

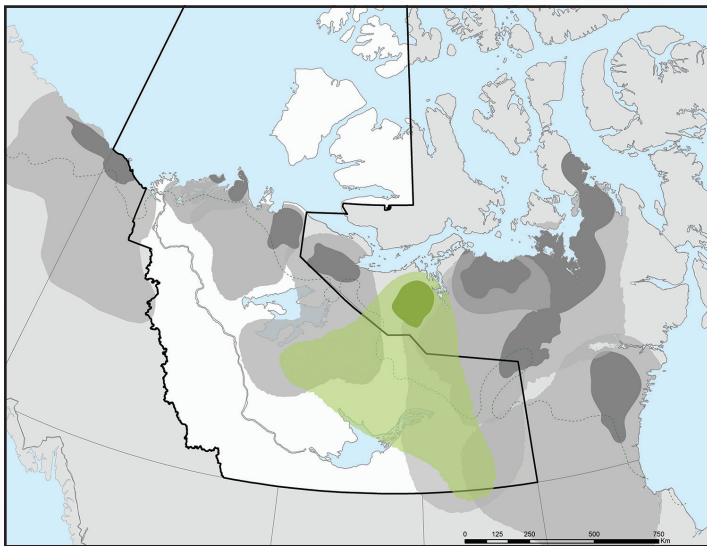
# Barren-ground Caribou in the NWT Bathurst Herd



The Bathurst herd is one of nine barren-ground caribou herds that spends all or part of its time in the Northwest Territories.

## *Bathurst Caribou Range*

The Bathurst range, where caribou live throughout the year, has traditionally spanned from southern and central Northwest Territories to the herd's calving grounds west of Bathurst Inlet in Nunavut. In some years, Bathurst caribou have wintered as far south as northern Saskatchewan. More recently, as the size of the herd has decreased, the extent of the range used by the herd has also become significantly smaller.



Historical Bathurst caribou range and calving grounds

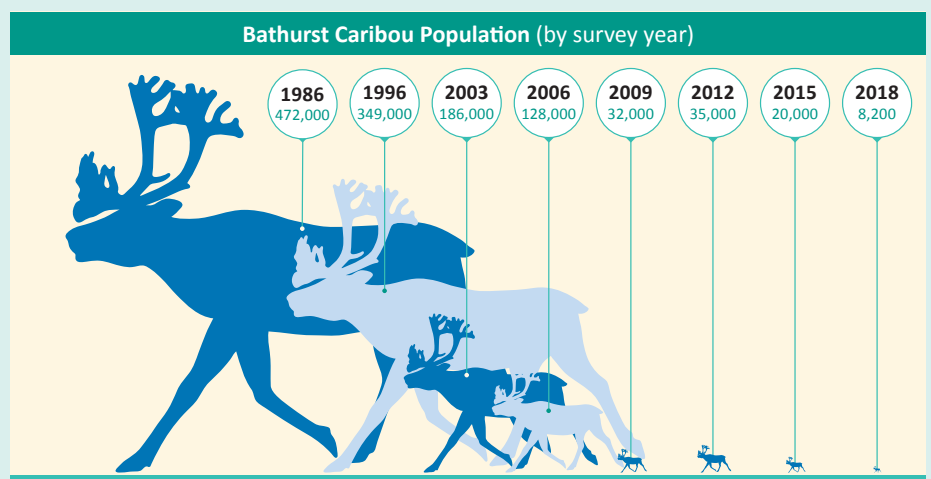


Government of  
Northwest Territories

Since 2015, harvest of Bathurst caribou has not been allowed in the NWT, although historically many Indigenous peoples, including the Tłı̨chǫ, the Yellowknives Dene, the Łutsel K'e Dene and the North Slave Métis, along with other Indigenous groups, have depended on this herd.

## *Population*

A dramatic decline in the population of Bathurst caribou has been observed over the last 30 years. At their most recent peak in the mid-1980s, the Bathurst population was approximately 470,000 animals. 2018 survey results indicate the population is now around 8,200. This reflects a reduction of nearly 60 per cent since the last surveys in 2015.





## Shared Management

Caribou management decisions in the NWT are made collaboratively. The Government of the Northwest Territories works side by side with Indigenous governments and organizations, renewable resources boards and affected communities. Where caribou herds migrate across territorial borders, we coordinate with neighbouring provincial and territorial governments. In the case of the Bathurst herd, both the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board are key decision-makers.

Our efforts to help the Bathurst caribou are primarily focused on managing harvest, predation, habitat, research and monitoring, and development of an overall management plan.

### Key actions to date include:

- **Reducing the harvest.** Prior to 2009, annual Bathurst caribou harvest was estimated at about 5,000 animals. This was reduced to 300 per year between 2010 and 2015. As of 2015, there is no harvest allowed for Bathurst caribou in the NWT. A mobile no-hunting conservation zone was put in place to protect the herd in 2015.
- **Reducing predation.** Wolf harvesting incentives were initiated in 2010, and subsequently increased in 2015 in an effort to reduce wolf predation of caribou.
- **Managing caribou habitat.** A draft range plan for the Bathurst herd has been developed in collaboration with 21 organizations, including Indigenous governments, wildlife management boards and industry from the NWT,

Nunavut and Saskatchewan. The draft plan defines limits to development across the Bathurst herd's range, and proposes protection of key caribou habitat from fire. The range plan will be finalized in early 2019. Once approved, the plan will provide a tool for decision-makers within our established co-management and regulatory systems to help ensure all new development is environmentally sustainable.

- **Research and monitoring.** Scientific monitoring of the Bathurst caribou herd, including aerial surveys and satellite collar tracking, is conducted with support from Indigenous governments and communities. The GNWT also provides assistance to on the land community-based monitoring initiatives such as the Tłıchǫ Government's *Boots on the Ground Caribou Monitoring Program* and the *Moccasins on the Ground Program* established by the Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation. Additional research on Bathurst caribou is carried out in partnership with researchers from across North America.
- **Overall management.** An overall management plan for this herd is being updated under the direction of the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee, which has representation from management authorities and traditional user groups across the range of the Bathurst caribou herd.



The Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board determines harvest levels for the Bathurst herd in the Wek'èezhì area and makes recommendations for monitoring and management.

## Shared Responsibility

We have a shared responsibility to support our caribou herds through this current low, towards recovery. There are no easy answers. It is up to all of us to take care of caribou and ensure we have the best information – including scientific, traditional and local knowledge – to make good decisions about sustainably managing wildlife, the environment and development.

