

Preface

Two hundred and forty people attended the 8th North American Caribou Workshop. Attendees brought perspectives from government and private sector research, management, industry, boards, councils and First Nations. As well, the involvement of colleagues from Norway, Finland, Greenland and Russia diversified these proceedings. Over 60 papers covering broad areas of caribou resource interests were given in both the plenary and poster sessions.

Sessions featured presentations on population dynamics, co-management, habitat, nutrition and physiology. Many papers provided new and interesting perspectives. The new planning team approach for restoration of the Fortymile caribou herd using non-lethal wolf control will provide a test of socially acceptable methods of reducing predation on caribou. The finding of genotypic separation among

small woodland caribou herds using DNA fingerprinting technology opens an avenue into better understanding of herd fidelity, historical distribution patterns, and genetic diversity. The importance of long-term research was clearly illustrated with the knowledge that calving ground locations may rotate over decades thus introducing uncertainty into land use management in the NWT. Finally, studies using similar and divergent techniques on caribou feeding site selection in Alaska, Yukon, British Columbia, and Alberta demonstrated how complementary inter-jurisdictional research is being carried out.

A full day was devoted to the controversial topic of caribou and human activity. The afternoon included a panel discussion on '*Human developments and their effects on caribou*'. The intent of this session was to examine what has transpired over the last 15

HE WANTS HIS DATA BACK !!



years as this topic was the theme of the First North American Caribou Workshop in Whitehorse, October, 1983. Participation from Norway provided an opportunity to contrast the European experience with that of North America. We wanted to determine whether we were advancing the science or being long on rhetoric and short on fact. We asked ourselves what we needed in terms of research and how long this should be carried out. We also examined decision-making processes to determine what works and what does not. A healthy and respectful dialogue was carried out and its inclusion in these proceedings provides a benchmark on the status of this topic.

The Workshop organizers wanted to insure a wide range of content and meaningful participation of First Nation's people. The displays in the lobby and the caribou skin hut constructed on site greeted participants as they entered the Yukon Art's Center, the site of the conference. Elders told stories at the beginning of each session and these stories set a

respectful tone to the whole conference. One of these stories is presented in these proceedings. In addition each session was accompanied by a selection of cartoons by Doug Urquhart to bring humor to participants during breaks. A selection of these cartoons is included in these proceedings so that the lighter side of our work can be referenced in the permanent record.

The Workshop opened on April 20 with the film 'Beringia' at the Beringia Interpretive Center reception. It ended April 23 with the presentation 'Ancient caribou, its evolution and place as one of the 'big 4' of the Beringian mammoth steppe fauna' by guest speaker Dr. Richard Harrington at the closing banquet. Dr. Harrington's talk helped us reflect on the general Workshop theme 'A future for an ancient deer'.

The organizers wish to thank all attendees for their participation and enthusiasm that made the 8th North American workshop a resounding success.

Rick Farnell, Head of the Organizing Committee and Conference Co-chair