



## Wolf Management Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why are the GNWT and Tłı̨ch̨ Government taking steps to reduce the number of wolves in the North Slave Region?

The Bathurst and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou (ekwò) herds have declined significantly in recent years, despite sustained efforts to reduce harvest pressure and manage disturbance to caribou. There is an immediate need for additional action to support the herds, and our co-management partners, harvesters and residents have told us that increased wolf management is needed to help the herds recover.

Wolves are the main predator of barren-ground caribou. On average, a single wolf can eat 23-29 caribou per year. Given the current low numbers of Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou, this level of predation is believed to be a significant contributor to caribou mortality. However, 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 and other determinations and recommendations from the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB).

### 2. What actions have been taken so far this winter to reduce wolves on the caribou winter ranges?

The GNWT and Tłı̨ch̨ Government approach to wolf management focuses on reducing the number of wolves on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou winter ranges through enhanced support for harvesters. This winter, the GNWT increased incentives under the Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program, eliminated fees for wolf tags, and has been offering workshops on wolf harvesting and pelt preparation to further support harvesting efforts. In collaboration with the Government of Nunavut, we are also offering enhanced incentives to Nunavut hunters harvesting in their traditional area within the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area.

### 3. How many wolves will be removed this year from the caribou winter ranges?

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.

The GNWT has updated its initial targets for wolf removals based on new information from harvesters and aerial surveys and other field work carried out in March. As the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds were separated on their winter ranges this year with limited mixing, we were able to set separate targets for the wolves associated with each herd.

Based on our analysis of the latest scientific, traditional and local knowledge, the GNWT has determined that removing 27-37 wolves from the winter range of Bathurst herd and 66-90 wolves from the Bluenose-East winter range would give these herds the best chance to recover. These ranges reflect our goal of 60-80% wolf reduction. However, it is important to remember these are estimates, and may need to be adjusted as new information becomes available.

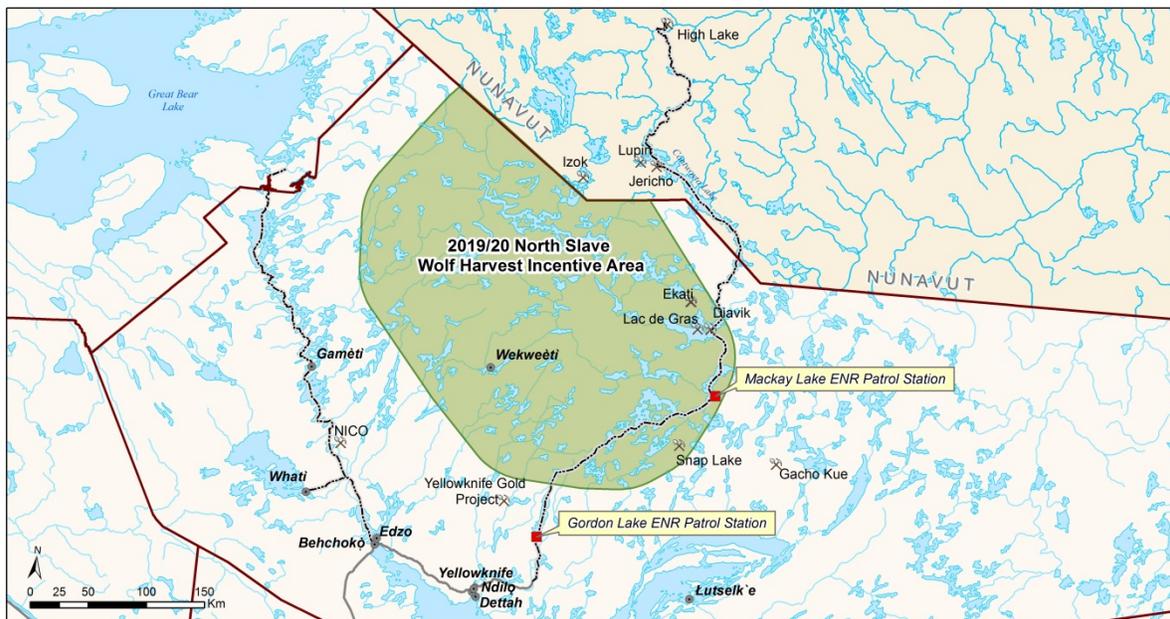


#### 4. How will these wolves be removed?

Wolf harvesters from both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut have been harvesting wolves since January, supported by increased incentives from the GNWT and the Government of Nunavut. However, fewer wolves have been harvested than expected this year on the winter ranges of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds. To achieve 60% to 80% removal rates, aerial removal will be required this year.

#### 5. Where and when will aerial removals take place?

The goal of the wolf reduction actions proposed by the GNWT and Tłı̨chǫ Government is to remove wolves on the winter ranges of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou to promote caribou recovery. This is the same area where hunters have been receiving increased incentives: the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Area (see map below).



With approval from the WRRB, aerial removal will be undertaken this winter starting in April, while the wolves are still in the NWT. Once spring migration begins in late April and early May, Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou and the wolves that travel with them will move into Nunavut, where they remain until late fall. As a result, the GNWT will not be carrying out any wolf reduction activities through the spring and summer.

#### 6. Is this activity safe? What about communities and people traveling in the area?

Aerial wolf removal will be carried out safely and respectfully, with consideration of nearby communities and other activities in the area. *Wolf removals will not take place near camps, communities or the winter road while it is open.*



## 7. What happens to the wolf carcasses and pelts?

Wolves removed from the winter ranges of Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou will be stored individually and transported to Yellowknife for examination and pelt preparation. The carcasses will be studied to learn more about the diet and life history of wolf populations. Indigenous harvesters will be involved in preparing the wolf pelts as part of the traditional economy.

## 8. How can the GNWT and Tłıchǵ Government be sure these measures will be effective?

There are many complicated factors that contribute to population decline among barren-ground caribou herds, including natural fluctuations in population. These proposed wolf reduction actions are one part of a larger approach being taken by the GNWT, Tłıchǵ Government and our co-management partners to support recovery of our barren-ground caribou herds.

Experience from other jurisdictions shows that sustained pressure on wolf populations can help increase caribou survival rates. However, it is important to remember that determining the success of this initiative will take time. Information collected from harvesters and satellite collars, along with scientific analysis, will help us learn more about wolves and assess the effectiveness of our management actions over the next five years. These actions will be adjusted within and between seasons using the latest scientific, traditional and local knowledge—and will be carefully reviewed every year to determine whether actions should continue.