

The **Bathurst Caribou Range Planning Area** is based on Traditional Knowledge and scientific information about how caribou use the land throughout the year.

## Why a Range Plan?

A Range Plan is a guide for decision-makers, companies and communities to help manage activities on the land in a way that supports the recovery of the Bathurst herd. It's needed for several reasons:

- Numbers of caribou have declined rapidly in recent years;
- Human activities have increased across the range;
- The size and strength of wildfires may be growing; and
- The relationship between people and caribou has fundamentally changed.

The Draft Bathurst Caribou Range Plan is a response to calls for action to help the herd recover and make sure its habitat remains healthy. It is also an attempt to balance these recovery efforts with the potential benefits that industrial development can provide. Human activities and land use need to be managed carefully, particularly when caribou numbers are low and more vulnerable to disturbance.

## How was the Draft Range Plan developed?

Representatives from Indigenous governments and organizations, industry and environmental groups, co-management boards and the territorial and federal governments started working together on a plan in June 2014.

The Draft Bathurst Caribou Range Plan is based on Traditional Knowledge and scientific information. It is being shared with the public so that community members and decision-makers can provide comments. Once all of feedback has been collected, a Final Bathurst Caribou Range Plan will be developed.

## Goals and Guiding Principles

The Draft Range Plan recognizes the role of northerners as caribou guardians and the shared responsibility for managing development to support the recovery of the herd.

Four main principles guided development of the Draft Range Plan:

1. Respect Caribou
2. Bring Together Traditional, Local and Scientific Knowledge
3. Practice Guardianship, Stewardship and Management to Care for Caribou
4. Achieve Balance



## What's in the Draft Range Plan?

Making sure the Bathurst caribou herd is healthy now and into the future depends, in part, on our ability to manage and maintain the land in a way that will continue to support caribou. That includes making choices about how we manage disturbance to caribou and caribou habitat.

The Draft Plan suggests four main ways to do that, in its objectives:

- Objective 1 – Make sure the most important parts of the range are not disturbed.
- Objective 2 – Make sure the herd can move freely throughout the range.
- Objective 3 – Set targets for how much humans can disturb the range.
- Objective 4 – Manage road development and traffic within the range.

There are three main components of the Draft Plan: Conservation, Guardianship and the Disturbance Framework.

### Conservation

The Draft Range Plan describes three kinds of areas that are important to caribou, and ways to manage those areas:



#### **Core use area**

As caribou numbers decline, the area they use (core use area) has gotten smaller. The Draft Range Plan suggests land users operating in the core use area shut down non-essential activities when caribou are nearby.



#### **Water and land crossings**

Water and land crossings allow caribou to migrate from summer to winter areas of the range. The Draft Range Plan maps out important crossings, and recommends protection be considered for these areas.



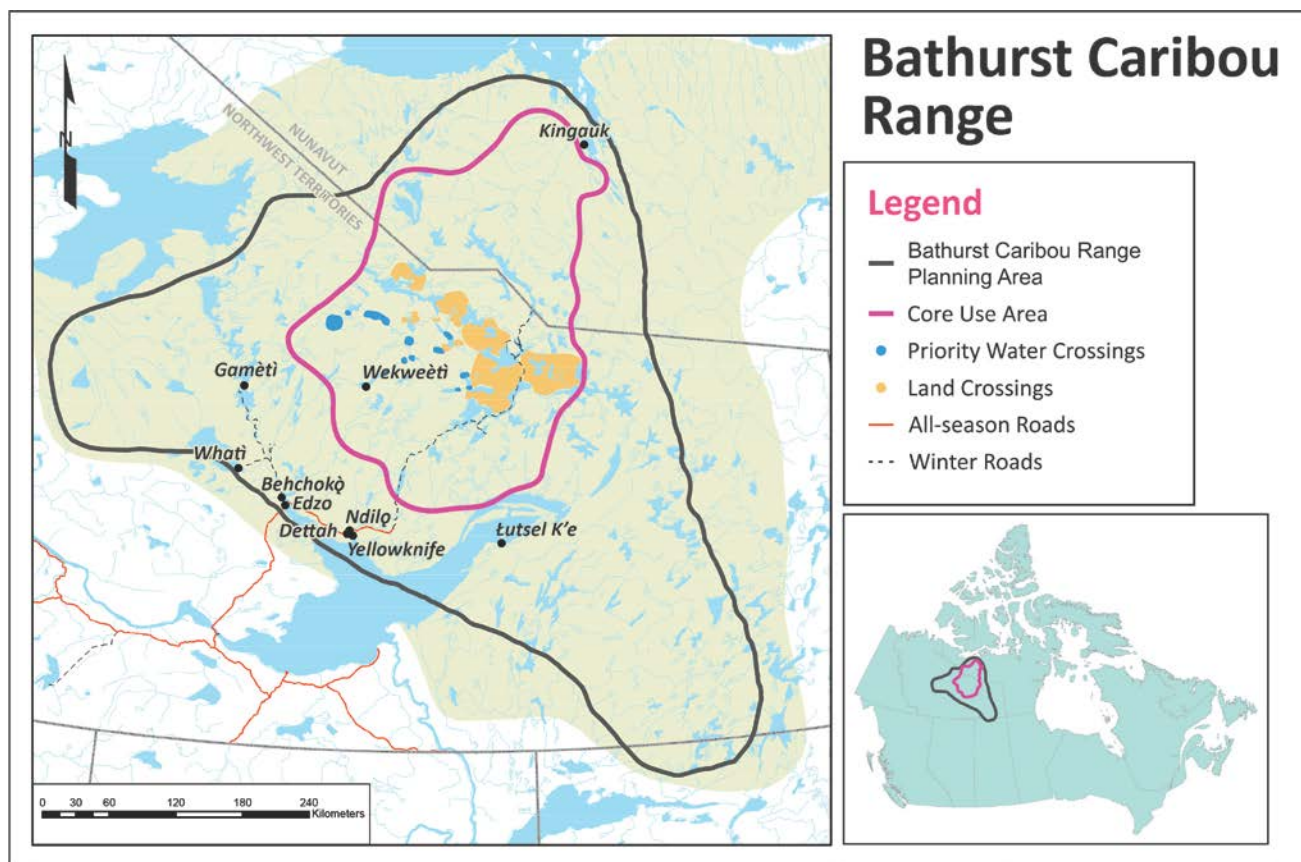
#### **Calving and post-calving grounds**

The areas where caribou choose to give birth are considered to be the most important part of the range, where caribou are at their most vulnerable to disturbance. The Draft Range Plan recommends protection is considered for Bathurst caribou calving grounds.



#### **What do we mean when we talk about the “range” of a caribou herd?**

The range describes the area where the caribou live throughout the year. For the Bathurst herd this extends from the forest to the tundra, across Nunavut and the eastern NWT, and down into northern Saskatchewan.



The Centre of Habitation, or **Core Use Area**, is the main area used by the Bathurst caribou herd in recent years. **Water and land crossings** are also shown here.



### Guardianship

As guardians who have always cared for caribou, Aboriginal peoples across the range have a critical role in charting the best path forward for the Bathurst caribou.

The Draft Bathurst Caribou Range Plan calls for the establishment of **guardian programs** that build on generations of careful observation and understanding of the land, the people and the natural cycles of the caribou.

Guardian programs already in place for the Bathurst caribou are “made in the north” approaches built on generations of “watching” the land and grounded in traditional laws and values. Expansion of existing guardian programs would support and promote respectful practices and help monitor caribou well-being, movements, environmental conditions and the ongoing relationship between caribou and people.



### Disturbance Framework

One of the ways to make sure caribou have enough healthy habitat is by managing the amount of human disturbance on the land. *What do we mean by disturbance?* Disturbances can include buildings and roads, as well as noise, dust, light and any other activity that might affect caribou.

The Draft Range Plan proposes three categories of disturbance on the range of the Bathurst caribou.



These categories are based on how much the area has already been disturbed, and tells decision-makers how any new disturbances in the area need to be handled. In areas where there is more disturbance, the Draft Range Plan recommends stricter rules for new development.

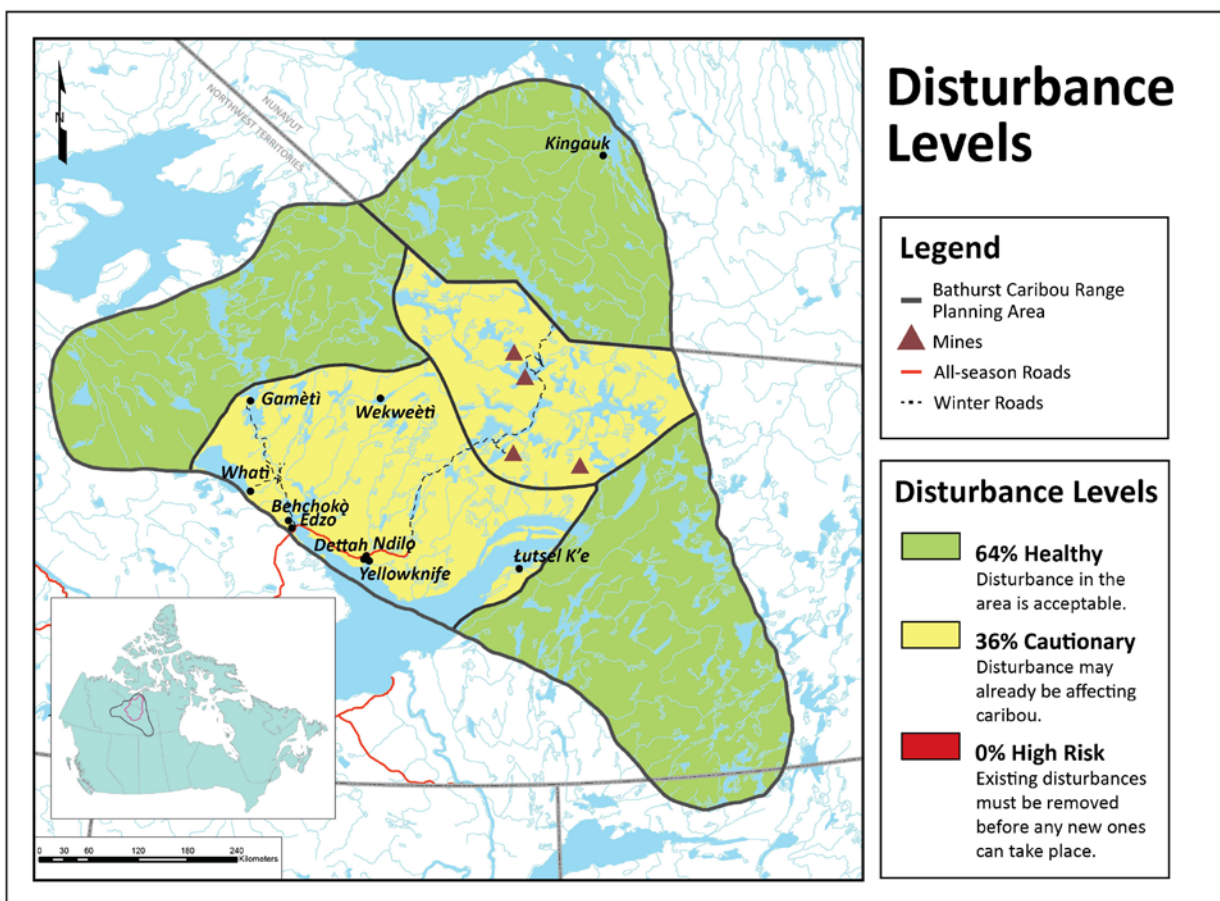
**Healthy:** Disturbance in the area is acceptable.

**Cautionary:** Disturbance may already be affecting caribou.

**High Risk:** Existing disturbances must be removed before any new ones can take place.

Keep in mind, the herd's sensitivity to disturbances varies throughout the year. For instance, caribou are more sensitive when they are in their calving grounds than in their winter range. This means the effects of disturbances in an area vary according to the time of year too. So, the disturbance level for an area is based on the level of disturbance, as well as how sensitive the caribou are when they are in that area.

The range of the Bathurst caribou herd is divided into five areas, under the Draft Plan. Three of the areas are considered **Healthy** (green), while two areas are in the **Cautionary** category (yellow). The idea is to keep disturbance below the **High Risk** level (red).



*So how do we manage disturbance?* In addition to conservation measures, the Draft Plan proposes the following management tools:



**Road planning and management** – Use best practices when planning and developing new roads in the Bathurst caribou range. When in the cautionary level, manage traffic.



**Compensating for Impacts (Offsetting)** – Find ways to improve habitat or compensate for impacts when all possible actions have been taken to minimize impacts on caribou. Increase amount of compensation when in the cautionary level.



**Wildfire Management** – Prioritize important caribou winter habitat (older forests) when making decisions about how to respond to wildfire.



**Online staking** – Allow people to stake mineral claims on computers rather than using aircraft, to reduce disturbance to caribou.

## How will the Range Plan be used?

To apply the Range Plan successfully in decisions about land use will require a genuine commitment from governments, organizations, industry, communities and individuals. The principles and recommendations in the Final Bathurst Caribou Range Plan should be applied to:

1. Land use planning
2. Community guardianship programs
3. Wildlife management recommendations and actions (governments and renewable resource boards)
4. Environmental assessments
5. Regulatory processes
6. Industry protocols and best management practices



### Range Plan vs. Harvest Restrictions










A range plan does not set rules for harvesting – it is a way to reduce impacts of land activity and disturbances to caribou.

Even after it is finalized, the Bathurst Caribou Range Plan will continue to evolve. The same groups that helped to develop it will continue to assess it over time, recognizing that as conditions change we must observe, learn and respond.

## Management Recommendations

The Range Plan includes 9 recommendations based on a combination of Traditional Knowledge and science. The purpose of the current public engagement phase is to make sure they are also based on input from community members and decision-makers. Feedback from the public will be used to revise the management recommendations and develop a Final Bathurst Caribou Range Plan.

## Management Recommendations

	<b>Recommendation 1: Cumulative Land Disturbance Framework</b> Decide what level of disturbance is considered acceptable in each area of the range and manage human disturbance accordingly.
	<b>Recommendation 2: Community Guardianship</b> Support Indigenous groups to develop Community Guardianship Programs across the range of the Bathurst herd.
	<b>Recommendation 3: Habitat Conservation – Water Crossings and Land Crossings</b> Decide what level of protection to give to important water and land crossings.
	<b>Recommendation 4: Habitat Conservation – Calving and Post-Calving Grounds</b> Decide what level of protection to give to calving and post-calving areas.
	<b>Recommendation 5: Mobile Caribou Conservation Measures</b> Consider shutting down non-essential operations when caribou are nearby.
	<b>Recommendation 6: Road Planning and Management</b> When planning and developing new roads in the Bathurst caribou range, consider using best approaches to road construction, routing and traffic management to reduce impacts to caribou.
	<b>Recommendation 7: Offsetting / Compensatory Mitigation</b> Improve habitat in other parts of the range or compensate for impacts after all actions have been taken to minimize impacts to caribou.
	<b>Recommendation 8: Wildfire Management</b> Consider important caribou winter habitat when making decisions about how to respond to wildfire.
	<b>Recommendation 9: Online Staking</b> Allow staking of mineral claims online rather than using aircraft, to reduce disturbance to caribou.