

## Leah Volkmann

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**From:** Wiebe, Heather I FLNR:EX <Heather.Wiebe@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** October 8, 2021 8:18 AM  
**To:** prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca; XT:FraserFortGeorge, RegionalDistrict ENV:IN; CRD Mailbox; info@ccrd.ca; XT:KitimatStikine, RegionalDistrict ENV:IN; XT:CentralKootenay, RegionalDistrict ENV:IN; info@rdek.bc.ca; admin@tnrd.ca; XT:BulkleyNechako, RegionalDistrict ENV:IN  
**Cc:** Holt, Oliver FLNR:EX  
**Subject:** Predator Reduction for Caribou Recovery: Engagement Period Now Open  
**Attachments:** GovBC\_PredatorManagement\_Map\_V02-02.pdf;  
GovBC\_PredMngmnt\_BackgroundScience\_Pt1\_V08.pdf

Good Morning,

The BC Caribou Recovery Science team has recommended predator reduction for 13 caribou herds (map attached). Engagement and consultation is now underway to seek input to inform the statutory decisions that support this recovery action. First Nations collaboration and engagement is underway through herd planning tables, G2G agreements, and formal consultation approaches. Tenure holders in treatment areas who may be impacted (e.g., guide outfitters, trappers) have already received direct emails from the Caribou Program to begin conversations.

The reasons declining herd numbers are complex and include multiple factors such as habitat loss, predators, natural disturbance, nutrition, and climate change. Evidence collected through research and monitoring in BC suggest the best results for caribou recovery are achieved when multiple management actions are taken in tandem. This can include some combination of habitat protection and restoration, predation management, and maternal penning. Long-term success for caribou recovery will depend on landscape-scale habitat management; however, it may be decades before the benefits of such measures are realized. In the short-term, removing predators has shown the most rapid, positive effect.

The decision to remove animals of one species to benefit another is difficult, and such decisions are taken seriously. We understand how some people may find the idea of deliberately removing wolves unsettling even though this approach is supported by science. The removal of predators could make the difference between caribou herd recovery and continued population decline leading to the complete loss of caribou in particular areas.

Engagement for citizens is running concurrently with the consultation of Nations and engagement of tenure holders (September 15-November 15). Citizens are encouraged to make their voices heard through [engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou). To date 1,065 surveys have been completed.

I've attached a brief introduction to the topic. More information can be found through [engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou). I would be happy to make myself available if you would like further conversation on this recovery action and associated engagement.

hw



**Heather Wiebe (she/her)**

Director

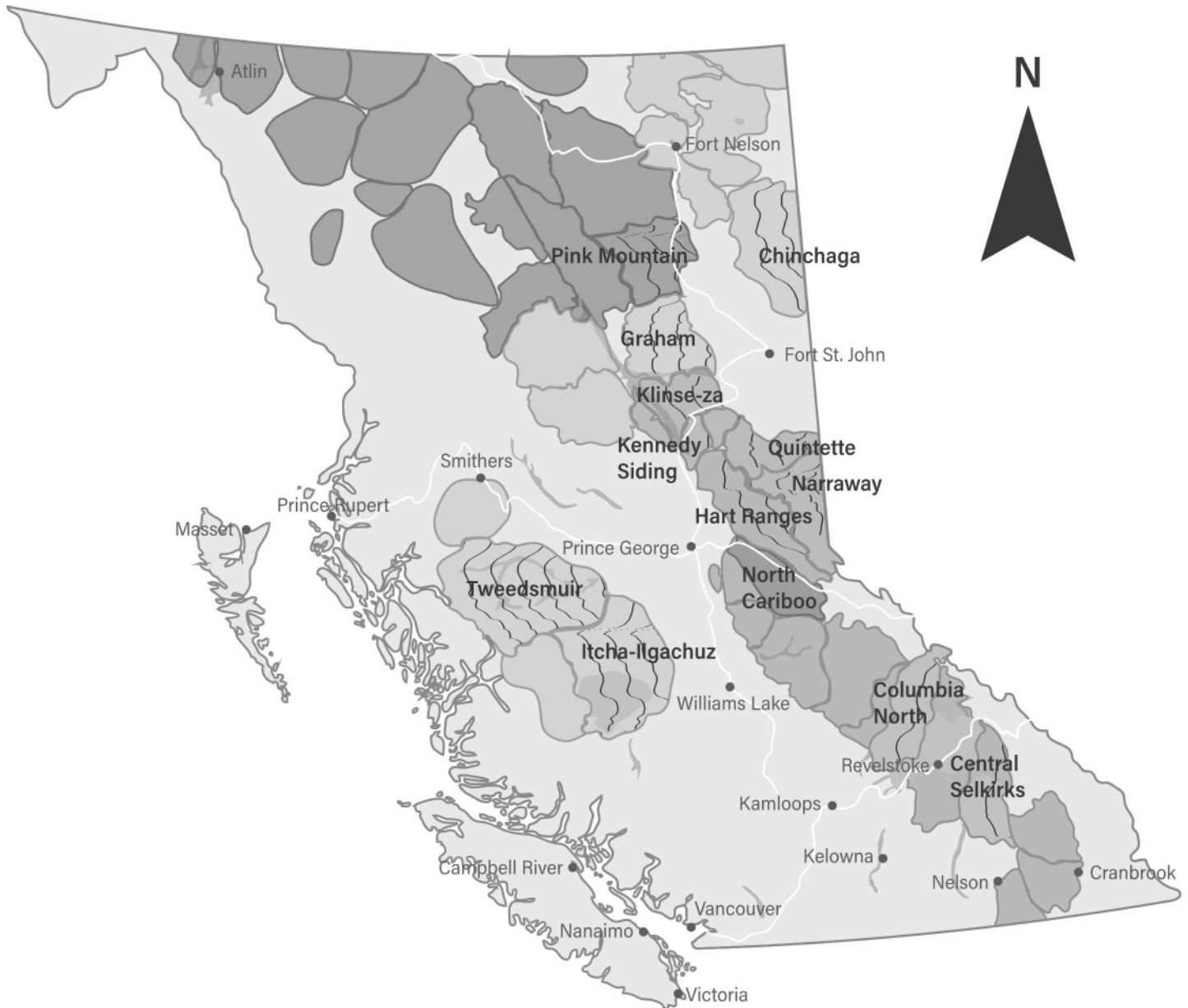
BC CARIBOU RECOVERY PROGRAM

*Vision: Conserving and recovering British Columbia's caribou through excellence in integrated resource stewardship.*

Phone: 778-916-4005

Engagement on proposed predator reduction for caribou recovery will be open from September 15 to November 15. For more information please visit: [engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou).

# Caribou Herd Ranges Prioritized for Predator Management Program in B.C.



## B.C. Caribou Herd Boundaries



# Understanding Caribou Declines in British Columbia

Woodland caribou are a species of great ecological importance and have significant cultural and ecological value for people that call British Columbia (B.C.) home. Once abundant, many caribou herds have declined steeply over the past several decades. The overall population in B.C. has gone from approximately 40,000 animals to 15,500 currently. Caribou recovery is a key priority of the Government of B.C., and a wide range of recovery actions have been implemented in caribou ranges. This document outlines why caribou herds are declining, and what tools biologists are using to help recover caribou populations.

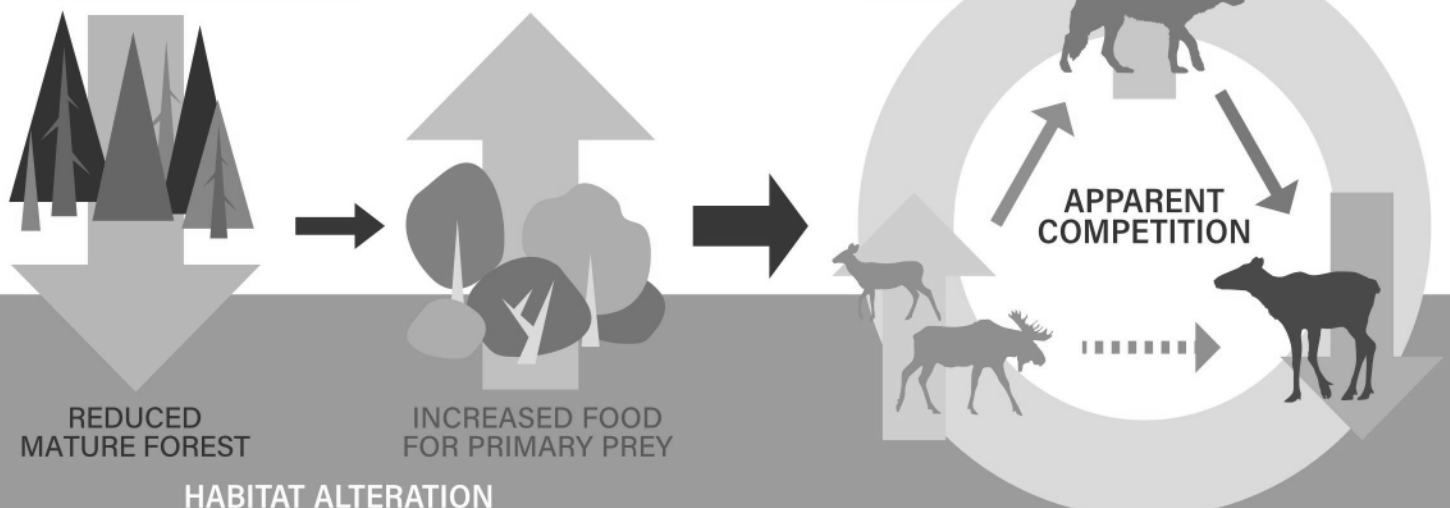
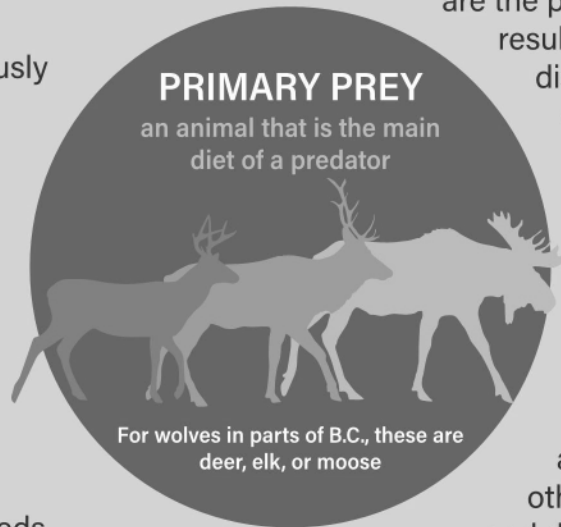
## Human-caused landscape change has altered relationships between caribou, primary prey, and their predators

Woodland caribou have previously coexisted with predators by using a strategy of avoidance. Throughout the seasons, caribou inhabit areas that are typically not desirable for predators and other prey species. Caribou are adapted to live in mature coniferous forests, mountainous terrain, peatlands, and areas with deep persistent snowpacks. These habitats sustain their needs, but not those of other prey species.

However, habitat disturbance - often caused by industrial resource development, has severely altered the condition of the landscape in caribou ranges.

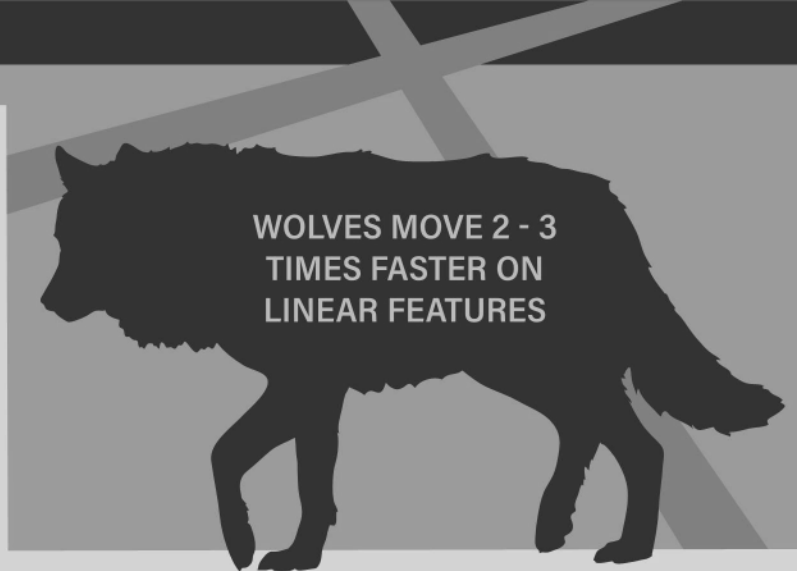
When forests are disturbed, through human activity or natural causes like wildfire, the regrowth is initially dominated by leafy shrubs, herbs, and grasses. This surplus of food leads to more moose, elk, and deer, all of which are the primary prey for wolves. This results in a greater abundance and distribution of wolves, and reduced separation between wolves and caribou. Ultimately, this leads to more caribou being predated on by wolves.

This phenomenon is known as "apparent competition." Caribou are susceptible to predation, and are less productive than other ungulates like moose, elk, and deer. The result of apparent competition leads to fewer caribou.



## Linear features provide predators easy access into caribou habitat

Human activity can also give predators a hunting advantage. Linear features like roads, seismic lines, and pipeline right of ways provide easy access into caribou habitat. Wolves move faster along linear features compared to natural forest, allowing them to search large areas and encounter caribou at a higher rate.



WOLVES MOVE 2 - 3  
TIMES FASTER ON  
LINEAR FEATURES

### UNDISTURBED



### DISTURBED



As a result of these changes to predator-prey dynamics, scientific evidence indicates that habitat change resulting from the extraction of natural resources is the main factor leading to unsustainable predation rates on caribou, and the leading proximate cause of woodland caribou declines.

## A multi-lever approach is needed

To address these challenges for caribou populations, the Government of B.C. has adopted both short-term and long-term recovery measures. A few examples of these are shown below. See other summaries for more details on these measures and observed responses of B.C. caribou herds.

#### SHORT-TERM EXAMPLES

PREDATOR  
REDUCTIONS



MATERNAL  
PENS



SUPPLEMENTAL  
FEEDING



#### LONG-TERM EXAMPLES

HABITAT  
PROTECTION



HABITAT  
RESTORATION



CHANGES TO  
INDUSTRY  
PRACTICES

