

# BC Caribou Recovery Program Update - Teleconference

April 22, 2020, 10 – 11 PDT

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## Hosted by:

David Muter, Executive Director, Species at Risk Recovery Branch, BC Min. of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Darcy Peel – Director, Caribou Recovery Program, BC Min. of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

## David Muter:

### Program Response to COVID-19

- The [Provincial Caribou Recovery Program website](#) has links to all COVID-19 related information from the Province
- We are making some changes in our work to follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer and do our part to support community health and safety measures, including pausing fieldwork

### Budget

- Although the legislature is not sitting, a special warrant budget of 75% has been approved, so the Program is continuing, and the balance of the budget is expected to be reviewed by government in a fall session
- A modest amount of funding is available to support Indigenous Nations' participation in herd planning and other caribou recovery activities – more information will be available soon

While caribou recovery work is important, it must be done in a way that respects health and safety measures and we are open to suggestions and ideas on how best to adapt to keep things moving forward

## Darcy Peel

### Predator Management

- Delivered this winter in a broader scope than in the past – only where without it we would have far fewer or no caribou to talk about and only where high densities of predators are having a large impact on caribou growth and stability
- Removed 498 wolves by air and ground in 10 different herd areas and 13 cougars mostly in the south Southern Mountain Caribou areas
- We will not know the impact for a while
- We do not undertake this work lightly – it is only for maintenance and to prevent extirpation
- Tied directly to conversations in herd planning

### Penning

- Now that we have five years of experience in this area, the Program is awaiting results of a review of the Klinse-za and Revelstoke pens to see if experts believe we should continue to consider this as a tool

- Arrow Lakes Caribou Society approached us as they wanted to build a maternity pen (it is not a maternity pen at this time and it could be used for a number of purposes that caribou science would determine)
  - We have discussed it with them and they understand our position
  - They have chosen to proceed with initial steps and we are supportive

#### Leo DeGroot

##### Population Inventory and Monitoring

- Sixty different projects were completed – census work, collaring, mortality investigations, and we still await some results
- Please see page 5 for herd data

#### Heather Wiebe

##### Herd Planning:

- All face to face herd planning meetings have been cancelled due to COVID-19 related safety concerns
- We understand that herd planning may not be a priority for many of our clients. However: if your group would like to move forward with virtual herd planning at this time, we'd be happy to connect. Thank you to those who have been in touch to indicate their desire to continue discussions
- Pre-COVID small table sessions were planned to be 4-6 hours in length and were face to face
  - We are looking at what platform we could use for virtual meetings
  - We will be breaking up the meeting into more manageable “chunks”
  - We are developing some information that will be “recorded” so that participants can view when it is most convenient to them
- If we are delayed it will NOT reduce the time dedicated to herd planning. We will take the time necessary for meaningful conversation
- In different parts of the province land use planning pilot projects are in concept – thank you to those in areas that have both herd planning and land use planning for their patience as we figure out the best way to line up these pilots with herd planning in space and time
- Please reach out to your local engagement representative or Heather Wiebe for further details:

Herd or Herd Complex	Engagement Point	Phone	Email
Hart Ranges	Heather Wiebe	778 916-4005	<a href="mailto:Heather.Wiebe@gov.bc.ca">Heather.Wiebe@gov.bc.ca</a>
Central Selkirks	Heather Wiebe	778 916-4005	<a href="mailto:Heather.Wiebe@gov.bc.ca">Heather.Wiebe@gov.bc.ca</a>
Chilcotin Complex (Tweeds/Itchas/Rainbow/Charlotte Alplands)	Sean Mitchell/	250 847-7689	<a href="mailto:Sean.Mitchell@gov.bc.ca">Sean.Mitchell@gov.bc.ca</a>
Revelstoke Complex (Columbia North & South, Frisbee/Boulder)	Heather Wiebe	778 916-4005	<a href="mailto:Heather.Wiebe@gov.bc.ca">Heather.Wiebe@gov.bc.ca</a>
Wolverine/Chase/Takla	Loni Arman	250 997-2207	<a href="mailto:Loni.Arman@gov.bc.ca">Loni.Arman@gov.bc.ca</a>

Reminder from Darcy that if you would like to chat or have ideas about how we can adapt the program for these (COVID 19) circumstances, please get in touch.

Questions:

Q: Requests for predator management and population monitoring and inventory numbers in writing.

A: Committed to providing these either with meeting notes via email or on the web (or both).

Q: Wells Gray numbers – could the 18% recruitment figure be because of the recent logging shutdown?

A: Other measures could be having effects as well - likely a result of several long-term management actions by government and industry, including the fact that a significant area that was good moose habitat is now aging out (of being that) – need to look at longer term trends (10+years)

Q: What is the maternal penning timeline?

A: Had hoped for now but contractor challenges/availability have occurred (expert had health challenges). Committed to notifying Mayor Bertrand when it might be available as he has ideas.

Q: Will predator management continue?

A: yes – it requires a commitment of several years to see results, but it is part of a larger, longer term plan

Q: Request for copy of the report the Partnership Agreement Leadership Table's socio-economic committee will be using

A: The report requires further analysis and input and contains sensitive information so cannot be released publicly. The committee is working to build a Terms of Reference to help build an understanding of how to release it and will take the time to get it right.

Q: Where is predator control occurring and do we have a moose control program?

A: Predator control is occurring in the Tweedsmuir-Entiako, Hart Ranges, Itcha-Ilgachuz, and Central Selkirk herds. The primary prey discussion is ongoing – there is a predator/prey working group and moose monitoring is built into its mandate.

Q: Does the predator/prey working group accept submissions?

A: It is only academia and government at this point, but there is likely a place for other groups – commitment by Darcy to build into the process and follow up.

Q: How are Indigenous groups managing and how are they looking at managing caribou recovery?

A: Program staff are meeting with Indigenous groups in areas where we have active herd planning taking place. Due to COVID-19 the pace of the work has slowed down or stopped but we are adapting to find ways to continue engagement through alternative platforms to in-person meetings. We are working with those who can when they can.

Q: When will the herd plan for Columbia/Shuswap be finished?

A: Work is underway. We had hoped for completion by fall 2021.

Q: Request for the North Columbia Environmental Society and other ENGOs to be involved in engagement the same way as local government, industry and snowmobiler groups.

A: You are absolutely part of the conversation. We are contacting Indigenous groups first, communities second and going broader after that. Y2Y and many other environmental organizations are part of regular updates. We value your voices during these discussions (committed to confirming members NCES are on our contact list)

Q: Is there any coordination between B.C. and Alberta?

A: Yes, we meet with neighbouring jurisdictions regularly to share data and objectives and sometimes partner/coordinate on projects. Areas where we are doing predator management are not generally adjacent to Alberta, though there are some linkages.

Q: The Site C reservoir is set to start filling this fall – have we considered the effect related to caribou recovery?

A: We have not really considered large ungulate displacement.

Q: Are you aware of a new five-year exploratory permit for Imperial Metals in the area near the maternity pen?

A: We are aware of their past work/proposal and aware of concerns by government caribou experts, but we have no recent news on this.

Herd Name	BC_Ecotype_Grouping	Population Estimate Year	Population Estimate	Population Estimate Description	Current Trend	Long-term Trend	Comment
South Selkirk	Southern Mountain_southern group	2019	0	Expert Knowledge	Extirpated	Extirpated	3 remaining adult female caribou translocated to Columbia North Jan -March 2019
Purcells South	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	2	Expert Knowledge	Extirpated	Extirpated	Functionally extirpated in 2019. 1 adult female translocated to Columbia North in Jan 2019; 2 adults remaining in Purcells South
Purcell Central	Southern Mountain_southern group	2006	0	Observed Total Count	Extirpated	Extirpated	
Central Selkirk	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	26	Minimum Number Known Alive	Decreasing	Decreasing	Duncan and Nakusp herds amalgamated in 2015; all population data post -2014 recorded as Central Selkirk
Monashee	Southern Mountain_southern group	2016	1	Observed Total Count	Extirpated	Extirpated	Functionally extirpated in 2016. 1 adult remaining.
Central Rockies	Southern Mountain_southern group	2008	3	Observed Total Count	Extirpated	Extirpated	Functionally extirpated.
Columbia South	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	4	Observed Total Count	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Frisby-Boulder	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	6	Observed Total Count	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Columbia North	Southern Mountain_southern group	2017	147	Observed Total Count	Stable	Decreasing	Current stable trend attributed to predator management
Groundhog	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	31	Observed Total Count	Stable	Decreasing	
Wells Gray North	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	236	Model or Correction	Stable	Stable	
Wells Gray South	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	135	Minimum Number Known Alive	Stable	Decreasing	
Barkerville	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	65	Model or Correction	Stable	Stable	
North Cariboo	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	145 (111-246)	Model or Correction	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Narrow Lake	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	8	Observed Total Count	Decreasing	Decreasing	
George Mtn	Southern Mountain_southern group	2003	0	Expert Knowledge	Extirpated	Extirpated	
Hart Ranges	Southern Mountain_southern group	2020	408 (399-455)	Model or Correction	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Narraway	Southern Mountain_central group	2020	35 <sup>a</sup>	Observed Sampled Count	Stable	Decreasing	<sup>a</sup> not a population estimate; represents caribou observed only.
Quintette	Southern Mountain_central group	2019	88	Minimum Number Known Alive	Increasing	Decreasing	Current increasing trend attributed to predator management
Kennedy Siding	Southern Mountain_central group	2020	87	Observed Total Count	Increasing	Decreasing	Current increasing trend attributed to predator management and supplemental feeding
Burnt Pine	Southern Mountain_central group	2014	1	Observed Total Count	Extirpated	Extirpated	Functionally extirpated in 2016. 1 adult male remaining.
Moberly	Southern Mountain_central group	2020	85	Minimum Number Known Alive	Increasing	Decreasing	Current increasing trend attributed to predator management and maternity pen. Moberly and Scott herds amalgamated in 2014
Scott	Southern Mountain_central group	---	---	---	---	---	Moberly and Scott herds amalgamated in 2014
Redrock-Prairie Creek	Southern Mountain_central group	---	---	---	Unknown	Unknown	not available
Graham	Southern Mountain_northern group	2016	298	Model or Correction & Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Decreasing	
Itcha-Ilgachuz	Southern Mountain_northern group	2019	385	Model or Correction	Decreasing	Decreasing	Precipitous decline from early 2000's (~2500 individuals)
Charlotte Alplands	Southern Mountain_northern group	2001	23	Observed Total Count	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Rainbows	Southern Mountain_northern group	2016	32	Observed Total Count	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Tweedsmuir	Southern Mountain_northern group	2019	160	Minimum Number Known Alive	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Telkwa	Southern Mountain_northern group	2019	32	Observed Total Count	Increasing	Decreasing	
Takla	Southern Mountain_northern group	2020	43	Model or Correction	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Wolverine	Southern Mountain_northern group	2019	264 (252-316)	Model or Correction	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Chase	Southern Mountain_northern group	2019	572 (518-683)	Model or Correction	Stable	Stable	
Thutade	Northern Mountain	2019	116	Observed Sampled Count	Unknown	Unknown	Survey area does not include Russell Range and South Sustut
Finlay	Northern Mountain	2020	116	Observed Total Count	Unknown	Unknown	
Pink Mountain	Northern Mountain	2018	237 <sup>a</sup>	Observed Sampled Count	Unknown	Decreasing	<sup>a</sup> not a population estimate; represents caribou observed only.
Muskwa	Northern Mountain	2004	738	Model or Correction	Stable	Decreasing	
Gataga	Northern Mountain	2007	138 <sup>a</sup>	Observed Sampled Count	Unknown	Unknown	<sup>a</sup> not a population estimate; represents caribou observed only.
Frog	Northern Mountain	2020	114 <sup>a</sup>	Observed Sampled Count	Unknown	Unknown	<sup>a</sup> not a population estimate; represents caribou observed only.
Rabbit	Northern Mountain	2007	1133 <sup>a</sup>	Observed Sampled Count	Unknown	Unknown	<sup>a</sup> not a population estimate; represents caribou observed only.
Liard Plateau	Northern Mountain	2017	87	Observed Sampled Count	Unknown	Unknown	
Horseshoe	Northern Mountain	1999	600 (400-800) <sup>b</sup>	Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Unknown	<sup>b</sup> 1999 survey included both Little Rancheria and Horseshoe, with combined modelled estimate of 1767 (1817-1876)
Little Rancheria	Northern Mountain	1999	1200 (800-1600) <sup>b</sup>	Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Unknown	<sup>b</sup> 1999 survey included both Little Rancheria and Horseshoe, with combined modelled estimate of 1767 (1817-1876)
Swan Lake	Northern Mountain	2007	700 (600-800)	Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Unknown	
Level-Kawdy	Northern Mountain	1999	1500 (1000-2000)	Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Unknown	
Atlin	Northern Mountain	2018	1527 (1077-1927)	Model or Correction	Increasing	Increasing	
Carcross	Northern Mountain	2008	775 (642-935) <sup>c</sup>	Model or Correction	Increasing	Increasing	<sup>c</sup> 2008 population estimate is for Laberge (Yukon) and Carcross herds combined; 2019 population estimate in prep.
Tsenagloode	Northern Mountain	2015	712	Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Unknown	
Edziza	Northern Mountain	2017	75	Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Unknown	
Spatsizi	Northern Mountain	1996	3000 (2000-4000)	Expert Knowledge	Unknown	Unknown	
Chinchaga	Boreal	2010	250	Expert Knowledge	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Snake-Sahtaneh	Boreal	2010	360	Expert Knowledge	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Westside Fort Nelson	Boreal	2010	79	Expert Knowledge	Decreasing	Decreasing	
Maxhamish	Boreal	2010	300	Expert Knowledge	Stable	Decreasing	
Calendar	Boreal	2010	290	Expert Knowledge	Decreasing	Decreasing	