



## Dear Wilderness Defender,

Today (March 18) is the last day in the consultation period on the proposed federal recovery strategy for 'southern mountain' woodland caribou, which includes four threatened Alberta populations. Comments are accepted until midnight Pacific time. If you (and any friends you know who care about caribou) can spare a few minutes today to send comments to the federal government, it could make a real difference – the boreal caribou recovery strategy improved thanks to public comments.

- Carolyn Campbell, AWA Conservation Specialist

## In This Issue:

Help Alberta Mountain  
Caribou Survive and  
Recover

AWA  
[www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)  
[1-866-313-0713](tel:1-866-313-0713)

## The Issue

Southern mountain caribou populations have continued to decline despite being federally designated as *threatened* for fourteen years. However, a better future is possible: as the *proposed* Recovery Strategy notes, recovery of all southern mountain caribou local population units is technically and biologically feasible. A stronger Recovery Strategy can make a great difference in achieving the stated goal of self-sustaining populations of caribou.

## Background

In Alberta, 'southern mountain' woodland caribou populations used to use mountain areas in summer, and foothills in winter, from Banff/Jasper northwest to the Kakwa. Many now avoid their historic foothills ranges because of intensive industrial activity there, but the mountains do not provide optimal year-round habitat for them.

Caribou have co-existed with forest fires and wolves for thousands of years, but human alterations of caribou habitat have caused unsustainable predation. Human disturbance creates more food for deer, moose and elk, which draws in wolves, and it also opens access for wolves and other predators to encounter caribou.

The finalized federal Recovery Strategy will guide action plans that are supposed to recover these caribou to self-sustaining populations. The proposed strategy needs to be significantly stronger. Your voice matters: in 2012, the *boreal* woodland caribou Recovery Strategy was strengthened thanks to public comments.

[Link to AWA Comments](#) to the Environment Minister and Environment Canada

## Take Action

Please write before midnight March 18 to Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq, copying the Environment Canada recovery comments Office (see addresses below), with these key points:

To recover self-sustaining southern mountain caribou populations, the Recovery Strategy needs to:

- Identify specific Critical Habitat that is the entire identified caribou range and a 20-30 km buffer zone around each range, because predator ranges are large and human disturbance stimulates alternate prey and predator numbers in caribou range
- Emphasize habitat 'maintenance' specifically, as well as long-term protected areas, especially in Alberta's foothills region where only 2% is now protected
- Set habitat disturbance limits aimed at population recovery: 80% undisturbed for foothills ranges, elsewhere 'no new habitat disturbance and access', and targeted restoration goals to reduce net disturbance and access over time
- Set a recovered range objective to expand into previously occupied range and a recovered population objective of 300 animals per local population, rather than just maintaining diminished ranges and populations
- Drop the phrase 'to the extent possible' that improperly weakens the Goal and Population and Distribution Objectives, because recovery of all local populations is both technically and biologically feasible

Please write: Hon. Leona Aglukkaq  
Minister of the Environment  
House of Commons  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
By email: [Minister@ec.gc.ca](mailto:Minister@ec.gc.ca)

And: Recovery Planning  
Environment Canada  
15th Floor, Place Vincent Massey  
351 St. Joseph Boulevard  
Gatineau, QC K1A 0H3  
By email: [RecoveryPlanning\\_PI@ec.gc.ca](mailto:RecoveryPlanning_PI@ec.gc.ca)

And please send us a copy at [ccampbell@abwild.ca](mailto:ccampbell@abwild.ca)

Thank you for taking action for caribou!  
*Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action*

If you wish to sign up for the Wilderness and Wildlife Defenders mailing list, please use the form on this page:  
[www.albertawilderness.ca/Act-Now](http://www.albertawilderness.ca/Act-Now)