



Maternal Penning to Enhance Survival of Caribou within the Klinse-Za Herd

External: Issued June 22nd, 2018



Days in pen → 101

Days to release → 40

All of the caribou calves have now been born; a total of six males and three females! All of the calves are doing well and are continuing to grow at a fast rate; by the end of next month they should have a good chance at evading the predators outside of the pen. See the graph below for ages of calves at the release date.

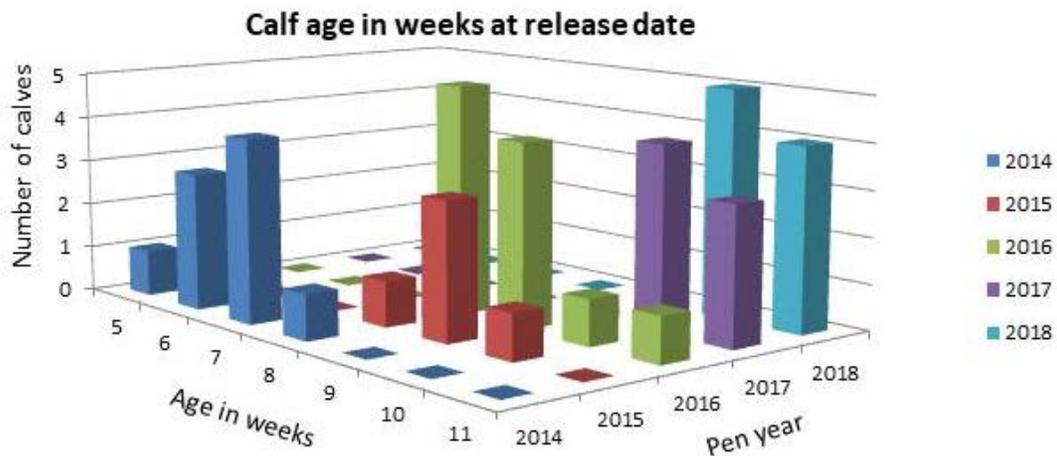




Figure 1. Calves are growing quickly and staying close to mom

Electric Fence

A permanent electric fence was slow to go up with the copious amounts of snow, quick melts, and frozen ground. Nonetheless we pushed hard and now have a very nice electric fence supported by 10ft metal T-posts. The posts are unaffected by the wind and the 7mm electric wire provides an even stronger barrier compared to the 3mm wire that was used in previous years at the Bickford pen.



Figure 2. Second electric fence is in good working order and provides a second barrier to any predators that try to enter the pen



And it's good to have the fence up and running. Although predator sightings and tracks have decreased in frequency in the past few weeks, there is still one large grizzly bear that comes past the pen somewhat regularly. Bears have bitten or clawed the second electric fence twice to date. Repairs and maintenance are ongoing each day as required.

Update on C332K

Cow C332K has been under close watch since capture. She has suffered from a uterine infection for at least 2 to 3 years. She was first captured March 2015 and soon after produced one male calf that died at an age of ~ 4 days. She was captured again March 2016 with an obvious but mild vaginal discharge which we attempted to culture but there was no confirmation of bacterial growth and no identification of the infection could be made. She produced one female calf that year which survived the penning period and the following summer. We are not certain of the eventual fate of that calf.

C332K had advanced discharge this year when caught and was not pregnant. She continues to eat lots every day, and hangs out with the larger group; it appears that new hair is starting to grow on her back legs. After much discussion among the various teams, we concluded that the risks of intervention to try to address C332K's infection were too high and chances of providing effective treatment too low. Therefore treatment and immediate release from the pen were not considered options. The infection does not appear to be causing her too much pain as evidenced by her continued social behavior and feed intake, so euthanasia is considered unnecessary at this time.

The team will continue to monitor C332K and further decisions on any action will be forthcoming from the team and from elders within each of the Society communities.



Figure 3. C332K continues to eat and socialize with the other caribou. -



A Unique Calf

One of the female calves born this year (C385K) was born with a very unique pelage including a darker back than usual and a series of spots along her back. See the picture below.



Figure 4. Unique pelage pattern on C385K- one good looking calf!

Pellet Collections

Fecal pellet collection continued both inside the pen and outside with the wild population as part of a project to compare the health of our penned caribou and the wild caribou.



Figure 5. Two Wildlife Infometrics biologists collecting fecal pellets inside the pen. The collected pellets will contribute to a study on health of the penned caribou.



The teams:

- Níkanêse Wah tzee Stewardship Society
 - West Moberly First Nations (Chief Roland Willson/Tamara Dokkie)
 - Saulteau First Nations (Estelle Lavis/Naomi Owens)
- Caribou Mat Pen Working Group¹
 - West Moberly First Nations (Bruce Muir/Jason Lee)
 - Saulteau First Nations (Naomi Owens/Carmen Marshall)
 - Wildlife Infometrics (Scott McNay/Line Giguere)
- Mat Pen Technical Advisory Team²
 - Revelstoke penning trial (Rob Serrouya/Corey Legebokow)
 - FLNRO (Chris Addison/Chris Ritchie/Helen Schwantje/Bryan Macbeth/John Surgenor)
 - MOE (Dale Seip)
- Support teams – capture specialists, veterinarian team, shepherds, lichen collectors

Thanks to our sponsors³



¹ The Caribou Mat Pen Working Group is a committee appointed by the Níkanêse Wah tzee Stewardship Society.

² The Mat Pen Technical Advisory Team is an ad hoc committee chosen by the Working Group to obtain technical advice.

³ Current and historic