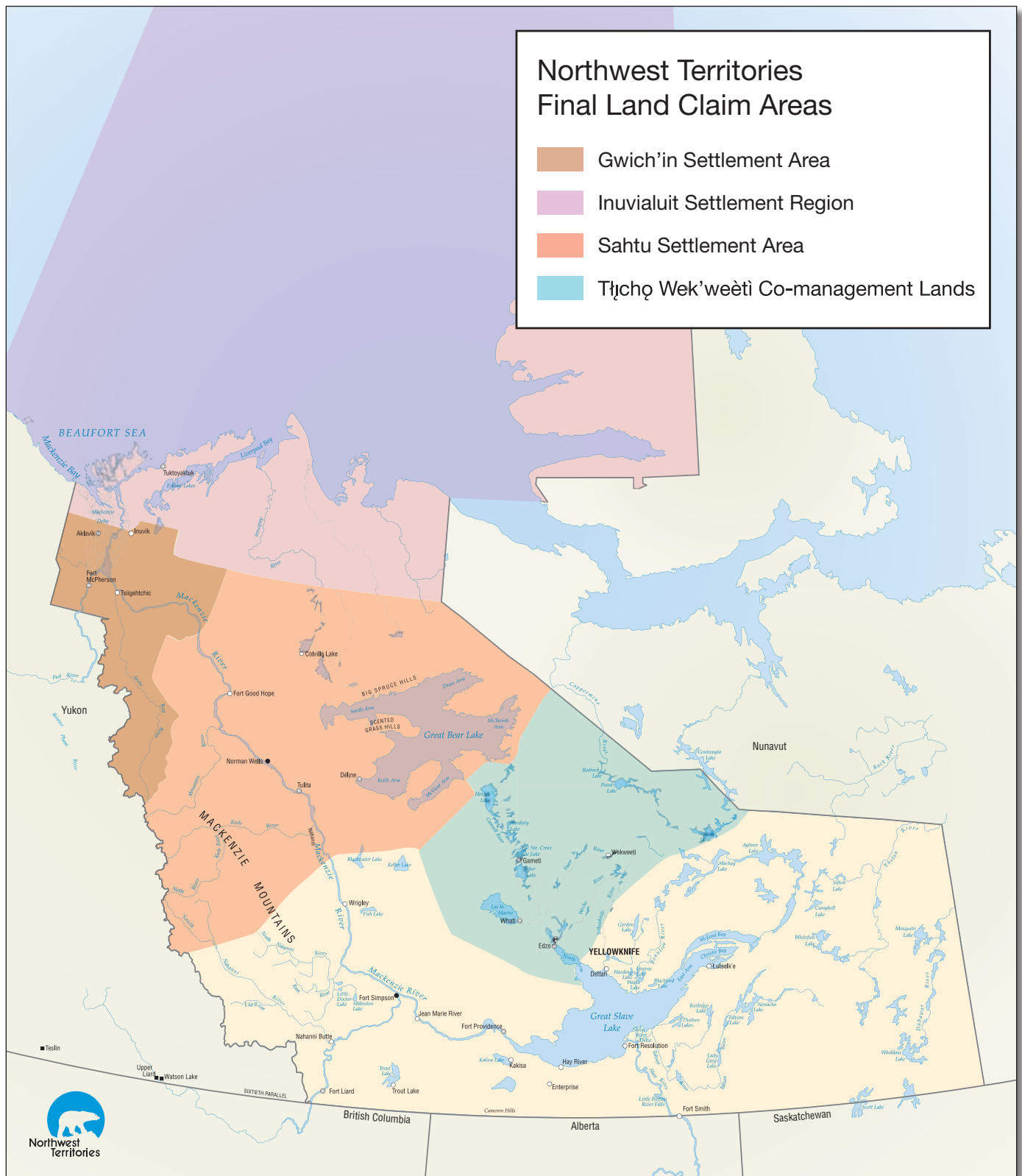


# Wildlife Management in the Northwest Territories





## Introduction

The Northwest Territories (NWT) is recognized as a world leader in the successful co-management of wildlife resources. The responsibility for wildlife management is shared between governments, users and renewable resource boards set up under land claim agreements. Co-management provides direct involvement for the land claimant groups in wildlife management in their claimant area and region.

Wildlife management or renewable resources boards (co-management boards) have been established as **the main instruments of wildlife management in areas where land claims are settled.**

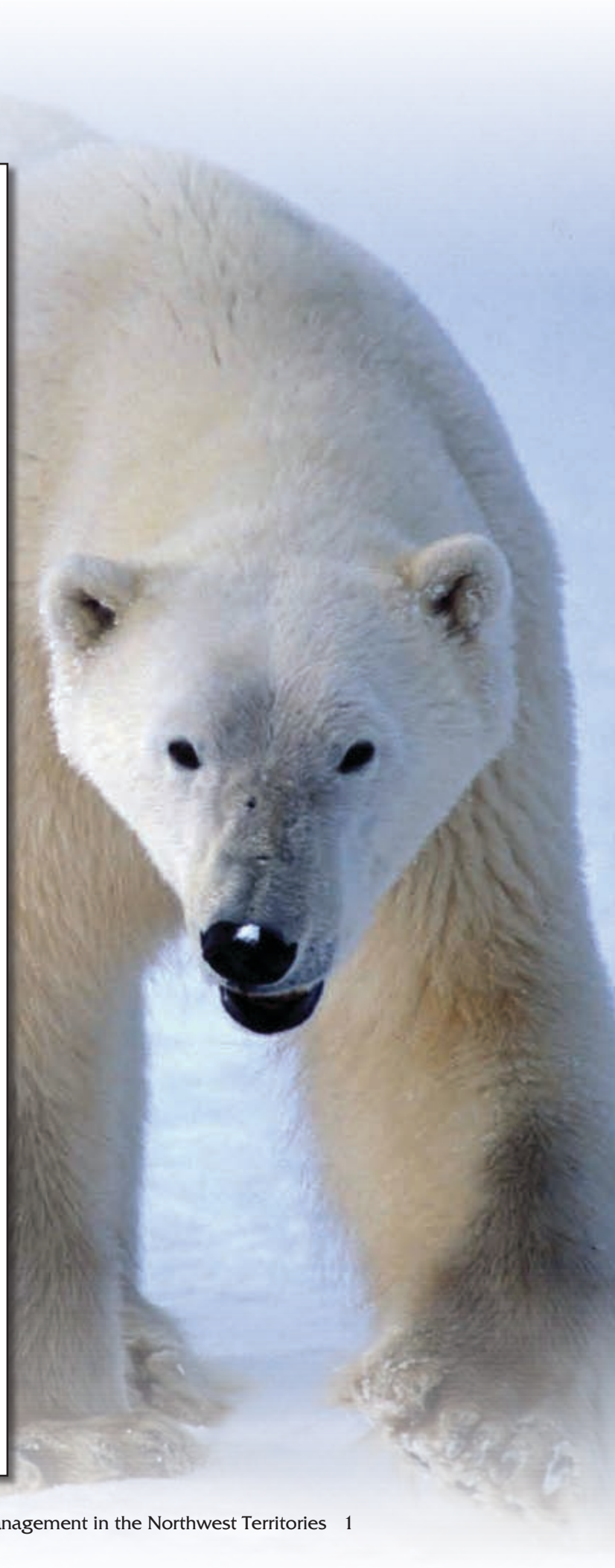
Current co-management boards set up under land claim and self-government agreements in the NWT are:

- **Wildlife Advisory Management Council (NWT)** ([www.jointsecretariat.ca](http://www.jointsecretariat.ca)), established under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement;
- **Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board** ([www.grrb.nt.ca](http://www.grrb.nt.ca)), established under the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement;
- **Sahtu Renewable Resources Board** ([www.srrb.nt.ca](http://www.srrb.nt.ca)), established under the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements; and
- **Wek'ëezhii Renewable Resources Board** ([www.wrrb.ca](http://www.wrrb.ca)), established under the Tłıchǫ Land Claims and Self-government Agreement.

In non-settlement regions, the co-management system provides for input and involvement by Aboriginal organizations in wildlife management.

Consultation obligations for wildlife management in the NWT are based on land claim and self-government agreements, Aboriginal and treaty rights and case law.

*Photo by Gordon Court*



## Role of Co-management Boards

The co-management system and the establishment of co-management boards under settled land claim and self-government agreements reflects the importance of wildlife to NWT Aboriginal land claim beneficiaries.

Co-management boards act in the public interest. However, the primary role of the boards is to integrate the special interests of Aboriginal land claim beneficiaries in wildlife and environmental management into the ministerial decision-making process of the federal and territorial governments. Board members are nominated by the respective land claim organization or government and by the federal and territorial governments. Appointments are made by the federal and territorial governments. In the case of the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board, the Tłıchǫ members are appointed by the Tłıchǫ Government.

Although differing in structure and authority, co-management boards all provide an avenue for Aboriginal land claim beneficiary input into wildlife management. The boards use traditional and local knowledge and scientific information to make recommendations to governments on management decisions affecting wildlife within their respective settlement areas.

Community consultation is a critical component of the co-management system. An informed and engaged public is necessary for the process to be effective.

As the main instrument of wildlife management in their respective settlement areas, co-management boards are responsible for providing ministerial advice on all matters affecting wildlife and environmental management.

Boards also have the power to establish policies and propose regulations in respect of the harvesting of wildlife by any person, including any class of persons, the commercial harvesting of wildlife and commercial activities relating to wildlife.

Boards are also responsible for the establishment of a Total Allowable Harvest in their respective settlement areas, if required. Priority for allocation of harvest under the total allowable harvest is established by the land claim agreements.

In the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, hunters and trappers committees can pass by-laws, enforceable under the wildlife ordinance of the NWT, to assist with the implementation of management decisions.

Under all agreements, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) retains ultimate authority for the management of wildlife.

Implementation of decisions and recommendations made by the co-management boards that require regulations are implemented through the NWT *Wildlife Act* and regulations.

Other management actions, such as conservation education programs or allocation of harvest, are often implemented by the co-management boards or other land claim committees (i.e. Inuvialuit Game Council, hunters and trappers committees).



## Tłıchò Government

The Tłıchq Land Claim and Self-government Agreement provides the Tłıchq Government with the power to enact laws "in relation to the use, management, administration and protection of Tlıcho lands and the renewable and non-renewable resources found thereon".

The Tłıchq Agreement also states: The Tłıchq Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories will, prior to the enactment of laws in relation to wildlife management, make every reasonable attempt to harmonize those laws to ensure maximum protection for wildlife in the Northwest Territories."

The GNWT works cooperatively with the Tłıchq Government in developing wildlife management proposals for consideration by the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB). This approach is required under the Tłıchq Agreement.

Recommendations by the WRRB are provided to both governments. The GNWT or, eventually, the Tłıchq Government, develop legislation to support the recommendations, as required.



## Interim Measures Agreements

Interim Measures Agreements (IMAs) have been signed in areas without settled land claim or self-government agreements. IMAs provide for the protection, management or use of land and resources before land claim agreements are concluded.

While these agreements do not set out wildlife management in the areas, they do establish temporary arrangements clarifying the role of Aboriginal organizations' resource management decision-making in their regions. The IMAs also outline consultation requirements for the territorial and federal governments.

Current IMAs are:

- Akaitcho Interim Measures Agreement;
- Dehcho First Nations Interim Measures Agreement; and
- Northwest Territory Metis Nation Interim Measures Agreement.



## GNWT Role in Co-management

GNWT responsibility for wildlife management flows from the NWT Act. Implementation is accomplished through the NWT *Wildlife Act*. The current *Wildlife Act* applies to vertebrates, other than fish, that are naturally found wild in the NWT. This includes mammals such as big game, small game and fur-bearers, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

One of the primary roles of the GNWT is to collect and provide information to co-management boards. The boards also consider traditional and local knowledge in making recommendations. The GNWT also works with boards to share information with communities and participate in information sharing, consultation or engagement sessions.

The GNWT develops management actions and legislation on wildlife in settlement regions based on input, consultation and recommendations from the co-management boards.

In most cases, once a recommendation or proposed regulation is received from a co-management board, the Minister of ENR must accept, reject or modify the recommendations. If the Minister rejects or modifies the recommendations, the reasons must be provided in writing to the board.

The Minister of ENR has the authority to implement wildlife management decisions based on decisions and proposed regulations provided by the co-management boards. ENR is responsible for enforcing the regulations.

## Development of New Wildlife Legislation

The GNWT has new legislation to protect species at risk in the NWT. It forms the basis for assessment, listing, protection and recovery planning for species at risk. The new legislation applies to all wildlife, birds, insects, amphibians and plants in the NWT. The *Species at Risk Act* (NWT) is anticipated to come into force in 2010.

The GNWT is also drafting a new *Wildlife Act*. As with the species at risk legislation, the GNWT is working collaboratively with co-management boards, land claim organizations and their legal counsel to ensure the draft *Wildlife Act* integrates wildlife management provisions from each of the four settled land claim agreements.



## Co-management and Caribou Management Boards

Co-management boards established under land claim agreements are all involved in making decisions and recommendations with respect to the management of caribou herds in their settlement areas.

Other co-management processes have also been established to provide direction and advice to governments on the management of human activities with respect to caribou herds and their habitat. These processes include the involvement of governments and organizations from neighbouring jurisdictions, including Nunavut, Yukon, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Board	Role	Herds Covered
Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) ( <a href="http://www.jointsecretariat.ca">www.jointsecretariat.ca</a> )	Advises on management of caribou in the Inuvialuit Settlement Area.	Porcupine Cape Bathurst Bluenose-East Bluenose-West
Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board ( <a href="http://www.grrb.nt.ca">www.grrb.nt.ca</a> )	Main instrument of wildlife management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.	Porcupine Cape Bathurst Bluenose-West
Sahtu Renewable Resources Board ( <a href="http://www.srrb.nt.ca">www.srrb.nt.ca</a> )	Main instrument of wildlife management in the Sahtu Settlement Area.	Bluenose-West Bluenose-East
Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board ( <a href="http://www.wrrb.ca">www.wrrb.ca</a> )	Performs the functions of wildlife management set out in the Tłıchǵ Agreement within Wek'èezhii.	Bluenose-East Bathurst Ahiak
Porcupine Caribou Management Board ( <a href="http://www.taiga.net/pcmb">www.taiga.net/pcmb</a> )	Provides advice and recommendations to Ministers and co-management boards in the NWT and Yukon.	Porcupine
Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board ( <a href="http://www.arctic-caribou.com">www.arctic-caribou.com</a> )	Provides advice and recommendations to government and traditional users for the conservation of herds and their habitats in Nunavut, NWT, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.	Beverly Qamanirjuaq
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board ( <a href="http://www.nwmb.com">www.nwmb.com</a> )	Has no jurisdiction in the NWT, but has a key role in management of shared populations.	Bluenose-East Bathurst Ahiak Beverly Qamanirjuaq

For more information on wildlife management in the Northwest Territories, contact Public Affairs and Communications, Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the NWT at 867-873-7379 or 867-920-3310.





*Photo by Steven Matthews*