

Research Bulletin

NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program

Watching the Land: Knowing the Impacts of Climate Change

Summary

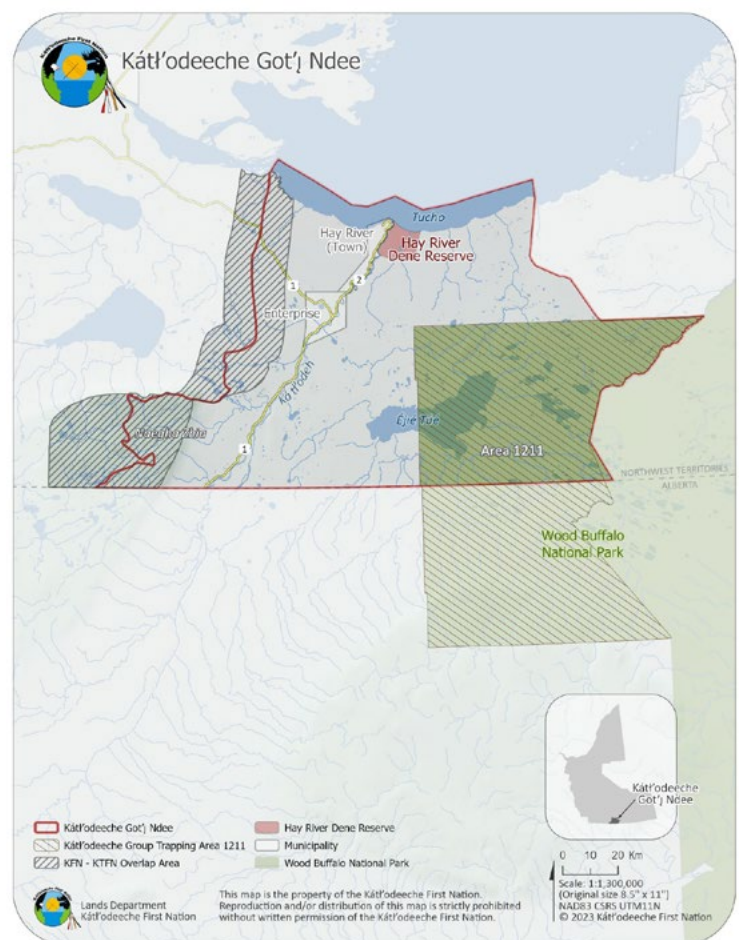
Since 2016, the Kát'odeeche First Nation (KFN) has been tracking the health of the environment through a community-based, Traditional Knowledge-focused harvest monitoring program. The project aimed to inform KFN membership, as well as industry and government, of evidence-based environmental trends and changes over time. Traditional Knowledge data collection coincided with seasonal traditional on-the-land harvesting activities during the fall moose hunt, winter boreal caribou hunt, spring geese hunt, summer berry harvest, and summer-fall fish harvest. Monitoring was done consistently based on time of year and location. Results presented below focus on boreal caribou monitoring.

Why is This Important?

Boreal caribou are a culturally significant species and an essential source of food security and traditional on-the-land activities for KFN members.

What Did We Do?

KFN has monitored boreal caribou harvested during winter community harvests at Swan Lake since 2018. Each caribou harvested was assessed for overall health using Traditional Knowledge. KFN also provided samples to the territorial government's Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC).



Location of KFN Traditional Territory in Northwest Territories.
(Credit: KFN)



What Did We Find?

KFN harvested a total of 12 boreal caribou over three winters (2021-22 to 2023-24). Only two of the boreal caribou harvested during this time were found to be in fair or poor health, with low weight and warble parasites present. KFN is waiting to receive the results of the sampling data from ECC to determine if the TK data and scientific data align.

Six years ago, KFN regularly carried out boreal caribou harvest monitoring during the first two weeks of December. In recent years, KFN has had to shift this monitoring to the second week of January because of late freeze-up, restricting access to the harvest area.

What Does This Mean?

According to the data collected, KFN's Traditional Territory is experiencing major effects of climate change, impacting KFN's traditional way of life. A trend of warmer weather in fall and early winter, a mark of a changing climate, is affecting traditional harvest.



Early morning woodland boreal caribou hunt (Credit: I. Graham)

What's Next?

KFN will continue annual harvest monitoring through its Nahendeh Kehotsendj environmental monitoring program.

The Kát'odeeche First Nation (KFN) people have been living in the area in and around Ejíe Túé (Buffalo Lake), Ejíe Túé Dehe (Buffalo River), and Kát'odeh (Hay River) since time immemorial. This area is known as Kát'odeeche Got'í Ndee, or the KFN people's land.

For More Information

Kát'odeeche First Nation at kfnlands@katlodeeche.com or kfnenvironmental@katlodeeche.com

NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP191)

Kát'odeeche First Nation. 2022, Watching the Land: Knowing the Impacts of Change. NWT Environmental Research Bulletin. [128-cimp_bulletin_36_en_proof.pdf](#) (gov.nt.ca)

Video: CIMP191 – [Kát'odeeche First Nation Traditional Harvest Monitoring Project](#)

NWT CIMP is a source of environmental monitoring and research. The program coordinates, conducts and funds the collection, analysis and reporting of information related to NWT environmental conditions. If you're conducting environmental monitoring and research, consider sharing your information with northern residents and decision-makers in a Bulletin.