

# Wolf management

## A joint proposal to support the recovery of Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou 2020-2025

The Bathurst and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou (ᑲᑦᑲᑲᑲ) herds have declined significantly in recent years, despite sustained efforts to reduce harvest pressure on the herds. There is an immediate need for additional action to support the herds through these current low numbers.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tłıchǫ Government have prepared a five-year joint proposal in a response to calls from our co-management partners, harvesters and residents, who told us that increased wolf management is needed to help the herds recover.

Read the full proposal to the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB): [www.wrrb.ca](http://www.wrrb.ca).

### Our approach

Wolves (diga) are the primary predator of barren-ground caribou. Reduced wolf predation, combined with ongoing caribou harvest restrictions, and supported by research and monitoring, can help support our efforts to increase caribou survival and give the herds a chance to recover.

This proposal includes three main approaches to wolf management:

1. Wolf harvester training
2. Monitoring, research and assessment
3. Wolf reduction actions

### Wolf harvester training

Wolf harvesters are an important part of the traditional economy in the NWT. To ensure harvesters in the North Slave region have the best chance to successfully harvest wolves and produce quality furs, the Tłıchǫ Government and the GNWT plan to offer enhanced training opportunities.

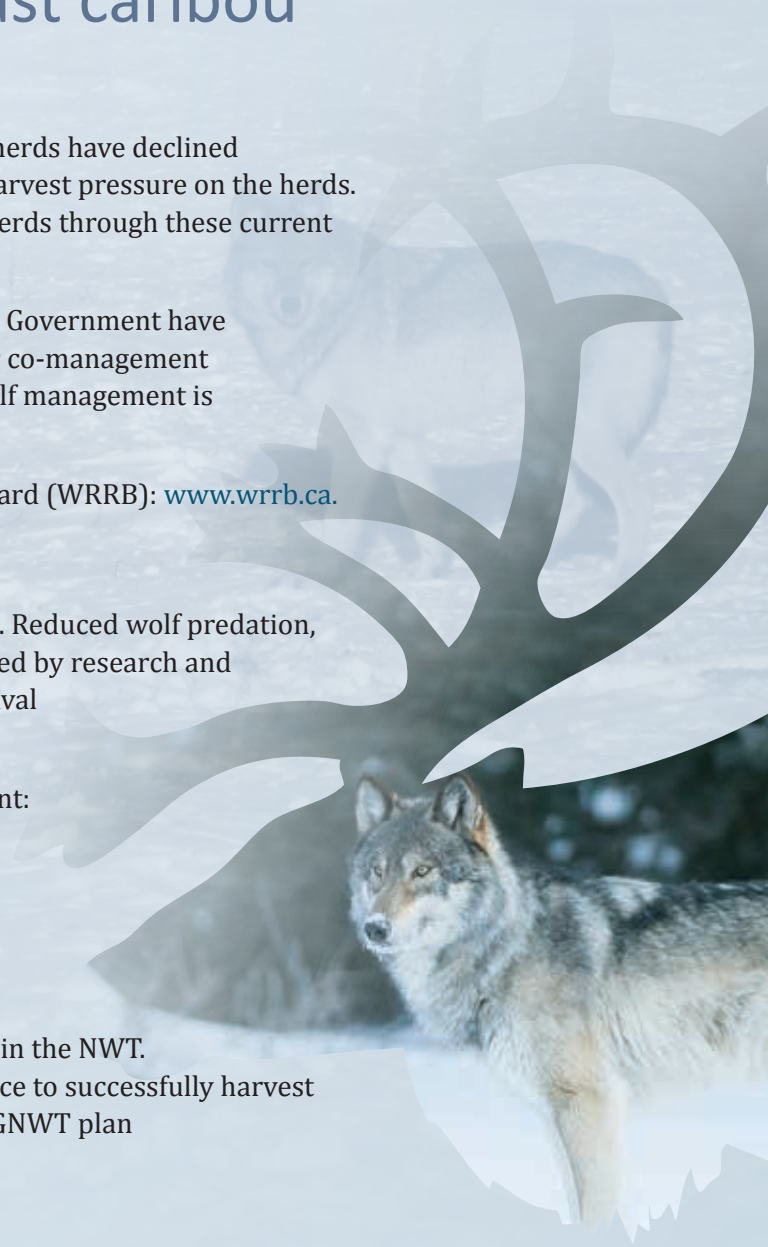
#### Key actions:

- Enhance Tłıchǫ Government wolf harvester training
- Enhance GNWT workshops on best practices for wolf harvesting and pelt preparation

### Adaptive management

To give caribou the best chance at recovery, we need to be prepared to change our approach to reflect new information. Wolf management actions will be adjusted within and between seasons using the latest scientific, local and traditional knowledge.

The GNWT and Tłıchǫ Government will also conduct a full program review every year to assess the effectiveness of wolf management actions and determine, with the WRRB, whether wolf reductions should continue.



## Monitoring, research and assessment

Information collected from harvesters and satellite collars, along with biological and statistical analysis, will help us learn more about wolves and assess the effectiveness of our management actions. The GNWT is working closely with experts in caribou and wolf dynamics to develop and refine approaches to research, monitoring and assessment.

### Key actions:

- Harvester survey
- Wolf collaring
- Biological research and monitoring
- Estimate wolf removal levels for each caribou herd
- Monitor catch per unit effort for wolf harvesters
- Monitor changes in caribou populations

## Wolf reduction actions

The goal of wolf reduction actions is to remove 60% to 80% of wolves from the winter ranges of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds over a period of five years.

Experience elsewhere shows this level of sustained removal is necessary to support an increase in caribou cow and calf survival rates, as wolf populations can rebound quickly once management actions are no longer applied.

Decisions on wolf management must be considered with care. It is important to note that wolf reduction actions are never carried out in isolation, but as part of a larger, coordinated management approach for barren-ground caribou recovery, which includes implementation of the Bathurst Caribou Range Plan.



### Did you know?

Wolves are the primary predator for barren-ground caribou. Each wolf can eat 23 to 29 caribou every year.

### Key actions:

#### • Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program

GNWT plans to continue this program for 2019/20 and provide additional support to wolf hunters over the next five years by offering higher incentives and wolf tags to all hunters at no cost.

#### • Participation of Nunavut wolf harvesters

Inuit hunters who harvest wolves in the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area will be paid \$1,200 for each wolf (\$900 from GNWT and \$300 from the Government of Nunavut).

#### • Aerial removal of wolves on Bathurst and Bluenose-East winter range

Aerial removal is considered to be the most effective and humane management option for applying further pressure on wolf populations. If reduction targets are not met by harvesters, aerial removal will be considered to achieve 60% to 80% removal rates.

## A tiered approach

Our goal is to reach wolf removal targets **through harvesting** by supporting community-based wolf harvesters. Aerial removal will only be considered if removal targets cannot be met.

Annual targets for wolf removal will depend on the degree of overlap between barren-ground caribou herds on their winter ranges.

