



Media Release
December 13, 2019

T̓silhqot̓'in and Ulkatcho Announce Emergency No Caribou Hunting Ban in their Traditional Territories

Williams Lake, BC: Both the T̓silhqot̓'in Nation and Ulkatcho Nation are implementing an emergency hunting ban on Mountain Caribou in their traditional territories due to the drastic and devastating population declines of caribou in the region.

As part of the ongoing efforts to protect the remaining Mountain Caribou, all hunting including sustenance hunting, is banned. The ban applies to everyone including the First Nations people who are making the sacrifice of sustenance for conservation. Hunting will cease immediately and until further notice, for all caribou including bulls, cows and calves to protect the few remaining caribou in the Itcha-Ilgachuz, Rainbows and Charlotte Alplands herds.

The Itcha-Ilgachuz herd, which are by far the largest of the three herds, have declined by 86% and continue to decline with approximately 385 caribou as of June 2019. If this decline continues the caribou in the Chilcotin could disappear within the next 7 years. In conjunction with the closure of caribou hunting, the T̓silhqot̓'in and Ulkatcho Nations will be working on more effective ways to protect the remaining caribou including better habitat management, disturbance and predation factors through the herd planning process. This hunting ban will remain in place until the caribou have recovered to the point sustenance hunting can once again sustainably occur to ensure the conservation and persistence of the caribou in the region.

Quotes:

Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chair, T̓silhqot̓'in National Government:

“Once again it is our people who have to make the sacrifices because of the government’s mismanagement of wildlife, resources and industry. They put profit over sustainability and now the caribou are paying the price for that. Just like how the government managed the moose into decline the caribou are in even worse shape. We were notified too late in the BC management process to ensure the caribou were being managed properly with conservation values and not just money values taking priority. This is our land and our people that must now make the sacrifice to ensure that caribou persist in the region after the government, for too long, ignored the proper management decisions needed to take place for caribou. It is crucial that the caribou not be hunted and that activities that threatened the caribou’s habitat cease. There needs to be a continued push to ensure that

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predation is also being properly managed so that the caribou are given a chance to recover.”

Nits'il?in (Chief) Otis Guichon, T̓sideldel First Nations Government:

“Conservation of species is very important to us and as stewards of the land we are greatly concerned about the decline of our caribou herds and we are willing to do what it takes to ensure they survive. This includes taking the extra step to protect them by no longer allowing the harvest of caribou for sustenance as our people have done for thousands of years. Not long ago caribou herds roamed throughout the Chilcotin but today are limited to a few hundred remaining animals in one area within the West Chilcotin.”

Chief Lynda Price, Ulkatcho (Anahim) First Nation:

“Ulkatcho First Nation (UFN) were opposed to the Province's proposal and caribou management plans to transfer some of the Itcha-Ilgachuz caribou herd to the Purcell Mountains in Southeastern BC between 2000 - 2005. The reason we did not agree with the transfer was because they had not dealt with the issues that created the decline in the caribou herd there. UFN were not invited to the planning table to address the decline of the caribou herd in the Itcha-Ilgachuz. UFN informed the Technical Working group last week that we are not satisfied with their consultation process with UFN. This herd is located in our territory and we believe that the only productive way of managing this herd and other wildlife in our territory is to implement the UNDRIP legislation and immediately address legislation, policy and regulation pertaining to wildlife management and conservation with our full participation. UFN supports the ban on caribou hunting.”

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