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## Interim Emergency Measures Put In Place to Help Conserve Bathurst Caribou Herd

**YELLOWKNIFE (December 17, 2009):** The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has put interim emergency measures in place to help conserve the Bathurst caribou herd.

“These interim emergency measures and resulting regulation changes are based on the use of the precautionary principle to conserve this natural resource for the use of current and future generations,” said ENR Minister J. Michael Miltenberger. “Using the best information available, we have determined the most reasonable conservation method is to limit the harvest of caribou from the Bathurst herd.”

Starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, barren-ground caribou commercial/meat tag, non-resident and resident harvesting will be closed in the North and South Slave Regions and all harvesting is closed in a new no-hunting conservation zone established north of Yellowknife where the Bathurst caribou herd winters. The new zone covers the area between the Tlicho Winter Road to Gameti east to the Hoarfrost River in the East Arm north to Nunavut. (See attached map).

“Our analyses of recent population surveys, trend and modeling analysis project the Bathurst caribou herd could be lost or reduced to extremely low numbers if harvest continues at current levels,” added Miltenberger. “When the herd numbered 300,000-400,000, the harvest was small relative to herd size, but at much lower numbers, the harvest has become a serious factor in the recent rapid decline. Regardless of the causes of the decline, the fundamental issue is preservation of wildlife. No one benefits from further decline in this herd.”

Additional regulations providing access to wood bison for General Hunting Licence holders are also being put in place to alleviate some of the hardship communities will face because of the restrictions to caribou harvest. Under the new regulations, two new bison zones have been created in the North Slave Region. Zone R/WB01 is available for tag only hunting. Tags will be provided to the Tlicho Government and Yellowknives Dene. Zone R/WB/02 is open to GHJ holders only. Harvest in this zone is unrestricted and all harvest must be reported to ENR within 72 hours.

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The new regulations come into effect on January 1, 2010. They will remain in effect until recommendations on barren-ground caribou management by the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board are implemented.

**For more information, contact:**

**Andrew Matthews**

Communications Officer

Office of the Premier and Executive Council

Government of the Northwest Territories

(867) 669-2302

**Attachment: No-Hunting Conservation Zone Map**