



Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Plan

Update December 2007

The Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation plan was announced on October 16th 2007 by the provincial government. For further information regarding the recovery planning process:

<http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/sarco/mc/>

Decision: The Province approved the science team's recommendations of recovering mountain caribou to the 1995 populations (2500 animals) across the mountain caribou range within 20 years in those planning units with greater than 10 animals.

Implementation: The plan has been divided into five categories which need to work together to ensure successful recovery of mountain caribou.

- **Habitat management**
- **Recreation - public snowmobiling**
- **Recreation - Commercial tenures**
- **Predator / prey control**
- **Augmentation**

Habitat Management

The mountain caribou range has been divided into five planning areas. The habitat planning areas and chairs of those areas are:

- Revelstoke /Shuswap Team: Chair Frank Wilmer - ILMB
- Wells Gary North Thompson Team Chair: Jim Britton - ILMB
- Caribou Chilcotin Team Chair: Darcy Peel - ILMB
- Prince George Team Chair: Howard Madill - ILMB
- Kootenay Team Chair: Mike Geisler – SaRCO Contractor

The goal of the habitat planning teams is to recommend the distribution of 380,000 ha of protected forest within mountain caribou range. The first drafts of these areas, known as incremental habitat, are just being completed and will be posted to the following FTP site over the week of December 17th

(ftp://ftpprg.env.gov.bc.ca/pub/outgoing/requests/SARCO_Mtn_Caribou_Recovery). The incremental habitat will be sent out to First Nations, licensees, stakeholders and environmental non-government organizations for comment. All comments will be evaluated and incorporated, as appropriate, into the final habitat reports.

Recreation – Public Snowmobiling

The mountain caribou range has been divided into five planning areas. The public snowmobiling planning areas and chairs of those areas are:

- Revelstoke /Shuswap Team: Chair Darcy Monchak - ILMB
- Wells Gary North Thompson Team Chair: Jim Britton - ILMB
- Caribou Chilcotin Team Chair: Kate Greskiw - ILMB
- Prince George Team Chair: Howard Madill - ILMB
- Kootenay Team Chairs: (West) Steve Flett – ILMB and (East) Bill Adair – ILMB

The goal of the Public Snowmobiling teams is to work with snowmobile clubs to develop stewardship management agreement (SMA) for each of the riding areas. An SMA is an agreement which outlines how, when, and where activities can occur on the land base. The completed SMAs will be reviewed. If SMA is within the accepted risk threshold, it will go forward. If SMA exceeds the risk threshold, the areas will be recommended for legal closure. Where no agreement can be reached the provincial government will proceed with making a decision, which may mean areas will be legally closed.

Recreation - Commercial

The goal of the Commercial recreation team is to minimize the likelihood of further displacement of mountain caribou by commercial tenure operators. Provincial staff will work with commercial tenure operators to review and amend management plans and current Best Management Practices in relation to Caribou management. There is a current moratorium (section 16 Land Act reserve) on new commercial backcountry winter recreation applications within the southern part of the core Mountain Caribou habitat that is extended for five years. For those northern areas outside of the current moratorium area (but within the Mountain Caribou range) a one year moratorium on new commercial backcountry winter recreation applications will be implemented to allow habitat and backcountry recreation planning to be completed.

Predator Prey Control

Predator control is one of the key areas that need to be addressed for the survival of mountain caribou. Ministry of Environment (MOE) will implement wolf control programs where they have strong information on the wolf packs. In other areas there will be more research, including collaring and fertility control, done this winter to provide adequate data for making decisions regarding predator control in the future. MOE will be working closely with First Nations, as well as other groups, to devise a successful strategy.

Prey control will work sequential to the predator control. The goal of this management category is to lower alternate prey biomass for mountain caribou predators such as wolves. To be successful this program needs to be done only after a successful predator reduction has occurred. More research and inventories will take place over the next year to provide a baseline for measuring alternative prey reductions.

Augmentation

For some herds to survive there will need to be augmentation of additional members to build up the population numbers and add diversity to the group. Augmentation of herds will not take place until next year as more census work of mountain caribou populations occurs this year.

First Nations

There are 28 First Nation Bands and numerous Tribal Councils who have an interest in the mountain caribou recovery plan area. The intent is to involve First Nations at a local level with central coordination between all the management categories. First Nations that have identified an interest in the project are involved in initiatives such as workshops, involved in local planning processes and involved in the establishment of local government to government agreements.

Progress Board

There will be a cross sector progress board set up in the spring of 2008 made up of Provincial Government, First Nations, snowmobile clubs, stakeholders, forest licensees, environmental non-government organizations and Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Plan team members. The purpose of the board will be to monitor the progress of implementation activities for all the management categories.