

Response Statement - Caribou, Eastern Migratory population

January 18, 2018

Common Name: Caribou, Eastern Migratory population

Scientific Name: *Rangifer tarandus*

Status assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC): Endangered

How the Minister of the Environment intends to respond to the assessment: The Minister of the Environment will forward the COSEWIC assessment of the Caribou, Eastern Migratory population to the Governor in Council as soon as possible following completion of the extended consultation period and analysis as appropriate. During the extended consultation period the Minister of Environment will undertake consultations with the governments of Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, and the public on whether or not the Caribou, Eastern Migratory population should be added to the *List of Wildlife Species at Risk* (Schedule 1) under the *Species at Risk Act* as Endangered. The Minister of the Environment will also consult with the Hunting and Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC).

Once a species has been assessed by COSEWIC, further steps must be undertaken before it is added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. For more information on this process, please view [The Species Listing Process Under SARA](#).

Reason(s) for status designation provided by COSEWIC: This migratory caribou population exists as four subpopulations from coastal western Hudson Bay to Labrador. The present population estimate of 170,636 mature animals indicates there has been an 80% overall decline in number over three generations (18-21 years). The decline is predicted to continue because of overharvest, and a decrease in habitat quality associated with climate change and development. Two declining subpopulations contain about 99% of the Eastern Migratory population; the George River has declined by 99% over 3 generations, and the Leaf River by 68% over two generations. Although migratory caribou populations fluctuate in abundance, there is concern that recent and predicted threats will limit population growth in a population that presently is at its lowest recorded level. Threats appear to be less prevalent in the two western subpopulations which represent only about 4% of the existing total population. Most of the remaining caribou reside in the Leaf River subpopulation, which continues to decline.

Occurrence: Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador

Competent Minister(s):

Minister of Environment

Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency

Province(s) and territory (territories) to be consulted:

Manitoba

Ontario

Quebec

Newfoundland and Labrador

Applicable federal legislation: When the species is found within national parks of Canada or other lands administered by the Parks Canada Agency, it is protected or managed under the *Canada National Parks Act* or through measures or management tools available to the Parks Canada Agency under other legislation.