

LOCAL AND HARVESTER OBSERVATIONS INTERVIEWS



HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Local community members, Elders and harvesters hold vast knowledge of caribou health and population status.
- Interviews are valuable for monitoring of long-term population change, body condition, and disease.
- Individual or group interviews and discussions offer valuable long-term insights that enhance and complement other monitoring methods.



Photo credit: Shana Dennis

WHAT CAN BE MEASURED?

- Interviews are suitable to monitoring many population metrics including movement, distribution, habitat use, and signs of disease.
- Observations are generally qualitative in nature, but can be semi-quantified through techniques such as 'proportional piling' or through standardized 'participatory epidemiology' sessions.
- Discussions and interview results can support collaborative research and planning.

WHAT (AND WHO) IS REQUIRED?

- Required personnel include local/Indigenous knowledge experts and community coordinators.
- Costs may include travel to remote locations, participant honoraria or financial incentives, data collection apps, and transcription/translation of data.
- In addition to direct participation in interviews, local community members can identify key knowledge holders, conduct interviews, analyse results, and communicate findings.

WHEN CAN IT BE USED?

Use: Interviews can put science-based results into a broader context, highlight the need for addressing new research questions, and help inform other monitoring methods.

Avoid: Not appropriate when detailed quantitative data are required. Insights from hunters might be limited for caribou populations not commonly harvested.

Previous boreal caribou application: Community-based boreal caribou harvest monitoring is ongoing in the Northwest Territories (Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board and Katlodeeche First Nation). Community-based health monitoring is also occurring for Northern Mountain caribou in BC (with the Tahltan Guide and Outfitters Association) and for barren-ground caribou of the Dolphin & Union herd in NWT.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Standardized and repeatable interview methods will strengthen the precision and value of findings.
- Knowledge from multiple communities can be combined through collaborative networks, providing more detailed information at broader scales.
- Interpretations will be influenced by the experience of the observer, and thus interview design should take this into consideration (e.g., ask for a comparison of observed body condition from year to year, rather than a one-time indicator of body condition).
- Local people should be involved in all stages of project development, interviews, and sharing of results. For example, between interview years, sampling approaches and protocols can be improved based on feedback from participants.



Photo credit: Naima Juhra

Cost:
\$-\$\$

Logistical Complexity:
MODERATE

Capture/Handling:
NO

For more information, including regional subtleties and method particularities, please refer to decision tree, detailed write-ups and suitability tables 1 and 2. The information contained in this factsheet is intended for rapid communication and summary purposes only.

