
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

GNWT and Tłıchǵo Government submit joint wolf management plan to support caribou recovery

YELLOWKNIFE (January 31, 2020) – The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tłıchǵo Government submitted a joint proposal today on management actions for wolves on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herd winter ranges. This proposal is part of a wide range of management actions the two governments and their co-management partners are taking to support the recovery of these herds, including implementation of the [Bathurst Caribou Range Plan](#).

Both the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds have experienced rapid declines in recent years, and the GNWT has heard clearly from its co-management partners that more needs to be done to manage predators to support caribou during this period of decline.

This five-year joint proposal on wolf management is based on the best available scientific, traditional and local knowledge, including the experience of wolf management programs conducted elsewhere and numerous discussions with harvesters, residents and communities.

The joint proposal prioritizes the traditional economy of the Northwest Territories and the role of wolf harvesters in caribou recovery efforts. It proposes additional training for wolf harvesters and increased support for community-based wolf harvesting through the [Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program](#). Research and monitoring will help improve our knowledge of wolf population dynamics and allow us to adapt our management actions over the five years to maximize impacts on caribou recovery.

The joint proposal is now before the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) for review.

Quotes

“At times of low numbers, we know that caribou populations are especially vulnerable to predators. Our hope is that reducing the number of wolves on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou ranges will help increase survival rates of caribou enough to stabilize their population and give them an opportunity to recover, while supporting our traditional economy. The health and abundance of all wildlife is important to the GNWT and decisions about predator management must be made with care.”

- **Shane Thompson**, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources

“Our people have been talking about the caribou for a long time. The caribou are in danger and we all need want to do more to assist in their recovery. We have had meetings with our Elders and our traditional knowledge affirms that wolves are an important animal and must be treated with great respect even when harvesting them. We are committed to the training of our harvesters for the purpose of a controlled wolf harvest using Tłıchǫ traditional knowledge practices in the wintering ranges of the Bluenose East and Bathurst Caribou. It is time to put stronger actions in place before it is too late for the caribou.”

- **Grand Chief George Mackenzie**, Tłıchǫ Government

Quick Facts

- Wolves are the primary predator of barren-ground caribou in the Northwest Territories. 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 a significant contributor to caribou mortality.
- A 2017 Wolf Technical Feasibility Assessment considered a range of predator management options to support caribou herd recovery. The GNWT and Tłıchǫ Government carefully considered all of these options when putting together this joint wolf management proposal, and worked closely with wolf experts, university researchers, and other wildlife management agencies to review additional wolf management options and to learn from experiences in other jurisdictions.
- In 2018/19, incentives for wolf harvesters were increased on the winter range of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou through the [Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program](#).
- 56 wolves were taken by 31 hunters as part of the 2018/19 enhanced incentive program. Analysis showed that 95% of the wolves harvested from the incentive area with food in their stomach had eaten barren-ground caribou. This suggests the incentive program is effective in focusing on wolves associated with wintering barren-ground caribou.
- The GNWT- Tłıchǫ Government joint proposal on wolf management includes further increases to harvest incentives for wolf hunters, as well as training opportunities and the removal of tag fees.
- To ensure NWT harvesters have the best opportunity to harvest wolves under the increased incentives program, aerial removal will only be implemented at the end of the harvest season if wolf removal objectives have not been reached.
- Wolf carcasses that are recovered through proposed wolf management actions will undergo scientific analysis and pelts will be prepared and sold at auction, whenever possible.

- Determining the success of this initiative will take time. All predator management actions undertaken by the GNWT, Tłıchǫ Government and co-management partners will be closely monitored to ensure we can measure results and adapt our management approach as required.

Links

- Government of the Northwest Territories and Tłıchǫ Government Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Wolves (dìga) on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou (ʔekwò) Herd Winter Ranges: 2020 – 2025
 - [Summary](#)
 - [Full proposal](#)
- [FAQ: Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program](#)
- [Bathurst Caribou Range Plan](#)
- [Barren-ground Caribou](#) (ENR website)

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