

Preface

Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) have been an integral part of the fabric of the cultures of Newfoundland and Labrador for thousands of years; the Maritime Archaic, the Dorset, the Thule, the Beothuk, the Innu, the Inuit, Mik'maq, and descendants of European dispersers. Varied peoples in a varied landscape of rock, forest, bog, mountain and coastline, shaping those that live here, including caribou. It is humbling to recognize that every life history strategy exhibited worldwide by *Rangifer* occurs within Newfoundland and Labrador. The theme of the 12th NACW, **Integrating Understanding across Ecotypes**, is therefore very topical for this workshop, hosted in Newfoundland and Labrador.

But there are other reasons as well. Dr. A. T. Bergerud, who pioneered the concept of ecotypes, started his career with *Rangifer* while working for the government of Newfoundland and Labrador on the George River herd and the various sedentary populations, and continued his research as the first Chief Biologist working on Newfoundland caribou. His contribution to caribou research and management is formidable and unquestioned.

The North American Caribou Workshop (NACW) is organized every two or three years to bring those interested in *Rangifer* together to discuss research and management issues, human use and impacts, and conservation of caribou, and increasingly, reindeer. The 12th NACW follows a long and impressive list of previously hosted events:

- 1st Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, 28-29 September 1983; Caribou and Human Activity
- 2nd Val Morin, Quebec, 17-20 October 1984; Caribou Management – Census Techniques – Status in Eastern Canada
- 3rd Chena Hot Springs, Alaska, 4-6 November 1987; Reproduction and Calf Survival
- 4th St. John's, Newfoundland, 31 October – 3 November 1989
- 5th Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, 19-21 March 1991; Caribou Management in the 1990s: Incorporating Theory into Practice
- 6th Prince George, British Columbia, 1-4 March 1994
- 7th Thunder Bay, Ontario, 19-21 August 1996; Putting Caribou Knowledge into Ecosystem Context
- 8th Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, 20-24 April, 1998; A Future for an Ancient Deer
- 9th Kuujuaq, Quebec, 23-27 April 2001; Caribou and Man
- 10th Girdwood, Alaska, 4-6 May 2004
- 11th Banff, Alberta, 23-26 April 2006

Planning for the 12th NACW started not long after the conclusion of the event in Banff. An organizing committee was struck, and one of the first decisions was to host the workshop in the central Labrador community of Happy Valley – Goose Bay, providing an opportunity for participants to experience the Labrador portion of the Province, known affectionately as “The Big Land”. The province was host to the same event in St. John's in 1989.

Approximately 140 people attended the event, far outpacing the most optimistic expectations of the organizing committee, from Canada, United States, Norway, and Greenland. The 12th NACW included more than 70 oral and poster presentations, including Keynote Addresses by Serge Couturier, Shane Mahoney, John Mameumskum, John Nagy, and Peter Penashue covering a wide spectrum of topics including the latest research from Newfoundland and the Unagava region eastern Canada, caribou of the Northwest Territories, and caribou in the context of aboriginal and treaty rights of the Innu and Naskapi people.

The 12th NACW also provided an opportunity to, sadly, recognize two individuals that made major contributions to the conservation of caribou in Labrador that are no longer with us. Penote (Ben) Michel and Dr. Neal Simon both had significant impacts on my personal perspectives on caribou research, management, and conservation, each from a wide array of philosophies. I am saddened that I will not have the pleasure and fortune of more conversation with these two thoughtful and committed friends of caribou.

Robert Otto, Chair, Organizing and Scientific Committees 12th NACW

