



# Draft Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

## Why a Management Plan?

The Draft Plan makes recommendations for the recovery and long-term well-being of the Bathurst barren-ground caribou herd across the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan.

The Bathurst Caribou Management Plan is needed for several reasons:

- + Numbers of caribou have declined rapidly in recent years
- + Human activities have increased across the range
- + The relationship between people and caribou has fundamentally changed
- + The herd's decline has left many Indigenous peoples and residents of Northern communities unable to hunt caribou

The Draft Bathurst Caribou Management Plan is a response to calls for action to help the herd recover and make sure its habitat remains healthy. The plan builds on the recommendations of the 2019 Bathurst Caribou Range Plan, and brings together important knowledge and insight from Guardianship Initiatives and Community-Based Monitoring Programs across the Bathurst range.

# Background

Bathurst caribou travel thousands of kilometres every year, crossing the traditional territories of at least seven Indigenous groups.

The herd's range extends from southern and central Northwest Territories to the Bathurst Inlet in Nunavut. In some years, they have wintered as far south as northern Saskatchewan.

Caribou may encounter human or natural disturbances along their route, including roads, communities, mines, camps and burned forests. These disturbances, along with the effects of a changing climate, can affect the size and health of the herd.

The Bathurst Caribou Herd Range Map





## Background continued

Today the Bathurst caribou herd is much smaller than it once was.

It has dropped from a high of about 470,000 caribou in the mid-1980s, to a current low of about 8,200 animals in 2018.

Community members are worried about such low numbers of caribou and the amount of disturbance across the range, and have called for action to help the herd recover.

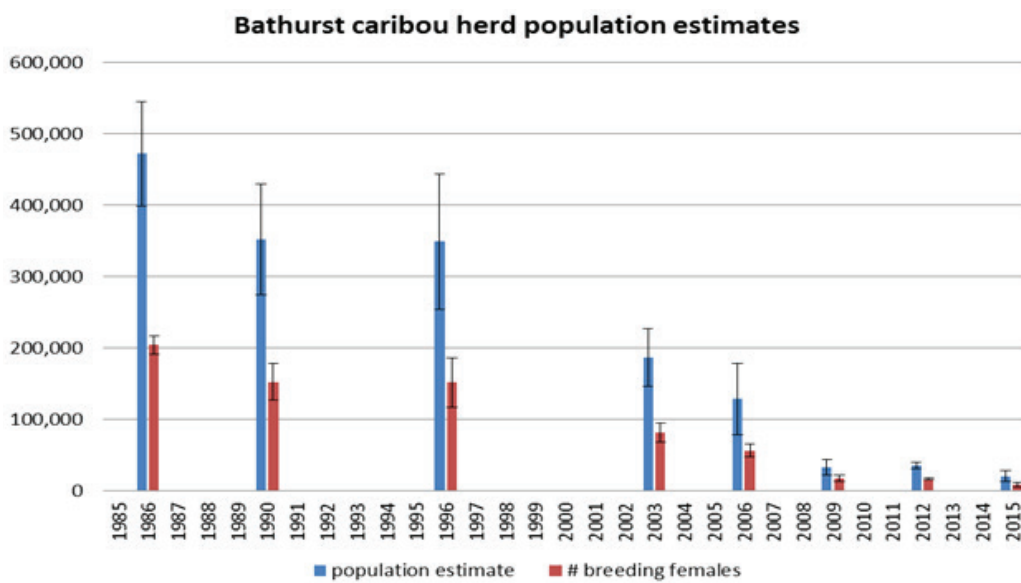


Photo Caption: Caribou monitors watching Bathurst caribou North of Contwoyto lake.  
(Source: Petter Jacobsen, 2018)

# How was the Draft Management Plan developed?

The Draft Plan was developed under the direction of the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee. The committee is made up of representatives from Indigenous governments and organizations, territorial and provincial governments, and other management authorities.

The Draft Plan reflects the diverse interests of governments, (Indigenous, territorial, provincial, and federal), communities, and stakeholders across the herd's range. It weaves together Indigenous Knowledge, community experience and ongoing Bathurst caribou science initiatives.

The Draft Bathurst Caribou Management Plan is being shared with the public so that community members and decision-makers can provide comments.

Once all feedback has been collected, a Final Bathurst Caribou Management Plan will be developed.

## Goal and Guiding Principles

The Draft Plan recognizes the role of Indigenous peoples and other Northerners as caribou guardians and the shared responsibility for managing human actions to support the recovery and well-being of the herd.

The Draft Plan was guided by a few main principles, including:

- + Respect caribou.
- + Bring together Indigenous, community, and scientific knowledge.
- + Promote guardianship and community programs for caribou.
- + Work together to care for caribou, and adapt based on what we learn.



# What's in the Draft Management Plan?

Making sure the Bathurst caribou herd is healthy now and into the future depends on our ability to manage human actions so that the herd can recover.

The Draft Plan describes five ways we can manage human actions:

## Harvest

Manage hunting levels so that caribou are conserved over time.

The Draft Plan recommends different harvest levels depending on how well the herd is doing.

When the herd is not doing well, it recommends all hunting be stopped to give caribou time to recover.

When the herd is at a high point, it recommends removing limits on hunting for Indigenous peoples and allow for residential and non-resident harvest.

## Predators

Manage relationships between caribou and predators based on Indigenous values and laws.

The Draft Plan recommends promoting hunting of wolves and other caribou predators more or less depending on how the herd is doing.

It also recommends keeping track of how many predators there are and how they are affecting the herd.

## Habitat & Disturbance

Manage land use and disturbance to caribou so that the herd is conserved within its natural range.

The Draft Plan recommends different levels of habitat protection and conditions on new development depending on how the herd is doing and how much the land is already being disturbed.

The recommendations for Habitat and Disturbance are based on the Bathurst Caribou Range Plan, which was completed in 2019.

## Communication & Education

Educate people about Bathurst caribou conservation and respectful hunting and land use.

No matter how well the herd is doing, the Draft Plan recommends working to share Indigenous, community, and scientific knowledge about the Bathurst herd with all communities that live alongside Bathurst caribou.

## Research & Monitoring

Learn more about Bathurst caribou, their habitat and their relationships with other species.

The Draft Plan recommends monitoring the herd more closely when it is not doing well, and less closely when the herd is large and healthy.

When the herd is declining, the Draft Plan recommends doing research to learn more about what causes the herd to decline.



# How will the Management Plan be used?

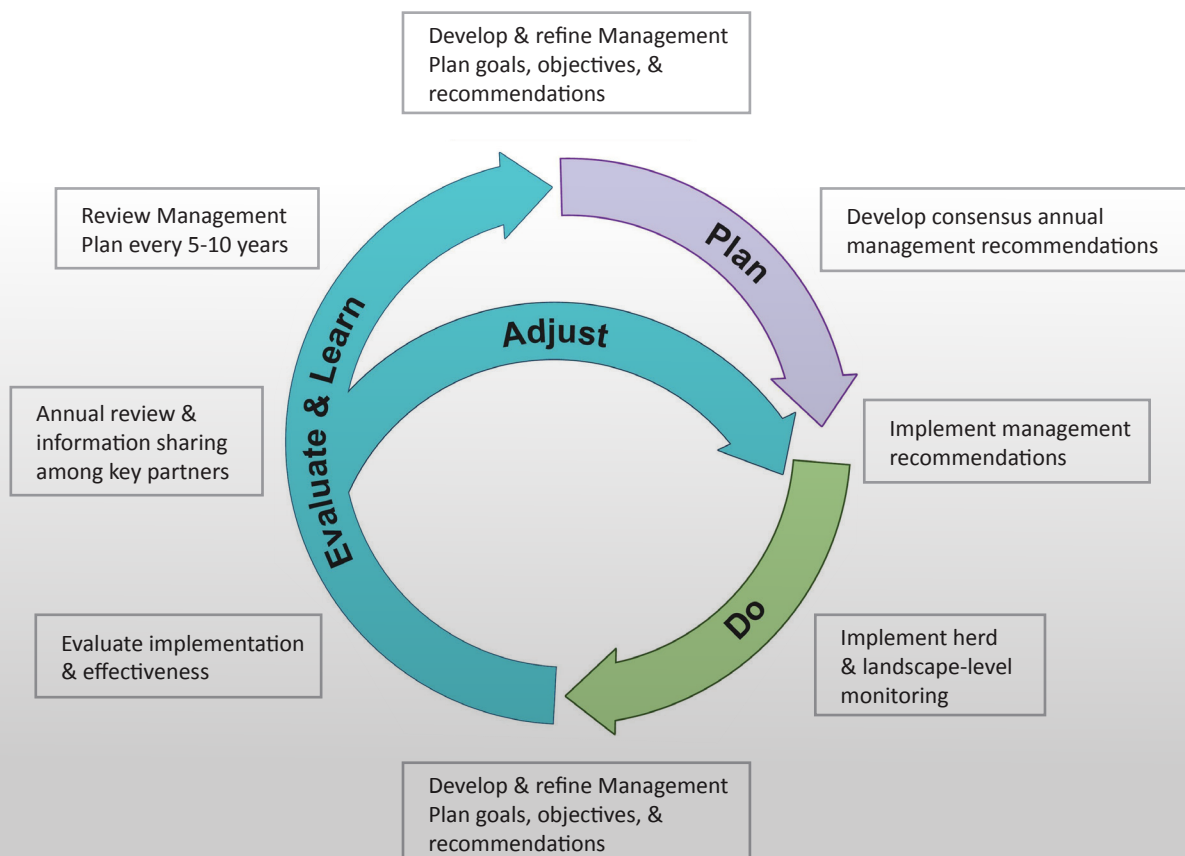
The plan will be applied in an annual cycle of planning, doing, and learning.

As part of this cycle, the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee will meet every year to:

- + Gather new information from community members, knowledge holders, scientists, guardianship and community programs, governments, and management boards.
- + Discuss how well the Bathurst herd is doing.
- + Agree on recommended management and monitoring actions for the next year.
- + Reflect on how the Plan is working so far and what has been learned.
- + Develop a public summary report of the Annual Review.

Implementing the annual cycle successfully will require commitment and cooperation from Indigenous governments, territorial governments, communities, and management boards.

Even after it is finalized, the Draft Plan will continue to evolve. The same groups that helped to develop it will continue to assess it over time, recognizing that as conditions change we must observe, learn, and respond.







## We want to hear from you!

IN PERSON: Check with your local Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) office for the closest community meeting

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