



Summary: Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan

Why do we need a plan?

The Porcupine Caribou Herd is a magnificent population of migratory caribou that we must conserve for all time. When the herd is large, harvesting caribou poses little or no threat to it. When the herd is declining it can get to a point where hunting could become a serious problem. Harvesting like normal, when herd numbers are low and the herd is declining, could make the population of the herd go down further and faster so that it would take many, many years to recover. We do not want this to happen.

Who wrote this plan?

This plan is part of the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Strategy initiated by the PCMB:

1. The Harvest Management Protocol Agreement (done in 2007);
2. The Harvest Management Plan (this Plan released in 2010); and
3. The Native User Agreement (not yet started).

Parties to the Plan are:

- First Nation of NaCho Nyäk Dun
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Inuvialuit Game Council
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
- Vuntut Gwitchin Government
- Government of the Northwest Territories
- Government of Yukon
- Government of Canada

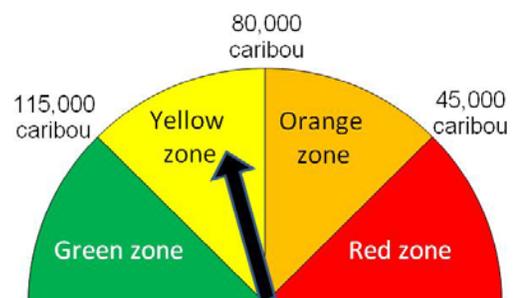
Management Goal:

We want to try to conserve the Porcupine Caribou Herd by adjusting the number and sex of caribou we harvest based on the changes in the herd size and population trend.

The Precautionary Principle

The plan supports the use of the Precautionary Principle which is; in the absence of complete information, where there are threats of serious or irreparable damage, the lack of complete certainty shall not be a reason for postponing conservation measures. These measures must be reasonable; that is to the extent necessary to achieve conservation as defined.

Harvest Management Colour Chart



Management of harvest numbers

Herd size	Licensed Hunters	Aboriginal Hunters
GREEN ZONE more than 115,000 animals	Up to two animals each Mandatory bulls only All hunters required to report ①	No harvest limit Cows and bulls may be taken All hunters required to report ①
YELLOW ZONE 80,000 – 115,000 animals **CURRENT LEVEL**	1 animal each Mandatory bulls only All hunters required to report ①	No harvest limit Voluntary bulls only with a commitment to strive for 100% bulls harvest ② All hunters required to report ①
ORANGE ZONE 45,000 – 80,000 animals	Harvest limit through permit ③ Mandatory bulls only All hunters required to report ①	Harvest limit through subsistence allocation ③ Mandatory bulls only All hunters required to report ①
RED ZONE Up to 45,000 animals	No harvesting	Extremely limited harvesting ④ All hunters required to report ①

- ① *The Parties to the Harvest Management Plan are to work out a rigorous and verifiable system for reporting as part of the implementation plan*
- ② *All Parties commit to implementing a bulls-only harvest.*
- ③ *Limits will be determined by the Annual Allowable Harvest (0.5 to 3% of herd) that will be reviewed annually in order to respond to population trend. The subsistence allocation will be determined through a 'Native User Agreement' and the licensed hunter allocation in Yukon worked out between the Yukon government and Yukon First Nations.*
- ④ *Essentially no harvesting but consideration will be given to allocating up to 0.1% of herd for ceremonial purposes, such as a potlatch.*

Note: Currently there are still interim conservation measures in place in the Yukon that include mandatory bulls-only harvest and mandatory reporting. For more information see:

http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/huntingtrapping/porcupine_caribou_interim_conservation.php

How will the allowable harvest be set?

Each year, the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) will host a meeting of the Parties to review all available scientific, local and traditional knowledge about the current status of the herd and recent harvest information from all Parties. The PCMB will then decide which colour zone the herd is in and will recommend management actions to the Parties to implement. This meeting will take place in early February with actions implemented by the next fall hunting season.

If the herd is in the Orange zone, the PCMB will also recommend an Annual Allowable Harvest, limiting the total number of caribou that can be harvested from the herd. This number will be a proportion of the estimated population size (from the photocensus where available, otherwise from the computer model). The proportion will range between 0.5% and 3% of the herd, with fewer animals available at the lower end of the population size.

In the orange and red zones the limited harvest will be allocated to user groups in both Alaska and Canada. Allocation of harvest limits on Aboriginal hunters will be detailed in Native User Agreements for Yukon and NWT.

Information needed

The following indicators are collected for the Porcupine Caribou Herd on a regular basis:

- *Estimated herd size* — the number of caribou in the herd from the photocensus or Caribou Calculator **.
- *Harvest information* — The number of caribou harvested by hunters each year.
- *Adult cow survival* — The percentage of the cows that survive each year.
- *Calf birth rate* — The percentage of cows that gave birth that spring.
- *Calf survival to nine months* — The number of calves still alive by late winter, relative to the number of cows.
- *Body condition* — The fatness of caribou that hunters harvest in fall and winter.

** The Caribou Calculator is a computer program that uses all of the annual monitoring information to estimate how many caribou are in the herd. The Plan says that in years where we don't get a photocensus, the Caribou Calculator will be used to help make harvest management decisions.

Predator control

Predator control is not called for in this plan. The Inuvialuit, NWT Gwich'in and Yukon First Nations may independently consider community driven initiatives to reduce predation.

Sale of caribou

While the trade, barter and sale of Porcupine caribou with other native users is permitted under the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* (PCMA), commercial harvest of meat is not. Results from the community engagement meetings suggest sale is happening and there is a concern about it. This plan recommends the Board establish guidelines for the trade, barter and sale of caribou as per the PCMA.

Alaska

About 15 percent of the total reported harvest of the Porcupine Caribou Herd Caribou is taken by Alaskans. Alaskan community and agency participation in harvest management is vital to the plan's overall success.

The Plan says that efforts should be made to revitalize the International Porcupine Caribou Board to "...make recommendations and provide advice on ... cooperative conservation planning for the Porcupine Caribou Herd throughout its range."

Alaskan user communities and governments have been informed about the Canadian harvest planning process and a coordinated effort to include Alaska in harvest management will be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.

Education and communication

By adopting this plan it is understood that the parties will support the Porcupine Caribou Management Board in devoting a large portion of its time and resources toward working closely with the communities on education and communication that:

- Improves marksmanship and use of accurate, flat-shooting rifles (reduces the use of underpowered rifles) so that fewer caribou are wounded and die without being found.
- Makes all hunters try their hardest to go after a wounded animal rather than letting it run off.
- Helps hunters identify bulls from cows.
- Makes people aware that it is mandatory to report their harvest.
- Encourages hunters to participate in projects that keep track of the health of the herd.

Dempster Highway

The plan does not call for regulations but it contains numerous recommended Best Practices for hunting along the Dempster Highway. These will be included in the Hunter Education program.

A full copy of the plan can be downloaded from www.taiga.net/pcmb