



## Boreal Caribou Section 11 Conservation Agreement

### Frequently Asked Questions

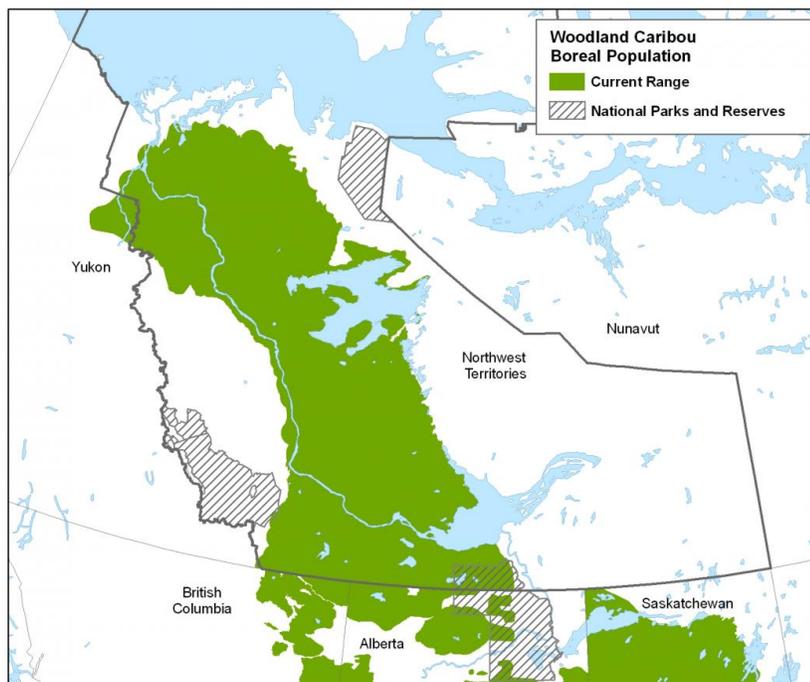
#### What is a section 11 conservation agreement?

Section 11 of the federal *Species at Risk Act* enables a federal minister to enter into an agreement “with any government in Canada, organization, or person to benefit a species at risk or enhance its survival in the wild.” This includes boreal caribou, which are listed as Threatened in Canada and the Northwest Territories (NWT).

A section 11 agreement sets out conservation measures consistent with the *Species at Risk Act*, including measures to:

- Monitor the status of a species
- Develop and implement recovery strategies, range plans, action plans and management plans
- Protect the species’ habitat, including its critical habitat
- Undertake research projects in support of recovery efforts for the species

The *Conservation Agreement for the Conservation of the Boreal Caribou* between the governments of Canada and the NWT describes how the two governments will work together with the territorial Conference of Management Authorities to support a healthy and sustainable population of boreal caribou in the NWT.



Boreal caribou range in the NWT (as of 2014)

## **Why is a conservation agreement needed for boreal caribou in the NWT?**

Together with other GNWT departments and co-management partners, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has been working on a framework that outlines the GNWT's proposed approach to developing five regional boreal caribou range plans. These plans would maintain at least 65 per cent undisturbed habitat within the NWT range of boreal caribou over the long term, as required by the national recovery strategy. This is an approach we believe will provide effective and adaptive critical habitat protection for boreal caribou in the NWT while supporting economic development.

The conservation agreement recognizes and supports our 'made-in-the-North' approach to boreal caribou protection and habitat management and reduces the likelihood of a federal protection order being imposed on the NWT. The agreement also provides significant federal funding to support range planning in the NWT over the next five years.

## **What is in the agreement?**

The overarching goal of the agreement is to articulate the actions the governments of Canada and the NWT will take over the next five years to support the long-term objective of maintaining a self-sustaining population of boreal caribou in the NWT. These include:

- Engagement and consultation on a range planning framework
- Development of regional range plans
- Range plan implementation
- Evaluation of sustainable harvest rates

Underpinning this work are the *NWT Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy and Implementation Agreement*, tools developed collaboratively by the GNWT, Indigenous governments and organizations, renewable resources boards and other partners. The draft NWT Boreal Caribou Range Planning Framework, once finalized, will guide the development of regional range plans using a balanced approach that maintains a healthy and self-sustaining boreal caribou population while ensuring sustainable economic growth opportunities for residents of the NWT.

The conservation agreement provides \$3.255 million in federal funding to support the development and implementation of these range plans over the next five years. In addition, the GNWT has negotiated \$1 million in funding to support related engagement and consultation activities to ensure these plans reflect the values and interests of northerners.

## **How does the agreement help the NWT avoid a federal protection order?**

A federal protection order, also known as a 'safety net order,' may be issued where the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) believes the laws of the province or territory do not effectively protect a species, its residences or a portion of its critical habitat. A progress report on the implementation of the federal recovery strategy for boreal caribou published in April 2018 concluded there are currently no territorial laws in place that would provide mandatory and enforceable prohibition against the destruction of critical habitat in the NWT.

Imposition of a federal protection order in the NWT would mean any land user destroying critical habitat would require a Species at Risk permit from ECCC prior to starting land use activities.

The conservation agreement, which commits the GNWT to developing five range plans within the next five years in collaboration with our co-management partners, provides a path forward on effective boreal caribou management in the NWT.

### **What is the status of boreal caribou in the NWT?**

There are an estimated 6,000-7,000 boreal caribou in the NWT, with a range that covers more than 44 million hectares in the NWT and part of northeastern Yukon. Approximately 69 per cent of the range is considered undisturbed. Most of the habitat disturbance within the NWT range is caused by forest fires.

Boreal caribou have been listed as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act* since 2003 and listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* since 2014 due to the small population size in the NWT and expected continuing decline in the amount of secure habitat and the number of boreal caribou. Population monitoring suggests the NWT population of boreal caribou is likely self-sustaining, with increasing numbers in the northern part of the range (Gwich'in region) and slightly declining numbers in the southern part (Dehcho and South Slave regions).

The estimated total annual harvest of boreal caribou in the NWT represents 3 per cent or less of the population (<200 individuals). Annual harvest by resident hunters is estimated at 22 caribou per year, on average.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Recovery Strategy for Boreal Caribou in Canada (2012)**

[https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual\\_sara/files/plans/rs\\_caribou\\_boreal\\_caribou\\_0912\\_e1.pdf](https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/plans/rs_caribou_boreal_caribou_0912_e1.pdf)

#### **Recovery Strategy for Boreal Caribou in the NWT (2017)**

[www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/sites/default/files/nwt\\_boreal\\_caribou\\_recovery\\_strategy\\_2017\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/sites/default/files/nwt_boreal_caribou_recovery_strategy_2017_final_0.pdf)

#### **Consensus Agreement on Implementing the NWT Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy (2017)**

[https://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/sites/default/files/consensus\\_agreement\\_boreal\\_caribou\\_implementation\\_nov2417\\_signed.pdf](https://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/sites/default/files/consensus_agreement_boreal_caribou_implementation_nov2417_signed.pdf)

#### **NWT Species at Risk**

[www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca)

#### **Draft Boreal Caribou Range Planning Framework**

- Discussion Document: [www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/node/17669](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/node/17669)
- Plain Language Summary: [www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/node/17667](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/node/17667)