



## Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. How long have we had a wolf harvest incentive program in the Northwest Territories (NWT), and how much have wolf harvesters been paid?

A North Slave Region wolf carcass collection program first began in the winter of 2008/09 and ran until 2009/10 (2 years total). That program paid \$100 per skinned wolf carcass.

In June 2009, the Bathurst caribou calving ground photo survey results showed a significant decline in the population of the herd, prompting the WRRB to recommend drastic harvest restrictions. At this time, the GNWT heard from North Slave communities that predation was contributing to the decline of the Bathurst herd, and that support for a wolf harvest incentive would help to reduce the number of wolves in the territory. The North Slave Region's wolf carcass collection was expanded NWT-wide.

Further Bathurst caribou calving ground surveys in June 2012 and 2015 confirmed the herd's continued decline. In response, and to further support the traditional economy, the wolf harvest incentive program was increased again in 2015 to \$200 for a skinned wolf, plus \$400 for a pelt prepared to traditional standards and an additional \$350 if the pelt met the requirement for a prime fur bonus as part of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program.

#### 2. What were the outcomes of the previous wolf harvest incentive program?

Although the program did result in an increase in harvested wolves, the amount was not high. Further, very few of the wolves harvested came from the Bathurst herd's wintering range—the area intended to help Bathurst caribou recover.

Much of the harvest (25-40%) of the wolves took place near communities and landfills. This helped to remove wolves that came into conflict with people and property around communities.

#### 3. Why are we increasing wolf harvest incentives on the wintering range of Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou?

In August 2018, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) held an on-the-land gathering with Elders, leaders and youth from Indigenous governments and organizations from the North Slave Region at Francois Lake, located 100 km east of Yellowknife. Participants shared information about caribou, moose, muskox, wolves and forest fires.

We heard from participants that the main reason harvesters had not been taking full advantage of the wolf harvest incentives program to target predators associated with wintering barren-ground caribou was due to the high cost of fuel and supplies to reach them in the winter.

Participants indicated that a significant increase in incentives would facilitate access by wolf harvesters to areas where migrating barren-ground caribou spend the winter in the North Slave Region, and provide more support for them to participate in the traditional economy.



Following the Francois Lake gathering, the GNWT finalized the results of the June 2018 calving ground photo surveys of the Bluenose-East and Bathurst herds. These results revealed a continued and very concerning decline for both herds.

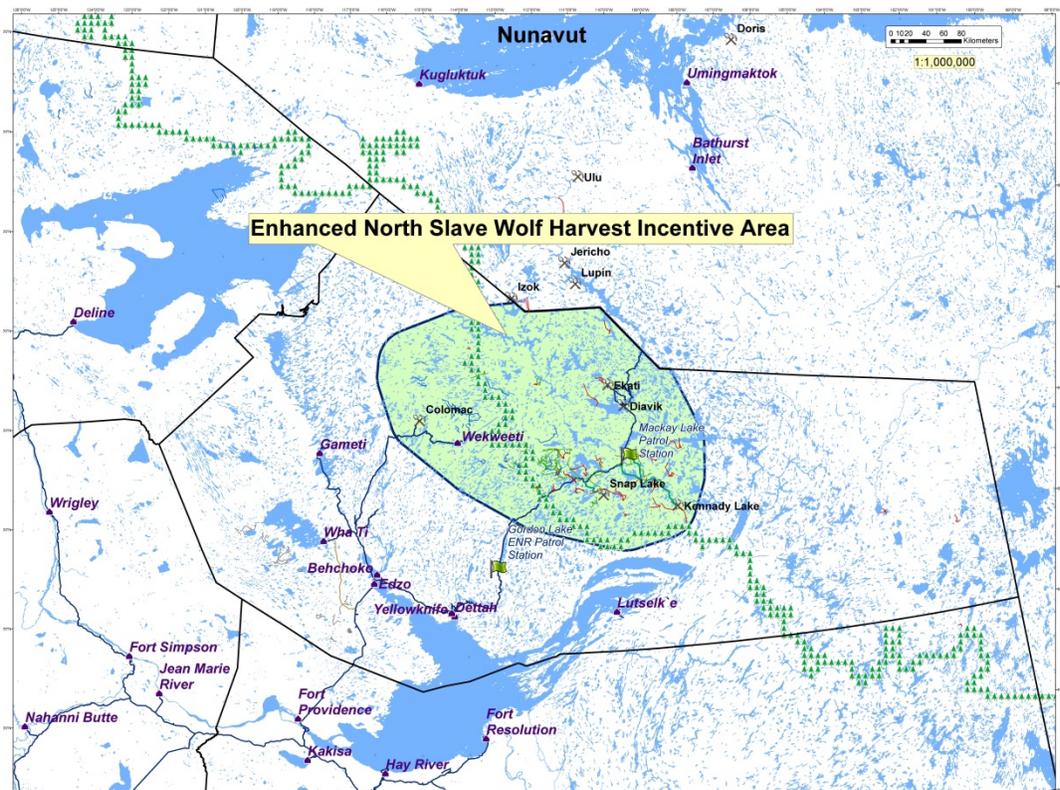
To help the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds recover, the GNWT is making a significant increase in the financial incentives for wolf harvesting in the North Slave Region. These incentives will encourage more wolves to be harvested where the barren-ground caribou are wintering in order to have the greatest impact on caribou herd recovery and promote a successful harvest for hunters.

#### 4. How is the North Slave wolf harvest incentive program being enhanced?

A new, enhanced Wolf Harvest Incentive Area in the North Slave Region will be created for the 2018/19 winter season. This area overlaps with the current wintering range of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds. Increased incentives will be offered for wolves harvested in this area.

Payment for a wolf carcass has been increased to \$900 per wolf, plus \$400 for a pelt prepared to traditional or taxidermy standard and an additional \$350 if the pelt meets the requirement of the prime fur bonus as part of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program.

The existing NWT-wide wolf harvest incentive program will continue to support the traditional economy elsewhere in the territory using the previous financial incentives of \$200 for a skinned wolf, plus \$400 for a pelt prepared to traditional standards and an additional \$350 if the pelt meets the requirement for a prime fur bonus as part of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program.





## 5. How can harvesters participate in the enhanced North Slave wolf harvest incentive program?

Wolf harvesters going into the Wolf Harvest Incentives Area will be required to register at a patrol station prior to hunting. Patrol stations will be established at Gordon Lake, Wekweeti and possibly Gameti, depending on the winter distribution of barren-ground caribou.

Hunters who successfully harvest a wolf in the Wolf Harvest Incentives Area will be required to bring the carcass back to a patrol station, where the carcass will be uniquely marked and the harvester will receive a receipt from patrol station staff.

The harvester will then have the option of either taking the wolf carcass (skinned or unskinned) home for pelt preparation or leaving it with patrol station staff, who will arrange for skilled skinners to prepare the pelt and securely store the carcass until it can be transported for necropsy and scientific analysis.

The harvester will be able to cash the carcass receipt at North Slave Regional ENR offices in Yellowknife or Behchokò.

Resident hunters are eligible for increased incentives for the wolf carcass only (\$900).

## 6. What will happen to the wolf carcasses collected through the program?

Skinned wolf carcasses will be necropsied to determine the nutritional condition, age distribution, and diet and food linkages of harvested migratory wolves.

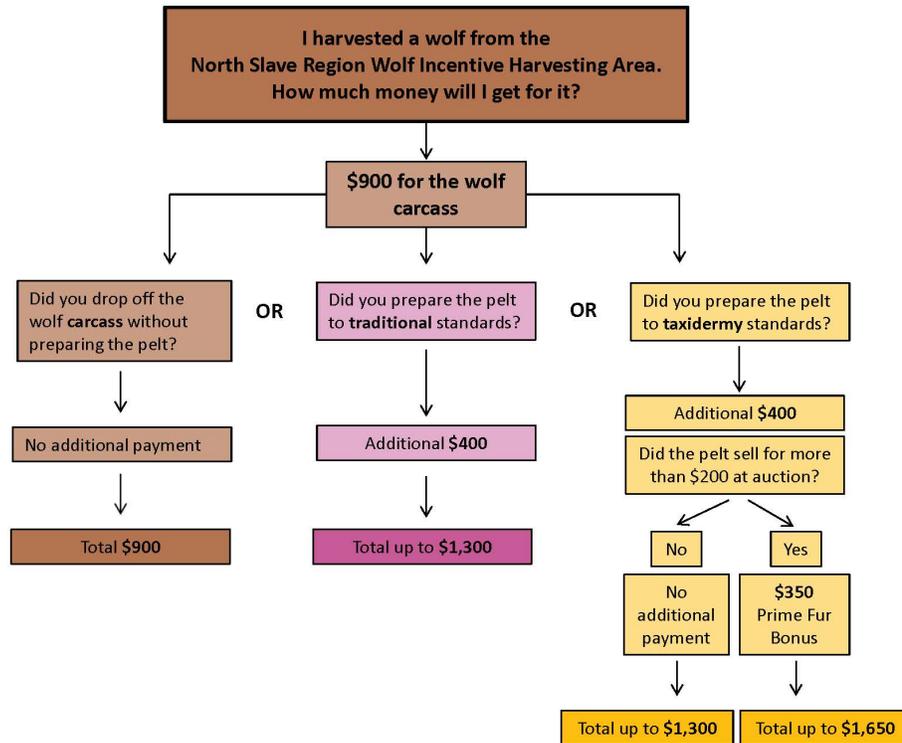
Samples collected will include teeth for aging, fat index and measurements for body condition, tissue samples for genetic analysis, contaminants, diet analysis (stable isotopes), and parasites and diseases. The reproductive tract of females will be used to determine potential litter size if samples are obtained during the breeding season (mid-March to mid-April).

ENR will be working with high schools and Aurora College to provide educational opportunities to students, where possible, throughout the sampling and analysis process.

## 7. What will happen to the pelts?

Pelts from harvested wolves will either be prepared to traditional or taxidermy standards, and sold at fur auctions or privately by the harvester. Higher incentives will be given to prepare pelts to taxidermy standards, not only because it takes more time to do so, but because the pelt also sells for a higher price at auction. ENR periodically holds workshops for traditional harvesters to provide instruction on pelt preparation.

Some of the pelts from wolves harvested through the increased incentives program will be used for Team NWT jackets during future Arctic Winter Games.



### 8. How will the GNWT manage potential illegal caribou hunting and harassment during the harvesting of wolves?

The North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentives Area overlaps with the Mobile Core Bathurst Caribou Management Zone, where no hunting of caribou is allowed.

The GNWT expects enhancements to the wolf harvest incentive program in the North Slave to generate additional human activity where barren-ground caribou are wintering. Hunters are required to understand and respect the law regarding caribou harvest and harassment.

The GNWT is committed to preventing the illegal harvest or harassment of caribou. ENR officers will engage in increased educational efforts with harvesters at patrol stations and will also be increasing the frequency of aerial and ground enforcement patrols to minimize the risk of infractions.

It is illegal to unnecessarily chase, fatigue, disturb, torment or otherwise harass wildlife, including caribou. Documented cases of illegally harvesting or harassing caribou will be prosecuted, as per the NWT *Wildlife Act*.

### 8. Where can I get more information?

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