



Summary of the imminent threat analysis for the southern mountain caribou

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has determined that Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountain population is facing imminent threats to its recovery.

The Minister came to this opinion after a scientific assessment that considered the biological condition of southern mountain caribou, ongoing and expected threats, and mitigation measures. The assessment noted a particular concern in the following ten local population units: Central Kootenay, Southwest Kootenay, Southeast Kootenay, Kinbasket, South Monashee, Quintette, Narraway, Jasper-Banff, Redrock / Prairie Creek, Telkwa (Figure 1).

The Minister also considered whether there were imminent threats to survival of the species and concluded that such threats do not exist at this time.

The imminent threat analysis is based on the best available information, including information provided by the Governments of British Columbia and Alberta, petitioners, and information gathered by Environment and Climate Change Canada and Parks Canada. She found that the species is facing threats, which are imminent in the sense that immediate intervention is required to allow for eventual recovery.

Southern mountain caribou was listed as a threatened wildlife species on Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act in 2003. The federal recovery strategy was posted as final on the Species at Risk Public Registry on June 3, 2014.

As stated in the federal recovery strategy, the long-term recovery goal is to achieve self-sustaining populations in all local population units within their current distribution. Achieving this goal should allow for sufficiently large local populations to support traditional Indigenous harvest in the long-term.

The most significant and immediate threat to recovery is unsustainable predation. Broadly, these unsustainable levels of predation are the result of habitat changes, which have led to changes to predator and prey communities and direct disturbance and displacement of individual caribou.

Environment and Climate Change Canada officials found that there are 10 local population units with estimated population sizes close to or less than 100 animals for which long-term population trends are declining and threats are ongoing. While population management is having a positive short-term effect in some local population units, such measures are not currently complemented by the significant habitat protection or restoration measures necessary to improve the likelihood of recovery in the long term.

The complete imminent threat assessment prepared by Environment and Climate Change Canada that informed the Minister's opinion will be posted to the Species at Risk Public Registry in June.



Figure 1. Local population units (LPUs) of southern mountain caribou.

