



Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS)  
Northern Region  
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February 15, 2017

Mark Cliffe-Phillips  
Executive Director  
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board  
5102 50<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
P.O. Box 938  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7

Via email submission

**RE: Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) Status for Barren-ground Caribou – Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB) Environmental Assessments**

Attention: Mark Cliffe-Phillips

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) received a request from MVEIRB in December 2016 enquiring about the updated status of Barren-ground Caribou by COSEWIC. ECCC provides the following information for MVEIRB to post and distribute in order to assist the board, developers and other parties with Environmental Assessments:

- In November 2016, COSEWIC assessed Caribou (Barren-ground population) as threatened.
- This is the first step in a larger process. A complete assessment package will be submitted to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change in Fall 2017.
- The formal response and listing process under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) begins once the federal government receives the assessments in Fall 2017.
- The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will consult with the appropriate wildlife management boards, territorial and Indigenous governments, and communities that may be affected by the proposed listing. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will provide a recommendation to the Governor in Council.
- Once a wildlife species has been assessed by COSEWIC, the Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, decide on whether or not it should be added to the List of

Wildlife Species at Risk set out in Schedule 1 of SARA. Part of the Governor in Council's decision may include a public consultation period, advertised in the Canada Gazette.

- The listing category (i.e., Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern) determines both the level of protection and the specific recovery planning process required under SARA. Once it is added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, a wildlife species is afforded protection (s.32-35) and recovery measures under SARA (s. 37, 47, 65), including its consideration while assessing the environmental effects of a project under another Act of Parliament (s. 79).
- As a matter of best practice, ECCC recommends that species under consideration for listing on SARA, including those designated as "at risk" by COSEWIC, be considered during a project assessment in a manner similar to listed species under s.79. Caribou (Barren-ground population) are at the forefront of wildlife issues and concerns during most project assessments under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* due to their social, cultural and economic value. As a result, MVEIRB already fulfills many of the expectations under s.79 of SARA with regards to Caribou (Barren-ground population) during environmental assessments and is encouraged to continue this effort.
- The Government of the Northwest Territories has primary management responsibility for Caribou (Barren-ground population) and should continue to be consulted to identify appropriate mitigation and monitoring measures to minimize project effects.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Jean-Francois Dufour at (867) 669-4766 or Jean-Francois.Dufour2@canada.ca.

Sincerely,



Bruce MacDonald  
Regional Director, Northern Region  
Canadian Wildlife Service

cc: Brett Elkin, Director of Wildlife, Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT