



ALBERTA  
ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS

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Office of the Minister  
MLA, Lethbridge-West

Dr. Troye McPherson, President  
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association  
339, rue Booth Street  
Ottawa ON K1R 7K1  
[admin@cvma-acmv.org](mailto:admin@cvma-acmv.org)

Dear Dr. McPherson:

Thank you for your letter regarding Alberta's management of wolves. It is important that we receive input as we work towards achieving Alberta's commitments under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

The Government of Alberta is committed to ensuring all of our wildlife species remain important elements of Alberta's biodiversity. Our government endeavours to make thoughtful decisions about wildlife management that are based on evidence and the best available science. The Management Plan for Wolves in Alberta identifies wolves as a valuable part of well-functioning ecosystems, and aims to ensure that wolf populations are self-sustaining.

The methods that Alberta Environment and Parks use to remove wolves have been carefully selected considering the effectiveness and implications of available options. The delivery of wolf population management actions is strictly controlled to minimize potentially undesirable effects. The use of toxicants in Alberta for wolf management is limited and only deployed in rare situations when damage prevention, mitigation, and other lethal methods of management have been exhausted. Alternative methods, such as wolf trapping or snaring, are typically ineffective at achieving wolf population management targets (e.g., Webb et. al. (2011). Demography of a harvested population of wolves (*Canis lupus*) in west-central Alberta, Canada. The Canadian Journal of Zoology, 89.8, 744-752. <https://doi.org/10.1139/z11-043>).

The Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute monitors species and their habitats to understand distribution of biodiversity and to inform sustainable resource development and biological conservation in Alberta. Currently, wolves are widespread and abundant throughout Alberta's forested lands. For further information on the relative abundance of our province's wolves, please visit <http://species.abmi.ca/pages/species/mammals/GrayWolf.html>.

In contrast, woodland caribou populations have dramatically declined in Alberta and other parts of Canada, and this pattern is continuing. Woodland caribou are at imminent risk of extirpation in Alberta. The immediate issue affecting caribou population declines is excessive levels of predation, ultimately related to habitat and landscape change due to human activities. In the absence of delivering effective measures to reduce predation to more sustainable levels, Alberta will continue to lose caribou populations.

The continued loss of caribou populations in the province is contrary to Government of Alberta policy and to expectations and obligations under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Alberta, like other provinces, is working towards meeting the federal recovery strategies for woodland caribou. We are currently reviewing Environment and Climate Change Canada's "Report on the Progress of the Recovery-Strategy Implementation for the Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*), Boreal Population in Canada, for the Period 2012 to 2017." The report can be found at [www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=3199](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=3199).

Alberta has made significant progress on caribou range planning. Our Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan, which was released on December 19, 2017, demonstrates our government's commitment to conserving this ecologically important and culturally significant species. Anticipated woodland caribou recovery actions will include both habitat and wildlife population management measures. A provincial plan with range-specific details and maps is expected to be completed in the spring of 2018, and will include concrete actions for habitat and population recovery for each of our remaining caribou populations/ranges. Our newly released draft plan can be found at <https://talkaep.alberta.ca/caribou-range-planning>.

Further engagement with industry, municipalities, other stakeholders, Indigenous peoples and the public will inform range-specific plans and ensure we have the information needed to get this right. Avoiding the extirpation of woodland caribou in Alberta is a key goal. If you have further comments on Alberta's caribou range planning process, you can reach the Caribou Range Planning Team by email at [aep.caribouplanning@gov.ab.ca](mailto:aep.caribouplanning@gov.ab.ca).

Thank you again for taking the time to share your valued perspective on this important matter. Alberta is committed to recovering woodland caribou and achieving self-sustaining populations. We appreciate and will consider all feedback we receive about the draft range plan and may adjust the plan through this process.

Sincerely,



Shannon Phillips  
Minister