

## Activity budgets, food habits and habitat selection of the Porcupine Caribou Herd during the summer insect season

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*Abstract:* The effects of insect harassment on the activity budgets, food habits and habitat selection of caribou can have a profound effect on physical condition of individuals entering winter. The proportion of time animals spend feeding and lying declines with increasing harassment levels with a subsequent increase in time spent standing. Fecal analysis revealed no discernable alteration in diet during the insect season although indications are that a decrease in food intake is significant. Members of the Porcupine Herd seek insect relief on windswept slopes of mountain complexes within the region. Groups favoured lower insect "risk" habitat types as insect harassment increased and use of higher "risk" as well as diminishing in importance, were located in lower "risk" terrain locations. The implications on the ecology of the herd during this critical time period is discussed in relation to proposed development within the summer range.

**Rangifer**, Special Issue No. 3, 1990: 255