

Bathurst Caribou Survey Completed

YELLOWKNIFE (19 September 2006) - A recent survey of the breeding females on the Bathurst caribou herd calving grounds shows the herd continued to decline at about five percent per year over the past decade.

In 1986 the calving ground survey estimated 203,000 breeding females and a herd size of approximately 472,000. A 2003 survey showed these numbers had fallen to approximately 80,800 breeding females and a total herd size of 186,000. June 2006 aerial surveys conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shows this decline has continued. This survey estimated 55,600 breeding females and a herd size of 128,000.

Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Michael Miltenberger, says that management actions were taken in 2006 across the Northwest Territories to address declining caribou herds. However, with the continued decline, further actions will be required. "I am looking for advice from the newly-formed Wek'eezhie Renewable Resources Board which will meet in early October. I will also be having discussions with all other affected governments, groups and organizations," said Minister Miltenberger.

The North Slave regional office will hold a workshop in late fall to review management actions identified in the Bathurst Caribou Management Plan. This follows the workshop held in February 2006. Participants will include agencies and boards responsible for caribou management and representatives from First Nations, Inuit organizations, outfitters, resident hunters and the public.

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