



*Species at Risk Act (SARA) Consultation,
Cooperation, and Accommodation Project*

Southern Mountain Caribou Virtual Workshops: Series 2

Summary Report

November 2022 Workshops

October 3, 2023

Prepared by:

Pacific Region, Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment and Climate Change Canada



Acknowledgments

We first acknowledge our presence and work on the unceded territories and lands of many Indigenous Nations. We respectfully recognize the need for an ongoing commitment to reconciliation that includes an expression of gratitude to the land.

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) partnered with the [Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources](#) (CIER) on a [Species At Risk Act \(SARA\) Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project](#) in 2021. The goal of this partnership, in relation to Southern Mountain Caribou, is to support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, perspectives, and language in an amendment to the federal Recovery Strategy. This was one of the early phases of a larger engagement and consultation process for Southern Mountain Caribou across its range—it does not, by itself, constitute formal consultation.

ECCC and CIER would like to once again extend the deepest gratitude to the people who attended, participated, shared knowledge, and offered prayers to open and close these workshops. These contributions to caribou recovery are invaluable. Please note that direct quotes, and the opening poem, have been included in this report with permission.

ECCC and CIER would also like to acknowledge the contributions to the project, workshops, and report by consultants Carmen Chelick (Biodigenous Consulting Ltd.), Kate Curtis, and Tash Prokop, all of whom provided essential expertise, time, and energy to the process. The workshops also benefited from visual support in the form of specialized illustrations, graphic design, and real-time graphic recording by [Fuse Consulting Ltd.](#) and [Conference Doodles](#).



The information in this summary report is intended to:

1. Provide background material on what ECCC shared during the virtual workshops
2. Summarize into themes what ECCC heard from Indigenous communities at the workshops
3. Enable additional opportunities for Indigenous communities to engage in and contribute to what will become an amendment to the federal Recovery Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou

If you have questions, concerns, or ideas to share, please reach out to the Canadian Wildlife Service, ECCC biologists in the Pacific Region: Jean Polfus (jean.polfus@ec.gc.ca), Teresa Tufts (teresa.tufts@ec.gc.ca), and Robin Steenweg (robin.steenweg@ec.gc.ca), or in the Prairie Region: Thea Carpenter (thea.carpenter@ec.gc.ca).

Opening

Living With the Land, For the Land

Since time immemorial we sustained the land,
Honouring our sacred teachings taught firsthand.
Indigenous knowledge preserved Cedar's life,
We pray to Cedar to guide our carving knife.
We are taught to use and respect each part,
Our Cedar renditions are works of art.
Coyote, Raven, and Mink, are notorious deceivers,
Patience gives skill to our gifted cedar weavers.
Elder berries harvested for the common fever,
Blessed foresight is given to our traditional healer.
We are blessed to receive the gifts we need,
For bad things come for those filled with greed.

All My Relations,

Lenore Natrall
Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Acknowledgments | i |
| Opening | iii |
| Table of Contents | iv |
| Background Information | 1 |
| Species at Risk Act | 1 |
| The 2014 Recovery Strategy | 2 |
| Recovery Strategy Amendment | 2 |
| Collaborations are Key | 5 |
| Workshop Series Overview | 6 |
| Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, Languages, and Perspectives in the Recovery Strategy | 8 |
| Workshop Series 2 | 10 |
| Objectives | 10 |
| Participant Summary | 11 |
| Graphic Recordings | 13 |
| Summary of Discussion by Themes | 16 |
| Jurisdictional Mandates and Roles | 17 |
| Limitations of SARA | 18 |
| Industry Related Threats to Caribou | 19 |
| Protection and Restoration of Caribou Habitat | 20 |
| Responsibility and Cultural Identity | 21 |
| Community-led Caribou Initiatives | 23 |
| Knowledge Sharing Processes | 24 |
| Representation and Avoiding the Standardization of Indigenous Knowledge | 25 |
| Indigenous Resources and Knowledge Protection | 27 |
| Next Steps | 28 |
| Future Workshops and Opportunities for Feedback | 28 |
| Community Recommendations | 29 |
| Appendix A: Caribou Language Tables | 30 |
| Appendix B: Links for Additional Information | 38 |

Background Information

The Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and the [Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources](#) (CIER) partnered to hold a series of virtual workshops on Southern Mountain Caribou recovery planning to support an amendment to the federal Recovery Strategy.

The information provided in this background section was shared by ECCC during the virtual workshops. It is included here to help provide context.

Please see the section “Summary of Discussion” for what we heard from participants at the November 2022 workshops.

Species at Risk Act

The [Species at Risk Act](#) (SARA) is a federal law that includes measures to protect and recover Species at Risk (SAR) in Canada. Although SARA does enable multi-species approaches, to date, most Recovery Strategies, Management Plans, and policies have primarily focused on single species and have been informed largely by Western science. Provisions in SARA recognize the essential role of Indigenous Nations in wildlife conservation and require consideration of Indigenous Knowledge when species are assessed and when developing and implementing recovery measures. ECCC acknowledges that many Recovery Strategies do not currently reflect Indigenous Knowledge systems. As the implementation of SARA is constantly being adjusted, ECCC is committed to improving relationships with Indigenous peoples and advancing reconciliation.

WHO WE ARE

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

A department of the Government of Canada with responsibilities related to the natural environment, including biodiversity, pollution, weather, and climate change.

Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS)

The branch of ECCC that focuses on wildlife conservation, including Species at Risk in Canada.

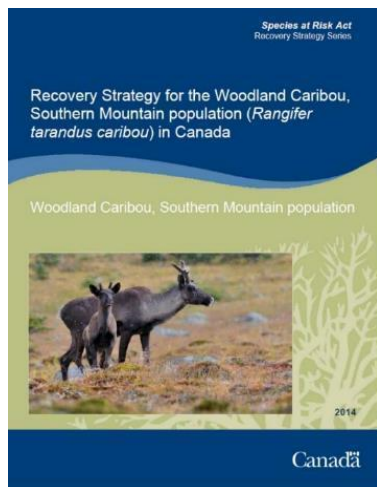
The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER)

Canada’s first National Indigenous-directed environmental non-profit charitable organization. CIER's mission is to work in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations to support and build sustainable Indigenous communities and protect lands and waters.

Species like caribou have tremendous importance to many Indigenous communities and ECCC understands that Indigenous Knowledge systems need to be better reflected in relevant SARA processes. ECCC is working to provide new opportunities for more meaningful engagement and to explore multi-species, ecosystem-based approaches to SAR recovery in Canada. In doing so, ECCC seeks to strengthen partnerships with Indigenous Peoples.

The 2014 Recovery Strategy

On June 3, 2014, ECCC posted the [Recovery Strategy for Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population \(*Rangifer tarandus caribou*\) in Canada](#)¹ on the Species at Risk Public Registry. Although this recovery strategy is informed by input from some Indigenous communities, many Indigenous



communities have expressed to ECCC that future amendments to this and other recovery documents for this species should better reflect Indigenous Knowledge and languages. ECCC, along with many Indigenous governments, are committed to meaningful engagement to continuously improve upon Southern Mountain Caribou recovery planning and actions.

Recovery Strategy Amendment

A [SARA Recovery Strategy](#) is a planning document that identifies what needs to be done to arrest or reverse the decline of a species². SARA allows for amendments to a recovery strategy at any time. Recovery Strategy development, including amendments, require, to the extent

¹ The 2014 Recovery Strategy for Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population can be found on the SARA Registry [here](#).

² https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/sar/recovery/recovery_e.cfm

possible, ‘cooperation with others’ including ‘every Aboriginal organization that will be directly affected’ by the Recovery Strategy. In addition to ECCC's responsibilities to engage with Indigenous communities under the SARA, ECCC is committed to meaningful engagement and centering of Indigenous voices in recovery documents, in line with its responsibilities under the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#). Recovery strategies must also be developed in cooperation with provincial governments, which often hold primary responsibility for species management, land use, and implementing recovery measures.

An opportunity to find new and innovative ways to center Indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and perspectives related to caribou.

The amendment to the 2014 federal Southern Mountain Caribou Recovery Strategy will involve:

1. More fulsome inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge and languages.
2. Completion of the currently incomplete mapping of Critical Habitat (including cooperation with Indigenous communities on updates to Critical Habitat categories, amounts, and boundaries).
3. General updates to reflect current best available information on caribou ecology and recovery.



ECCC and CIER are extremely grateful to those who have attended workshops and engaged in conversations about how the Recovery Strategy amendment can respectfully include Indigenous Knowledge and languages. We recognize this has been challenging for many Indigenous communities who found the initial process to develop the 2014 Recovery Strategy inadequate due to the short timelines, limited funding to support participation and, ultimately, minimal inclusion of Indigenous perspectives. Through ongoing information sharing, listening, and new discussions, ECCC hopes to reinforce relationships and develop new partnerships with interested communities on the path towards reconciliation and a shared interest in caribou recovery.

Importantly, the federal focus on Southern Mountain Caribou acknowledges that this species, for many Indigenous communities across its range, is woven together with Indigenous identity, history, and values, and represents deep and personal relationships. ECCC recognizes that much of the progress towards Southern Mountain Caribou recovery to date has been the result of Indigenous initiative and leadership. ECCC will continue to look to Indigenous communities to guide recovery actions and will support the meaningful involvement of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Holders, Hereditary and elected leadership, staff, and youth in the Recovery Strategy amendment.

Collaborations are Key

Caribou recovery cannot occur without meaningful collaborations among governments—federal, provincial, and Indigenous. Responsibilities and roles vary across these groups and influence how collaborations manifest.



- The federal government is responsible for implementing the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) and managing federal lands (e.g. National Parks) for the conservation of species at risk (SAR).
- Provincial governments manage wildlife and land use on provincial lands, including making decisions related to industry development and wildlife monitoring.
- Indigenous governments manage and steward their lands, waters, skies, and the non-human relations that live within their unceded territories.

[SARA Section 11 Agreements](#) are cross-jurisdictional collaborations, between one or more parties and the federal government. They enable SAR recovery by providing funding and resources, improving communication between governments, and taking direct action to recover species. There are currently three Section 11 Agreements in place for Southern Mountain Caribou. These are between Canada and:

1. [Province of Alberta](#)
2. [Province of British Columbia](#)
3. [Province of British Columbia and West Moberly First Nations and Saulneau First Nations](#)

There are also many examples of collaboration through less formal arrangements, such as direct funding contribution agreements or shared cost arrangements. The significant progress made on caribou recovery in some areas is a testament to the importance of collaboration across jurisdictions and how Indigenous Nations have leveraged SARA as a tool for conservation.

Workshop Series Overview

The November 2022 workshops were the second in a series of workshops hosted by ECCC and CIER that aim to create space for dialogue around improvements to the Recovery Strategy, including the respectful inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, perspectives, and languages and updates to critical habitat. These virtual workshops are just one of the many ways ECCC is seeking to engage with Indigenous communities on the Recovery Strategy amendment. An overview of the workshop series is provided below.

1. The **first series** included three virtual overview workshops about SARA processes along with six caribou-specific virtual workshops that took place between January 26th and March 17th, 2021. At these workshops, ECCC presented tables and maps of words for caribou in many of the Indigenous languages of BC and AB that had been compiled from publicly available sources (e.g., books, articles, dictionaries, websites, etc.).
 - A [Summary Report](#) and [PPT slides](#) of ECCC's presentation and other resources are available on [CIER's website](#) under the Southern Mountain Caribou tab.
 - Following the 2021 workshops, ECCC continued to work with communities to verify the words for caribou in Indigenous languages and dialects.
2. The **second series** involved three virtual workshops that were held in November 2022 and focused on developing a plan for how feedback from Indigenous communities could be included in the Recovery Strategy amendment.
 - This report summarizes the outcomes from the second workshop series.
 - [PowerPoint slides](#) of ECCC's presentation and other resources are available on [CIER's website](#)
 - Following the 2022 workshops, ECCC held one-on-one meetings with interested communities. ECCC partnered with CIER to provide capacity funding that supported 7 communities in their

Indigenous Knowledge and language revitalization work that may (if communities provide consent as the engagement process continues) be included in the Recovery Strategy amendment.

3. The **third series** of virtual workshops, held in late February and early March 2023, focused on the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in updates to Critical Habitat.
 - o A Summary Report and [PowerPoint slides](#) of ECCC's presentation and other resources are available on [CIER's website](#)
4. The **fourth series of in-person workshops** is being planned for the winter of 2024 to continue the work with communities to develop, edit, and refine feedback and improvements to the Recovery Strategy amendment.

The workshops are only one early step of the larger process intended to engage with Indigenous communities in BC and AB on Southern Mountain Caribou recovery. The workshops were intended as information sharing and relationship building sessions between ECCC and interested Indigenous communities. These workshops, on their own, are not considered to represent formal consultation. We anticipate there will be additional opportunities to engage in this process in constructive ways including the many ongoing nation-to-nation discussions that preceded this project.

Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, Languages, and Perspectives in the Recovery Strategy

To recognize Indigenous history, people's relationships with caribou, and to reframe current conversations around recovery action, ECCC is working in collaboration with communities to center Indigenous voices in recovery documents, where appropriate, and as supported by communities.

The workshops serve as a starting point to begin facilitating dialogue on the meaningful and respectful inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge. ECCC looks forward to continuing to co-develop this approach in close collaboration with, and with respect for, the protocols of each individual community.

ECCC has provided potential examples of improvements to the text of different sections of the Recovery Strategy, including: the executive summary, species information, population and habitat, and descriptions of threats. To view these examples, please refer to [the presentation slides](#).



Community members are invited to provide feedback, ask questions, and are encouraged to set-up individualized meetings to discuss how their participation can be supported to meet the needs of their community. Communities will continue to have the opportunity to verify, update, or edit information related to their interests prior to ECCC finalizing the draft amendment.



ECCC understands that not all Indigenous Knowledge or language is meant to be shared outside of communities and intends to work closely with Indigenous Knowledge and language experts to ensure that all information included in the Recovery Strategy amendment is in line with community wishes.

Workshop Series 2

ECCC and CIER hosted three half-day virtual workshops dedicated to discussing and planning the federal recovery strategy amendment for Southern Mountain Caribou in BC and AB on November 16th, 22nd, and 24th, 2022.

The repeat sessions, held across multiple days, were intended to allow as many participants as possible to attend. While all of the sessions followed the same [agenda](#), the topics, questions, and discussions that were brought forward by participants were unique between days.

Each workshop was facilitated by Tash Prokop (CIER contractor). Jean Polfus and Robin Steenweg (ECCC-CWS) presented information (see [PowerPoint slides](#)) and answered questions. The workshops were recorded in Zoom for internal review only and to ensure the accurate representation of community feedback and concerns.

Objectives

- Build on past engagement and continue to share information on the status and process of the federal Southern Mountain Caribou Recovery Strategy amendment;
- Share examples of how past feedback from Indigenous communities, including Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and languages, has the potential to be included in the Recovery Strategy amendment;
- Co-develop a respectful, personalized, and inclusive approach to participation in the preparation of the Recovery Strategy amendment (such as one-on-one follow-up meetings); and
- Create opportunities for networking among Indigenous communities with current and historical relationships to caribou, and provide opportunities for learning from Indigenous-led work supporting caribou recovery.

Participant Summary

The three virtual workshops (Nov 16th, 22nd and 24th, 2022) had 109 participants total, 62 of whom represented 42 different Indigenous communities, associations, or organizations.³



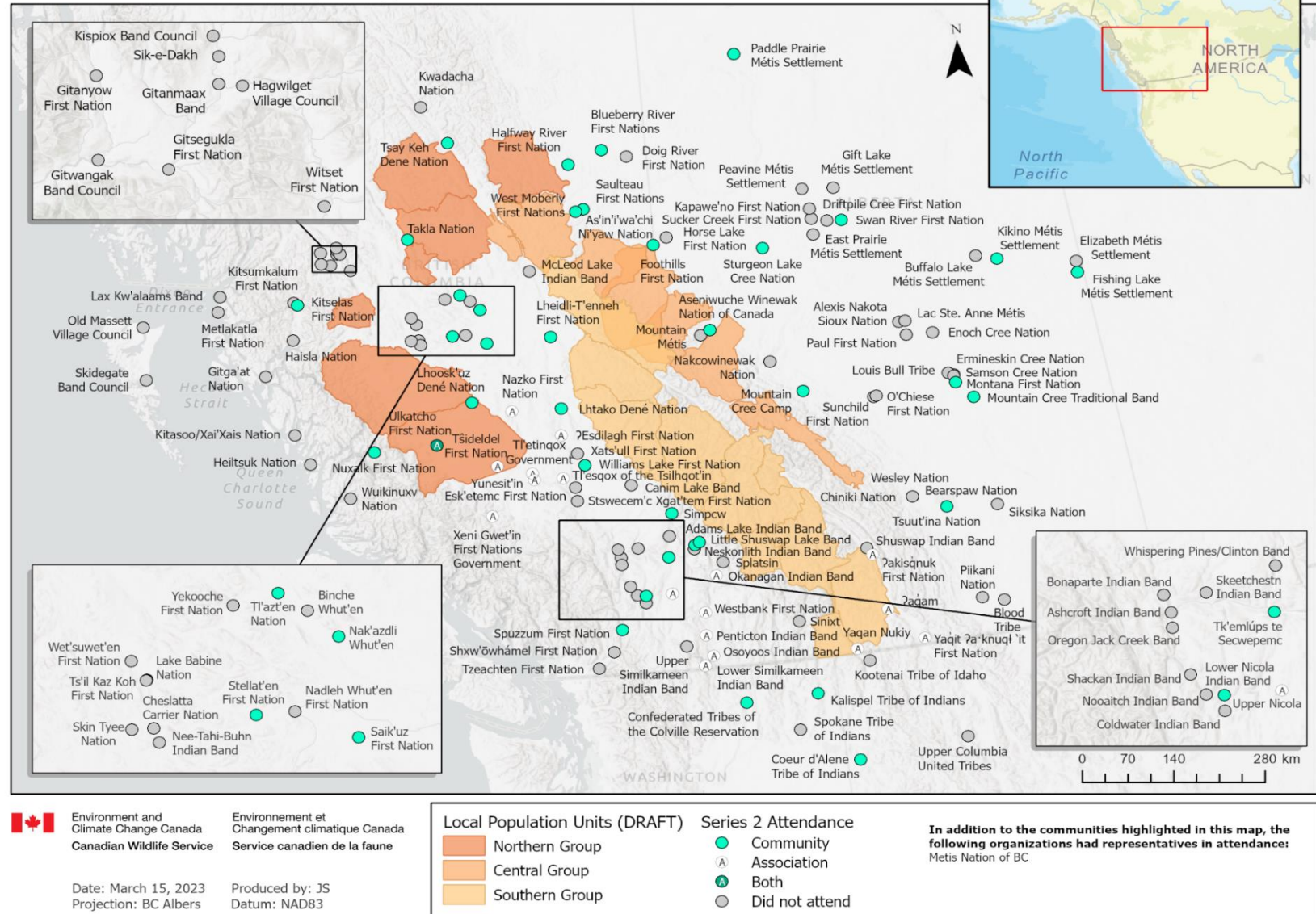
| Number of Indigenous communities/associations/organizations represented at the Fall 2022 workshops | | |
|--|---|---|
| British Columbia <i>Indigenous Communities/ Organizations</i> | Alberta <i>Indigenous Communities/ Organizations</i> | United States <i>Indigenous Communities/ Organizations</i> |
| 30 | 9 | 3 |
| <i>Individual Representatives</i> | <i>Individual Representatives</i> | <i>Individual Representatives</i> |
| 44 | 13 | 5 |

| Number of other participants at the Fall 2022 workshops | | |
|--|---|--|
| Government Employees <i>CWS/ECCC, Parks Canada, BC Government</i> | Contractors <i>CIER, Other Consultants</i> | Others <i>University, ENGO, Graphic recorder trainees</i> |
| 31 | 10 | 6 |

³ Repeat participants were counted only once.

Indigenous Knowledge, Perspectives, and Languages - Virtual Workshop #2
 Southern Mountain Caribou Recovery Strategy Amendment Community Engagement

Nov 16, 22, and 24, 2022



Map of Indigenous communities/associations/organizations who attended the November 16, 22 and 24, 2022 Southern Mountain Caribou - Indigenous Knowledges, Perspectives and Languages workshop series. Community locations are based on best available data from CIRNAC, Altalis, or online sources. Locations may be approximate.

Graphic Recordings

The workshops were graphically recorded (virtually) in real-time by Aaron Russell of [Conference Doodles](#) to produce a visual representation of the diverse discussions that took place. Graphic recording provides an alternative method for expressing and receiving knowledge as a supplement to the text-based summary of this report. All of the graphics can be found on the CIER [website](#) and individual illustrations from the graphic recordings from the 2021 and 2022 workshops are included throughout this report. Each of the three graphics below represent the discussions from one workshop.

WED NOV 16 2022



TUES NOV 22 2022

WHERE ARE YOU FROM? Good Direction

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE

HERDS IN DECLINE Wolves

INDUSTRY

RECOVERY strategy documents

SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU

CRITICAL HABITAT

LAND USE

EMERGENCY ORDER

INDICATOR SPECIES

WILDERNESS

gentle

vulnerable

silviculture

belongs

albert

lichen

undisturbed-land

resilient

everything

very important

deepsnow

landuse-impacts

curious

navaxalhts'i

endangered

shy

take

bio

critical

habitat

community

CHIEF & COUNCIL

CONNECTION

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

WISDOM OF ELDERS

CAPACITY FUNDING

PRESERVE

DISTINCT LANGUAGE

IDENTITY

BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

- BACKGROUND
- THREAT ASSESSMENT
- POPULATION & DISTRIBUTION
- BROAD STRATEGY FOR RECOVERY
- CRITICAL HABITAT
- ACTIVITIES

GENERAL vs **SPECIFIC**

History, Biocultural Diversity, General Statements, Specific Examples, Language, Dialect

Build Relationships

Systemic racism and discrimination pose a threat to Indigenous Peoples' ability to take action to recover caribou

Capacity and funding are the biggest barriers to participation

Working youth on Indigenous language and ecological knowledge is priority

There should be a focus on community-driven action to combat caribou decline

Concern about the federal government's ability to take concrete action

Communities want to connect and learn from each other on efforts to protect caribou

RECOVERY strategy

DECOLONIZING LANGUAGE

BEST WAYS

AMENDMENT

LOST WITH ELDERS

IN THE COAL MINE

canary

LICHEN

pollen

very

important

2014

AMENDED

WOLVES

COSEWIC

COSEWIC

SECTION 11

VIRTUAL SPACE

ZOOM!

AIR

WATER

LAND

relations

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

GOOD DIRECTION

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE

HERDS IN DECLINE

WOLVES

INDUSTRY

RECOVERY strategy

SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU

CRITICAL HABITAT

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WISDOM OF ELDERS

CAPACITY FUNDING

PRESERVE

DISTINCT LANGUAGE

IDENTITY

BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

[in](#) Aaron Russell [@ConfDood](#)

Thur Nov 24 2022

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE LANGUAGE

SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN CARIBOU

MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATION

CORRIDORS MOVEMENT

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

FORESTRY

mineral LICKS

AMENDMENT

RECOVERY strategy

teeth

CRITICAL HABITAT

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

LEADERS

GOOD WAY

zoom

zoom

JURISDICTIONS

MWAC

BC/FN

COSEWIC

COSEWIC

BACKGROUND THREATS POPULATION STRATEGIES CRITICAL HABITAT ACTIVITIES

Educating youth on Indigenous language and ecological knowledge is a priority

Concern about the federal government's ability to take concrete action

There should be a focus on community-driven action to combat caribou decline

Individual Communities

Communities want to connect and learn from each other on efforts to protect caribou

Systemic racism and discrimination pose a threat to Indigenous Peoples' ability to take action to recover caribou

Capacity and funding are the biggest barriers to participation

DATA

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

FUNDING MEETINGS

CROSS-COLLaboration

FUNDING

EVENTS

WORKSHOPS

CLOSING

DRAW LINES

bio cultural diversity

2014

AMENDMENT

History

GENERAL

Biocultural Diversity

General Statements

Specific Examples

Language

whudzih

clichen

protection

fragile culture

quarter sustenance

disappearing

identity

governance

ecosystem

wilderness

volatile

sad

canadian

old-growth

habitat

respect

right

migration

resilience

santa

granitor

sacred

proactive

whut'en

threatened protect

need-help

canada

dwindling

vital

obv

resilience

SAIK'uz territory

BEST WAYS TO COLLABORATE

what works?

recover documents

2017

pollev

Dem

Abnakan

thianic

Algonquian

Wickwac

Selkwhan

Koyuk



Summary of Discussion by Themes

The workshops were intended to provide a space for open discussion. Community representatives were encouraged to express their ideas, thoughts, or concerns about the federal Recovery Strategy amendment process, as well as share experiences, language, or knowledge about caribou and their communities. The contributions that were shared have helped ECCC develop an individualized engagement approach that reflects the unique capacities of all interested Indigenous communities and associations. Across the workshops, recurring themes emerged through discussion. These are explored through summaries and participant quotes in the following section.



Jurisdictional
Mandates & Roles



Limitations of SARA



Industry Related Threats
to Caribou



Protection & Restoration
of Caribou Habitat



Responsibility & Cultural
Identity



Community-led Caribou
Initiatives



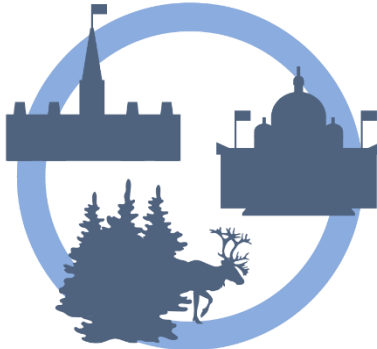
Knowledge Sharing
Processes



Representation & Avoiding
the Standardization of
Indigenous Knowledge



Indigenous
Resources & Knowledge
Protection



Jurisdictional Mandates and Roles

There were many discussions around the constitutional division of powers between the federal and provincial governments, and jurisdictional authority for the active management of caribou habitat. Concerns were raised about the ability of the federal government (and SARA) to protect Southern Mountain Caribou across their range. Automatic federal SARA protections extend only to federal lands (such as National Parks) which cover only a very small portion of caribou habitat. Provincial governments hold decision-making authority over most land use planning (such as industry permits), hunting, and the management of caribou, other ungulates, and predators. Therefore, some participants called for increased coordination between jurisdictions to better protect caribou habitat. Some participants expressed a general skepticism for long-term species protection outside of federal government jurisdiction within the constraints of SARA.

“You cannot have recovery if you don’t have habitat. You cannot even begin the process of discussing it if you are not able to somehow link SARA with the Ministry of Forests. The Ministry of Forests is different from parks. If we can’t protect old-growth, how can we talk about recovery?”

- Marilyn James (Autonomous Sinixt)



Limitations of SARA

Indigenous community representatives expressed their frustration at the current status of caribou habitat protections and wanted to ensure that their contributions to recovery planning could be effectively used as drivers of change. Discussions highlighted a general concern over the limited power SARA has to enact meaningful recovery measures. There was apprehension related to the provincial processes for industry approvals. Participants wondered how to find the best pathway toward meaningful caribou recovery given these challenges. Indigenous community representatives shared that they want to see their contributions advancing actionable steps and not tokenized to fulfill government mandates and objectives.





Industry Related Threats to Caribou

Industrial activities, most notably forestry, mining, and recreation, were frequently cited by participants as major antagonists to caribou recovery. Old-growth forests have been consistently fragmented by logging and mining. Similarly, activities like

backcountry recreation with motorized vehicles (snowmobiles and ATVs) also impact caribou behaviorally. Participants warned that caribou habitat will continue to suffer until industry and recreation are regulated. Participants shared personal experiences of racism and discrimination directed towards Indigenous community members that are perceived as opposing industry, the economy, and recreation.

“With industry growing and encroaching on their habitat, it is causing a decline, it has a lot to do with it. Some people believe that the wolves are to blame for it, but personally, I don’t believe that. I don’t think it has much to do with the wolves and more to do with industry causing too many disturbances.”

- Ruby Davies (Tsay Key Dene Nation)

“The racism that came out of the little town, we were literally concerned about going to town, as members of West Moberly and Sauleau, that’s how threatening it became. It wasn’t just the logging industry, it was also backcountry recreationists, because that was also being restricted (skidoos and quads in the backcountry). I think we will have to prepare for how to deal with the general public, because all they think about is money, they don’t care about anything else. That was our experience anyway. And we are still dealing with the fallout.”

- George Desjarlais (West Moberly First Nations)



Protection and Restoration of Caribou Habitat

Caribou populations will not survive without protection of undisturbed habitat. Caribou have co-evolved with, and depend upon, old-growth forests for their life history needs. Participants explained that key habitat features and food sources, such as lichen, are challenging to regrow once they have been impacted. Discussions brought forward a general fear that, despite federal listing under SARA, without further habitat protections, Southern Mountain Caribou critical habitat will continue to disappear. Restoration of impacted sites was also brought up as an important consideration essential for caribou recovery.

“West Moberly First Nation elders say there were three kinds of caribou; those who stayed in the bush; those who stayed on the mountains; and those who came out to visit. Kayas-there were caribou everywhere.

Today we are trying to help remnant populations, and to protect their habitats, but have not realized that caribou recovery will require the protection of much larger portions of the boreal as populations grow. Our current discussions about the need for deferment of industrial activity within matrix [habitat] and low elevation habitats are the tip of this iceberg.”

- Jim Webb (West Moberly First Nation)



Responsibility and Cultural Identity

Southern Mountain Caribou occupy a central place in the livelihoods and identities of many of the over 150 Indigenous communities and associations across BC and AB. Participants highlighted the responsibility to protect and recover caribou populations as a critical piece to preserving cultural identity. Indigenous Peoples maintain strong cultural ties to caribou that are evident through relationships, stories, languages, and cultural practices. Continuing to practice the cultural traditions that sustain these relationships with caribou are also critical to Indigenous sovereignty and governance. Participants expressed that the long-term protection of caribou populations is directly connected with respecting and upholding Indigenous cultural values and Indigenous identity.

"We have a responsibility to engage and if we can engage in a way that can bring forward these voices and take us where we need to go for caribou, that is our work. There is no whether we want to or not."

- Marilyn James (Autonomous Sinixt)

"Years ago, talking with the elders, they said, there used to be numerous herds [of caribou] within our territory. Now there are such huge declines. The Tsay Keh Dene people have a close relationship with caribou, they've always been here."

- Ruby Davies (Tsay Key Dene)



“The critical state of our land relatives is a result of the provincial government’s gross mismanagement and failure to protect the biodiversity of our unceded lands. The priorities of our sm̓én’s⁴ should not come at the expense of the government’s pathological pursuit of profit.

Our connections, history, stories, and teachings can be found if looked for through an indigenous lens. Sources of indigenous knowledge and lessons come from our land and natural resources. They are expressed, shared, and taught through our ancestors, songs, stories, poems, prayers and art, to name a few. We rely on Mother Earth to tell us when to prepare, preserve and rest.”

- Lenore Natrall⁵ (Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw)



⁴ sm̓én’s means "gifts" in the NŁE?KEPMXCIN language.

⁵ Lenore Natrall: “I am a member, not an elected or hired representative for my nation. I am utilizing my inherent right to be a voice.”



Community-led Caribou Initiatives

Indigenous communities and organizations are taking direct action for caribou recovery through many different community-led initiatives. Indigenous communities have unique knowledge about local ecosystems and cumulative environmental risks that need to be considered during research, planning, management, and implementation of recovery actions. Emergency management actions, monitoring, and data collection are being carried out by Indigenous governments and communities. Participants described how these local-level initiatives are needed for the recovery of caribou populations and should be prioritized for ongoing support.

“Recently my community, Kelly Lake, in northeastern BC had a wildfire south of the range of where the caribou herd is located. Kelly Lake Cree Nation’s efforts on recovery strategy is identifying the migration routes of the herd, the health of the herd, identifying mineral licks, and food sources to support the herd. Our knowledge holders have gone out to set up wildlife cameras and are in process of opening up historical trails.

Ensuring that the historical relationship is maintained through our respectful approach to maintain the integrity of the herd. We appreciate being involved in this process as we receive no capacity from the federal government or provincial government. Largely in protecting the herd is through identifying the habitat that supports the sustainability of the herd.”

- Shelley Caillou (Kelly Lake Cree Nation)



Knowledge Sharing Processes

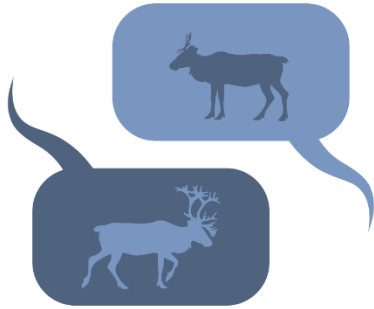
Discussions during the workshops also centered around how best to connect with communities and engage with community members. Participants noted that generalized approaches to engagement are often limiting. Chief and council, as well as Indigenous government or association staff, face barriers within policy and governance structures. Participants also shared that capacity and competing priorities impact knowledge sharing. Opportunities exist to raise awareness at the grassroots level by engaging directly with community members.

“If you want to use the Indigenous knowledge, give the Indigenous Knowledge Holders an equitable role in the decision being made!”

- Jim Webb (West Moberly First Nations)

“The three First Nations in the northeast BC Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment-ENV Livelihood working group have said that it is important, as BC transforms its relationship with First Nations, that the First Nation governments appoint Indigenous Knowledge holders who have ‘two eyed seeing’ to participate jointly with Crown decision-makers on collaborative decisions which provide an equitable voice to First Nation values, ethics, and responsibilities.”

- Jim Webb (West Moberly First Nations)



Representation and Avoiding the Standardization of Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous people hold unique expertise, diverse insights, and deep historical understandings of caribou populations. One of the challenges faced by a federal Recovery Strategy that encompasses many different cultures, language families, and Indigenous communities, is finding ways to respectfully and meaningfully represent the diversity of Indigenous knowledge related to caribou. There are countless culturally dynamic ways of understanding ecosystem processes, recognizing interactions between people and the environment, and implementing relational practices. While engaging with so many different perspectives can be challenging, it is also an opportunity to highlight the local processes that maintain diversification and sustain variation in the world. Participants noted the importance of accurately representing their specific community's knowledge and perspectives and avoiding a simplified "pan-Indigenous approach". Participants encouraged ECCC to avoid standardizing Indigenous knowledge and to acknowledge and honour individual Indigenous Nations, governments, languages, and communities.

"Systemic engagement processes result in an insurmountable loss of life for our sm'én's, our gifts. When government engagement structures fail to reach indigenous peoples at the community level, our relatives pay with their lives, while we pay the price of being severed from our ancestors, traditions, and future generations.

Government engagement structures can make it difficult to reach members at the community level or hear their



feedback. Bringing topics to the community as a whole is important for many reasons. Each community has their own experiences, needs, and priorities. Indigenous leaders juggle many commitments and must deal with competing priorities. Community members bring grassroots perspectives, distinct family teachings and ancestral practices that could be beneficial for our species at risk. We have worked cohesively with our land since time immemorial and successfully sustained our natural resources and way of life for thousands of years.”

- Lenore Natrall (Sḱwḱwú7mesh Úxwumixw)





Indigenous Resources and Knowledge Protection

Participants expressed significant challenges related to the significant ongoing challenges related to colonization and its impacts on the transmission of Indigenous knowledge and languages across generations. The direct impact of the loss of Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous language speakers emphasizes the

importance of thorough record keeping and documentation led by community needs and processes. Discussions reflected the collective understanding of the importance of creating resources and documents that could be kept and shared amongst communities. The role of intergenerational teaching and learning was noted as an important tool to rebuild connections and increase youth interest in participating in Species at Risk recovery.

“West Moberly prepared the Seven Herds Report to present our knowledge on caribou, similar to the recovery strategy. The community spent a lot of time with knowledge holders in the community, and presented it in a way that the community approved. Today we are being introduced to some ideas around the need for engagement, and we may have representatives from the community that have all the data needed to contribute to this. As a younger member of the community, I know that there is a lot of information housed within our community, although the process doesn’t always allow for external sharing. How could this process allow for our own internal presentation to happen? How can we work within our community to prepare this information?”

- Carmen Richter (Saulteau First Nations)

Next Steps

Future Workshops and Opportunities for Feedback

The workshop summarized here - Workshop Series 2 - is the continuation of many steps towards meaningful and respectful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, languages, and perspectives in the Recovery Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou.

The **third series** of virtual workshops, which took place in February and March 2023, focused on updates to critical habitat and is available on [CIER's website](#).

In the winter of 2024 ECCC is planning to hold **regional in-person workshops** to continue to work with communities to develop, edit, refine, and improve the Recovery Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou through the amendment.



Community Recommendations

ECCC appreciates all participants who provided feedback both during the workshop and through the post-workshop survey. The following are key recommendations that will be used to shape future engagement strategies and meetings.

1. In-person workshops would be a beneficial tool for collaboration, sharing of information, and relationship building.
2. Create more opportunities for Indigenous communities and organizations to discuss, collaborate, and share initiatives related to Southern Mountain Caribou recovery (such as Indigenous knowledge sharing circles).
3. Reach out to community grassroots organizations to create awareness for caribou conservation with the public, within communities, and across generations.
4. Encourage provincial government representation in Recovery Strategy amendment workshops to foster more collaboration between jurisdictions.
5. When considering the legal and procedural steps required to enact protections for caribou habitat, make sure that resources, information, and data are available and transparent.



Appendix A: Caribou Language Tables

Indigenous Peoples have used their languages to describe, categorize, identify, and maintain relationships with caribou since time immemorial. The detailed vocabularies provide complementary descriptions of biodiversity from a robust place-based perspective. Our intent is to collaborate with Indigenous communities to decolonize the language used to describe caribou, and through a biocultural diversity approach, recognize and empower the voices of Indigenous people to shape caribou recovery efforts.

The words listed here related to caribou in BC and AB have been compiled from publicly available sources in dictionaries and online. Sources include: First Voices (First Peoples' Cultural Council), online and public dictionaries, community publications, anthropological and scientific articles, and linguistic regional reports. The [full source list](#) will be continually updated as we continue to work with communities to find the most appropriate sources of information and language.

One of the next steps in the update to the 2014 Recovery Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou is to verify Indigenous language related to caribou for inclusion in the amendment. ECCC will be following-up with workshop participants to help ensure that communities have a chance to review the accuracy of language related to caribou that has been compiled from publicly available sources. ECCC will work directly with Indigenous language experts across the extent of Southern Mountain Caribou range. We also welcome any suggestions or insight for best facilitating this approach.

If there is any information in the table below that is incorrect, please reach out to Robin Steenweg, Senior Wildlife Biologist, Canadian Wildlife Service, ECCC (robin.steenweg@ec.gc.ca) or Jean Polfus, Senior Species at Risk Biologist, Canadian Wildlife Service, ECCC (jean.polfus@ec.gc.ca). The below table can be made available in formats that meet individual community language revitalization and caribou recovery needs.

| Words For "Caribou" in Indigenous Languages | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--|--|----------|
| Language | Dialect | Word | English Definition | Alternate Spellings | Notes | Source | Verified |
| Nakota | | tatohga | caribou | | | Dictionary of The Stony [Stoney] Language (1959, J. Laurie) | |
| Nēhiyawēwin | Mountain Cree and Plains Cree | atihk | caribou | (3) "atihk (ᐱᐢᐱ)" | (2) During Jan 26 enagement session, during discussion about caribou: "atihk" is caribou is cree | 1. Community Member from Saulteau First Nation 2. Community Member from As'in'i'wa'chi Ni'yaw Nation; Verified and Provided by Elders from As'in'i'wa'chi Ni'yaw Nation 3. Plains Cree Online Dictionary | YES |
| | Mountain Cree from As'in'î'wa'chî Ni'yaw Nation | asini waci atihk | mountain caribou | | | Provided by Elders from | YES |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|---------------------|----------|--|---|-----|
| | | | | | | As'in'i'wa'chi Ni'yaw Nation | |
| | Mountain Cree From West Moberly First Nations | Utik | caribou | | | Provided by Elder G. | YES |
| | | Uskni Wuche' Utik | mountain caribou | | Uskni = rock; Wuche' = mountain or hill | Desjarlais from West Moberly First Nations | YES |
| | Woodland Cree - Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation | Namesakikun /Sakawatihk/ Atihk | caribou | | "Long ago stories of Caribou in our area (Little Puskwaskaw area)" - Elders of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation | Provided by the Elders of Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation | YES |
| | | Asiniwachew Atihk | mountain caribou | | | | YES |
| Blackfoot | | a'sínnoka | caribou | | | Blackfoot to English Online Dictionary | |
| Anishnaubemowin | | adík | caribou | (2) adik | Southwestern Ojibwe dialect | 1. Ojibwe - English Online Wordlist 2. The Ojibwe People's Online Dictionary | |
| Dakelh | | whudzih | caribou | | Carrier Syllabics: ᐃᐃᐃ; IPA: /xwʌdzih/. | First Voices - Dakelh | |

| | | | | | Orthography used: Carrier Linguistic Committee. | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|---|--|-----|
| Dane-Zaa/Dunne-za | West Moberly Lake (Dunne-za) | wadziih | caribou | | | Maternal Penning to Enhance Survival of Caribou within the Klinse-Za Herd (2019) | |
| | Doig River (Dane-Zaa) | madziih | caribou | | | Madziih (caribou) Tsáá? ché ne dane Traditional Knowledge and Restoration Study (2016) | |
| Tse'khene | McLeod Lake | mudzih | caribou | mudzeeh cho | mudzih cho = large caribou | First Voices - McLeod Lake Tse'kene | |
| | Fort Ware (Kwadacha) | wudzih | caribou | | "An animal we can kill for food and hide." alt spelling:whudzih | First Voices - Kwadacha Tsek'ene | |
| Nenqayni Ch'ih (Tsilhqot'in) | | bedzish | caribou | | | First Voices - Tsilhqot'in (Xeni-Gwetin) | YES |
| Nedut'en/Witsuwit'en | | widzih | caribou | (2) widzi | | 1. First Voices - Wet'suwet'en | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|------------|---------|-----------|--|---|----------------|
| | | midzih | caribou | (1) midzi | | 2. Witsuwit'en Grammar (Hargus, Sharon 2007) | |
| Danezāgé' | | gūdzj̄h | caribou | | | Legacy First Voices - Kaska | |
| Lingít | | watsix | caribou | | | Dictionary of Tlingit 2009 | |
| Tāltān | | hodzih | caribou | | | Tahltan Central Government Annual Report (2019) | |
| Ktunaxa | | naxni | caribou | | | First Voices - Ktunaxa | |
| nfeʔkepmxcín | | slxʷaʔexkn | caribou | | | 1. Thompson, L. and Thompson, T. 1996. Thompson River Salish Dictionary. 2. Provided by Language Expert from Lower Nicola Indian Band. | YES |
| nsyilxcən | syilx & Snsəlxin Dialects | styíʔcaʔ | caribou | | (2) "styíʔcaʔ - male caribou, also sometimes | 1. First Voices - Sylix 2. Verified by Snsəlxin | YES (Snsəlxin) |

| | | | | | used for elk (sty-eel-tsa)" | language speaker | |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------|---------|--|--|---|-----|
| Secwepemctsin | Splatsin Dialect | ygálcka | caribou | | | Spallumcheen Re Splatsinac's Cqweqwelutn Shuswap and English Dictionary by Cindy Williams (1980) | |
| | | slcwáyaca | caribou | | | Provided by D. Antoine from Splatsin | YES |
| | Northern Secwepemctsin | selcwéycen | caribou | (2) APA: slx ^w éyaxən | During Jan 26 engagement session: mentioned during the word cloud question | 1. First Voices - Secwepemc 2. Shuswap-English Dictionary (Kuipers 1983; communication Dr. John Lyon) | |
| Státimcets | Northern Státimcets | (s)lacwáza7cen | caribou | (2) slacwáza7cen; APA: slax ^w áza7xən | | 1. First Voices - Northern Státimcets 2. A note on the Coast-Salish component of the Lillooet lexicon (van | |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--|--|--|-----|
| | | | | | | Eijk 2013; communication Dr. John Lyon) | |
| Nuxalk | | stl'axt | caribou | | | First Voices - Nuxalk | |
| Gitsenimx̣ | Western/Geets'imx̣ | wijix | caribou | | Western Gitxsen Sim Algyax dialect | First Voices - Gitsenimx̣ | |
| Nisga'a | | wijix | caribou | | | First Voices - Nisga'a | |
| Sgüüx̣s | | wadziix | caribou | | | Tsimshianic Animal Names 1994 | |
| Sm'algyax | | wüdzii | caribou | | "definition: moose (usage: may refer to reindeer and caribou by extension)" | First Voices - Sm'algyax | |
| Xaad Kil / Xaaydaa Kil | Xaayda kil (Skidegate) | Ts'in hlaal | Dawson's caribou | | | SHIP YÁAYDA KIL GLOSSARY "A" – 2019 | YES |
| | | Xis kuu | Dawson's caribou | | V3 / SHIP Mammals / Animals CD #1 – Track 57 | Skidegate Haida Immersion Program Draft #21 Provided by The Council of The Haida Nation | YES |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|--|
| | ᑭaad kil (Masset) | ts'inhlq'al | Dawson's caribou | | | Enrico Haida Dictionary | |
| | Kaigani (Alaskan) | ts'ánhlk'al | Dawson's caribou, moose | | Some speakers are noted as having migrated from Northern Yáadláa Gwáayaay (Haida Gwaii) to Alaska many years ago | Dictionary of Alaskan Haida | |

Appendix B: Links for Additional Information

- June 2014: [Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population \(*Rangifer tarandus caribou*\) in Canada](#) (SARA Recovery Strategy document that will be amended)
- May 2018: The Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada determined that southern mountain caribou were facing “imminent threats” to their recovery; noting a particular concern in ten Local Population Units.
 - Imminent Threat Assessment for Southern Mountain Caribou: https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/ImminentThreatAnalysisSmc-v00-2018Jun-Eng.pdf
 - The Federal *Species at Risk Act* requires that if the Minister makes a determination of imminent threats, then the Minister must recommend an emergency order to protect the species for consideration by the Governor in Council (GIC).
- March 2021: A statement is released outlining the Government of Canada’s (GIC) decision to decline the making of an Emergency Order in response to the 2018 finding by the Minister of ECCC that the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population were facing imminent threats:
 - https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/virtual_sara/files/Sd-SmcMsc-v00-2021Mar-Eng.PDF
- [Jasper National Park Action Plan](#) (that includes Southern Mountain Caribou)
- [Mount Revelstoke Glacier National Park Action Plan](#) (that includes Southern Mountain Caribou)