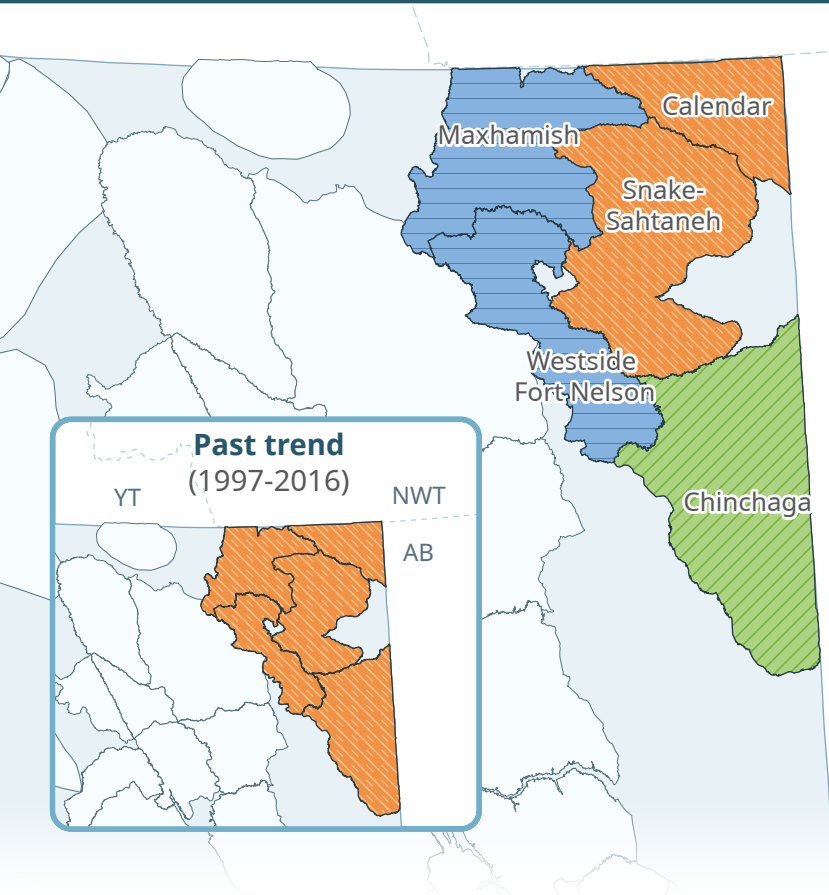


# Boreal Caribou






While all caribou in British Columbia are the same species, herds are generally grouped by “ecotype” based on their habitat and behaviours. Five of the 54 herds located in the province are classified as the Boreal ecotype.



## The Boreal Caribou ecotype

Boreal Caribou occur throughout northern boreal forests from Alaska to Newfoundland. Boreal Caribou are the least abundant of the three caribou ecotypes found in B.C. and rely on large undisturbed areas. They use large peatlands and open, old forests throughout the year.

## Current population trend (2017-2023):

-  Increasing
-  Stable
-  Decreasing
-  Extirpated (locally extinct)
-  Unknown



## Population status

Currently, Boreal Caribou are listed as **“Threatened”** under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) and are provincially red-listed (**“Threatened”** to **“Endangered”**).

For Boreal Caribou herds, it is usually not possible to estimate population size directly using aerial surveys due to the low visibility in dense forests. Therefore, population trends are estimated from calf recruitment surveys (proportion of calves surviving past 1 year of age) and adult female survival rates.

Obtaining a better understanding of the population dynamics of Boreal Caribou involves multiple approaches:



GPS-collared females are located in late winter to assess calf status so that the proportion of calves in the overall herd can be estimated.



Genetic information from DNA analyses of caribou fecal pellets can help determine population sizes, genetic diversity, and mixing between herds.

## Key threats

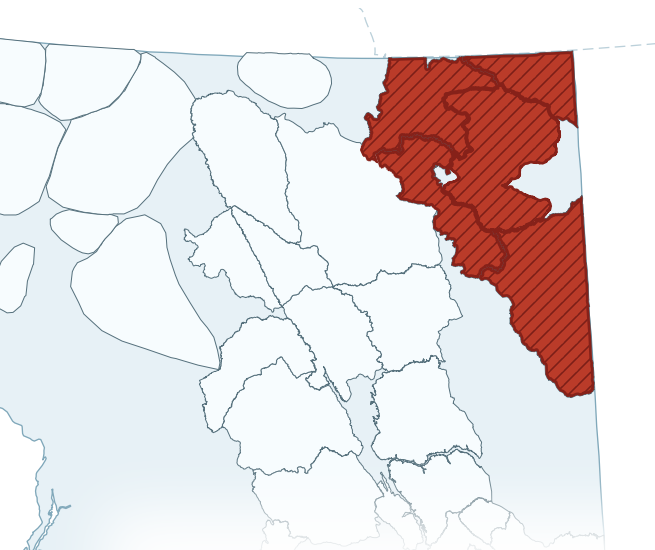
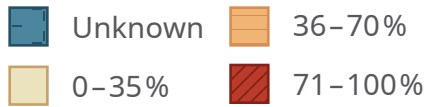
Disturbances associated with natural resource development (including seismic lines, roads, and timber harvesting) can significantly increase wolf predation on caribou. Oil and gas extraction is prevalent throughout Boreal Caribou habitat, making the impact of linear features such as roads a key threat. Additional stressors include wildfires, sensory disturbances from recreational vehicles and helicopters, and human settlement.



## Habitat condition

A key strategy to help Boreal Caribou populations recover is to limit habitat disturbance to no more than 35% (including 500-metre buffer zones) to maintain sufficient ecological conditions and balanced predator-prey dynamics<sup>1</sup>.

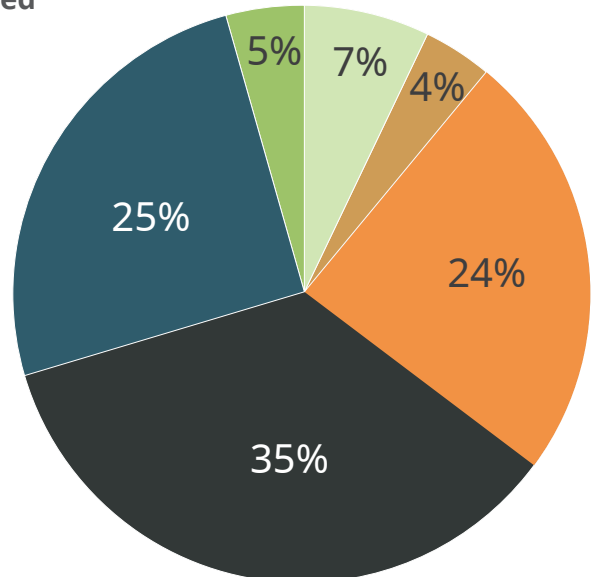
### Percent of area disturbed



### Habitat disturbance type

(clockwise from top right)

- **Old disturbances** (includes cutblocks, damage from forest pests, and fire damage older than 40 years)
- **Cutblocks** (includes 500-metre buffer)
- **Fire** (within the last 40 years)
- **Roads** (includes 500-metre buffer)
- **Static disturbances** (features with "permanent" footprints like mines and urban areas including 500-metre buffered area)
- **Undisturbed**



1. Amended Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*), Boreal Population, in Canada. 2020. [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2021/eccc/En3-4-140-2020-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/eccc/En3-4-140-2020-eng.pdf)

## Boreal Caribou Protection and Recovery Plan (BCPRP)

Boreal Caribou Protection and Recovery Plan (BCPRP) defines recovery objectives and outlines a recovery path for four of the five Boreal Caribou herds in B.C. The BCPRP was co-developed by Fort Nelson First Nation and the B.C. government with valuable contributions from the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality. The BCPRP aims to recover Boreal Caribou populations across their ranges to reach a self-sustaining status.



**Habitat protection:** In 2025, the B.C. government established 2.2 million hectares of Wildlife Habitat Areas within Boreal Caribou ranges, which are now protected from forestry. Of this area, 1.6 million hectares are also protected from oil and gas development.



**Habitat restoration** efforts have been led by Fort Nelson First Nation since 2019. Restoration guidance and priority criteria were co-developed and are available for industry groups to utilize.



**Predator reduction** has been implemented in the Chinchaga herd range from 2019 to 2025 in collaboration with First Nations. The results are consistent, increased adult survival and calf recruitment rates for the herd.

### Looking ahead

Continued research and learning are essential parts of our work. We take an adaptive management approach, where we continually monitor and assess the effectiveness of our actions and adjust our approaches as needed to achieve our caribou recovery objectives.

**To learn more about Boreal Caribou recovery in B.C., visit:**

[gov.bc.ca/caribou-recovery](http://gov.bc.ca/caribou-recovery)



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Spring 2026