

# Caribou Health Guide



CARIBOU HEALTH GUIDE

Padilla, B.J., Dornstauder, K, and Kutz, S.  
University of Calgary  
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

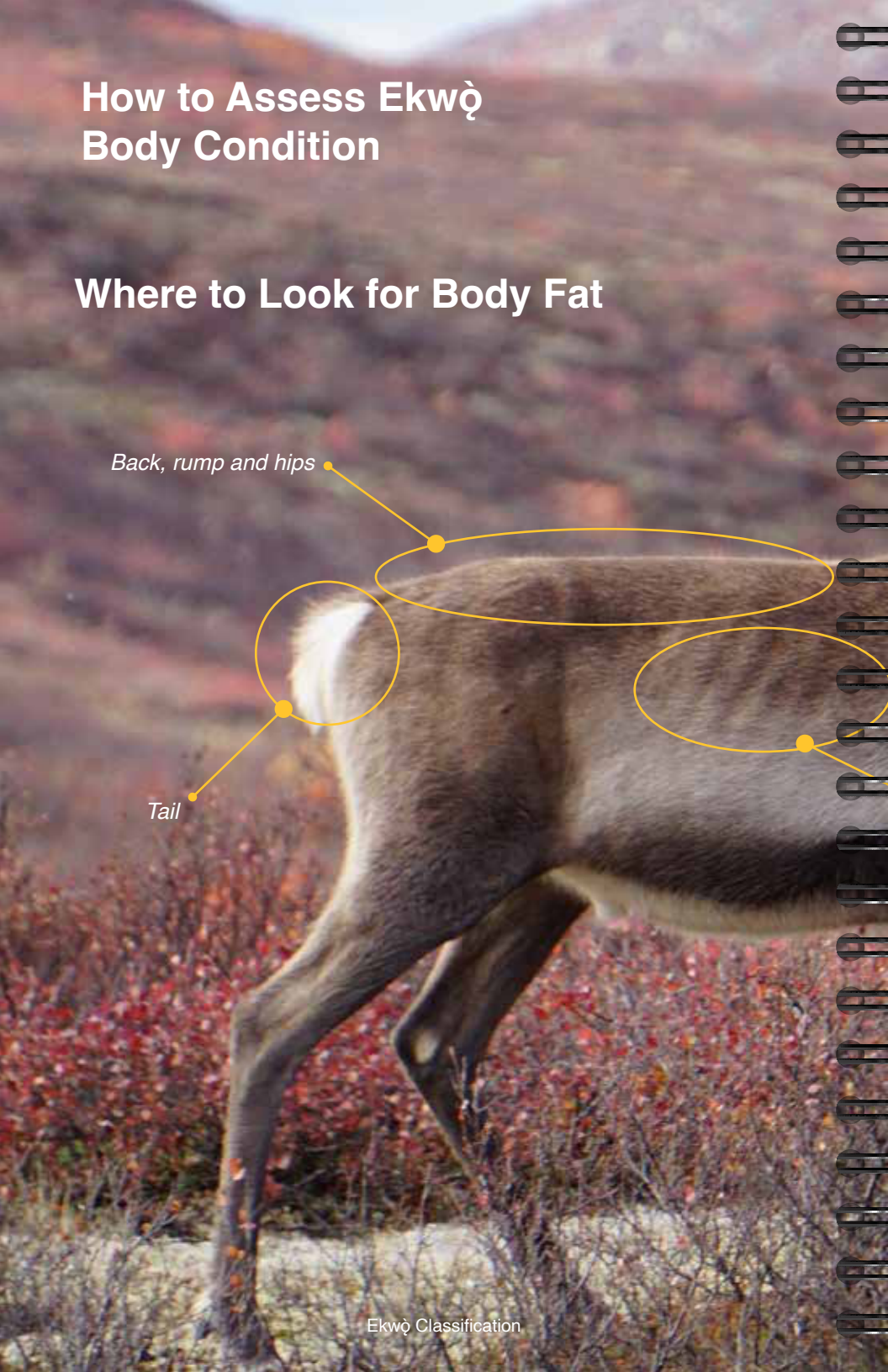


# How to Assess Ekwò Body Condition

## Where to Look for Body Fat

*Back, rump and hips*

*Tail*



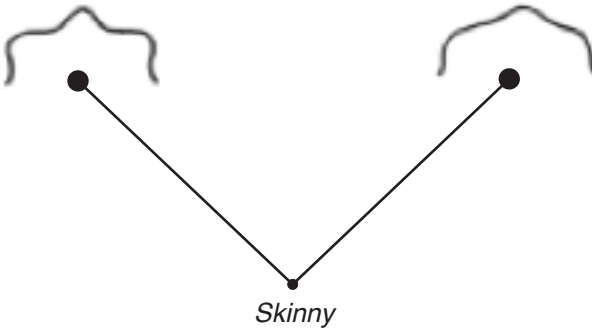


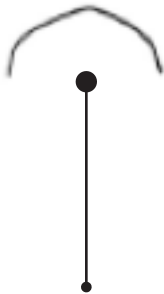
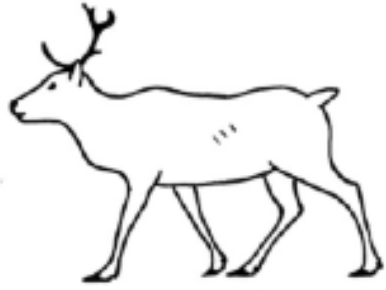
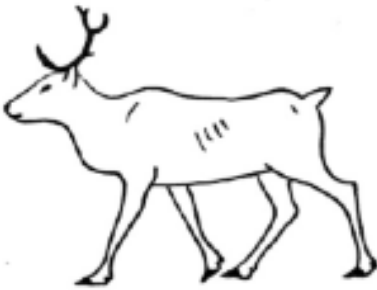
# HOW TO ASSESS EKWŦ BODY CONDITION

# Caribou Body Condition Score Chart

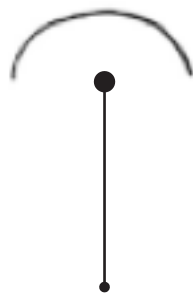


## Cross Section Profile of Hips





*Good*



*Fat*

What are the Tłı̨ch̨o words for skinny, good, and fat caribou?

## Notice Poor Body Condition?

### Take a closer look at...

- Examine the ribs and the hips
  - *How visible are these structures?*
- Scan the whole caribou. Focus on the head, legs, hooves, and hair coat
  - *Are there any abnormalities there?*



## Notice Something Strange Around the Head?

### Take a closer look at...

- Do they have trouble feeding?
- Examine eyes and nose.
  - *Any discharge, redness or swelling?*
- Examine the mouth
  - *Are there scabs around the lips?*
- Examine the head
  - *Are there any bumps, scabs, redness or wounds?*
  - *Is there any hair loss?*
  - *Are the antlers broken or uneven?*



## Notice Strange Walking?

Take a closer look at...

- When the caribou is standing still
  - *Is the weight evenly distributed?*
- When the caribou is moving
  - *Are they taking very long or short steps?*
  - *Is their head bobbing when walking or running?*



## Notice Something Strange with the Hair or Coat?

Take a closer look at...

- Scan the whole caribou
  - *Are they losing hair?*
  - *Is their skin bumpy or scarred?*
  - *Are there warbles visible under the coat?*







# Body Condition and Behaviour

## How to Identify Body Condition

- Look at the hips and shoulders
  - *Hip and shoulder joints will stick out from the body with poor body condition*
  - *Individual ribs can be seen along the sides of the caribou with a poor body condition*

## Changes in Behaviour

- Trouble eating
- Separate from the rest of the herd
- Lagging behind the main herd

## Where to Look Next

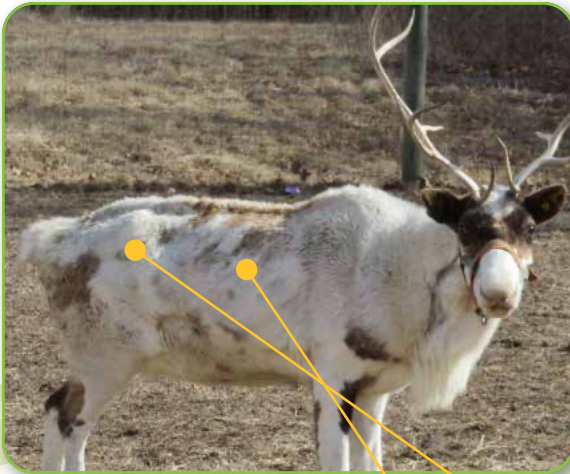
- Scan the whole animal with focus on the head, limbs, rump, and coat looking for anything abnormal



*Caribou in poor body condition. Note the visibility of the ribs and triangular shape of the hip bone.*

## Gather Background Information

- What is the age class of the animal?
- What is the sex of the animal?
- Is the body condition within normal limits for the season?
- How many other caribou in the herd look similar?
- How big is the herd?



*A thin, captive reindeer with ribs and hip bones clearly visible.*



# Trouble Moving

## How to Identify Trouble Moving

- Not all limbs are being used evenly, making walking uneven and less smooth
- A head bob or a hip hike can be seen
- The length of steps can be longer or shorter

## Changes in Behaviour

- Separated from the main herd
- Does not want to move
- Slower movement



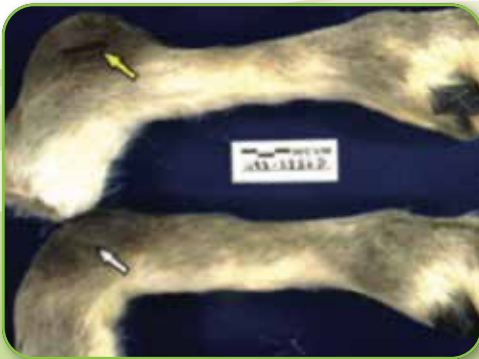
*Image shows a caribou with swelling in the wrist joint, indicated by the yellow arrow.*

## Scan the Caribou

- Scan the legs with focus on the joints
  - *Is there swelling, scabs, or wounds present?*
- Is there swelling, scabs, or wounds present on the hooves?
- Note the limb and general area affected.

## Gather Background Information

- What is the age class of the animal?
- What is the sex of the animal?
- Is the body condition within normal limits for the season?
- How many other caribou in the herd look similar?
- How big is the herd?



*Swelling on the ankle joint is visible (top) compared to a normal caribou ankle below.*



# Abnormalities on the Head

## How to Identify Abnormalities on the Head

- Examine the mouth
  - *Note if there are wounds or scabs*
- Examine the nose and eyes
  - *Note if there is discharge or swelling*
- Examine the shape of the antlers
  - *Note if there is velvet retention or asymmetry*

## Changes in Behaviour

- Trouble eating
- Signs for insect harassment – running away from good forage, sneezing, coughing, and shaking



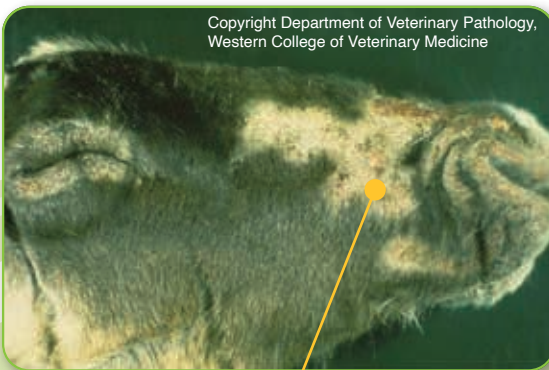
*A caribou with unusual antler growth indicated by the yellow arrow.*

## Scan the Caribou

- Scan the body of the animal to determine if any similar abnormalities that are seen around the head are elsewhere

## Gather Background Information

- What is the age class of the animal?
- What is the sex of the animal?
- Is the body condition within normal limits for the season?
- How many other caribou in the herd look similar?
- How big is the herd?



• *Hair loss and rough skin on the face of a caribou.*



# Abnormalities with the Hair or Coat

## How to Identify Abnormalities with the Hair or Coat

- Look for hair loss, scabs, wounds, bumps in the coat
- Where the abnormalities seen and what is its distribution on the body?

## Changes in Behaviour

- Signs for insect harassment – running away from good forage, sneezing, coughing, and shaking
- Licking infected areas
- Itching infected areas



*Bumps on the skin (arrow) are warble fly larvae growing under the caribou coat.*

*A parasitic caribou warble fly.*



## Scan the Caribou

- Scan the head of the animal to determine if any similar abnormalities that are seen around the body are seen there

## Gather Background Information

- What is the age class of the animal?
- What is the sex of the animal?
- Is the body condition within normal limits for the season?
- How many other caribou in the herd look similar?
- How big is the herd?



*A group of caribou seeking relief from insects in water.*



Τήχο Νδεκ'άowo



Τήχο Government

