Bathurst caribou herd.***

***A Caribou no-hunting zone is in effect and the area (Zone R/BC/02) is closed to all harvesters.***

## **Interim Emergency Measures**

- The no-hunting conservation zone is an interim emergency measure that is in place until the recommendations on caribou management from the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) are received at the end of May 2010.
- Population counts indicate the Bathurst caribou herd has declined from more than 100,000 animals in 2006 to an estimated 32,000 animals in 2009.
- With an estimated annual harvest of 5,000 – 7,000 animals, model projections indicate that a delay in action decreases the herd's chance for recovery and may jeopardize the survival of the herd.
- Since the majority of cow harvest occurs between late December and April, immediate action was required to conserve the Bathurst herd until a comprehensive assessment is completed by the WRRB.
- The Dene Nation passed motions in 2007 and 2009 stating the caribou herds were in drastic decline and immediate management plans were required.
- The purpose of the interim emergency measures was to reduce harvesting of the herd since it is the most critical factor for the herd during the next few months.
- When caribou are at low numbers, the most important factors that influence recovery are reducing harvest, high calf survival and high pregnancy rates.

## Harvest

- The GNWT does not have accurate estimates of Aboriginal harvesting because reporting of harvest is not mandatory.
- Check stations have been run on North Slave winter roads for the last five years. This harvest has decreased because caribou have not been close to most of the winter roads.
- Aboriginal people have voluntarily reduced their harvest the last two years.
- Even at these reduced levels, estimates of the current harvest for the past few years was still 5,000 – 7,000 caribou from the Bathurst herd.

## Consultation

- The Tlicho Agreement contains a provision on emergency measures. It states if emergency measures are taken, the GNWT must inform the Tlicho Government and the WRRB. This was done.
- The time for consultation is greatly reduced when emergency measures are required.
- The GNWT did inform and discuss the emergency measures with the Tlicho Government and the Yellowknives Dene First Nations before implementing the measures.
- The emergency measures eliminated all resident and non-resident harvest for barren-ground caribou.
- The GNWT continues to work with the Tlicho Government and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.
- Support is being provided for the most affected communities to access caribou elsewhere. Tlicho communities have undertaken community hunts outside of the no-hunting conservation zone.
- All community hunts are being monitored to address concerns of potential overharvesting by other regions who share these barren-ground caribou herds.

***For more information, contact the ENR North Slave Regional office at (867) 873-7184 or visit the ENR website at [www.enr.gov.nt.ca](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca)***