

LEADING THE WAY THE CONSERVATION OF NORTH AMERICAN CARIBOU

Boone and Crockett Club is a conservation organization tasked with the conservation of wildlife species. While the likelihood of a recovery to a huntable population of caribou in the lower 48 is highly unlikely in our lifetime, as conservationists it is our duty to speak up for all wildlife, not only that which we may hunt. With the changing landscape and a changing climate, caribou face an uncertain future. These circumstances set the stage for a new organization to form and team up with the oldest and most respected conservation organization in North America.

It is because of this commitment Boone and Crockett has partnered with a new non-profit organization, the International Caribou Foundation, to bring to light the needs of caribou. In this forthcoming series we will go through the categories recognized by the Boone and Crockett Club, as well as several specific herds highlighting the changes in populations; we will look at the science from some of the top researchers for each ecoregion in which they exist, and identify those doing good conservation work on behalf of caribou.



E WAY ERICA'S WILDLIFE

JUSTIN SPRING

KARLIE SLAYER

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTIONS EXCERPT FROM
HOW TO SCORE NORTH AMERICAN BIG GAME

The Boone and Crockett Club is teaming up with the International Caribou Foundation to gain more insight into the ongoing caribou recovery projects they are funding.

B&C CARIBOU CATEGORIES

The various varieties of caribou, which differ widely in size and antler configuration, have required subdivision of the species into five different trophy categories: mountain, woodland, barren ground, Central Canada barren ground, and Quebec-Labrador. Prior to 1960, the classification of the different species and categories of the world was in disarray. At that time, Frank Banfield (a Canadian wildlife biologist) reviewed all of the available museum specimens of the world's caribou and reduced the number of valid categories. Among his conclusions were that the new world caribou and the old world reindeer should all be classified as one species, but that northern barren ground caribou differ from the more southerly distributed woodland caribou, both in Eurasia and in North America.

BARREN GROUND CARIBOU

The largest antlered caribou from North America are the Grant's variety from Alaska and northern Yukon Territory. These caribou, called barren ground caribou for records-keeping purposes, have long, rounded main beams with very long top points. They also have

A photo from a trail camera in the Selkirks in 2014. The Selkirk Mountains are a mountain range spanning the northern portion of the Idaho Panhandle, eastern Washington, and southeastern British Columbia.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KALISPEL TRIBE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



59°F 08/17/14 03:00PM KALISPEL



ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

Our mission is to raise awareness of the conservation challenges facing caribou while leading the way to enhance their populations, protect caribou habitat, and promote effective caribou management in their current range.

The International Caribou Foundation was formed in Bozeman, Montana, in 2019 by an eclectic group of wildlife biologists, hunters, business managers, guides, photographers and outdoorsmen, collectively concerned about the fate of the species in the wake of the tragic loss of the final herd of mountain caribou in the lower 48 states. Unfortunately, the extirpation of the Selkirk herd is just the canary in the coal mine, and most populations of caribou across the world are imperiled from various threats including habitat loss, outdoor recreation, predation, poaching, and climate change.

ICF INITIATIVES

I. BREEDING PROGRAMS

Generating funding to place breeding caribou from healthy herds in a controlled environment to safely raise their calves and eventually be released into the wild to bolster existing herds and one day re-introduce caribou into their historic range.

II. ADVOCACY OUTREACH PROGRAM

The largest hurdle for long-term caribou and reindeer conservation is ensuring their habitat is protected. The ICF will work with governmental and non-governmental organizations worldwide through outreach programs and partnerships to keep caribou habitat wild.

III. CONSERVATION VISION PLAN

Funding for the research to develop a conservation vision plan that will provide our organization with the research to identify our high-priority initiatives, set tangible goals and begin maximizing our impact on challenges facing the various categories of caribou and the unique threats they face.



This map, as well as each category's boundary map can be found online at www.boone-crockett.org.

the highest All-time record book minimum entry score of 400 points. (See below for description of boundary between barren ground caribou and mountain caribou in Yukon Territory.) Trophies taken in Alaska on Umnak and Atka Islands are not eligible for entry in B&C or P&Y at this time because they are considered reindeer and neither organization has a category for reindeer.

MOUNTAIN CARIBOU

The so-called mountain caribou, now regarded as a variety of woodland caribou, is found in British Columbia, Alberta, southern Yukon Territory, and the Mackenzie Mountains of Northwest Territories. In Yukon Territory, the boundary begins at the intersection of the Yukon River with the boundary between Yukon Territory and the state of Alaska. The boundary runs southeasterly following the Yukon River upstream to Dawson; then easterly and southerly along the Klondike Highway to Stewart Crossing; then easterly following the road to

Mayo; then northeasterly following the road to McQuesten Lake; then easterly following the south shore of McQuesten Lake and then upstream following the main drainage to the divide leading to Scougale Creek to its confluence with the Beaver River; then south following the Beaver River downstream to its confluence with the Rackla River; then southeasterly following the Rackla River downstream to its confluence with the Stewart River; then northeasterly following the Stewart River upstream to its confluence with the North Stewart River to the boundary between Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories. North of this line caribou are classified as barren ground caribou for records-keeping purposes, while those specimens taken south of this line are considered mountain caribou.

CENTRAL CANADA BARREN GROUND CARIBOU

Central Canada barren ground caribou occur on Baffin Island and the mainland

of Northwest Territories and Nunavut, as well as in northern Manitoba and northern Saskatchewan. Caribou from other Arctic islands north of the mainland of Northwest Territories/Nunavut are ineligible for entry in B&C's records books. The geographic boundaries in the mainland of Northwest Territories are: the Mackenzie River to the west; the north edge of the continent to the north (excluding any islands except Baffin Island); Hudson's Bay to the east; and the southern boundary of Northwest Territories to the south. Pope and Young Club classifies caribou harvested in Greenland as Central Barren Ground Caribou. Boone and Crockett does not accept caribou from Greenland into our records program.

The boundary for Central Canada barren ground caribou in Manitoba begins at the point of intersection of the south limit of township 87 with the provincial boundary between the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The boundary then follows

this township line east to the point of confluence with Wasikoiwka Lake. From there it proceeds in a northeasterly direction along the high-water mark of the north shore of the aforementioned lake following the sinuosities of the shoreline to the point of intersection with the water connection to Hale Lake. From this point, the high-water mark of the north shoreline is followed to the point of intersection with the Little Churchill River. Henceforth, it follows the high-water mark of the north or westerly shore of the Little Churchill River including expansions of the river into lakes to the point of confluence with the Churchill River. From there the boundary crosses the mouth of the Little Churchill River and follows the high-water mark on the south or easterly shore of the Churchill River to the community of Churchill located on Hudson Bay.

Caribou taken in Manitoba north of the above described boundary are classified as Central Canada barren ground caribou.



Little is known about this photo taken in 1923 of a mountain caribou at Dease Lake, near Cassiar, Northern British Columbia.

In Saskatchewan, Central Canada barren ground caribou occur within Wildlife Management Zone #76. The boundary begins at the intersection between the 59th parallel and the Alberta-Saskatchewan border (intersection of 59th parallel and 110th meridian), runs east a few kilometers along the 59th parallel to its juncture with the south shore of Lake Athabasca, then follows the south shore of Lake Athabasca north easterly to the mouth of the MacFarlane River, turns south along the MacFarlane River to its juncture with the 109th meridian, follows the 109th meridian south a few kilometers to its intersection with the 58th parallel, turns easterly along the 58th parallel to its intersection with the 107th meridian, turns south along the 107th meridian until its intersection with the 58th parallel, then turns east and follows the 58th parallel to the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border (intersection of 58th parallel and 102nd

meridian). North of this line is the Central Canada barren-ground caribou zone (Wildlife Management Zone 76) where Central Canada barren ground caribou may be legally hunted in Saskatchewan.

QUEBEC-LABRADOR CARIBOU

The Quebec-Labrador caribou category was established in 1968. This large woodland caribou has very wide, long-beamed antlers with almost universally palmated bez formations. To have left these animals in competition with the woodland caribou of Newfoundland would have resulted in a complete swamping of the smaller-antlered woodland caribou from Newfoundland. Boundaries for Quebec-Labrador caribou are just as the name implies, Quebec and Labrador.

WOODLAND CARIBOU

Woodland caribou are eligible for entry from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick.

Woodland caribou occur sparingly all the way across Canada to southern British Columbia. Although there may be some open seasons in these provinces, they are not taken in large numbers anywhere. It would seem inappropriate to place such animals in competition with those from Newfoundland where they have been regularly hunted for more than 100 years.

THE NEXT STEP

Going forward we will be engaging with biologists, researchers and wildlife enthusiasts working in the field of caribou conservation, and hear some hunting stories along the way.

The incredible variety in biology and habitat between these categories is a testament to the difficulties in managing this species. Our goal is to educate our readers on the life and history of this species, as well as raise awareness of the policies and actions that can be taken to protect them. ■



Photo from a survey flight in 2016.