

## **Purcells-South caribou herd augmentation project**

### **2nd Quarterly report**

**July 10, 2013**

#### **Introduction:**

As part of the B.C. Government's commitment to recover mountain caribou to pre-1995 levels by 2017, 19 caribou were translocated from the Level-Kawdy herd in north-western British Columbia to the Purcell Mountains in south-eastern British Columbia in March 2012. This is the first phase of a multi-year project to move 40 caribou to the Purcells-South herd.

Refer to previous quarterly reports for additional information on this project.

#### **Monitoring of caribou and cougars:**

The movements of the remaining collared caribou in the Level-Kawdy herd continue to be monitored remotely via weekly download of data from Iridium GPS collars. 9 collars remain functional on the collared Level-Kawdy caribou. 5 resident caribou in the South Purcells also have functioning collars. We continue to learn a great deal about the movements of these caribou through the collaring program.

At the time of this report, 17 of the 19 caribou transplanted into the Purcell Mountains have died:

- 6 due to cougar predation
- 2 due to wolf predation
- 3 due to accidents
- 3 from unknown but confirmed non-predation causes
- 2 from unknown causes, predation not ruled out
- 1 from malnutrition (weakened by ticks)

The status of 1 remaining cow is uncertain due to collar failure. 1 bull remains at high elevations with residents in the South Purcells, however, only the VHF component of this collar remains functional, so we are reliant on infrequent field inventories for tracking the location of this caribou. 6 cougars are collared in the study area. All collared cougars are staying below caribou habitat at the time of this report.

4 wolves were collared in the study area. No wolf collars are still functioning.

#### **PLANNING FOR 2014-15**

A second phase of the transplant has been deferred to 2015 subject to an approved project design. Logistical planning continues for a second phase of the transplant, including a review of all aspects of the project. In particular, the donor herd and release methods are being reviewed.

## **RESEARCH**

Predation-risk research is continuing through the University of Victoria's Laboratory for Landscape and Wildlife Ecology, Department of Geography under Dr. Dennis Jelinski.

### **Next scheduled report:**

Further quarterly reports will be suspended until such a time as planning for Phase 2 of this transplant is re-initiated.

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