

September 28, 2009

Interim Conservation Measures to Protect the Porcupine Caribou Herd

WHITEHORSE – Environment Minister Elaine Taylor today announced immediate interim conservation measures to protect the Porcupine Caribou Herd from further decline until a harvest management plan is formally adopted and implemented by all parties to the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement.

Effective immediately, all hunters will be restricted to bulls only and licensed hunters will be limited to one bull. Previously, hunters could take cows and bulls and licensed hunters were limited to two caribou. Mandatory reporting of results will also be required of all hunters.

The conservation measures do not limit the number of bulls that may be harvested by aboriginal subsistence hunters.

“Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd has and continues to be a key priority of the Yukon government,” Taylor said. “The decision to implement conservation measures is based on the government’s obligations under land claims agreements and territorial legislation to ensure conservation, long-term productivity and sustainability of the herd for present and future generations.”

The Porcupine Caribou Herd’s population was estimated at 178,000 in 1989 and is now projected to be between 90,000 and 100,000 animals.

In light of key indicators suggesting further decline of the herd, absence of an approved management plan and related actions, and a marked pattern of herd declines across the north, the Yukon government, following consultation with parties to the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement, is proceeding with immediate interim conservation measures.

The government remains committed to the Porcupine Caribou Management Board’s continued work to put in place a harvest management plan that is endorsed and supported by all user groups. The new conservation measures will remain in place until all parties adopt and implement a harvest management plan.

First Nation governments who have the legislative and regulatory tools in place to implement these measures will be provided the opportunity to do so.

“The key objective of the interim measures is to reduce and potentially reverse the impacts of harvesting on a declining herd through limiting the harvest to bulls only and to better track harvest information for all parties to the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement,” Taylor added.

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