



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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RE: Seasonal Range Use and Movement Patterns of Boreal Caribou in the Dehcho

After several weeks of delay due to a lack of snow we were able to capture and deploy collars on 13 female boreal caribou from 20-22 January, 2006. Local observers from Fort Simpson and Jean Marie River participated in the aerial reconnaissance flights immediately prior to the capture operation. There was no reconnaissance flight in the Trout Lake at the request of Samba K'e Dene Band. The boreal caribou were much more widely distributed this winter, likely due to the lack of snow, which meant a lot more flying to locate and collar animals and subsequently a lot more flight time to relocate the collared animals than had been anticipated. Collared animals ranged from Fish Lake in the north to Celebita Lake in the south and the Redknife Hills to the east, over an area in excess of 30,000km².

We have been receiving satellite location data from collars deployed in January 2006 and previously, on their programmed duty cycle. We have continued to providing monthly updates of boreal caribou movements to the 4 First Nations directly involved in the project and are now going to circulate these maps to both the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation and Nahanni Butte Dene Band because the caribou distribution has increased and these First Nations have expressed interest in the program.

Spring weather has been very unpredictable and has created some problems in conducting relocation flights for the animals equipped with VHF collars. We did have good weather during the spring classification survey which was conducted from 1-2 March. The wide distribution of caribou resulted in a lot more flying than anticipated but we were able to find all of the animals with transmitting collars and classify 170 boreal caribou.

We will continue to monitor the satellite collared animals through spring 2009 when the majority of the collars will either be release or their transmitting lifespan has ended. The VHF collars are not programmed to release until 2011. We will endeavour to retrieve

any collars from caribou that may die during the remainder of the program so they can be made available for redeployment.

Even though we were delayed in capturing caribou we were able to submit the fecal samples collected for the analysis of diseases, parasites and diet composition.

Financial expenses for Seasonal Range Use and Movement Patterns of Boreal Caribou in the Dehcho are provided in the following breakdown:

CIMP funds (\$28,836.25) were applied toward the following expenses:

- \$10,750: Towards the cost of receiving ARGOS satellite location data.
- \$6,750: Towards the cost of the helicopter capture (helicopter time, turbo fuel, and crew expenses).
- \$2,500: Towards the cost of the classification survey (helicopter time and turbo fuel).
- \$5,000: Towards the costs of refurbishing and repairing satellite collars, the cost of replacing damaged telemetry equipment, and the shipping of repaired collars).
- \$3,900 Towards the costs of relocation flights to check on recent deployments, VHF collars, and a poorly transmitting collar.

Additional program costs include the following:

- Remaining costs of the ARGOS satellite location data,
- costs of backup cd's of all ARGOS satellite location data,
- remaining costs of the classification survey,
- remaining costs of refurbishment/repair/shipping of collars,
- costs of additional relocation flights,
- costs of the aerial reconnaissance flights,
- hiring local observers,
- costs for collar retrieval,
- costs for disease/parasite screening of fecal samples,
- costs for analysis of wolf stomachs for ungulate diet,
- tooth aging,
- laboratory and sampling supplies and equipment,
- costs of shipping,
- and other miscellaneous expenses

These expenses have been covered by funds from the ENR Biophysical Program and the ENR Dehcho Biological O&M.

Sincerely,

Nic Larter