



# Bluenose-East Caribou (Sahtì Ekwò): Status & Proposed Management 2019-2021

WRRB Public Hearing

April 9-11, 2019

**Northwest Territories**  
Environment and  
Natural Resources



# Presentation Outline

- Status of NWT Barren-Ground Caribou
- Bluenose-East Caribou Management Context
- Bluenose-East Caribou Status 2018
- Joint Management Proposal TG & ENR
  - 1. Harvest
  - 2. Predators
  - 3. Habitat & Land Use
  - 4. Education
  - 5. Monitoring & Research
- Working with Sahtú & Nunavut

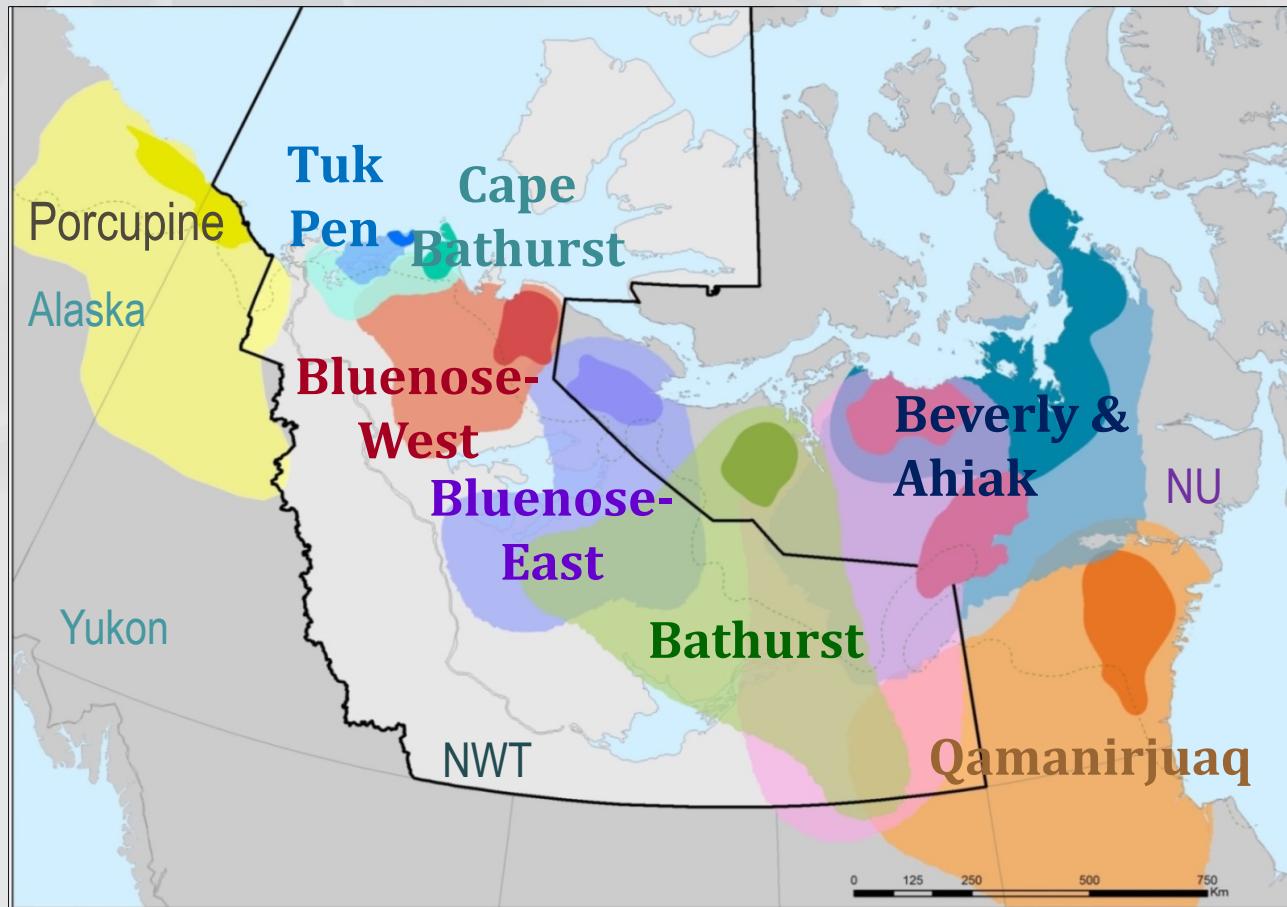


Photo J. Adamczewski





# NWT Barren-Ground Caribou (Ekwò) Herd Ranges & Calving Grounds



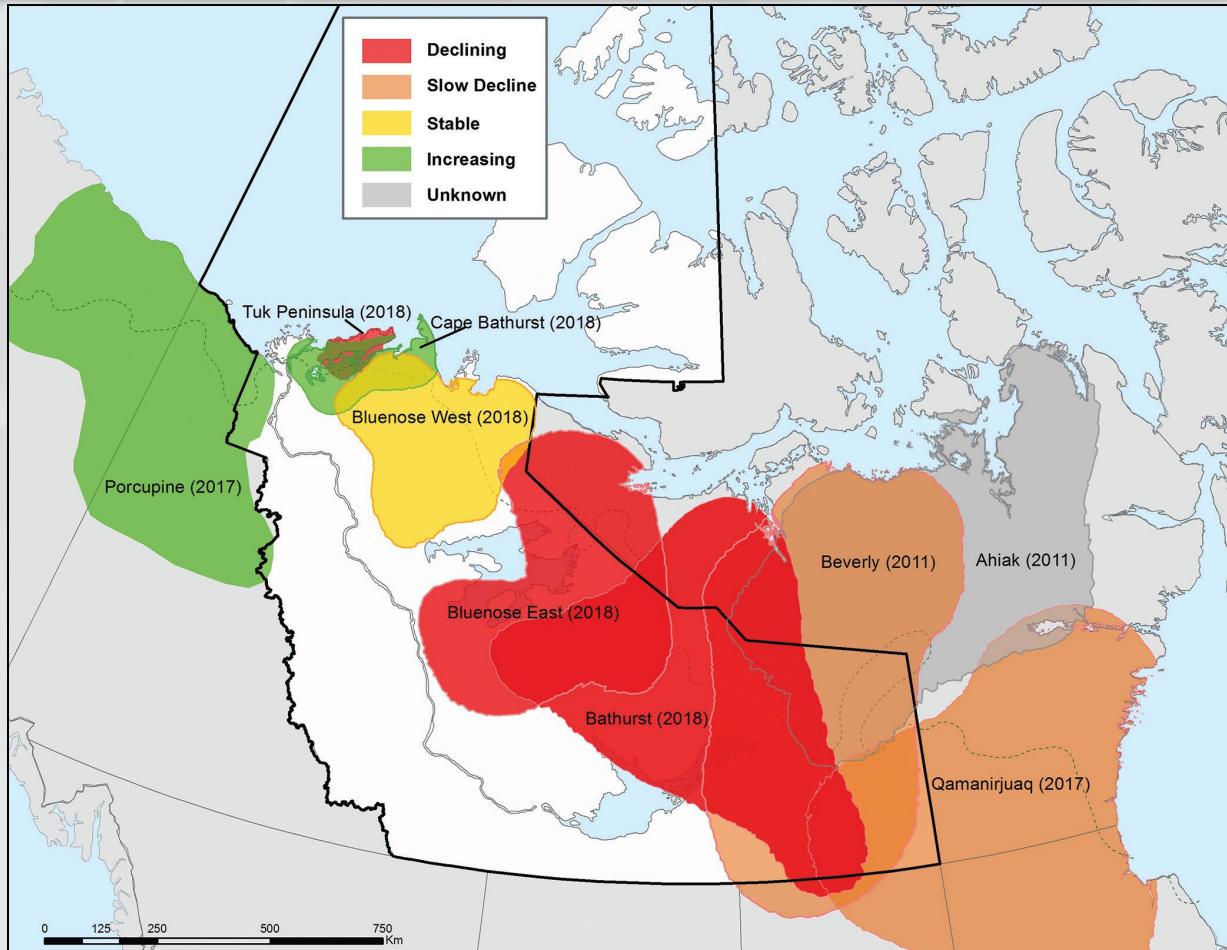
Map B. Fournier, ENR



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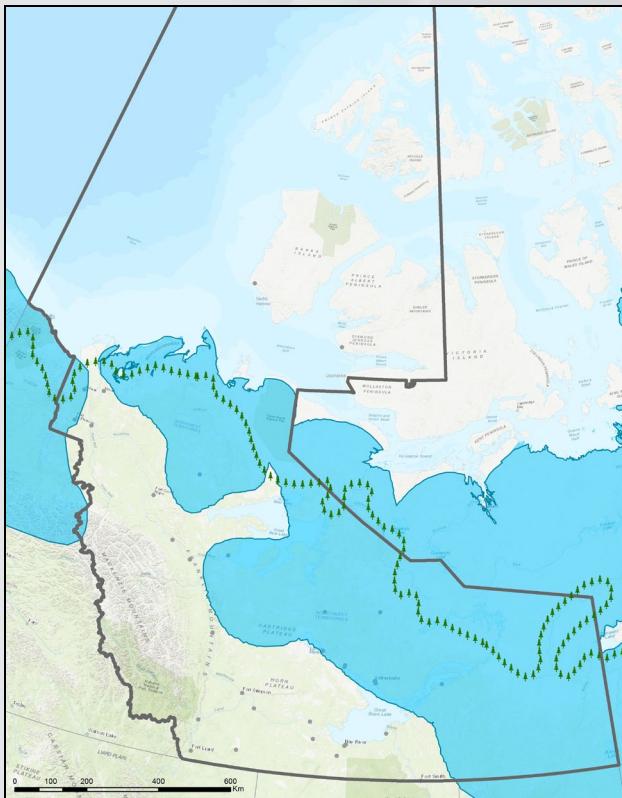


# NWT Barren-Ground Caribou (Ekwò) Herd Status





# Barren-Ground Caribou (Ekwò) Status: Canada & NWT



Map B. Fournier,  
ENR

- Canada COSEWIC: Threatened (2016)
- Canada SARA: Pending (In Review)
- NWT SARC: Threatened (2017)
- NWT SARA: Threatened (2018)

COSEWIC = Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada  
Canada SARA = Species at Risk Act (Federal)  
NWT SARC = Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee  
NWT SARA = Northwest Territories Species at Risk Act



# Bluenose-East Caribou (Sahtì Ekwò) Management Context

Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT)  
Tł'cho Government (TG)  
WRRB  
SRRB



Government of Nunavut (GN)  
NWMB

WRRB = Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board

SRRB = Sahtú Renewable Resources Board

NWMB = Nunavut Wildlife Management Board

# Bluenose-East Caribou (Sahtì Ekwò) Management Plans

## Overall Management Plan (Boards)



### Taking Care of Caribou

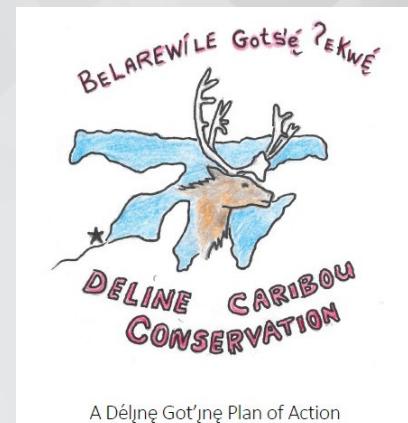
The  
CAPE BATHURST, BLUENOSE-WEST,  
AND BLUENOSE-EAST BARREN-GROUND  
CARIBOU HERDS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife  
Management



## Kugluktuk Caribou Plan

## Déljne Caribou Plan



A Déljne Got'ìñé Plan of Action

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Map B. Fournier, GNWT ENR



# Bluenose-East & Bathurst Ekwò June 2018 Surveys

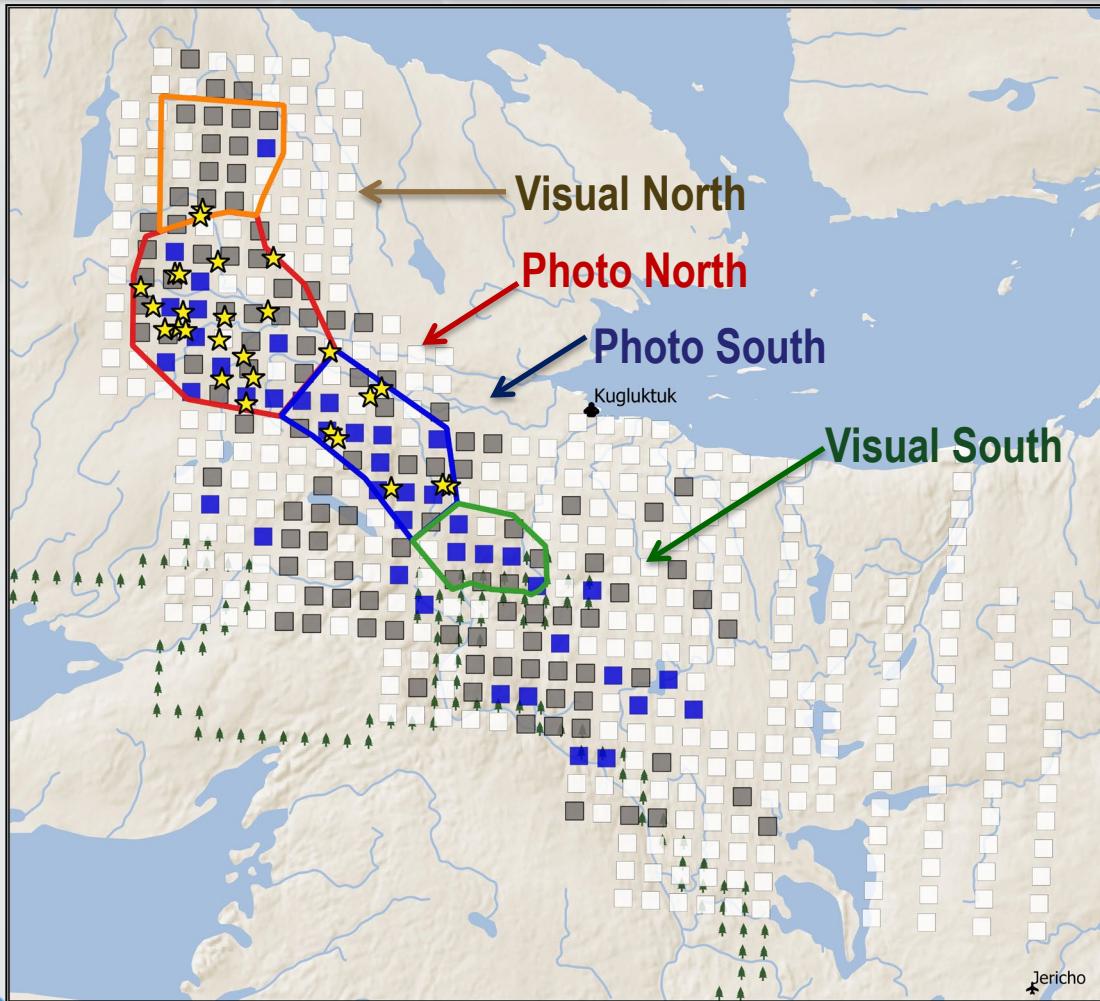
- Both Herds Same Time – June 2-16, 2018
- Main Base Kugluktuk, One Plane Ekati
- Aerial Photos June 8 (Both Herds)
- 13 Community Observers (4 NU, 9 NWT)
- *(R. Judas & C. Wetrade TG, A. Guile & L. Meinert WRRB)*



Photos J. Adamczewski



# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) June 2018: Survey Blocks

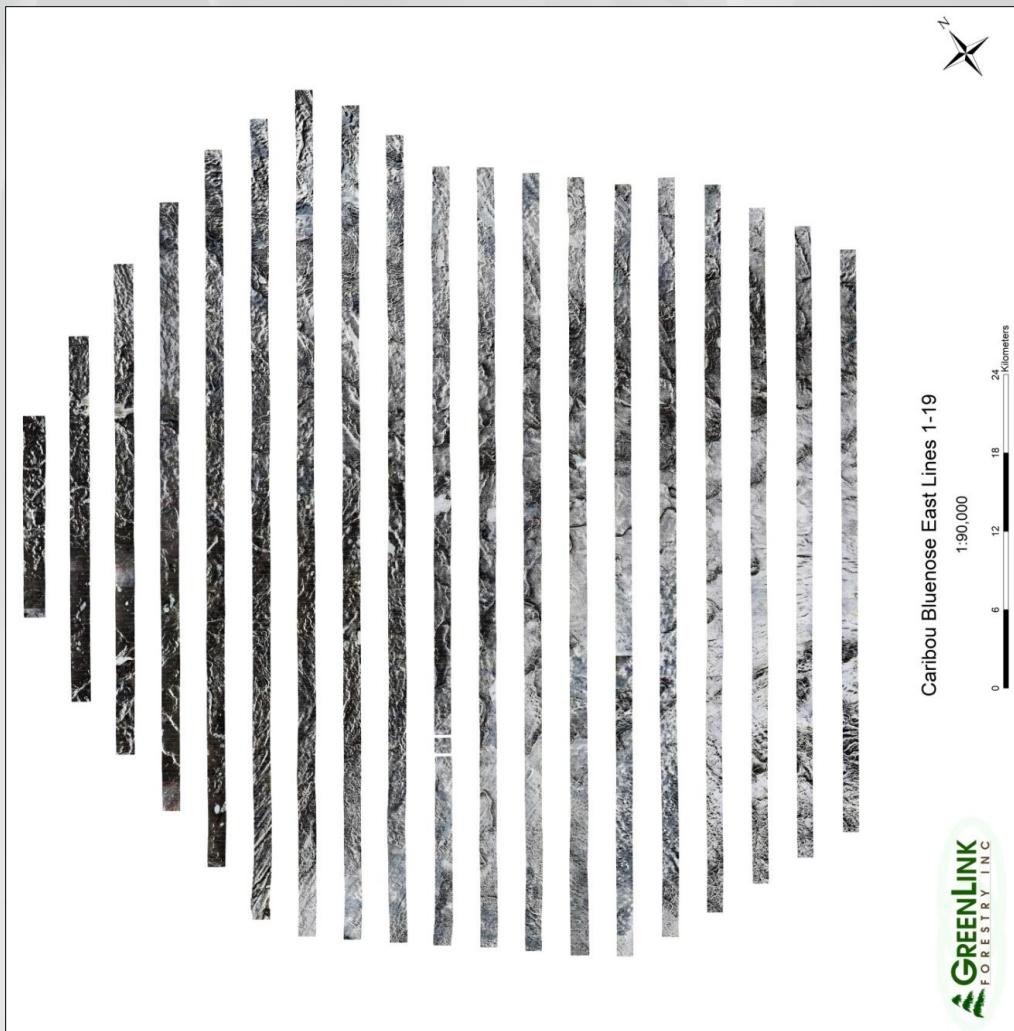


- No Caribou Observed
- Low Caribou Numbers ( $<1/\text{km}^2$ )
- Medium Caribou Numbers ( $1-10/\text{km}^2$ )
- Collared Cow



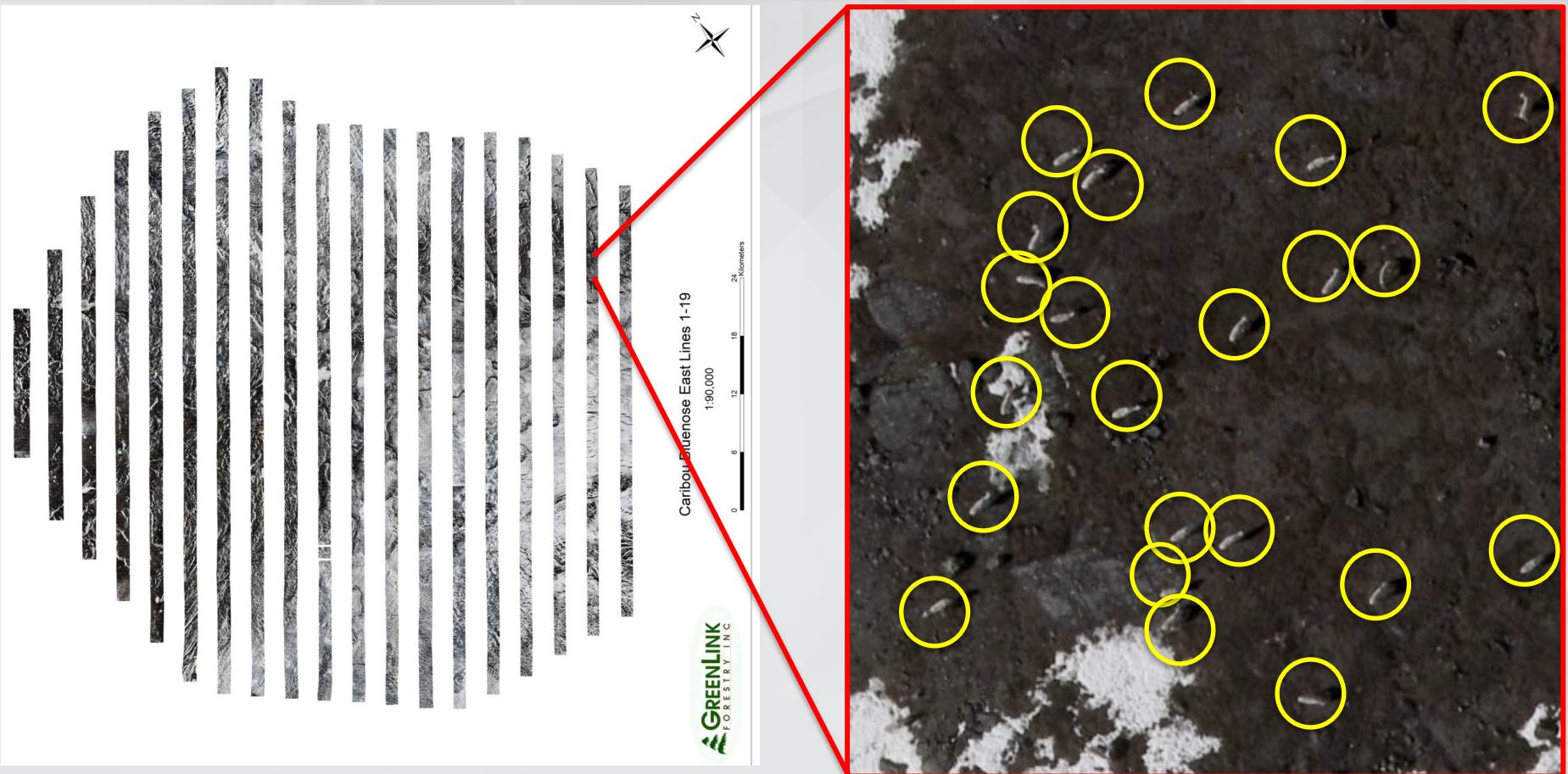


# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) June 2018 Survey: Photo North Block





# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò): June 2018 Aerial Photo





# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Herd Estimate: Cows & Bulls

- Calving Ground Survey: Number of Cows  
Bulls not on Calving Ground
- Fall Survey (October): Bull:Cow Ratio  
Add Bulls to Cows: Herd Estimate

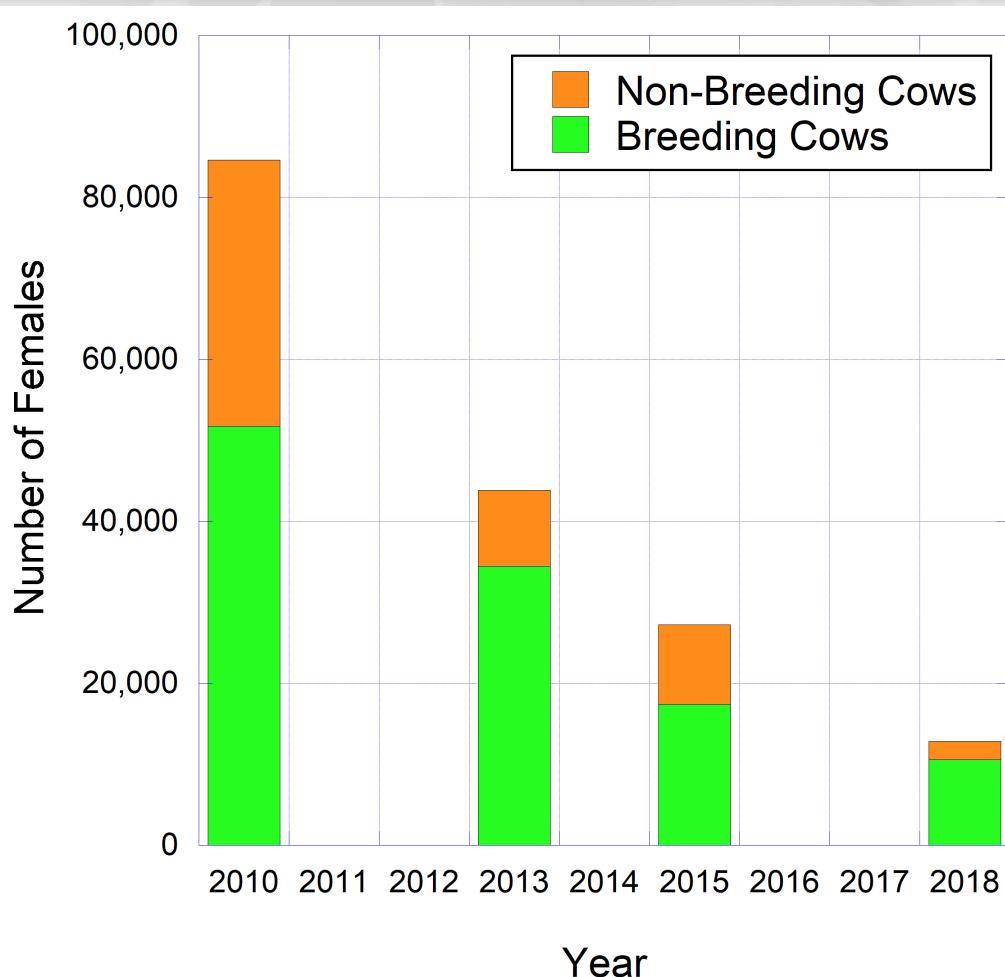


Photos J. Adamczewski





# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Female Estimates 2010-2018

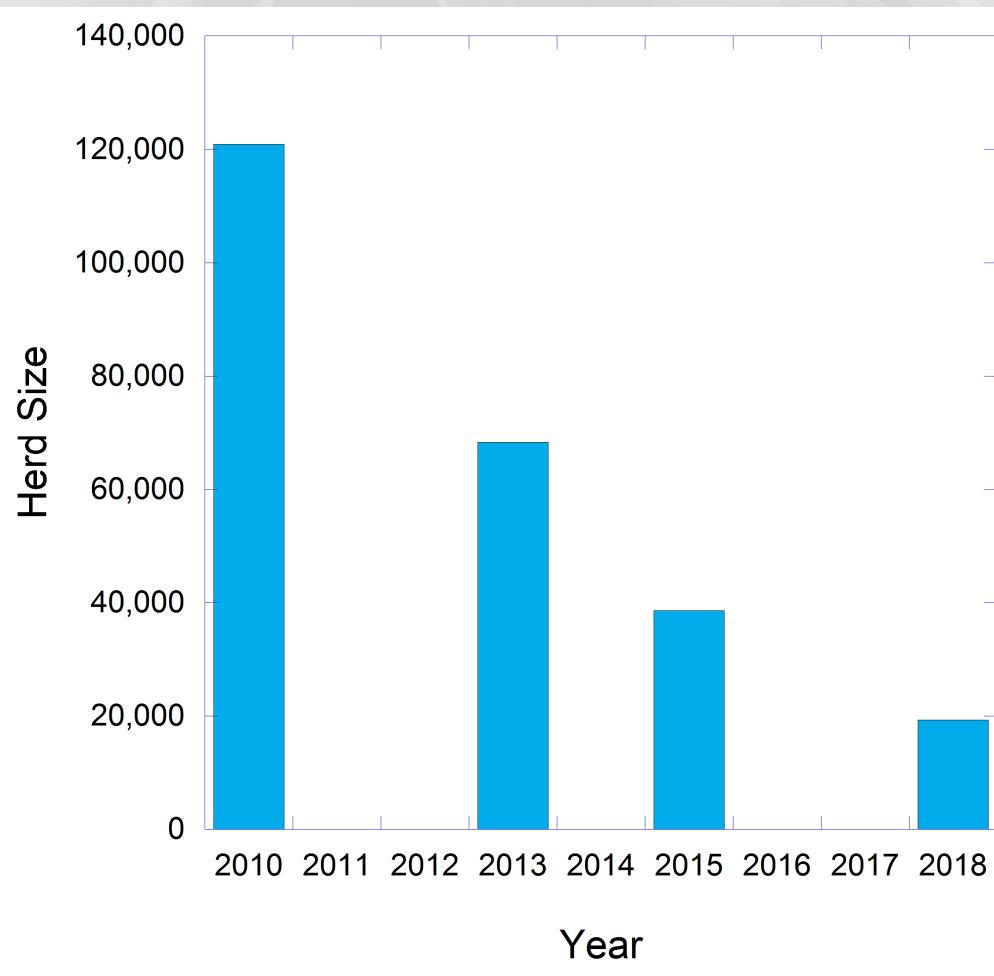


**Breeding Cows**  
**2010: 51,800**  
**2015: 17,400**  
**2018: 11,700**





# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò): Herd Estimates 2010-2018



**Herd Size**  
**2010: 120,000**  
**2015: 38,600**  
**2018: 19,300**





# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò): Vital Rates 2018

- Pregnancy at least 80% in healthy herds
  - *Bluenose-East 2018: 83% (Good)*
- Fall Calf Survival 35-45:100 for Stable Herd
  - *Bluenose-East Fall 2018: 25:100 (Low)*
- Adult Cow Survival 83-87% for Stable Herd
  - *Bluenose-East 2018: 72-78% (Low)*



Photo J. Adamczewski



# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Collars: An Important Tool



Photo J. Oosenbrug



Photo J.  
Adamczewski

## Collars Used For:

- Monitoring movement & range
- Planning surveys
- Measuring adult survival
- Monitoring & managing harvest

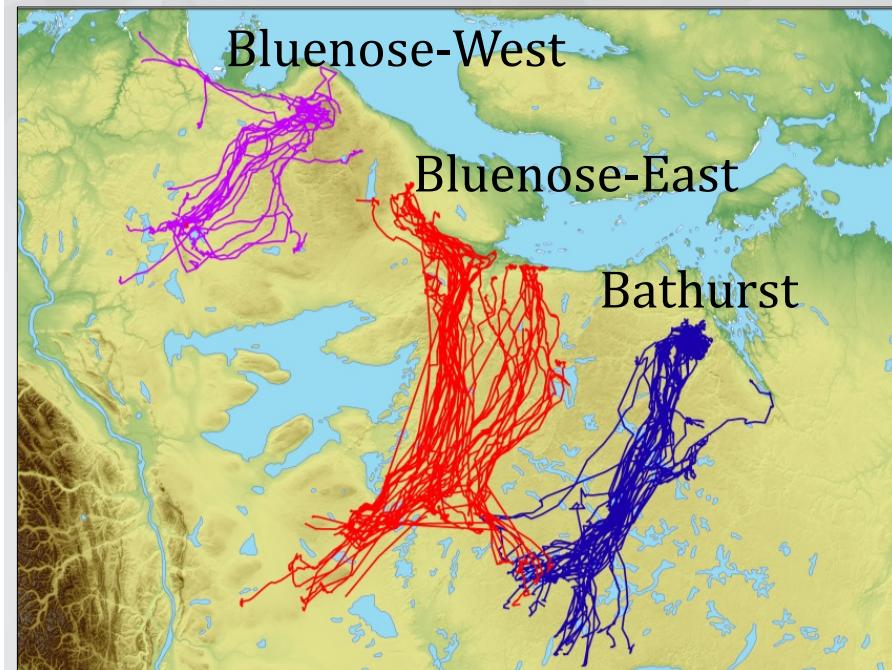
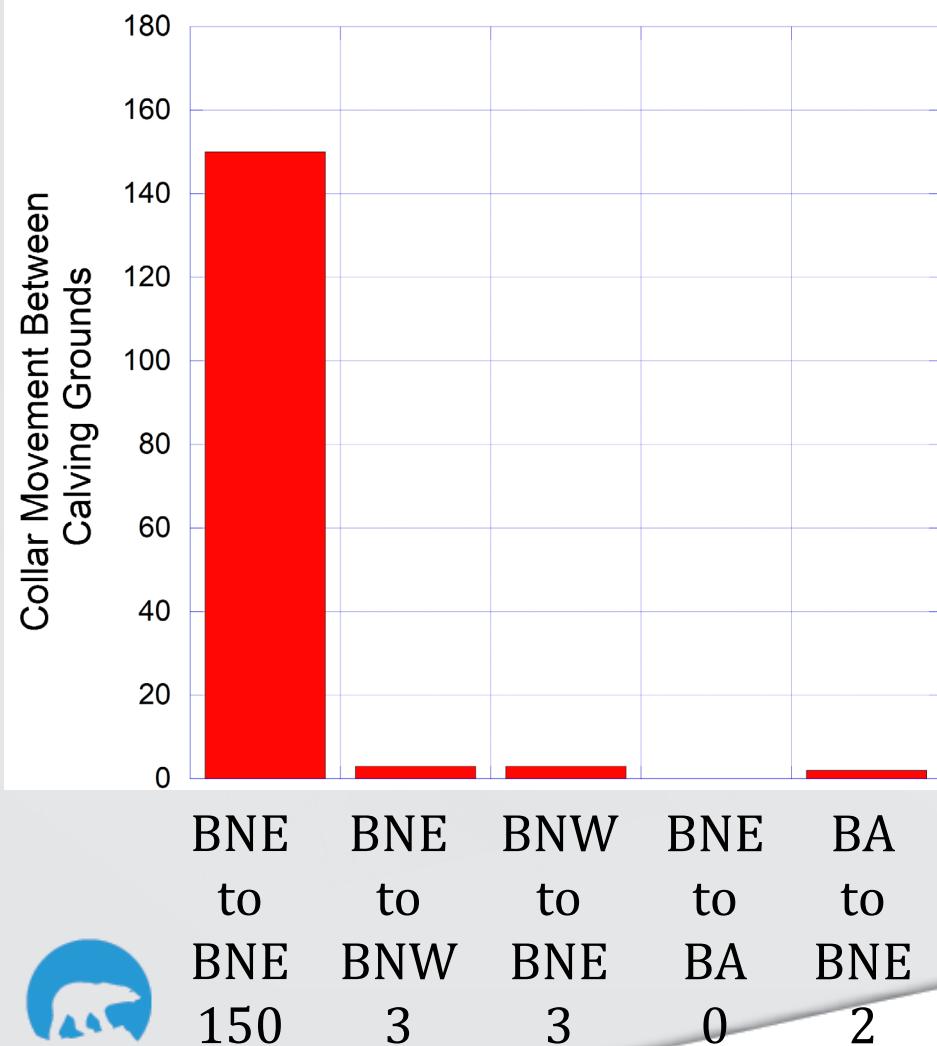
## Collars on Caribou:

- Timed drop-off
- Captures 10-15 minutes
- Specialists do captures
- Animal care standards





# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò): Loyalty to Calving Grounds 2010-2018



BNE = Bluenose-East

BNW = Bluenose-West

BA = Bathurst





# Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò): TG & ENR Joint Management Proposal January 2019

- Previous Ekwò Joint Proposals: 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015
- Last Bluenose-East Joint Proposal December 2015
- Proposal January 2019 (2 Years)
  - Main Sections:
    1. Harvest
    2. Predators
    3. Habitat & Land Use
    4. Education
    5. Monitoring & Research

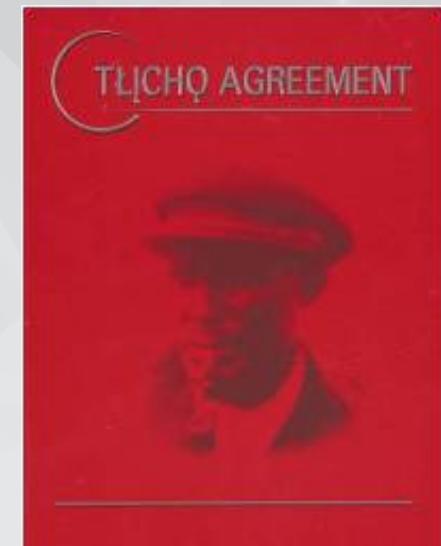


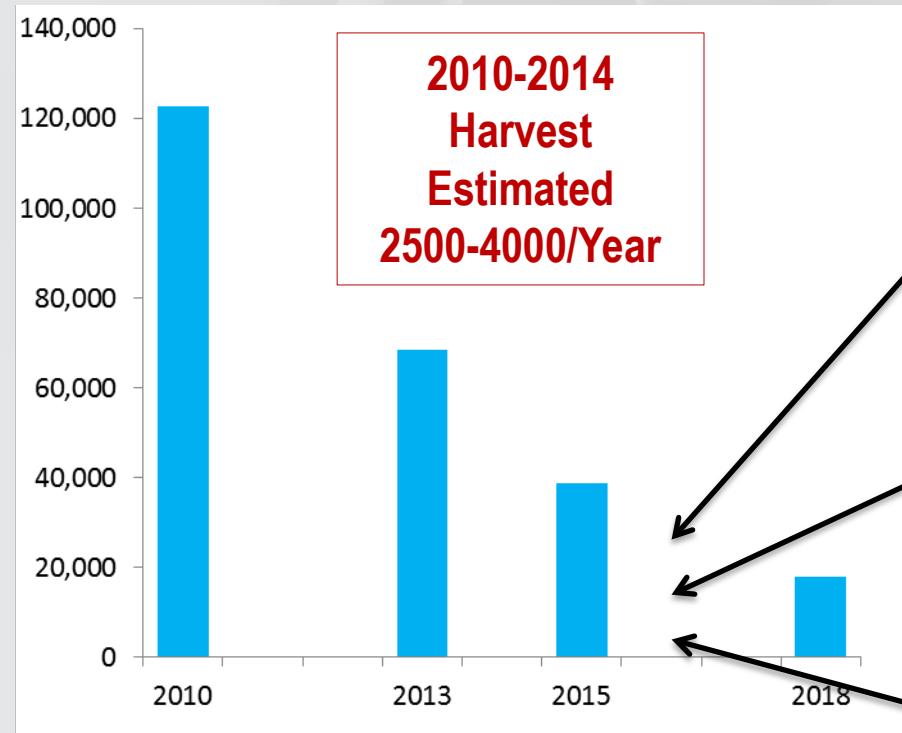
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# 1. Harvest: Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Caribou Management 2016



- NWMB/Kugluktuk:
  - 340 caribou
- SRRB/Déliné:
  - 150 caribou (80% Bulls)
- WRRB:
  - 750 Bulls (Entire Herd)



Photo J. Adamczewski





# 1. Harvest: Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Caribou: Reported/Estimated Harvest 2016-2018

<b>Harvest Season</b>	<b>N. Slave Region NWT*</b>	<b>Délînę, NWT</b>	<b>Kugluktuk, NU</b>	<b>Total Harvest</b>
<i>Harvest Limit</i>	750 Bulls	150 caribou, 80% bulls	340 caribou	
2016-2017	15 bulls	93 bulls, 33 cows	232 caribou	373 caribou
2017-2018	142 bulls	7 caribou	174 caribou	323 caribou



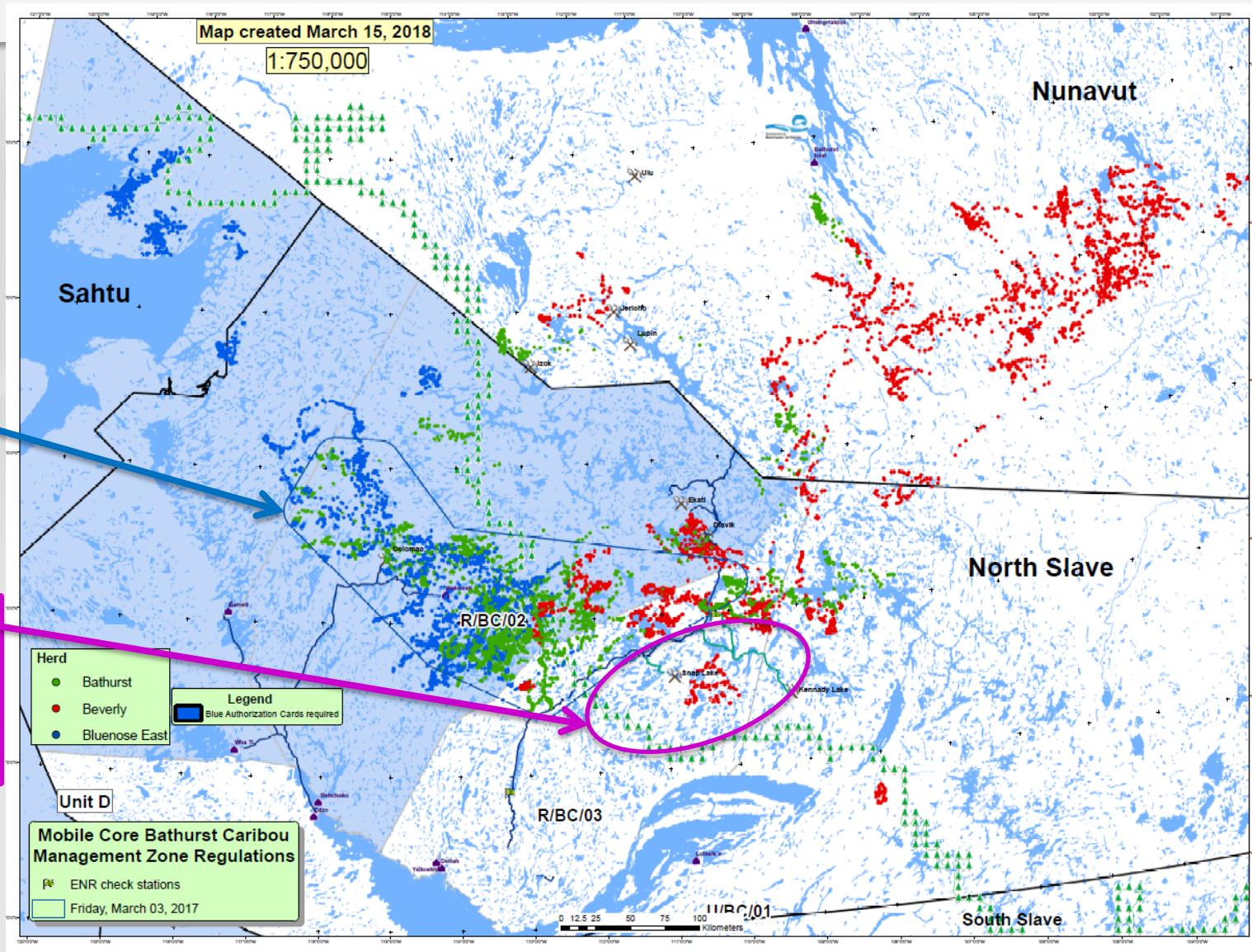
\*Includes Wek'èezhìi

# 1. Harvest: Bluenose-East, Bathurst & Beverly Ekwò Collared Caribou Jan. 1–April 1, 2017

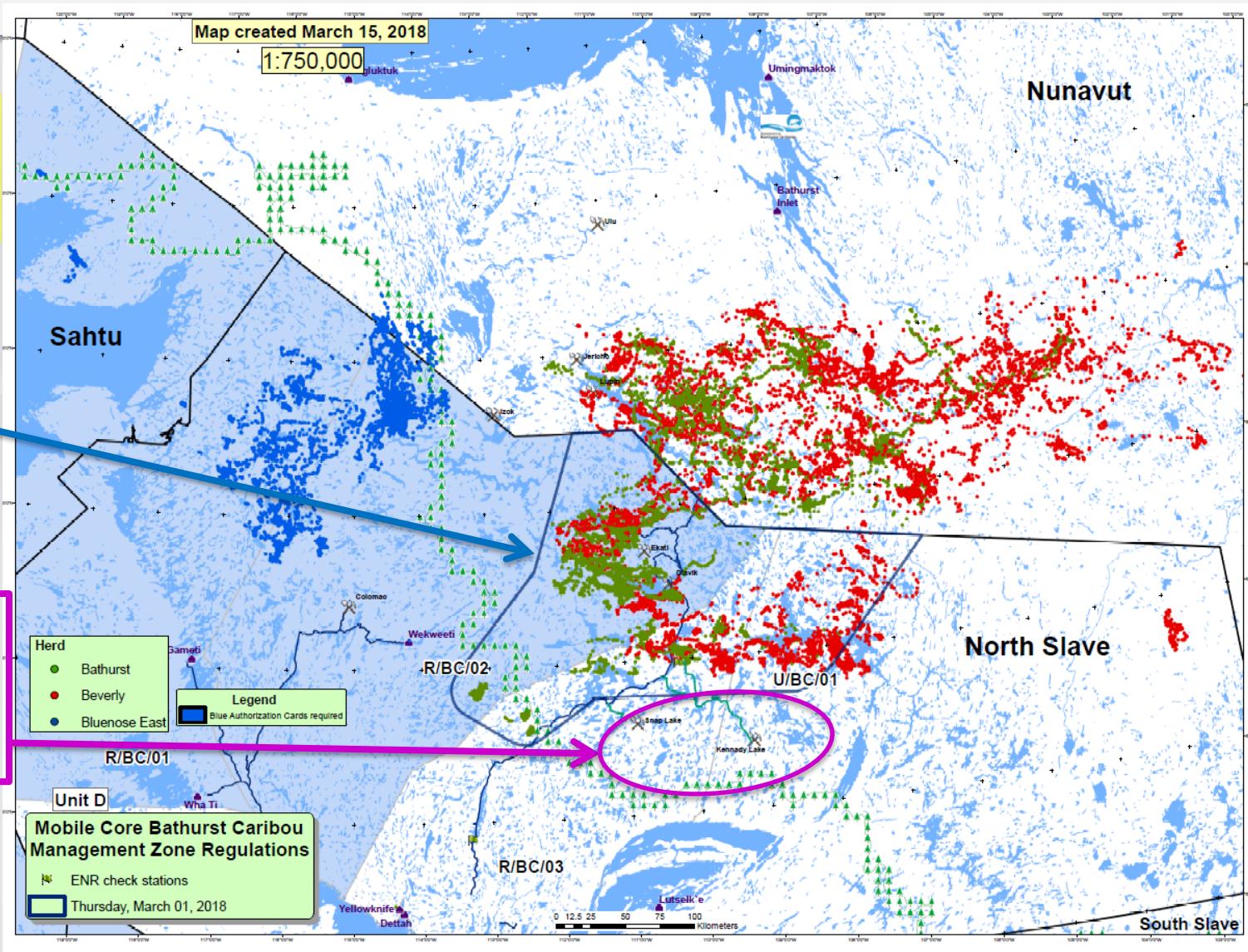
- Bluenose-East
- Bathurst
- Beverly

Bathurst  
No-Harvest  
Mobile Zone

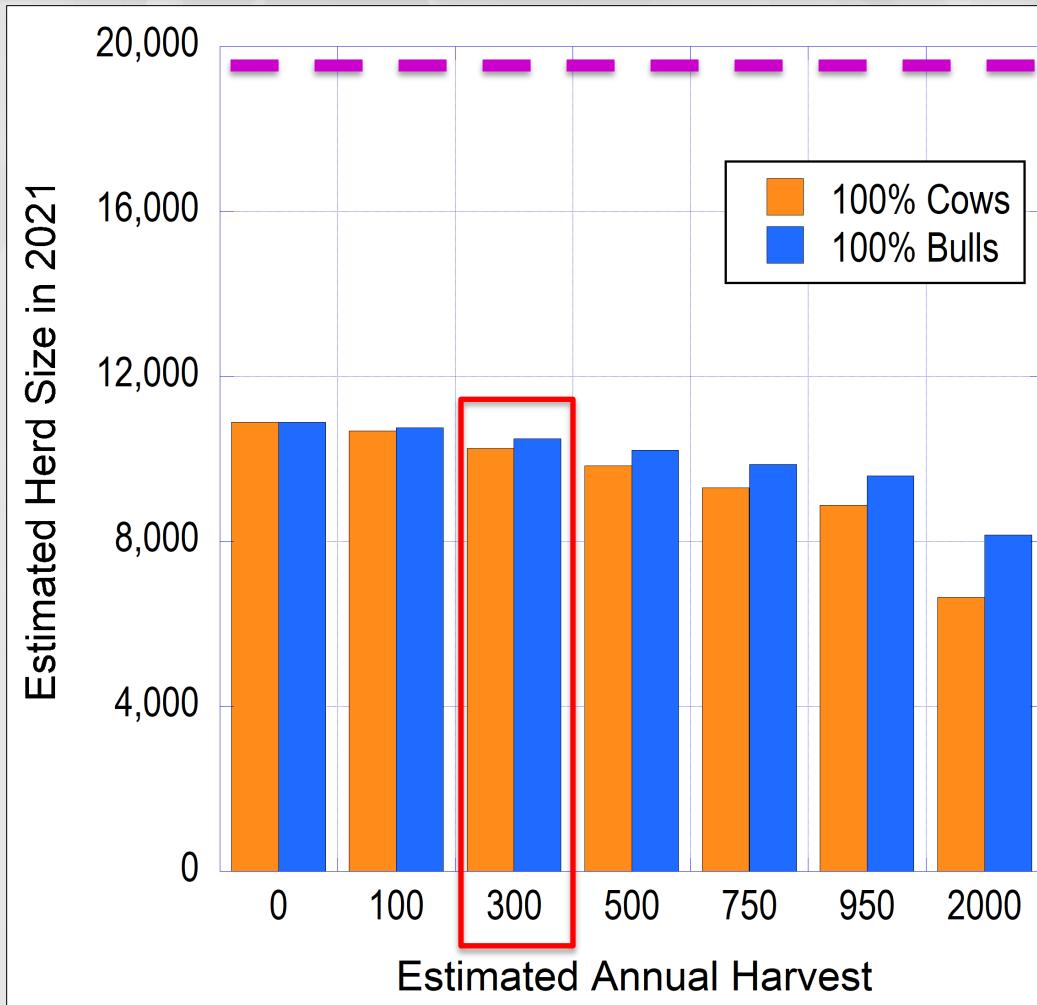
Main N. Slave  
Area for Caribou  
Harvest Winter  
2016-2017



# 1. Harvest: Bluenose-East, Bathurst & Beverly Ekwò Collared Caribou Jan. 1 – April 1, 2018



# 1. Harvest: Projected Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Herd Size in 2021 with Variable Harvest



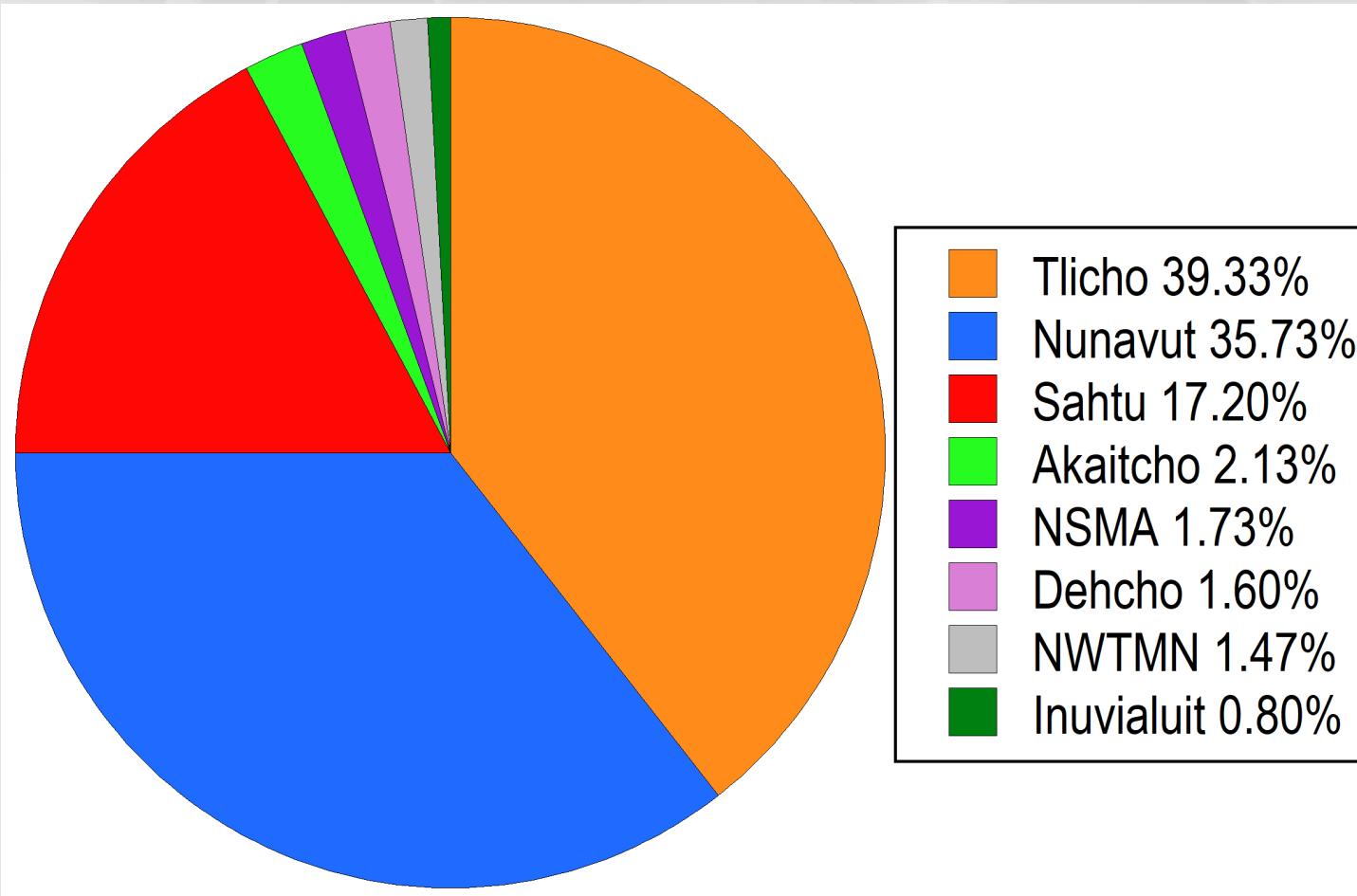
Herd in 2018:  
19,300

## Key Assumptions:

- Cow Survival 71%
- Average Calf Survival



# 1. Harvest Allocation Bluenose-East Caribou (Sahtì Ekwò) Sept. 2016





# 1. Harvest: Bluenose-East Sahtì Ekwò<sup>q</sup>

## *Proposed Harvest 2019*



WRRB Herd Harvest 2016: **750 Bulls**  
TG & ENR *Proposed* Harvest 2019: **300 Bulls**



Group	% of Harvest	Harvest 750 Bulls	Harvest 300 Bulls
Tłı̨chǫ	39.33	295	118
Kugluktuk (NU)	35.73	268	107
Sahtú	17.20	129	52
Akaitcho	2.13	16	6
NSMA	1.73	13	5
Dehcho	1.60	12	5
NWTMN	1.47	11	5
Inuvialuit	0.80	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>99.99</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>300</b>





## 2. Predators: Bluenose-East & Bathurst Ekwǫ̀ Wolf Management

**2010-2018:**

- GNWT Wolf Harvest Incentives 2010-2018
- Tłı̨chǫ Wolf Harvester Training 2016
- Wolf Technical Feasibility Assessment (Bathurst) 2017

**2019:**

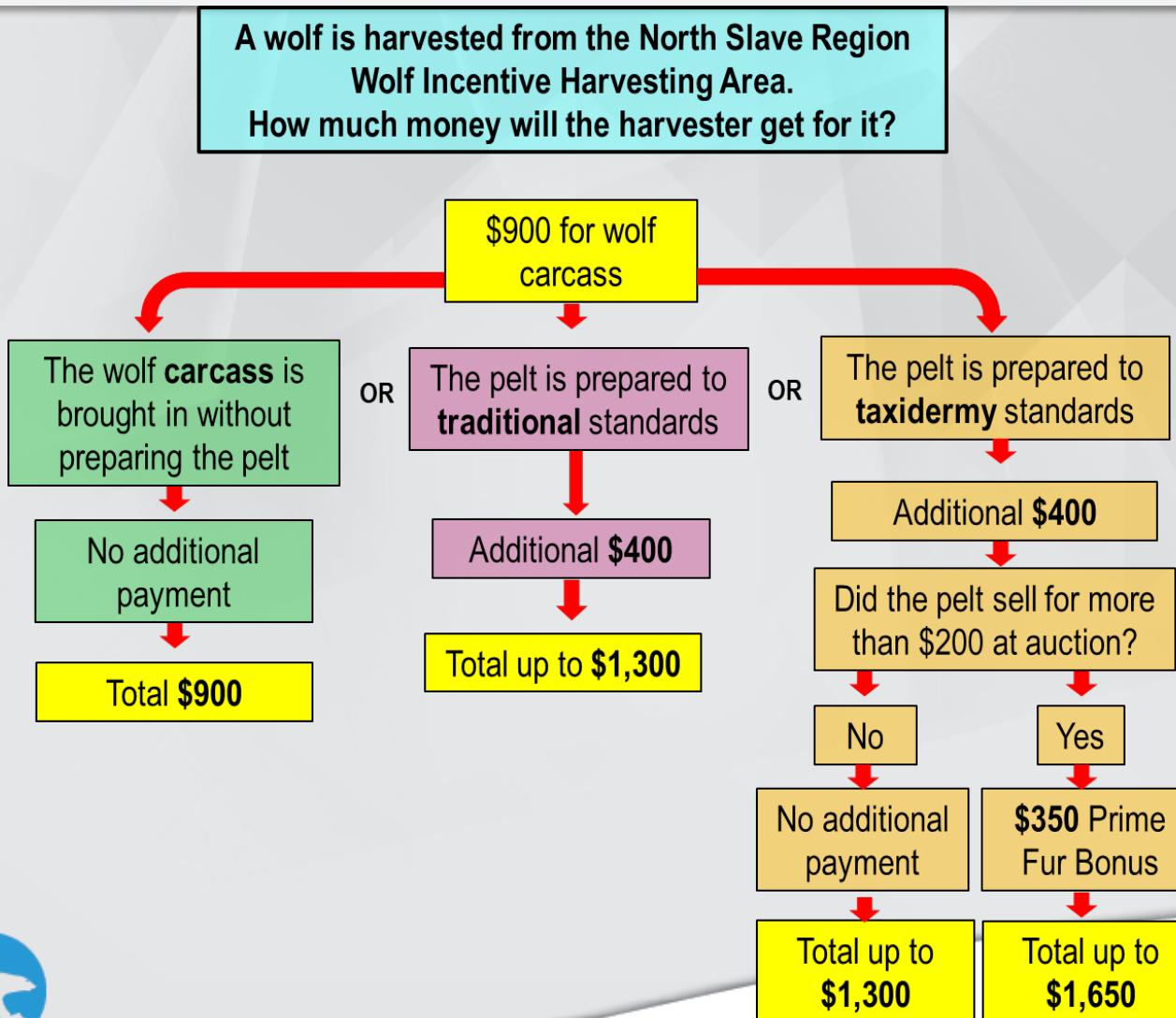
- Tłı̨chǫ Wolf Harvester Training  
(Wekweètì, Whatì, Behchokǫ̀)
- Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest  
Incentive Program
- Joint Proposal on Wolves (Bluenose-East & Bathurst)
- Discussion with Nunavut on predators



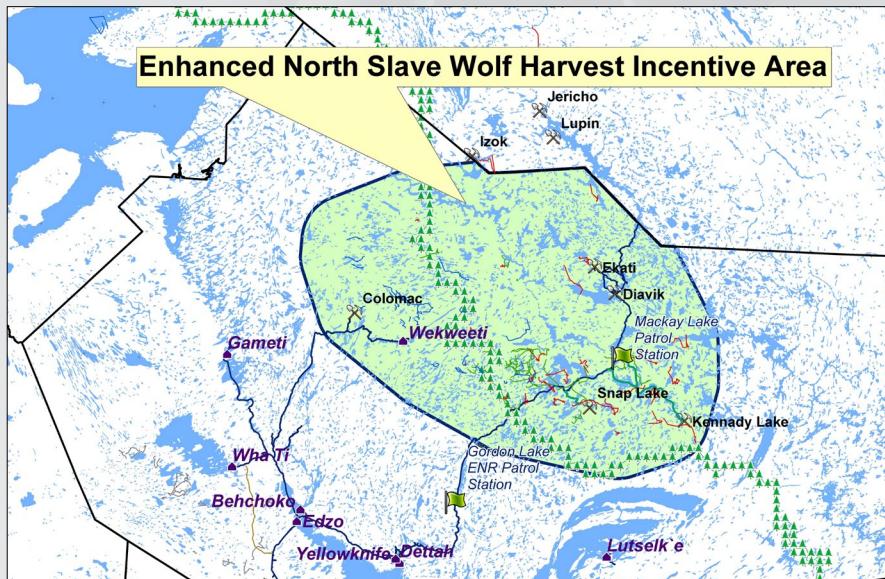
Internet  
Photo



## 2. Predators: Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program (GNWT)



## 2. Predators: Enhanced North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Program (GNWT)



Internet Photo

- Increased incentives in this area only
- Area built around Bathurst & Bluenose-East caribou locations
- Hunters check in and out at ENR stations
- Hunters get receipt for wolf carcass or pelt
- Each wolf identified (tattoo)



# 3. Habitat & Land Use: Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò)

- Taking Care of Caribou Plan: Main Guide
- Promote Calving Ground Conservation
- Identify & Protect Ekwò no'oke (water crossings), Tataa (land crossings) & Core Ranges
- Environmental Assessment & Land Use Planning
- Identify & Protect Unburned Winter Ranges

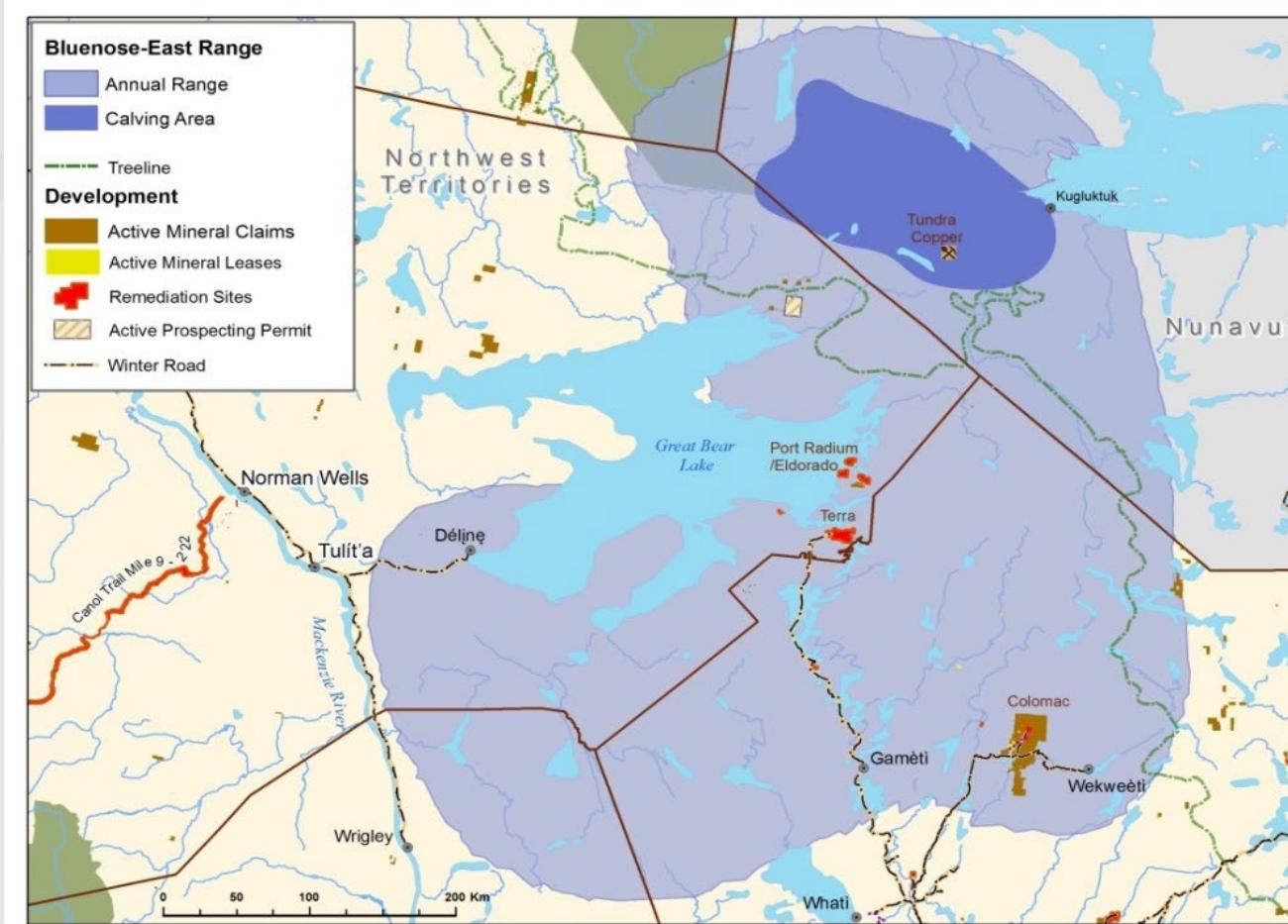


Photo J. Adamczewski

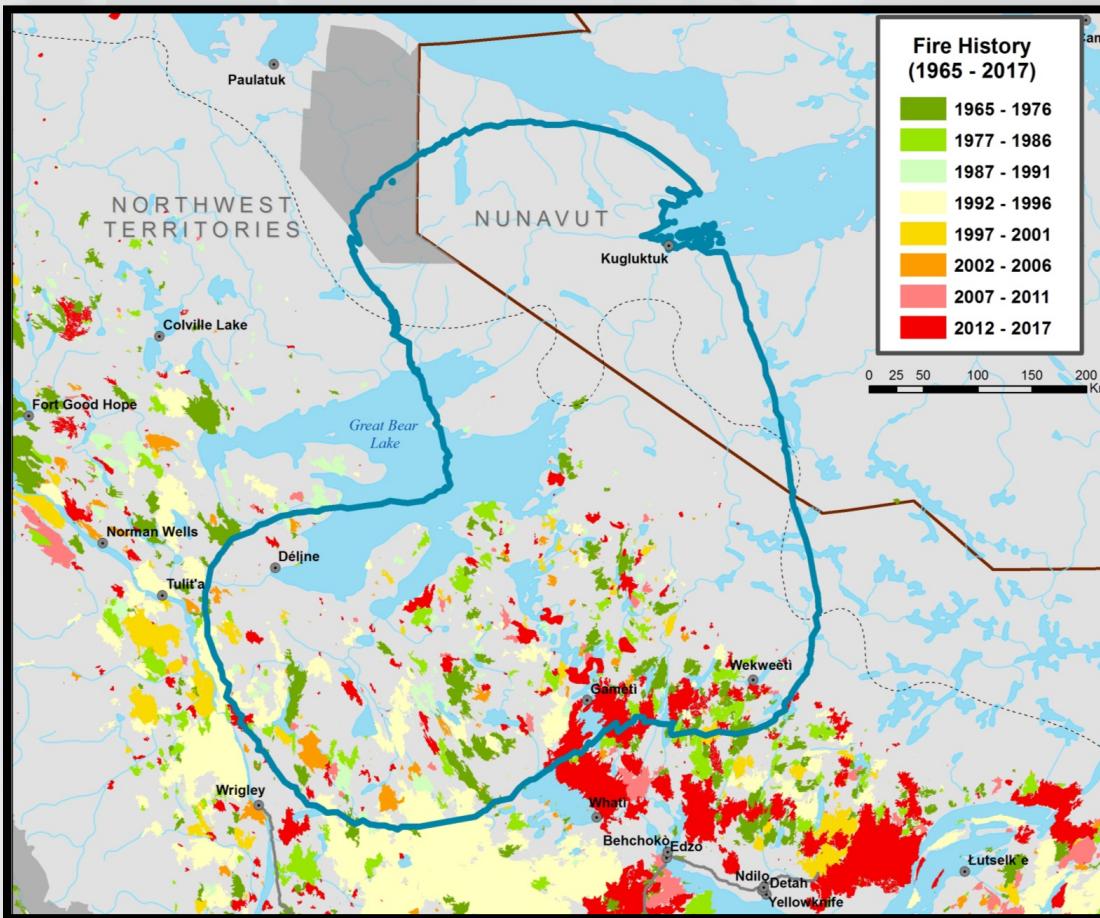




# 3. Habitat & Land Use: Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Herd Range & Disturbance



# 3. Habitat & Land Use : Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Herd Range & Fire





### 3. Habitat & Land Use: Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò) Herd & Climate Change

*Climate Change: Likely Multiple Effects on Caribou, All Seasons*

#### Possible Effects (Various Studies):

1. Earlier Start to Plant Growing Season
2. Greater Plant Growth in Summer
3. Warmer Summers
4. More Summer Drought & More Severe Insect Seasons
5. More Big Fire Years like 2014
6. Tundra Vegetation Shift to More Shrubs, Less Lichen
7. Warmer Winters
8. More Snow in Winter, More Icing Events



Photo J. Adamczewski

*Overall: Weather More Extreme, Less Predictable*



Photo J. Adamczewski





# 4. Education: Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò)

- Increase On-The-Land Activities
- Hunter Education
- Radio Updates, Interviews
- Posters for public education
- Community meetings
- Internet & Social Media



Photo J. Adamczewski

Government of Northwest Territories



## Caribou identification – if you're not sure, DON'T SHOOT

Always check the sex organs!

Why? In the fall, both males and females can have antlers. After the fall rut, most males lose their antlers.

A caribou with antlers in the winter and spring is probably a female.

A female caribou has a dark patch under her tail. This is the vulva.



A mature male caribou has a penis sheath that can usually be seen from the side.



Young males can easily be mistaken for females. Check to make sure there is no dark patch under the tail or wait for a good side view of the penis sheath before shooting.



Conserve our wildlife resources. Hunt responsibly and safely.

For more information, talk to an experienced hunter, your local ENR office, or visit [enr.gov.nt.ca](http://enr.gov.nt.ca)

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# 5. Monitoring & Research: Bluenose-East (Sahtì Ekwò)

- Increase Traditional Monitoring
- Population Surveys every 2 years (was 3)
- Monitor calf numbers in June, October & March
- Increase collars (cows from 30 to 50, bulls 20, total 70)
- Increase research (TK & science) on causes of decline



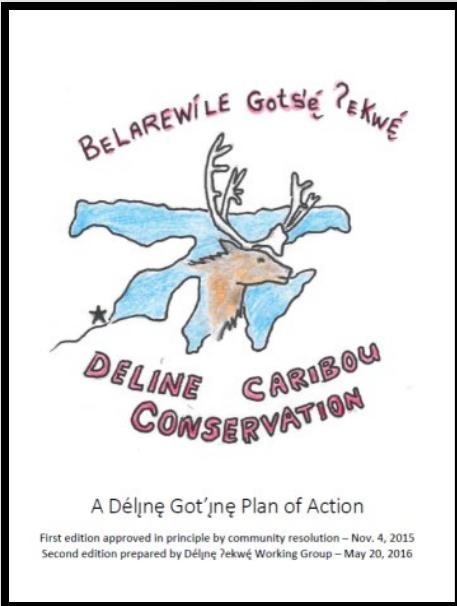
Photo J. Adamczewski



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# Working With the Sahtú & Nunavut: Management in Délînę



- Plan Accepted 2016 (SRRB & GNWT)
- New Survey Numbers: November 2018
- Délînę RRC Meetings:  
Dec. 2018, January 2019, February 2019



Photo J. Adamczewski



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# Working With the Sahtú & Nunavut: Management in Nunavut

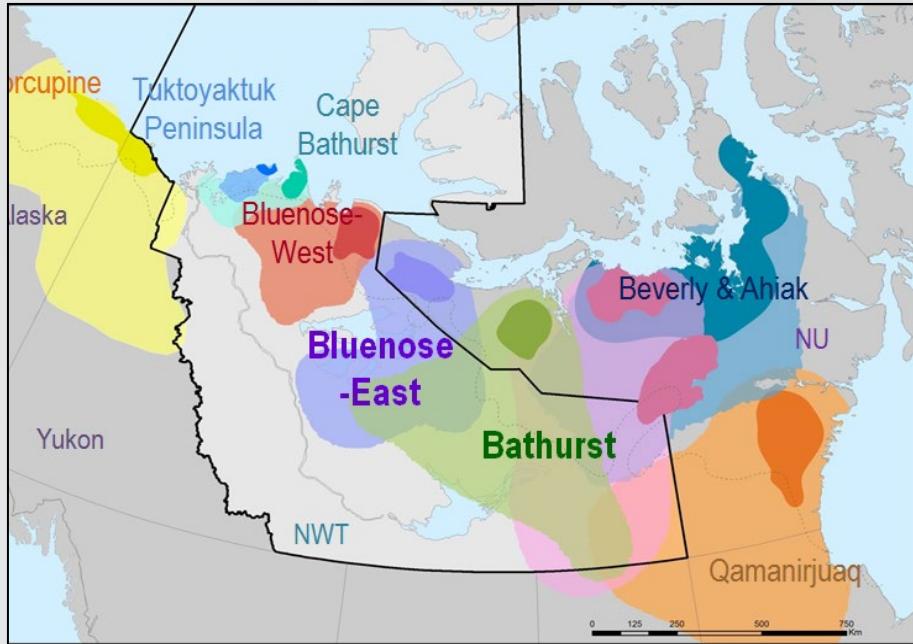


Photo J. Adamczewski

## Key Points

- Calving Grounds
- Environmental Assessment
- Land Use Planning
- Harvest
- Predators (Summer Range)
- Monitoring & Research
- Kugluktuk Caribou Plan



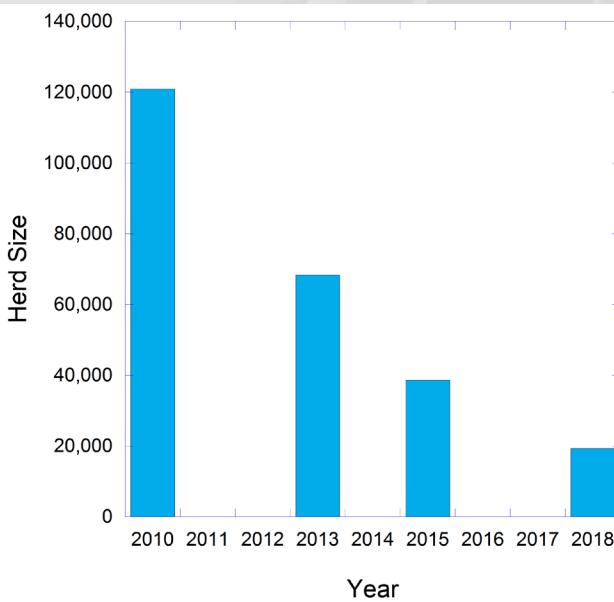


# Bluenose-East Caribou (Sahtì Ekwò): Engagement & Consultation 2018-2019

- ACCWM (Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management)  
Co-Management Boards: Bluenose-East status Nov. 21, 2018
- Déliné Renewable Resources Council: Dec. 11 & 12, 2018
- Tłı̨chǫ Communities:
  - Wekweètì & Gamètì - Jan. 21, 2019
  - Whatì Jan. 22, 2019
  - Behchokò Jan. 23, 2019
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation: Chiefs & Elders Council Jan. 24, 2019
- Ft. Smith: Salt River First Nation, Ft Smith Métis Council,  
Smith's Landing First Nation; Jan. 29, 2019
- Tulita Renewable Resources Council &  
Sahtú Renewable Resources Board: Jan. 30, 2019
- Łútsél K'é Dene First Nation: Feb. 6, 2019
- North Slave Métis Alliance: Feb. 18, 2019
- Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization: Feb. 20, 2019



# Bluenose-East Caribou (Sahtì Ekwò): Summary



- Bluenose-East Herd Declining Rapidly
- TG-ENR Joint Proposal to WRRB
  - Submitted January 2019
- Main Sections:
  1. Harvest
  2. Predators
  3. Habitat & Land Use
  4. Education
  5. Monitoring and Research
- Sahtú/Déliné Management
- Nunavut/Kugluktuk Management



# Questions?



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