



February 14, 2020

Daniel Shewchuk, Chair
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Box 1379
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
Email: receptionist@nwmb.com

Via Email
receptionist@nwmb.com

Re: Nunavut Wildlife Management Board In-person Public Hearing to Consider the Government of Nunavut's Proposal to Modify the Total Allowable Harvest of Bluenose-East Caribou From 340 to 107 and to Establish a Male-Only Harvest Non-Quota Limitation

Dear Mr. Shewchuk:

The following written submission, supporting documents and presentation are submitted on behalf of the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB), to be considered during the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) public hearing for the Sahtì ekwò (Bluenose-East caribou) herd, scheduled for March 2-3, 2020 in Kugluktuk, NU. The Board wishes to thank the NWMB for granting the WRRB 'party' status at the hearing, which permits the Board to make a presentation, respond to any questions, and observe the remainder of the hearing.

The WRRB has a mandate for wildlife, plant and forest management in Wek'èezhì and adheres to the principles and practices of conservation in fulfilling its duties. The Board shares responsibility for managing and monitoring the Sahtì ekwò herd. The Board's written submission, supporting documents, and PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*The Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board & 2019 Bluenose-East Caribou Herd Proceeding*", provides the NWMB with additional information about the involvement of the WRRB in management of the Sahtì ekwò herd in the Northwest Territories (NWT), specifically Wek'èezhì, and Nunavut.

Sahtì Ekwò (Bluenose-East Caribou) Herd Management in NWT

Since its inception in 2006, the WRRB has been invested in managing barren-ground caribou. The Board has conducted three proceedings to address Sahtì ekwò harvest limitations in 2010, 2016, and 2019 for a herd that has continued a declining trend since 2009. Reports from the 2010 and 2016 proceedings and Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tł̥chq̥ Government (TG) responses are available on the WRRB website.

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2019 Proceeding

In January 2019, the TG and GNWT submitted the *Joint Proposal on Management Actions for the Bluenose-East Pekwò (Barren-ground caribou) Herd 2019-2021* to the Board, outlining proposed management actions for the Sahtì ekwò herd in Wek'èezhì. The management actions proposed by TG and GNWT in the Joint Proposal were grouped under the five categories: harvest, predators, habitat and land use, and education as well as research and monitoring. More specifically, TG and ENR proposed implementing a herd-wide total allowable harvest of 300 bulls only for the Sahtì ekwò herd. The WRRB considers any specific restriction of harvest or component of harvest by way of a quota as the establishment of a total allowable harvest (TAH). The WRRB complied with Section 12.3.10 of the Tłchq Agreement and held a public hearing in Behchokò, NT on April 9-11, 2019.

As per Section 12.5.5(a)(i) of the Tłchq Agreement, the WRRB has sole responsibility for making a final determination with respect to a TAH for a population or stock of wildlife in Wek'èezhì. The WRRB determined that a TAH of 193 bulls only shall be implemented for all users of the Sahtì ekwò herd within Wek'èezhì for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 harvest seasons. Further, the Board determined that the proportional allocation of the TAH of the Sahtì ekwò herd for the 2019/20 and 20/2021 harvest seasons shall be as follows: Tłchq Citizens – 39.29%, and Members of an Indigenous people who traditionally harvest Sahtì ekwò (including Nunavut) – 60.71%. Additionally, the WRRB recommended additional management actions related to predators, habitat and land use, education, and research and monitoring.

For the NWMB's consideration, the WRRB submits the following supporting documents:

- WRRB's 2019 Sahtì Ekwò Reasons for Decision Report, entitled "*Report on a Public Hearing Held by the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board 9-11 April 2019 Behchokò, NT & Reasons for Decisions Related to a Joint Proposal for the Management of the Sahtì Ekwò (Bluenose-East Caribou) Herd*"
- Summary of the WRRB's 2019 Sahtì Ekwò Reasons for Decision Report
- Response from the GNWT and TG to the WRRB's 2019 Sahtì Ekwò Reasons for Decision Report
- Implementation Tracking Table for the WRRB's 2019 Sahtì Ekwò determinations and recommendations

Long-term Management Planning

Further, the Board has participated in long-term management planning processes for the Bluenose caribou herds with the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM). The ACCWM was established to exchange information, help develop cooperation and consensus, and make recommendations regarding wildlife and wildlife habitat issues that cross land claim and treaty boundaries. The committee consists of wildlife management boards

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from the NWT and Nunavut: Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT), Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board, Tukturnogait National Park Management Board, and Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board.

The ACCWM developed, in consultation with the majority of communities that harvest from the three herds, the “*Taking Care of Caribou: the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan*” to address caribou management and stewardship over the long term. The management goals are to maintain herds within the known natural range of variation, conserve and manage caribou habitat, and ensure that harvesting is respectful and sustainable. Submitted to TG, GNWT and the Government of Nunavut in November 2014, the Management Plan is a working document used in developing specific management tools, such as herd-specific action plans. The ACCWM meets annually to discuss and determine herd status and management actions under the framework of the Management Plan. The 2020 herd-specific action plans are currently being finalized by the ACCWM, to be submitted to governments in February 2020.

Conclusion

Since the Sahtì ekwò herd has continued to decline since 2009, the Board believes that all peoples who harvest the herd must do their part to ensure the herd's recovery. Users and managers must act now, in whatever ways possible, to protect the herd so future recovery may be possible. With the recent reduction in harvest limitations for the Sahtì ekwò herd in the NWT, the WRRB encourages the NWMB to take a similar approach to the protection of Sahtì ekwò in Nunavut.

The WRRB looks forward to continuing a collaborative relationship with the NWMB regarding barren-ground caribou. If you have any questions, please contact the office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Joseph Judas
Chair

Attachments

Cc Jason Akearok, Executive Director
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

Hon. Shane Thompson, Minister
Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Erin Kelly, A/Deputy Minister
Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Karin Clark, A/Director of Wildlife
Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Grand Chief George Mackenzie
Tłıchǫ Government

Laura Duncan, Tłıchǫ Executive Officer
Tłıchǫ Government

Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault, Director
Department of Culture and Lands Protection, Tłıchǫ Government