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Caribou Resource Committee

Annual Activity Report 2011-12



Environment and Conservation

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Message from the Chair

As Chair of the Caribou Resource Committee, I hereby submit the Annual Activity Report which outlines the activities of the Committee during the 2011-12 fiscal year.

The Caribou Resource Committee was formed at the outset of the Caribou Strategy to support its deliberations through involvement of various stakeholders. As such, it is a body comprised of government members and public organizations that provides comment to senior officials of the Department of Environment and Conservation on matters that encompass biological, social, economic and operational considerations related to the Caribou Strategy.

This engagement has allowed for the participation of relevant government departments and various stakeholder groups by representing the interests of those organizations. As such, it is a valuable mechanism for the integration of many viewpoints. I would like to acknowledge and show appreciation to members of the Committee for their interest and commitment to this process, and to the protection of the island's woodland caribou population. As Chair, and on behalf of the entire committee, we are accountable and responsible for the preparation of this report and the achievement of the identified activities.



Shane P. Mahoney
Chair, Caribou Resource Committee

Caribou Resource Committee Overview

The Caribou Resource Committee functions as a mechanism for stakeholder input on the social, economic, and ecological aspects of the Caribou Strategy. The Caribou Strategy is a five year (2008-2013) initiative to address the decline in the island woodland caribou population through research and adaptive management. Members of the committee assist and support the Senior Project Team¹ by providing comment on biological, social, economic and operational considerations, and through forwarding inquiries, views and concerns from stakeholder groups through their Committee representative. This may include advice on proposed activities, and comment on the progress and success of the Strategy's ongoing efforts. The Committee also serves to assist and support in the dissemination of relevant information from the Senior Project Team to stakeholder groups.

Members of the Committee include internal representation from:

- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation,
- Department of Natural Resources,
- Executive Council- Rural Secretariat, and
- the Wildlife Division- Department of Environment and Conservation.

Members if the Committee includes external representation from:

- Newfoundland and Labrador Outfitters Association,
- Newfoundland and Labrador Trapper's Association,
- Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Federation,
- general hunting public, and
- the academic community.

¹ The Senior Project Team is composed of senior officials Department of Environment and Conservation.

Current Membership

Name	Role	Affiliation
Mr. Shane Mahoney	Chair	Department of Environment and Conservation, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr. Brad Leyte	Member	NL Wildlife Federation
Mr. Bruce Porter	Member	Notre Dame Rod and Gun Club
Mr. Wayne Holloway	Member	NL Outfitters Association
Mr. Bruce Gilbert	Member	Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Ms. Mary Taylor-Ash	Member	Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreations, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr. David Schneider	Member	Professor, Oceans Science Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr. Ken White	Member	NL Trappers Association
Mr. Ross Firth	Member	Department of Environment and Conservation, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Mr. Keith Deering	Member	Department of Natural Resources, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

The Terms of Reference for the Committee has established a meeting frequency of twice annually or at the call of the chairperson. The secretariat for the Committee operates out of the Sustainable Development and Strategic Science offices in Corner Brook and St. John's, which functions as an administrative body and a conduit for two-way exchange between Committee members and the Senior Project Team¹. The Senior Project Team is responsible for the execution of the Caribou Strategy.

Committee members serve on a volunteer basis, with travel, accommodations and related costs covered under the current Caribou Strategy budget within the Sustainable Development and Strategic Science Branch.

Mandate and Scope

The Caribou Resource Committee will participate in the implementation of the Caribou Strategy by representing the interest of relevant government departments and various stakeholder groups which are impacted or have a contributory role in the Caribou Strategy. In addition, the Caribou Resource Committee will act as a conduit taking information from the Committee to the representative stakeholder groups, while also providing a focus for comment from these same groups.

Values

The following core values represent the disposition that embodies the Caribou Resource Committee in all its deliberations, and the fundamental principles that guide behaviour and decision-making. The value statements further expound on the core values in order to provide additional clarity on the expectations related to each core value.

Core Values	Value Statements
Accountability	The Committee is dedicated to providing accurate and timely information to stakeholders, and follows through on requests and commitments.
Participation	The Committee members participate in a proactive and productive manner.
Integrity	The Committee uses due diligence with the information given, and evaluates it to ensure accurate assessments of the data.
Responsibility	The Committee will work to ensure that the interests of the public are taken into account, and accurately spoken for.
Collaboration	The Committee is open to sharing ideas and knowledge with others and actively seeks the opinions and ideas of others.

Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Caribou Resource Committee are:

- General public (non-consumptive and consumptive wildlife users, outfitters, guides, and others involved in the wildlife industry), and
- Other provincial departments.

Vision

The vision of the Caribou Resource Committee is a healthy and sustainable population of woodland caribou on the island of Newfoundland that meets the social, cultural, ecological and economic needs of its residents at present, and in the future.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Committee reflects the intent of the Department, which is the reduction of adverse impacts of human activities on the environment and the improvement of the health of our ecosystems. By supporting the deliberations of the Caribou Strategy, the Committee will enhance the Senior Project Team's ability to effectively and sustainably manage an integral species in our ecosystem, which in turn will promote a more robust environment.

Objective and Accomplishments

The following objective identifies the priorities of the Caribou Resource Committee for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The Committee's main purpose is to participate in the Caribou Strategy process by way of expressing the concerns or suggestions of various stakeholder groups. Further to this, the Committee will advise on ways in which to increase public knowledge with respect to the Caribou Strategy.

Objective 1: The Caribou Resource Committee (CRC) will continue to provide meaningful input to the Senior Project Team on a wide array of factors, encompassing biological, social, economic, cultural, and operational considerations.

Measure: Provided input to the Senior Project Team.

Indicators	Accomplishment
The CRC will advise on ways to increase public awareness and efficiently disseminate information on the activities and progress of the Caribou Strategy to a wider group of stakeholders.	Various presentations were given at the 2011-12 CRC meeting on the progress and science of the Caribou Strategy. The meeting included members of government, academia, and public stakeholders. Significant information was exchanged amongst the groups. Many of the public stakeholders were representatives of public groups, which took information to their members and the public, as advised by the CRC.
Members' points of view, and hence stakeholder interests, are considered in the development of recommendations for caribou management on the island.	The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has received and compiled significant information, advice and concerns from member groups during the CRC meeting. The Senior Project Team will continue take these views into consideration when developing caribou management recommendations.

Activities

The Committee met once during the 2011-2012 fiscal year. This meeting took place in St. John's on December 14th and 15th. The meeting was a special meeting of the CRC and included members of the academic team that advises on the science of the Caribou Strategy, the standing CRC members as well as research staff from Sustainable Development and Strategic Science, Department of Environment and Conservation. The Minister of Environment and Conservation, the Hon. Terry French, and his staff were also present for parts of the meeting.

Presentations were given on a variety of topics over two days, these included: the Caribou Strategy's *Habitat Program*, the *diversionary feeding study*, on the *importance of valuation of Caribou in NL*, *caribou strategy progress update*, the *utility of hunter submitted data for population estimates*, and *predictive population modeling*.

The main goals of the *Habitat Program* are to: determine caribou habitat quantity and quality, caribou diet, determine caribou and predator habitat usage and selection, and to improve our understanding of caribou, predator, and habitat interactions.

The *diversionary feeding study* is designed to manipulate the feeding habits of large carnivore caribou predators by providing alternative bait food. The preliminary results shows that bears were diverted but coyotes were not and that caribou calf survival did not increase notably. The presentation on importance of valuation of Caribou in NL gave a brief overview of the economic value of caribou on tourism and outfitting industries. Overall the outfitting industry employs 850 people in rural areas. The gross revenue of 19.5 million dollars is added annually to the economy, 3% of which goes to tourism.

The presentation entitled *caribou strategy progress update* gave an update on the Caribou Strategy progress and activities, including caribou population monitoring, adult survival, calf survival, science-based approach, calf mortality, adult collaring, caribou census and population projections, predator density estimates, predator collaring and monitoring, predator home range, experimental predator reduction, habitat program and public education.

The presentation on the *utility of hunter submitted data for population estimates* found that hunter submissions of questionnaires and caribou jaw-bone samples are very valuable as an alternate method of estimating caribou abundance in Newfoundland.

The final presentation on *predictive population modeling* an overview on population modeling techniques that have been used to forecast the future of the woodland caribou in Newfoundland. The objectives were to forecast future population trends under current conditions, and assess the likely impacts of two potential variations from current conditions on projected trends.

The CRC meeting was very successful and included over twenty people in attendance over the two days. The stakeholder and academic groups are an integral part of the Caribou Strategy; the Academic Team was invited to advise and to determine the science around this issue, the Caribou Resource Committee is in place to represent the interests of many stakeholder groups. In the Caribou Strategy thus far, a significant amount of work has been done by staff, graduate students, and the committee's input has proven to be extremely valuable and will help guide the Government in this matter.

Financial Statement

Item	Amount*
Meals	\$231.55
Travel	\$1555.68
Total	\$1787.23

*Unaudited Amounts