

## Assessing management needs and priorities for caribou management in an era of decline and uncertainty: challenges of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board

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The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) is a co-management advisory board whose main purpose is to safeguard the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds in the interest of aboriginal peoples from four different cultures which have traditionally relied on harvest of these two herds. The Board was established in 1982 during a period of apparent serious decline in both herds, and has since witnessed the highest population estimates ever recorded based on surveys in the mid 1990s, followed by more recent reports of declines in both herds. A lack of clarity concerning the status of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds has created difficulties for co-management in an era in which most barren-ground caribou herds across North America have declined. Identifying appropriate management actions is complicated by divergent views, both about underlying causes of population declines and short and long-term solutions. Management actions underway and proposed for many declining herds in the Northwest Territories and Yukon, as well as political aspects such as the aboriginal right to harvest, have further complicated the situation. What is clear is that the BQCMB and its partners are faced with a management challenge that will be a true test of contemporary co-management.

