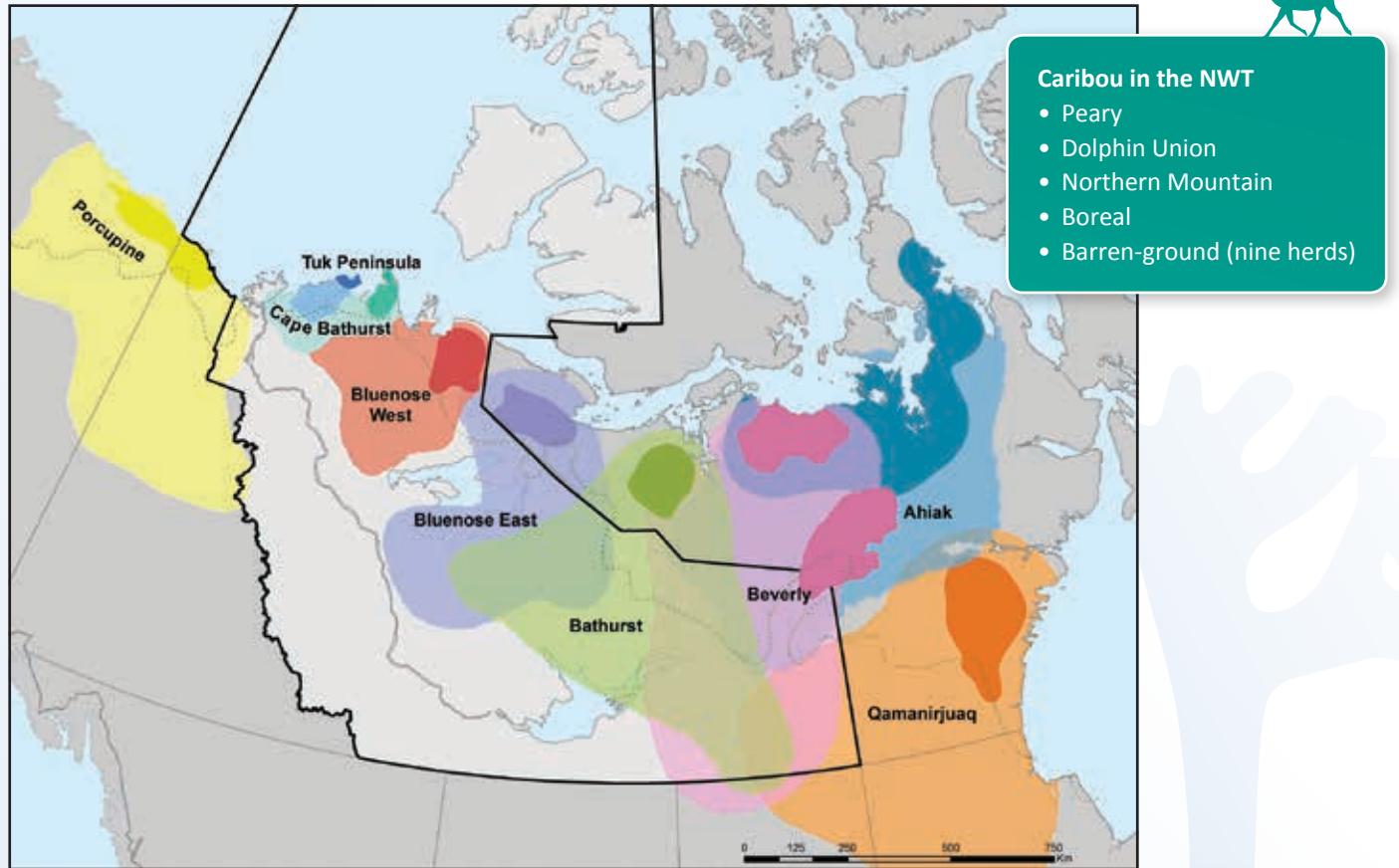


Barren-ground Caribou in the NWT



Barren-ground caribou are one of five different types of caribou in the Northwest Territories (NWT).

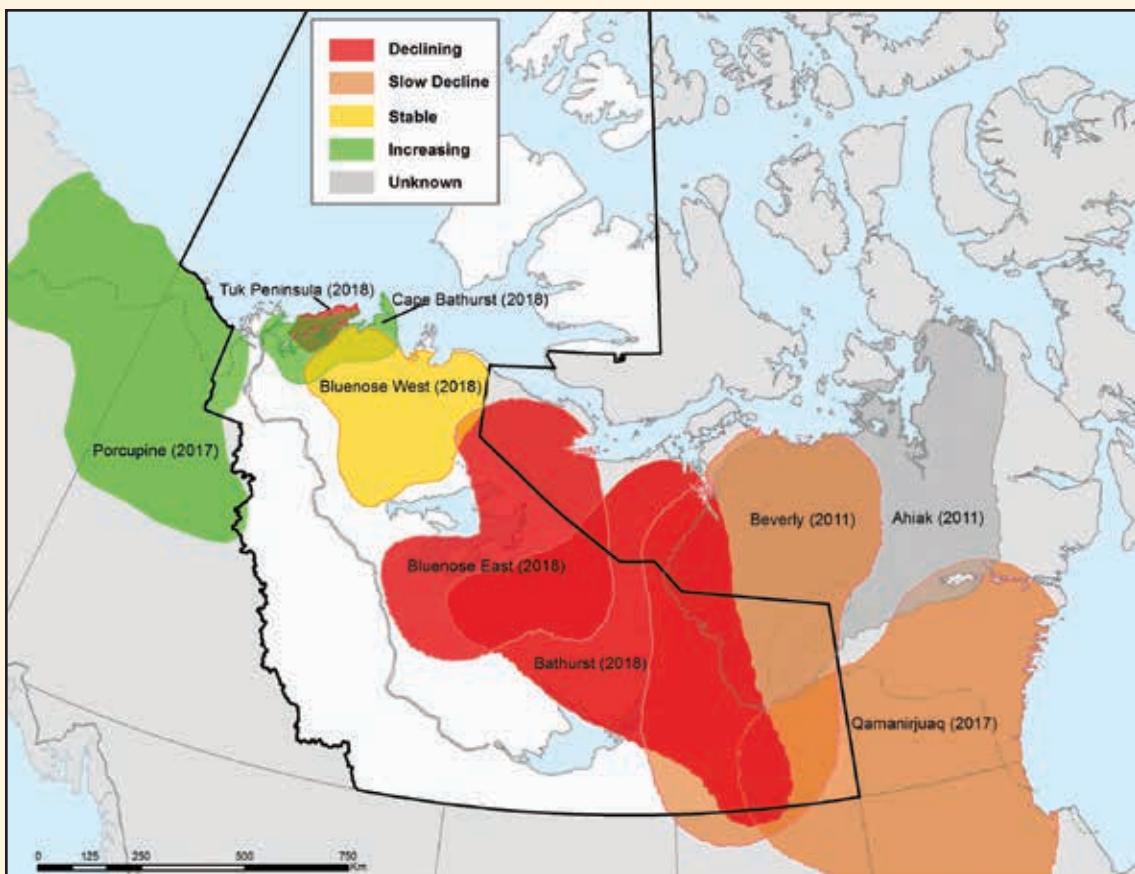


Historical NWT barren-ground caribou herd ranges and calving areas (1996-2018)

They are characterized by long seasonal migrations between winter and summer ranges. Barren-ground caribou are the most abundant and widespread type of caribou in the NWT.

Declining populations

Aerial surveys show many barren-ground caribou herds in the NWT and across the North are declining. Some are at very low numbers compared to peak abundance. Both Traditional Knowledge and scientific research tell us that caribou populations have historically experienced cycles of highs and lows. There are multiple pressures facing caribou, some of which we have little control over, including weather, disease and food availability. Climate change and human-driven pressures from harvesting and industrial development are complicating and intensifying these natural processes.



Status of barren-ground caribou populations in the NWT with most recent survey results, by year, shown on their historical ranges

Legal protection

In July 2018, eight of the NWT's nine barren-ground caribou herds (all but the Porcupine caribou) were listed as species at risk under NWT Species at Risk legislation. The listing triggers a legal requirement to develop a recovery strategy for the herds within two years. Management plans are already in place for several of the territory's herds.

How we can help the caribou

Measures to help the recovery and long-term sustainability of the herds include co-management activities related to harvest, predation and habitat. Traditional Knowledge and continued monitoring and research, including the use of satellite collars, helps refine our understanding of the pressures faced by caribou and how we can support the herds through this current low.

Caribou people

Indigenous peoples in the NWT have a strong connection with barren-ground caribou. Subsistence harvesting continues to be central to the cultural, social and spiritual well-being of many of our communities.

Shared responsibility, shared management

Barren-ground caribou are a shared resource, and coordinated action is necessary to ensure the recovery of the herds. The GNWT is engaging with its co-management partners, including Indigenous governments, boards and communities, to talk about a shared solution focused on responsible management that balances environmental, social and economic priorities.

