



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

External: Issued July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019



Days in pen → 111

Days until release → 26

### New energy inside the pen!

June 4<sup>th</sup>, marked the final birth of the 2019 Klinse-Za maternal pen project! 13 calves were born, seven males and six females, which marks the highest number of calves in the project's history! There are now 30 caribou held safely inside the Mt. Rochfort pen.

One of the calves, number 10, injured his front left leg shortly after capture but has quickly made a full recovery and can be seen frolicking about, with the other calves. All of the calves are healthy and growing rapidly.

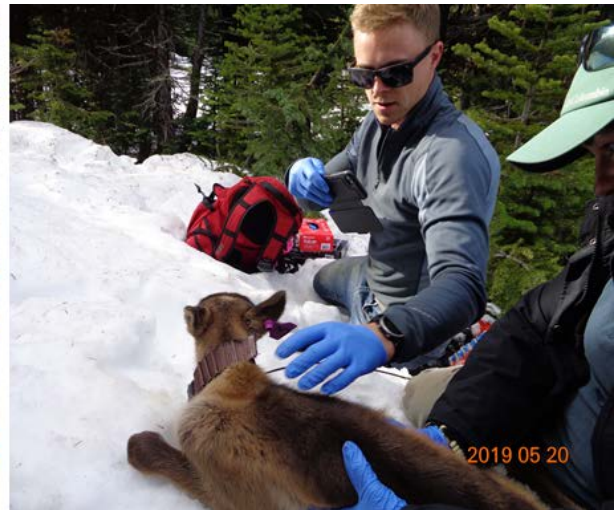


Figure 1. All calves born inside the pen are fitted with expandable vhf collars and marked with an ear tag; this ear tag is used to identify the individual animal during aerial surveys for their entire lifespan, once the collar has expanded and fallen off.

Calves are now old enough that they are routinely eating out of the feed troughs, pushing their moms out of the way to get the best spot! Calves are often found playing together, away from their respective mothers, without much care from the rest of the older cows, as if they know their calves are safe within the confines of the pen!



Figure 2. C348S on babysitting duty, watching both her calf, and the calf of C343S; cows and calves often split up throughout the course of the day now that calves are older.





## Lichen Picking



**Figure 3.** Members of Saulteau First Nations and TransCanada heading out to pick lichen to feed the penned caribou.

There have been a total of three different trips to collect lichen for the caribou residing in the pen. Community members and elders from Saulteau First Nations, along with members of TransCanada, have collected a total of 270 bags of lichen! We will begin to transition the caribou's feed from pellets to lichen in about two weeks, giving ample time to move towards a more natural diet before release.

## Pellet Collection

As part of an ongoing health project, we have completed two pellet collection sessions; we sample both caribou inside the pen, and those free ranging outside the pen.

## An old visitor to the pen

Two collared caribou, maternity pen residents last year, have been spotted around the pen by guardians this spring. On one occasion they were observed around the perimeter of the pen, and once ~1km down the road. Caribou tracks have also been spotted in the alpine above the pen on numerous occasions! It seems the caribou have quite the affinity for the high quality habitat!



## Release is coming quickly!



In just over one month's time, we will be opening the gates of the pen to release all 30 animals (16 cows, 1 juvenile, and 13 calves) back into the wild. Exact timing will depend on the presence of grizzly bears around the perimeter of the pen. Last year we had six different grizzlies patrolling the outskirts of the pen during July... this year there has only been sign of two bears at the pen, so our outlook is positive that release won't be delayed too long!

### The teams:

- Nîkanêse Wah tzee Stewardship Society
  - West Moberly First Nations (Chief Roland Willson/Tamara Dokkie)
  - Saulteau First Nations (Estelle Lavis/Naomi Owens)
- Caribou Mat Pen Working Group<sup>1</sup>
  - West Moberly First Nations (Tamara Dokkie)
  - Saulteau First Nations (Naomi Owens; alt - Carmen Richter)
  - Wildlife Infometrics (Scott McNay/Matt Erickson, alt - Line Giguere)
- Mat Pen Technical Advisory Team<sup>2</sup>
  - Revelstoke penning (Rob Serrouya)
  - FLNRO (Helen Schwantje)
  - MOE (Dale Seip; will be needing a replacement)
- Support teams – capture specialists, veterinarian team, guardians, lichen collectors

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<sup>1</sup> The Caribou Mat Pen Working Group is a committee appointed by the Nîkanêse Wah tzee Stewardship Society.

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



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<sup>3</sup> Current and historic