

## Project Profile

<b>Project Name:</b>	Facilitated Workshop: Exploration of Conservation Breeding and Translocation Tools to Increase Wild Caribou Populations in Western Canada
<b>Project Number:</b>	BCIP-2016-14
<b>Proponent:</b>	Calgary Zoological Society
<b>Funding Envelope:</b>	Boreal Caribou
<b>Timeframe:</b>	May 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016

### Project objectives

The objectives of the project are to plan and conduct a facilitated multi-stakeholder workshop on conservation breeding and translocation options with western Canadian regulators and caribou experts responsible for caribou recovery action planning. The workshop will have the following specific objectives:

- Understand regulator, stakeholder and rights holders positions on caribou population augmentation tools.
- Share experiences (successes / failures) in caribou conservation breeding techniques and tools, building on experiences within Canada and internationally.
- Assess and evaluate the merits of the full range of conservation breeding /translocation techniques as they apply to caribou in western Canada.
- Discuss risk assessment and prioritization criteria for potential caribou ranges that may benefit from conservation breeding and/or translocations.
- Determine funding/partner agencies and models to deliver specific feasibility studies and pilot projects in areas that are most likely to yield success, with the ultimate goal of delivering long-term projects.

### Project description

This project is centered on the planning, hosting, facilitation and follow-up of a workshop on the value of various caribou population augmentation tools. The workshop will explore the utility and social acceptability of conservation breeding, maternity penning, and wild-to-wild translocations as potential conservation tools to improve the demographics of boreal caribou through population reinforcement. Concept development will build upon an extensive knowledge base of scientific research, integrate lessons from planned or implemented management activities, and be evaluated within a broader

context of habitat conditions, predator dynamics, and land use planning. Considering options across provincial and territorial boundaries, the workshop will explore applications that could be actively tested as a proof of concept locally, for eventual implementation on a broader landscape level through Range or Action Plans. The workshop will not be a conference on caribou biology; rather it will focus on brainstorming, building relationships, and problem solving.

Participation in the workshop will be by select invite in order to manage the size and ensure an outcomes-based deliverable, but is expected to be multi-stakeholder in nature with expertise in conservation breeding and translocation.

The workshop will be hosted by the Calgary Zoo, which has a rich history of conservation breeding for species at risk both in Canada and internationally. The Calgary Zoo has also leveraged its relationship with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to bring in Dr. Mark Stanley-Price, IUCN Chair of the Captive Breeding Specialist Group, to facilitate the workshop. The workshop will be planned and facilitated by Dr. Stanley-Price, with support from Calgary Zoo researchers and conservation breeding specialists, including Dr. Axel Moehrensclager, the Zoo's Head of Conservation Research and the IUCN Chair of the Reintroduction Specialist Group.

## **Project background**

Stemming caribou population declines, and supporting population recovery, will require simultaneously addressing both the proximate and ultimate causes of population decline (predation and habitat change, respectively). While habitat conservation and restoration are foundational elements of any recovery strategy, in the case of boreal caribou these tools will not, on their own, create the immediate conditions needed for caribou population recovery. Therefore, we recognize that concomitant with aggressive large-scale habitat restoration, we must also reduce the losses due to predators and increase recruitment to breeding age in the short-term. .

This project is designed to scope the utility of a broad range of caribou population augmentation tools that may be implemented alongside other habitat-based tools. There are numerous options available to protect newborn calves from predators (e.g., maternal penning), to increase overall wild populations (e.g., captive breeding and reintroduction), or to supplement individual declining herds with animals from other healthier herds (e.g., wild-wild translocations). Options such as these need to be critically evaluated for their value in meeting caribou recovery objectives, and determining if related pilot programs should be evaluated as components of caribou range or action plans.

## **Project approach**

The project will be carried out using the following approach:

- 1) Prepare for workshop—prepare and distribute a pre-workshop background document to workshop participants.
- 2) Conduct workshop.
- 3) Document workshop in a final report.
- 4) Disseminate findings from workshop through presentations and publications.

## **Project deliverables**

The deliverables from this project include the following:

1. Final report, as well as potential peer-reviewed journal publications.
2. A follow-up from this workshop will be the creation of strategic collaborations to implement a pilot-scale conservation breeding project and/or translocation project to prove the feasibility of management option(s).