

Resolution: Emergency Recovery Plan for Mountain Caribou in British Columbia

October 2002

TO: Hon. Joyce Murray, Minister of Water, Land & Air Protection, PO Box 9047 Stat Prov Govt, Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2, 250-387-1187 (ph), 250-387-1040 (fax)

WHEREAS, the BC Conservation Data Centre (CDC) has placed the southern ecotype of Woodland Caribou on the Red List and the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has designated the caribou in the Southern Mountain National Ecological Area as threatened; and,

WHEREAS, the recently released Strategy for the Recovery of Mountain Caribou in British Columbia (MWLAP ver. 1.0, 2002) has reported that:

- Mountain Caribou have been extirpated from over 40% of their former BC range,
- nine of the thirteen Mountain Caribou populations are in decline and/or have declined during the past 20 years, due to habitat alteration, habitat fragmentation, alteration of predator-prey relationships, increased human access and associated disturbance and/or past over-hunting, and
- Mountain Caribou are facing present and/or potential threats from forestry practices and mechanized recreation;

BE IT RESOLVED that the BC Government and stakeholders take a *precautionary approach* to Mountain Caribou management, and recommend the following interim measures be immediately implemented, and maintained until the provincial recovery strategy has demonstrated positive trends in caribou populations:

- stop all habitat alteration in core caribou habitat – unless it can be clearly demonstrated that no detrimental impacts to caribou habitat will result (i.e. eliminate forest harvesting and road construction);
- restrict all experimentation with caribou habitat alteration (i.e. silvicultural trials) to non-core habitat areas of caribou populations that have at least 250 animals and have been stable or increasing for at least five years;
- immediately develop and implement access management strategies in core habitat areas for all caribou populations, including road closures and restrictions on commercial and non-commercial motorized recreation (i.e. helicopters, snowmobiles, ATVs etc.);
- undertake ecosystem restoration measures to minimize deer, elk and moose habitat within and adjacent to core caribou habitat areas (especially at high elevations) and utilize hunting regulations to reduce deer, elk and moose populations in caribou areas where appropriate;
- undertake ecosystem restoration measures to increase habitat suitability in core caribou habitat areas degraded by past management activities (e.g., silvicultural treatments and road rehabilitation);
- assess predator risks and implement predator control programs where appropriate (i.e. predation is linked to high mortality rates and predator populations are not at risk);
- where populations have been reduced to less than 50 individuals and not increasing, sufficient habitat is available, and effective habitat protection and access management measures are being implemented, assess the potential for population augmentation by transplantation, and implement transplants where appropriate; and,
- manage caribou hunting regulations in a precautionary manner, and undertake a hunter education program to minimize accidental kills and increase hunter awareness regarding caribou management issues.
- implement in the field caribou-specific, anti-poaching law enforcement.