



June 11, 2012

Resource Values Assessment: Mountain Caribou

State of Knowledge:

- Mountain caribou are listed as Threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act*; Red-listed Species by the BC Conservation Data Centre; and as a Priority 2 species under Goal 1 (Global Responsibility) of the BC Conservation Framework.
- On October 16, 2007, Cabinet approved the Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Plan to:
 - Protect 2.2 million hectares of mountain caribou range across the province from logging and road building, capturing 95% of high suitability winter habitat.
 - Manage human recreational activities in mountain caribou habitat; snowmobile closed areas under the *Wildlife Act* over ~1 million hectares of identified mountain caribou habitat.
 - Manage predator populations of wolf and cougar where they are preventing the recovery of mountain caribou populations.
 - Manage the primary prey of caribou predators.
 - Augment caribou numbers in threatened herds via transplants; this started in 2012.
 - Support adaptive management and research, and implement effective monitoring plans for habitat, recreation, and predator-prey management.
 - Institute a cross-sector progress board to monitor the effectiveness of recovery actions.
- These management actions are meant to be deployed simultaneously and in a coordinated and complementary manner. Habitat protection and restoration requires a long time frame.
- Caribou range over large areas of contiguous forest areas to avoid predators. These forest ecosystems have infrequent natural disturbances over small areas, and recovery of habitat values is very slow due to the cold, wet, low productivity nature of these land areas.

Current condition:

Mountain caribou habitat protection designations make up approximately 7% of the Prince George Timber Supply Area; 4% of the Williams Lake TSA; 4% of the Quesnel TSA; 2% of the 100 Mile House TSA; 11% of the Kamloops TSA. In certain areas of the Quesnel and Williams Lake TSAs, timber harvesting may occur in mountain caribou habitat subject to requirements for retention of specific amounts, distributions, and types of forest cover.

Sustainability Risk:

- Failure to sustain initiative on government's caribou recovery commitments and related management actions may erode support for the Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Plan.
- Due to low population recruitment rates, recovery of mountain caribou depends on a sustained supply of mature and old forest cover, and population recovery initiatives employed over a long time frame.
- Reduction of wildlife habitat areas for mountain caribou will decrease the supply of suitable cover and forage habitat, raising risk of negative impact on population stability.
- Clear-cut harvesting and high densities of active resource roads increase the effectiveness of predators, particularly wolves.

Information:

Mountain Caribou Recovery

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/speciesconservation/mc/index.html>