



**Results of the 2023 Yukon
Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*)
Hunter Effort Survey**

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Summary

- Hunter effort surveys are completed periodically by the Department of Environment as a means of ‘taking the pulse’ of the territory’s hunting community. Information from these surveys can be used to help evaluate harvest management rules and regulations.
- Resident hunters that purchased a caribou hunting seal for the 2023/2024 hunting season were invited to participate in a caribou hunter effort survey delivered by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics between February 6 and April 19, 2024.
- The survey asked questions pertaining to the hunters’ motivation, practices, beliefs, satisfaction and how much effort they exerted to harvest a caribou.
- We obtained 1,400 completed surveys, representing a survey response rate of 61%. Among these, 324 survey respondents (23%) hunted woodland caribou in 2023.
- Key results included:
 - Caribou hunting effort is largely dependent on the availability of Porcupine caribou to hunters, and they were largely not accessible to hunters in 2023/2024.
 - Caribou hunters are predominately male (86%), from Whitehorse (74%) and have an average age of 49 years.
 - Many respondents (42%) had 1–5 years’ experience hunting caribou, while 22% respondents were new to caribou hunting, and 36% had more than 5 years of experience hunting caribou.
 - Most woodland caribou hunting (90%) occurred in Game Management Zones 2, 4, 10 and 11, with an almost equal split between August (47%) and September (43%).
 - Most respondents (72%) spent two to nine days hunting woodland caribou in 2023.
 - Most woodland caribou hunting parties (53%) consisted of two individuals.
 - Most respondents (72%) hunted woodland caribou on foot once they reached their hunting area, which they initially accessed by vehicle (42%) or ATV (23%)
 - Respondents selected where to hunt for a variety of reasons, with the likelihood of finding caribou and the ability to harvest other species on the same trip being key factors.
 - Respondents typically decided when to hunt woodland caribou based primarily on avoiding the rut and on the availability of their hunting partners.
 - Hunters provided multiple motivations for hunting woodland caribou, with the main motivations being to obtain healthy meat (90%) and to take part in an enjoyable activity (52%). Several other motivations were also apparent.

- Woodland caribou hunters were typically satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity to hunt caribou (71%) and their caribou hunting experience (74%).
- More than half (54%) of respondents spent less than \$1,000 on their caribou hunt.
- Most successful hunters (62%) shared the meat with one to two other households.
- 527 individuals (38%) provided comments. An independent consultant completed a thematic analysis (i.e., qualitative analysis) which is available upon request.
- The results of this survey will be useful in better understanding the effort, demographics and motivations of caribou hunters, as well as informing harvest management decisions.

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Introduction

Hunter effort surveys

During the last 40 years, the Department of Environment has periodically conducted surveys of hunter effort, values and perceptions. These surveys are used to gather data on hunting patterns and hunters' perceptions pertaining to harvest management. Understanding the values, perceptions and behaviours of hunters can help inform harvest management (Radder and Bech-Larsen 2008, Kaltenborn et al. 2012, Brinkman et al. 2018, Aastrup et al. 2020, Bath et al. 2022). They also help wildlife managers (including First Nations, Inuvialuit, Renewable Resources Councils, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)) 'take the pulse' of the hunting community.

Information from hunter effort surveys contribute to decisions regarding hunting regulations (e.g., Figure 1) and various wildlife management programs, such as workshops for hunters. The purpose of this survey was to gain current information on the effort, values, perceptions and behaviours of all resident caribou hunters. We also aimed to provide an opportunity for Yukon's caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) hunters to share their thoughts, with a specific focus on their motivations, effort, satisfaction and interests pertaining to the management of the hunt. Surveys like this can provide information to wildlife managers which helps them in deciding and evaluating management approaches for caribou. The last hunter effort survey for caribou was conducted by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics in 2016 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Additionally, the Department of Environment conducted a hunter satisfaction survey for moose and caribou in 2013 (Cooley and Foster 2013).

This report provides a summary of what we heard from survey respondents. It outlines the survey design and delivery and summarizes the responses received. Responses are provided in aggregate, with respondent confidentiality maintained throughout. Like other Yukon hunter surveys or those related to wildlife management planning initiatives (e.g., Jung et al. 2018, 2021, 2022, 2023, Pinard et al. 2022), we do not provide a detailed quantitative interpretation of the survey data.

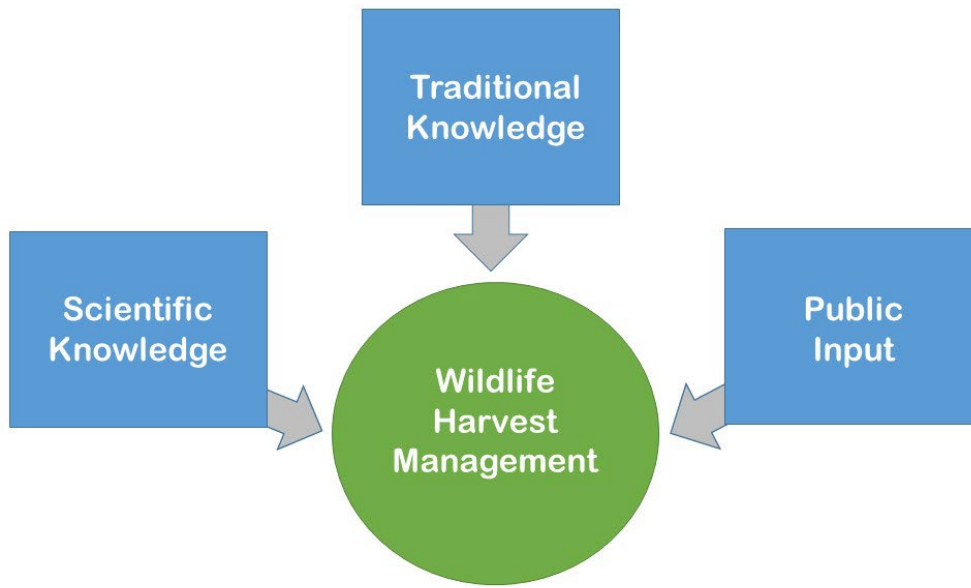


Figure 1. Major sources of information that are incorporated into wildlife harvest management decision making in the Yukon. Adapted from Environment Yukon (2016).

Caribou and caribou hunting in the Yukon

Caribou in the Yukon are classified as belonging to the Boreal or Northern Mountain populations of woodland caribou, or to migratory caribou populations (Figure 2). Northern Mountain caribou in the Yukon comprise 26 populations that have a patchy distribution in the southern two-thirds of the territory (Environment Yukon 2016). Boreal caribou occur in the northeastern part of the Yukon and are a small portion of a larger population that resides primarily in the Northwest Territories. Caribou from the Boreal and Northern Mountain populations of woodland caribou are referred to as ‘woodland’ caribou throughout this report. Migratory caribou consist of the Porcupine, Fortymile and Nelchina populations—all of which have large distributional ranges that extend well into Alaska (Figure 2). There are up to 304,000 caribou that occur seasonally in the Yukon, though precise abundance is uncertain. This population estimate consists of roughly 42,000 woodland caribou and about 262,000 migratory caribou. The number of Boreal caribou in Yukon is likely less than 200 animals and not hunted by licensed hunters, as they are difficult to access.

Nationally, caribou have a mixed legal status. Yukon populations are listed in the federal *Species at Risk Act* as Endangered (Porcupine caribou herd), Threatened (Boreal population), or Special Concern (Northern Mountain population). The Fortymile and Nelchina populations are not assessed and listed in the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Potential stressors to Yukon’s caribou

populations include climate change, extreme weather, habitat modification, human disturbance and overharvest. Disease may also pose a future threat to some populations. However, these are localized and, apart from climate change, have limited impact on most populations. Accordingly, despite their national listing as a species at risk, most caribou populations in the Yukon are stable. That said, given declines to other caribou populations in Canada and Alaska, and their national legal status, Yukon caribou populations need to be managed wisely to prevent them from declining.

Like moose (*Alces americanus*), bison (*Bison bison*) and sheep (*Ovis dalli*), caribou are among the most highly sought after big game animals in the Yukon (Milligan 2018). Caribou hunting is an important activity in the Yukon, where it has supported the livelihoods and lifestyles of resident Yukoners for decades, and in the case of Indigenous Peoples, millennia. Thus, careful management of caribou harvest and habitat is necessary to ensure that populations persist for future generations of Yukoners.

Caribou are listed as 'Big Game' in Yukon's *Wildlife Act*. Subsistence harvest is practiced by Indigenous Peoples with an unknown number of animals taken each year. Licensed hunters include resident (Yukon) and non-resident (non-Yukon) hunters, who may obtain up to two seals to hunt caribou each season. The number of seals sold, and the number of animals harvested by licensed hunters each year are tracked by the Government of Yukon's Department of Environment.

Between 1995 and 2023, an average of 3,059 seals were sold annually (range = 2,293 to 3,668). The number of seals sold annually increased between 1995 and 2015 but has been stable at about 3,500 since then (Figure 3). There was a small increase in the number of caribou seals sold to resident hunters in 2020 (Figure 3), likely due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The average annual harvest of caribou by licensed hunters between 1995 and 2023 was 386 (range = 195 to 636). The total harvest by licensed hunters annually depends largely on the harvest of the Porcupine caribou herd, which has not been easily accessible since 2010 (Table 1; Figure 4). In only four years since 2010, the harvest of migratory caribou exceeded 100 animals. The number of woodland caribou harvested has fluctuated between 149 and 296. Except for the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022 and 2023 resulted in the lowest harvest of woodland caribou since 1995. Between 1995 and 2023, licensed resident hunters harvested an average of 47% of the total licensed harvest of woodland caribou, and 90% of the total licensed harvest of migratory caribou (Table 1; Figure 4).

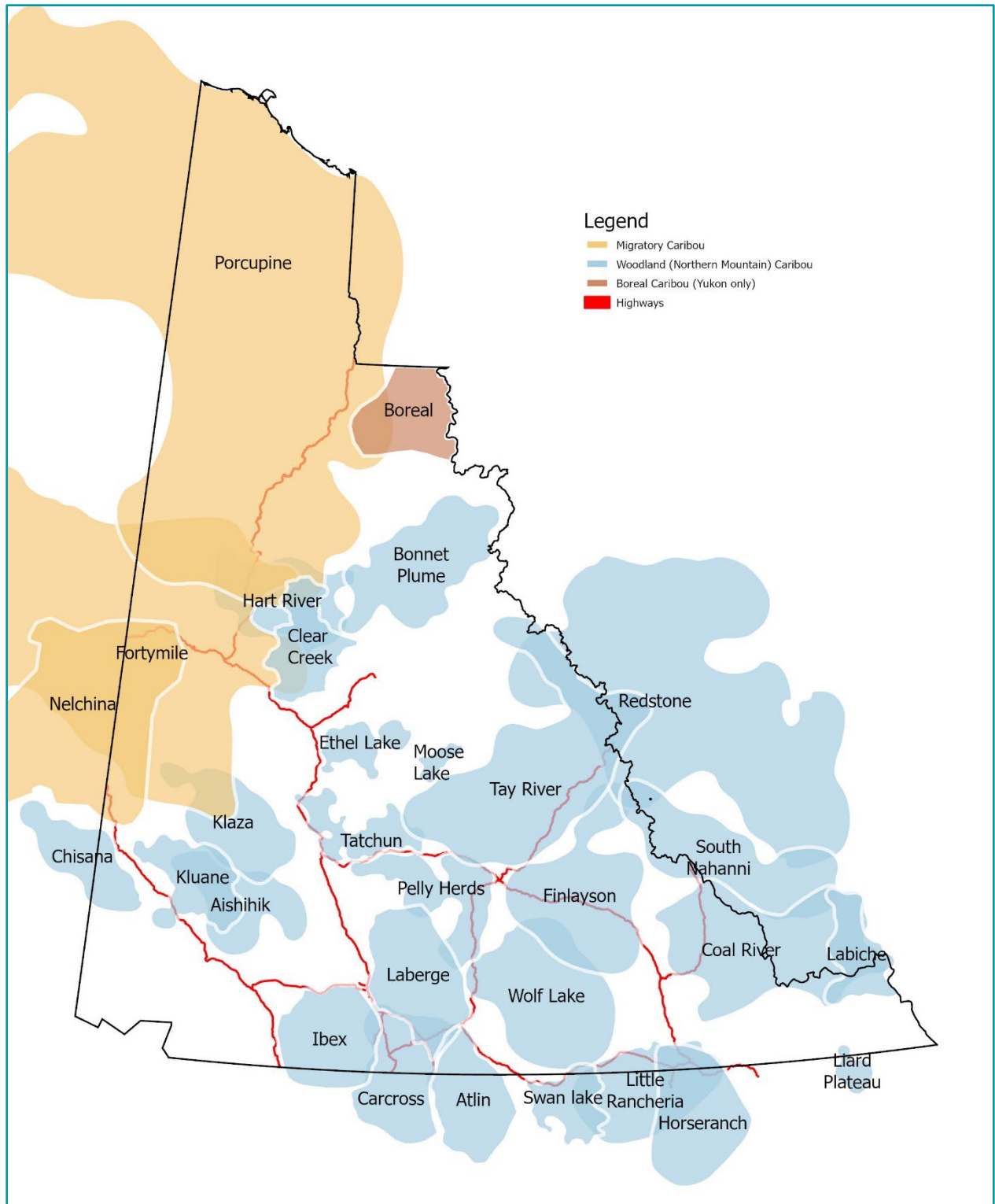


Figure 2. Distribution of caribou herds in the Yukon in 2023.

Caribou are harvested across their distributional range in the Yukon. Harvest management is based on a sex-selective harvest (males only for all herds, including Porcupine caribou since 2010), limited spatial and temporal access to animals (including Permit Hunt Authorizations [PHA] in some areas), a bag limit of one caribou per licensed hunter per year (with the ability to hunt a second caribou from the Porcupine caribou herd). Scientific guidelines for caribou management may be consulted for a detailed description of how caribou harvest is managed in the territory (Environment Yukon 2016). Caribou harvest management decisions are made using the best available Traditional Knowledge and scientific information, as well as public input, including that of Yukon hunters and outfitters (Figure 3).

Each year, the Government of Yukon conducts aerial surveys of caribou to estimate population size or other demographic parameters that infer herd trend (e.g., Hegel 2013, Hegel et al. 2016, Russell and Russell 2022, Goorts et al. 2023, Russell et al. 2023, 2024) and these data directly inform harvest management. Regulations for caribou hunting in the coming season, as well as licensed harvest statistics from the previous season, are provided annually in the Yukon Hunting Regulations Summary.

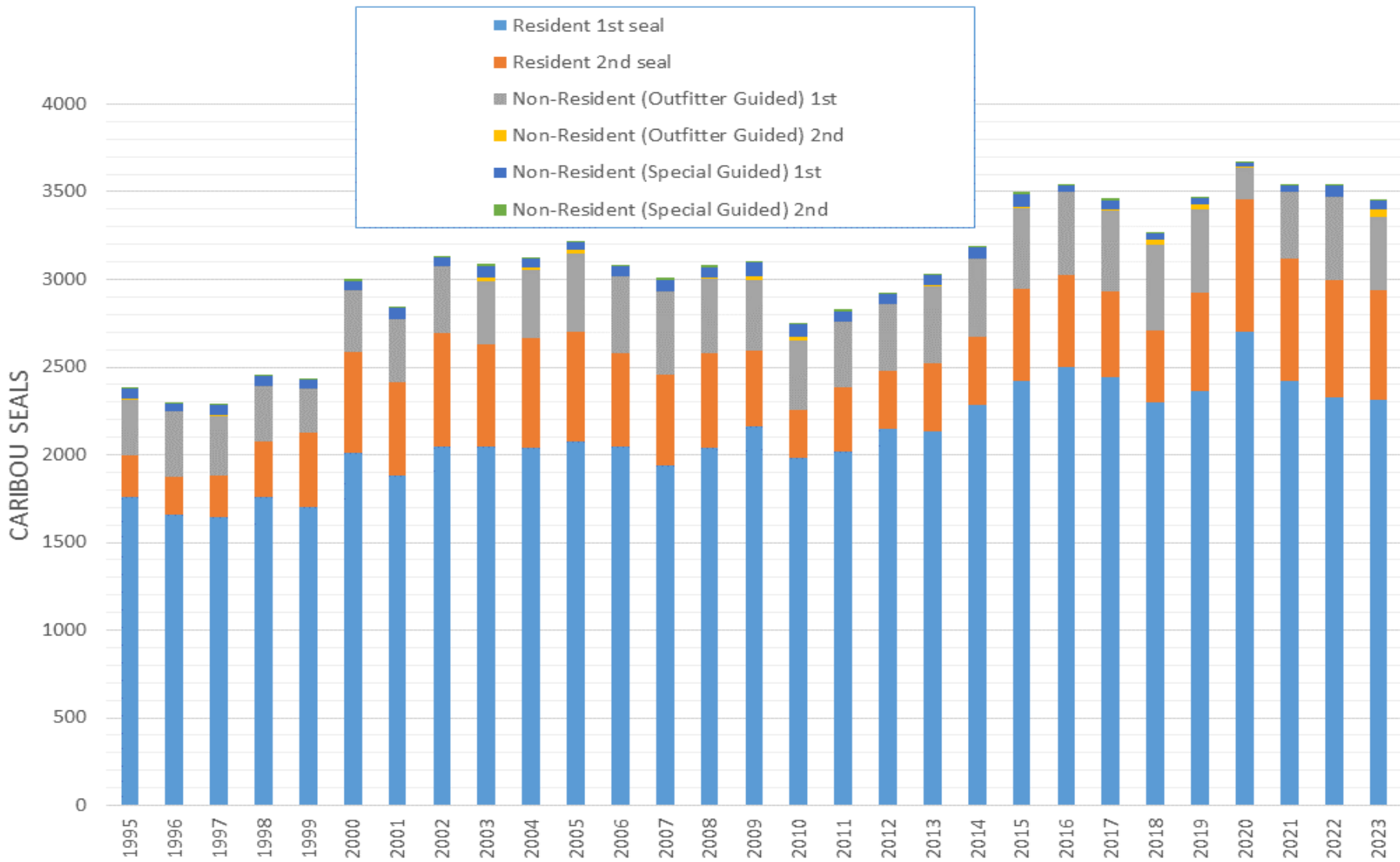


Figure 3. Number of caribou seals obtained by hunter type in the Yukon from 1995 to 2023.

Table 1. Harvest of caribou in the Yukon between 1995 and 2023 by caribou type (woodland and migratory and hunter type (resident [RES], non-resident outfitter guided [NR-OG], and non-resident special guided [NR-SG])).

Hunting Season	Woodland Caribou			Migratory Caribou			Total
	RES	NR-OG	NR-SG	RES	NR-OG	NR-SG	
1995	136	138	14	165	5	7	465
1996	141	147	8	236	24	11	567
1997	108	133	12	235	5	10	503
1998	104	117	2	284	10	6	523
1999	110	108	11	249	4	14	496
2000	116	89	11	363	21	15	615
2001	137	121	8	205	4	3	478
2002	118	129	9	355	19	6	636
2003	94	108	10	184	32	9	437
2004	91	106	11	281	38	3	530
2005	96	111	9	378	31	7	632
2006	101	110	11	140	0	2	364
2007	105	104	10	19	16	2	256
2008	102	99	16	238	31	16	502
2009	88	101	8	151	28	10	386
2010	85	100	11	29	0	9	234
2011	83	107	13	10	3	1	217
2012	116	102	6	8	0	0	232
2013	99	96	10	51	30	2	288
2014	134	96	14	4	0	0	248
2015	92	92	11	216	5	10	426
2016	103	125	4	6	2	0	240
2017	115	107	9	0	1	1	233
2018	97	124	8	12	0	0	241
2019	94	113	8	247	0	6	468
2020	94	52	3	147	1	0	297
2021	84	85	9	19	0	1	198
2022	73	90	12	98	0	4	277
2023	72	96	8	18	0	1	195
Totals	2,988	3,106	276	4,348	310	156	11,184

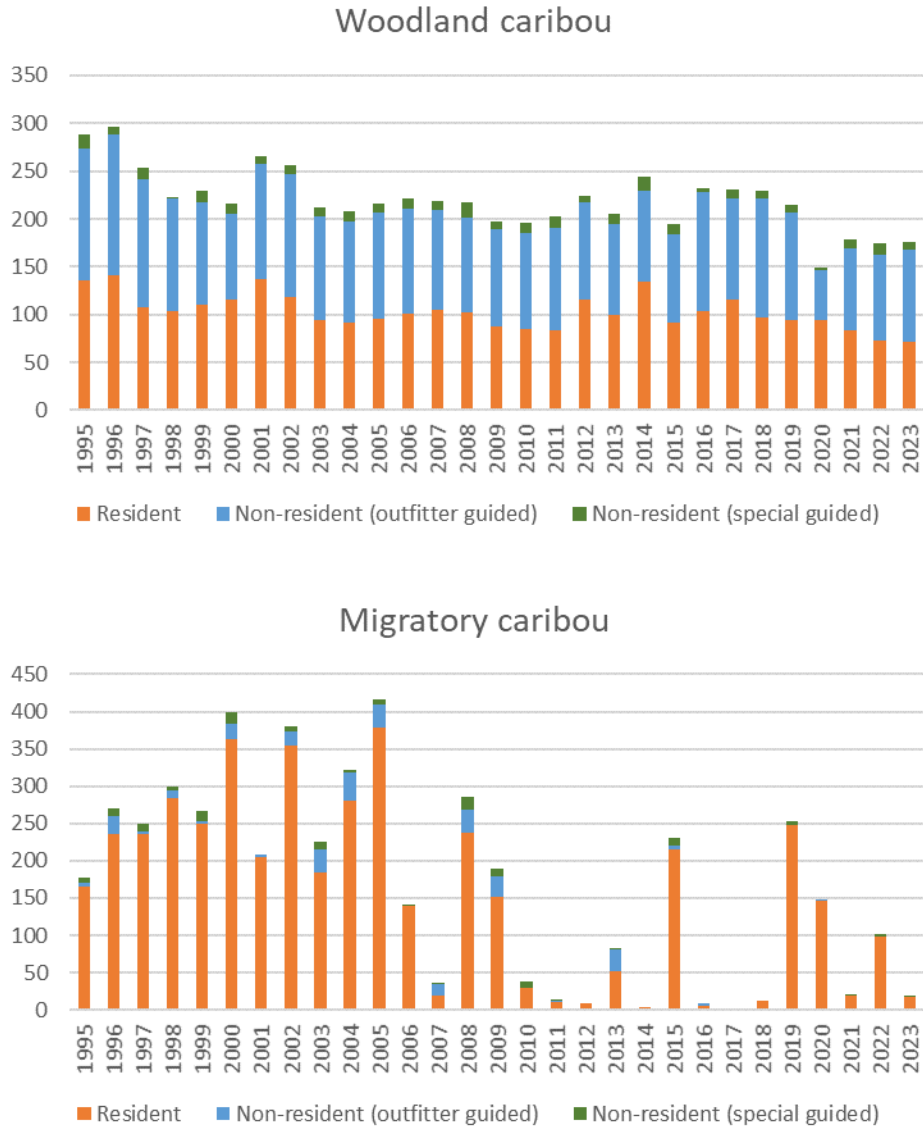


Figure 4. Harvest of caribou in the Yukon between 1995 and 2023 by caribou type (woodland and migratory) and hunter type (resident, non-resident [outfitter guided], and non-resident [special guided]).

Methods

Survey design

Given that this survey was focused on the effort, motivation and satisfaction of resident caribou hunters, we limited our survey to resident hunters that held a seal for caribou during the 2023/2024 hunting season. Non-resident hunters or other Yukoners were not surveyed.

We designed a survey that could be delivered online and take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey had 37 questions that were organized into sections (Appendix 1). Most questions pertained to hunter effort and included questions on when and how respondents hunted caribou, and their hunting experiences. These questions were multiple choice or “fill-in-the-blank”. We also used “skip logic” to increase efficiency and save respondents’ time. For example, if a respondent did not hunt caribou in 2023/2024, they were instructed to “skip” those questions that pertained to hunting effort in 2023/2024.

In subsequent sections we used Likert-scale style questions (e.g., Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), utilizing a 5-point scale with a neutral option. These questions addressed hunter satisfaction and practices as well as opinions on when they may be comfortable limiting caribou hunting opportunities. Finally, we provided an opportunity for respondents to offer comments regarding caribou hunting.

Survey delivery

Our survey was delivered by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics (YBS). All licensed resident hunters that bought a caribou hunting seal for the 2023 hunting season and who supplied a valid email address were invited to participate in the survey ($n = 2,310$). Each invitee was provided a unique four-digit code to access and participate in the online survey. Respondents were able to access the survey using either a computer or other device (e.g., phone, tablet, etc.), and were able to take the survey in English or French.

Our online survey was open for 27 days, beginning on 6 February 2024 and closing on 4 March 2024. Reminders were emailed to invited participants on three occasions (i.e., 13, 20 and 27 February). The Yukon Bureau of Statistics followed up by calling all respondents who had not yet completed the survey between 4 March and 19 April 2024, allowing them to do the survey over the phone. Completed surveys were compiled by staff at the Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

Data analyses

We report on the number of respondents answering each question (i.e., sample size) and the percentage for each response option, in keeping with our intent to report the results as “what we heard”. Where possible, we compare the results with similar surveys of caribou hunters.

Comment analyses

Of the 1,400 completed surveys, 527 individuals provided comments. The Government of Yukon hired an independent consultant to analyze the comments (i.e., qualitative data) through a thematic analysis. This report is attached in Appendix 2.

Results

Respondents

Overall, we received 1,400 responses by resident hunters that purchased a caribou hunting seal for the 2023/2024 hunting season, representing 61% of the 2,310 resident licensed caribou hunters that season.

Most respondents were from Whitehorse (72%), followed by communities in the Southern Lakes (7%), North Yukon (6%), Central Yukon (6%), Liard (5%) and Kluane (4%) regions (Table 2). The average age of respondents was 49 years (range = 14 to 87). Most respondents were male ($n = 1,210$, 86%; Table 3), while 168 (12%) were female, and gender was other or not specified for the remaining 22 (2%). The average age of female respondents was 44 years old and for males it was 50 years old. Similarly, in 2016, 74% of respondents were from Whitehorse and 86% were male (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

Most respondents ($n = 1,398$; 99.9%) reported the number of years of experience they had actively hunting caribou, while two respondents preferred not to say. Respondents varied widely in their reported years of experience hunting caribou (Q1), ranging from 0 to 70 years, with an average of 7.7 years of experience (SD = 10.9; median = 3; Table 4).

Table 2. Respondents by region and community.

Region	Communities	Number	Percent
Whitehorse	Whitehorse	1,011	72%
Southern Lakes	Carcross, Tagish, Teslin, Marsh Lake	98	7%
Liard	Watson Lake, Faro, Ross River	67	5%
North Yukon	Dawson City, Old Crow	83	6%
Kluane	Beaver Creek, Champagne, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, Haines Junction	54	4%
Central Yukon	Carmacks, Elsa, Mayo, Pelly Crossing	86	6%
Totals		1,399	100%

Table 3. Respondents by gender and age.

Age Group	Female		Male	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
< 25 years old	14	8%	41	3%
25-34 years old	40	24%	192	16%
35-44 years old	46	27%	293	24%
45-54 years old	22	13%	210	17%
55-64 years old	19	11%	190	16%
≥65 years old	27	16%	284	23%
Totals	168	100%	1,210	100%

Table 4. Number of years of caribou hunting experience among survey respondents (n = 1,400)

Years of Caribou Hunting Experience	Number	Percent
0	304	22%
1–5	588	42%
6–19	301	22%
20–40	180	13%
>40	25	2%
Totals	1,398	100%

Reasons for purchasing a caribou seal

Reasons for purchasing a caribou seal for the 2023/2024 season varied among respondents (Q2; Table 5). All respondents answered this question, and they could select all the provided reasons that applied. Two-thirds of the respondents (n = 916, 66%) only reported one of the four reasons, followed by those that selected two reasons (n = 296, 21%), three (n = 127, 9%), or all four provided reasons (n = 61, 4%). Thus, the total number of responses is greater than the 1,400 respondents.

Half of the respondents stated that they typically obtain all the seals whether they have hunting plans or not (Table 5). Many (42%) bought a seal, either solely or in part, in the event they encounter a caribou during another hunting trip. The least common response (29% of respondents) was that they specifically intended to hunt caribou that season, followed by a multi-species hunt that included caribou (31%; Table 4).

Table 5. Number and percent of respondents (n = 1,400) that indicated their reason(s) for purchasing a caribou seal in 2023/2024 (Q2).

Reasons	Rank	Number	Percent
I typically buy all the seals, whether I have hunting plans or not	1	702	50%
In case I encounter a caribou on another hunt	2	594	42%
For a multi-species hunt that includes caribou	3	433	31%
With the intent to specifically hunt caribou	4	404	29%

Hunting in caribou permit hunt authorization (PHA) zones

Of the respondents that previously hunted caribou one or more years ($n = 1,096$), 121 (11%) stated that they received a caribou PHA for 2023/2024 season (Q3). Of these 121 respondents, less than half of them ($n = 54$; 45%) hunted in the zone where they had a PHA (Q4). Only 12 of 54 those respondents (22%) reported harvesting a caribou in their PHA (Q5).

Reasons provided by the 67 respondents that had a PHA in 2023/2024 but did not hunt in their permitted PHA zone included not enough time, no hunting partners, the PHA area was hard or expensive to access, that they hunted elsewhere, or other reasons not listed (Table 6). Reasons provided by the 14 respondents that selected “other” included that they had already harvested a moose ($n = 4$), medical reasons ($n = 2$), caribou were not present in the PHA zone ($n = 2$) or in the rut ($n = 1$), did not hunt this year ($n = 1$) or get drawn for a PHA ($n = 3$), or equipment (snowmobile) issues ($n = 1$).

Table 6. Number and percent of respondents ($n = 67$) that indicated their main reason for not hunting caribou using the PHA they drew.

Reasons	Rank	Number	Percent
Not enough time	1	30	45%
Other reasons	2	14	21%
No hunting partner available	3	10	15%
Hunting elsewhere	4	8	12%
Difficult or expensive to access hunting areas	5	5	8%

A focus on woodland caribou

Respondents were instructed to answer the remaining survey questions (Q6 to Q37) regarding their experience with hunting only woodland caribou in the Yukon. Woodland caribou were defined as all caribou populations other than the Nelchina, Fortymile and Porcupine herds (see Figure 2).

Woodland caribou hunting effort

A total of 324 (30%) respondents indicated that they hunted woodland caribou in the 2023/2024 season, while 772 said they did not (Q6). This is an increase of about 5% of respondents that hunted caribou compared to the 25% reported in 2012 and 2016, both of

which included woodland and migratory caribou combined (Cooley and Foster 2013, Yukon Bureau of Statistics 2016). Of the 772 respondents who said they did not hunt woodland caribou, the most common reason was not enough time (45%), followed by “other” reasons, hunting elsewhere, accessing a hunting area was too hard or too expensive, and no hunting partner available (Table 7). Similarly, in 2016, the reasons for a decrease in caribou hunting effort was lack of time. “Other” reasons for not hunting woodland caribou in 2023 primarily included hunting other species instead ($n = 93$, 43%), which overwhelmingly meant moose, but also included bison, and to a limited extent sheep and elk. Medical reasons were also noted as a primary reason for not hunting among respondents ($n = 38$, 18%), as was not hunting in general in 2023 ($n = 37$, 17%). Additional reasons provided included focusing instead on migratory caribou ($n = 10$, 5%), not being drawn for a PHA ($n = 10$, 5%), caribou being too difficult to find ($n = 10$, 5%), concerns over caribou conservation ($n = 9$, 4%), other reasons ($n = 6$, 3%) or because their partner harvested a caribou ($n = 3$, 1%).

Table 7. Number and percent of respondents ($n = 772$) that indicated their main reason for not hunting woodland caribou.

Reasons	Rank	Number	Percent
Not enough time	1	344	45%
Other reasons	2	216	28%
Hunting elsewhere	3	112	15%
Difficult or expensive to access hunting areas	4	54	7%
No hunting partner available	5	46	6%

Three hundred and fifteen (315) respondents reported if they harvested a woodland caribou or not (Q11). Of these, 266 (84%) did not harvest a caribou (Q11).

During the 2023 hunting season, 318 respondents reported taking an average 1.7 (range = 1-13) trips to hunt woodland caribou (Q7). We excluded one response as a potential coding error because the number of trips (30) recorded was an outlier.

Respondents hunted woodland caribou in all Game Management Zones (GMZ) in 2023, except GMZ 6, 7 and 9, where caribou hunting is prohibited to licensed hunters. GMZ 1 only has migratory caribou and a small and very remote herd of Boreal woodland caribou available to hunt. Of the 315 respondents that reported which GMZ they hunted woodland caribou (Q8), 269 (85%) hunted in only one GMZ, 40 (13%) hunted in two GMZ, and 6 (2%) hunted in three GMZ. Most respondents reported hunting woodland caribou in GMZ 10 and 11 combined (53%), followed by GMZ 2, 4, 5, 8, and 3 (Figure 5). Similarly, in 2016, most respondent reported hunting caribou (woodland and migratory, based on numbers of days) mainly in GMZ 10 and 11, followed by GMZ 2, 4, 8, 5. GMZ 7, 3 and 1 had low numbers of hunting days (Yukon Bureau of Statistics 2016).

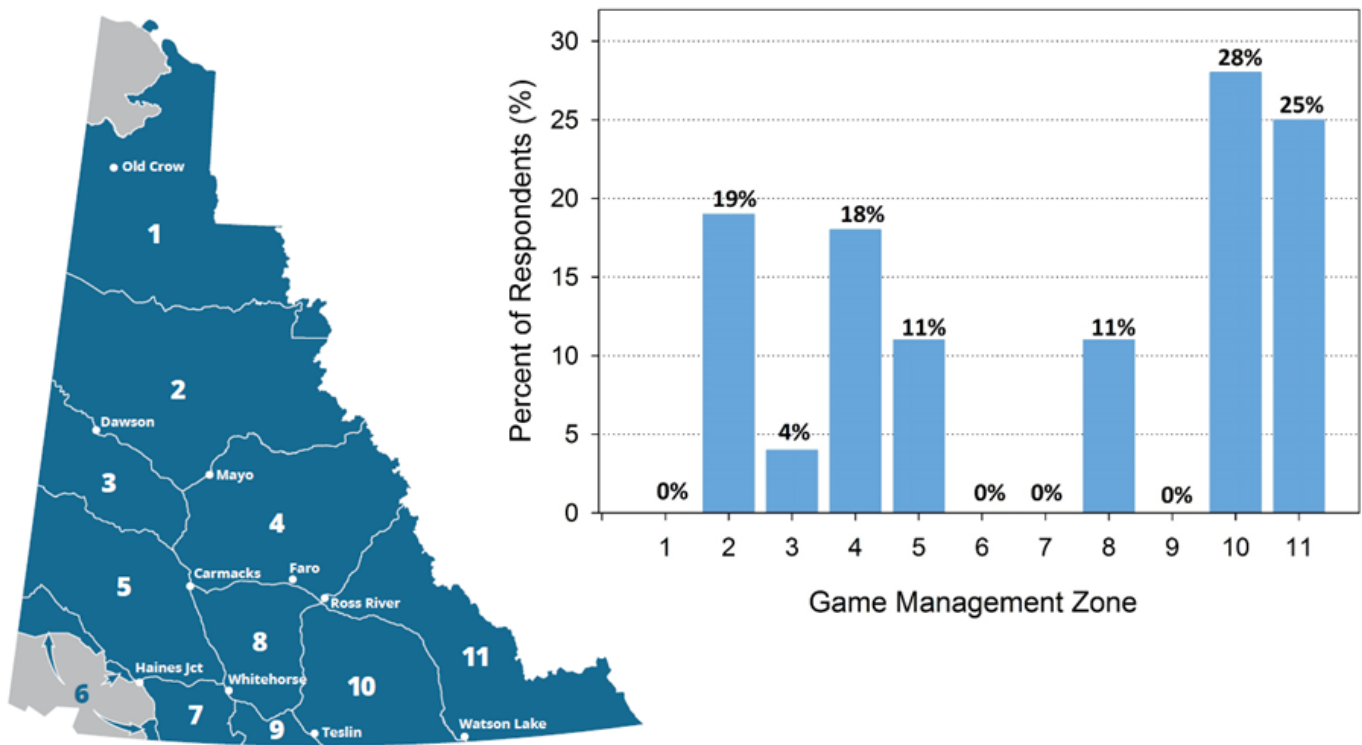


Figure 5. Results from Question 8. Values above the bars are the percent of survey respondents ($n = 351$) that hunted woodland caribou in each Game Management Zone (GMZ) in 2023. The 11 Yukon GMZ are indicated on the map – grey areas are national parks.

In 2023, 264 respondents reported hunting woodland caribou for a total of 1,480 days. The number of days hunting woodland caribou in 2023 by respondents varied between 1 and 63 days, with an average of 6.7 days per respondent. Most of the respondents (72%) hunted woodland caribou between two and nine days in 2023 (Q8, Figure 6).

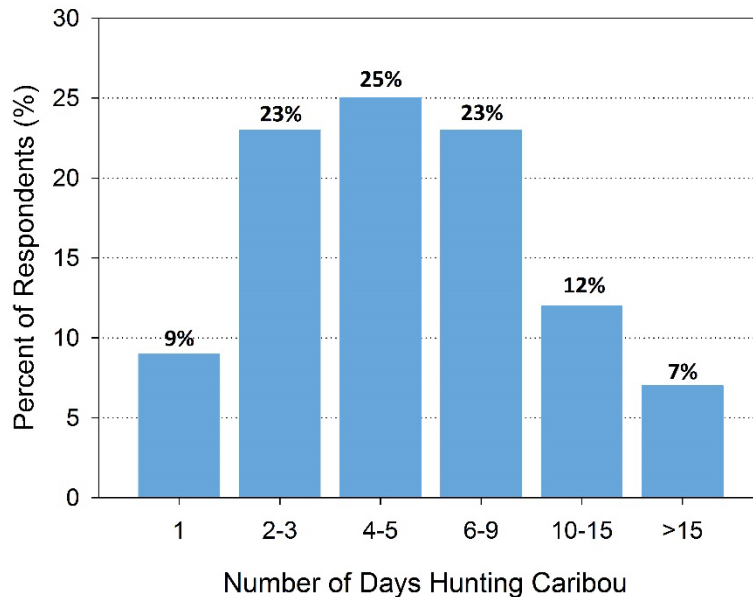


Figure 6. Results from Question 8. Number of days hunting caribou reported by respondents (n = 324). Values above the bars are the percent of respondents.

Respondents that hunted woodland caribou in 2023 did not distribute their hunting effort equally between months. Woodland caribou hunting effort in 2023 was similar in August (47%) and September (43%), then substantially reduced in October (10%; Q8). This differs from harvest behaviour compared to the 2016 season. That year, hunters reported hunting woodland and migratory caribou 875 days in August (57%), 478 in September (31%), and 177 days in October (12%). Woodland caribou hunting effort in 2023 by respondents is provided by GMZ and month in Table 8.

Over half of the respondents (n = 184, 57%) reported that their woodland caribou hunting efforts in 2023 stayed the same as last year, while for 57 respondents (18%) it increased, and for 54 (17%) it decreased (Q10). For the remaining 29 respondents (9%), this was their first year hunting woodland caribou in the Yukon.

Table 8. The number of days hunting woodland caribou by Game Management Zone and month as reported by respondents (n = 324).

Game Management Zone	Number of Days Hunting Woodland Caribou									Total Days
	August			September			October			
	N day	Min-Max	Mean	N day	Min-Max	Mean	N day	Min-Max	Mean	
1	0			0			0			0
2	151	1–21	4.4	62	1–8	3.6	29	2–7	4.1	242
3	14	1–8	3.5	12	2–7	4.1	8	1–7	4.0	34
4	85	1–7	3.4	140	1–14	5.0	20	1–5	2.9	245
5	114	1–25	5.2	56	1–6	3.1	21	1–7	4.2	200
6	0			0			0			0
7	0			0			0			0
8	65	1–12	4.6	67	1–14	3.5	16	2–4	3.2	148
9	0			0			0			0
10	146	1–15	3.9	118	1–8	3.2	37	1–5	2.8	301
11	155	1–8	3.8	134	1–21	5.0	30	1–18	5.0	319
Totals	838			760			179			1,480

Among the respondents that stated their woodland caribou hunting effort increased in 2023 (Q10), the most common reason provided by 48 respondents was because they wanted to specifically target harvesting a caribou (38%), followed by difficulty finding caribou (17%), having a Special Guiding licence for caribou (13%), more time to hunt caribou (8%), which included difficult access (6%), more luck finding caribou (6%), social reasons (4%), needing the meat (4%) and issues with administration of the hunt (4%).

The most common reason for a decrease in woodland caribou hunting effort in 2023 reported by 48 respondents was a lack of time (56% of respondents, Q10). The next most reported reasons included focusing on other species (10%; e.g., moose, elk, sheep), harvesting an animal

early in their hunt (8%), not needing meat this year due to other hunts (4%), too many other hunters on the land (4%), difficult access restricting hunting (2%), lack of available hunting partners (2%), illness or injury (2%) and poor weather (2%).

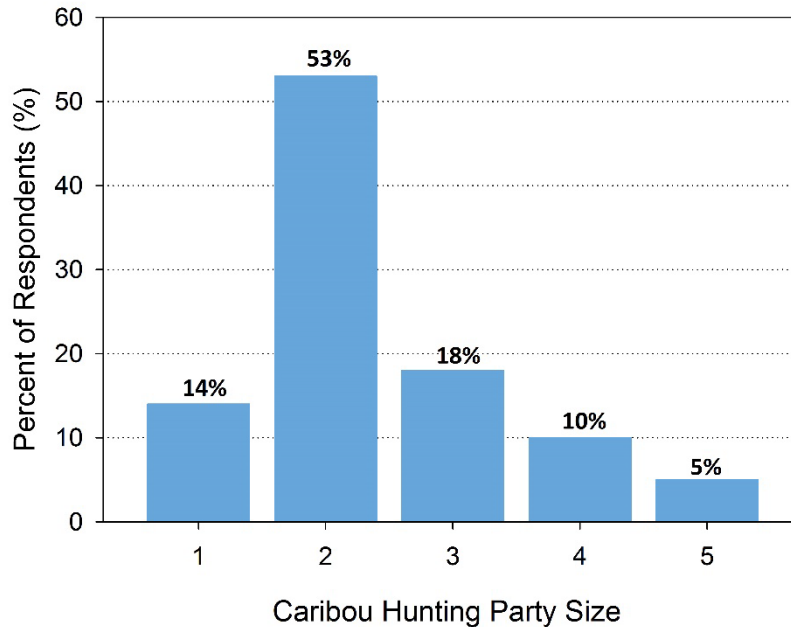


Figure 7. Woodland caribou hunting party sizes. Values above the bars are the percent of respondents (n = 324) for each category.

Table 9. Number and percent of respondents (n = 324) that indicated their reason(s) for when they decided to hunt woodland caribou (Q12). Respondents could select all that applied; however, the percent of responses is based on the number of respondents.

Reason	Rank	Number	Percent
Avoidance of the rut	1	160	49%
Availability of hunting partner(s)	2	147	45%
Caribou availability and accessibility	3	109	34%
Avoidance of other hunters	4	65	20%
Other	5	56	17%
Weather	6	51	16%

Respondents reported that their woodland caribou hunting party sizes ranged from one to five people, with an average of 2.4 people per party ($n = 324$ respondents). Over half of the respondents (53%) reported a party size of two people (Q9, Figure 7).

Half (51%) of the respondents listed more than one reason for when they decided to hunt woodland caribou in 2023. Primary reasons respondents ($n = 324$) provided for when they decided to hunt woodland caribou in 2023 (Q12) included avoiding when caribou were in rut (49%) and when their hunting partners were available (45%). Additional reasons are provided in Table 9. Other reasons overwhelmingly revolved around personal schedules.

Most respondents (59%, $n = 190$) reported accessing their woodland caribou hunting area using more than one mode of transportation (Q13). Over three-quarters of respondents (78%) reported using a vehicle (78%), followed by an ATV/Argo (43%) and/or on foot (walking; 39%) to access their hunting areas. Other forms of transportation used are listed in Table 10. Similarly, in 2016, hunters most used modes of transportation were ATV or Argo, on foot, or vehicle with comments showing that several respondents who hunted on foot got to their hunting destination through other means of transportation (the question did not differentiate between getting to hunting grounds versus actively hunting).

When hunting woodland caribou, most respondents (60%, $n = 194$) reported traveling within their woodland caribou hunting area using more than one mode of transportation (Q14). Most respondents (72%) reported hunting woodland caribou by foot (i.e., hiking), followed by using an ATV or Argo (43%) or truck (19%). Other modes of hunting woodland caribou are listed in Table 10.

Table 10. Ranking of transportation modes used by respondents ($n = 1,096$) to travel to and within caribou hunting areas. Respondents were asked to select all that applied.

To Caribou Hunting Area				Within Caribou Hunting Area			
Travel Mode	Rank	Number	Percent	Travel Mode	Rank	Number	Percent
Vehicle (truck/car)	1	254	42%	On Foot (hiking)	1	234	72%
ATV/Argo/UTV	2	138	23%	ATV/Argo/UTV	2	139	43%
On Foot (hiking)	3	127	21%	Vehicle (truck/car)	3	60	19%
Airplane	4	26	4%	Motorized Boat	4	24	7%
Motorized Boat	5	24	4%	Snowmobile	5	14	4%
Snowmobile	6	13	2%	Non-Motorized Boat	6	13	4%
Non-Motorized Boat	7	11	2%	Horseback	7	4	1%
Horseback	8	5	1%	Skis/Snowshoes	8	2	1%
Bicycle	9	3	<1%	Bicycle	9	1	<1%
Other	10	2	<1%				
Skis/Snowshoes	11	1	<1%				

Woodland caribou hunting economics

Of the 324 respondents that reported going on a woodland caribou hunt in 2023, more than half (54%) reported \$1,000 or less on their hunt (Q15; Figure 8). A large percentage (43%) spent between \$1,000 and \$5,000 (Figure 8). Only ten of the respondents (3%) reported spending more than \$5,000 on hunting woodland caribou in 2023 (Figure 8).

Respondents reported that the 58 woodland caribou that they harvested were distributed among 170 households (Q16). Respondents shared the woodland caribou they harvested between one to six households (Figure 9), and the average was 2.9 households.

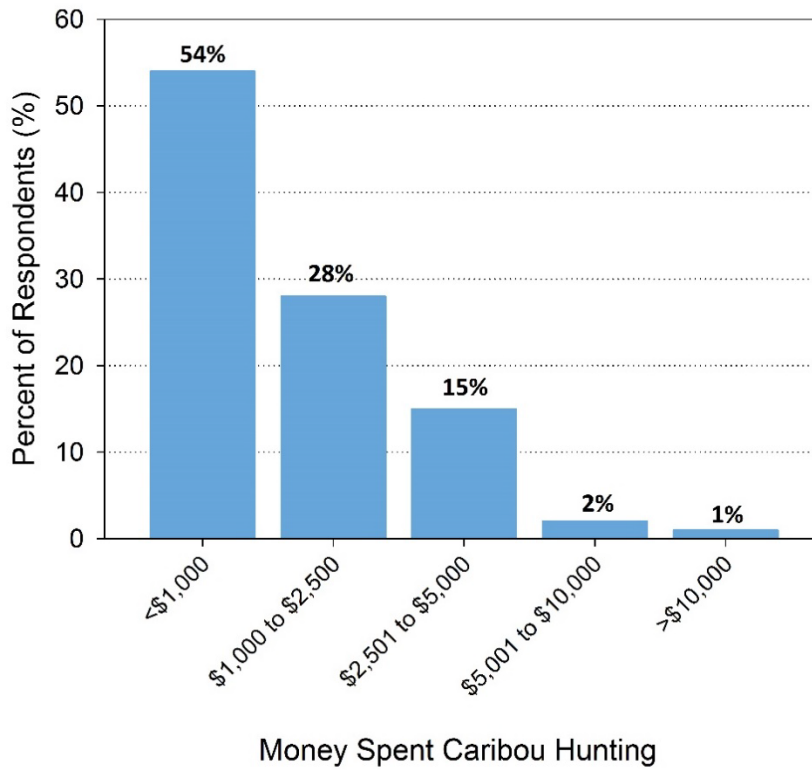


Figure 8. Money reported spent hunting woodland caribou. Values above the bars are the percent of respondents (n = 324) for each category.

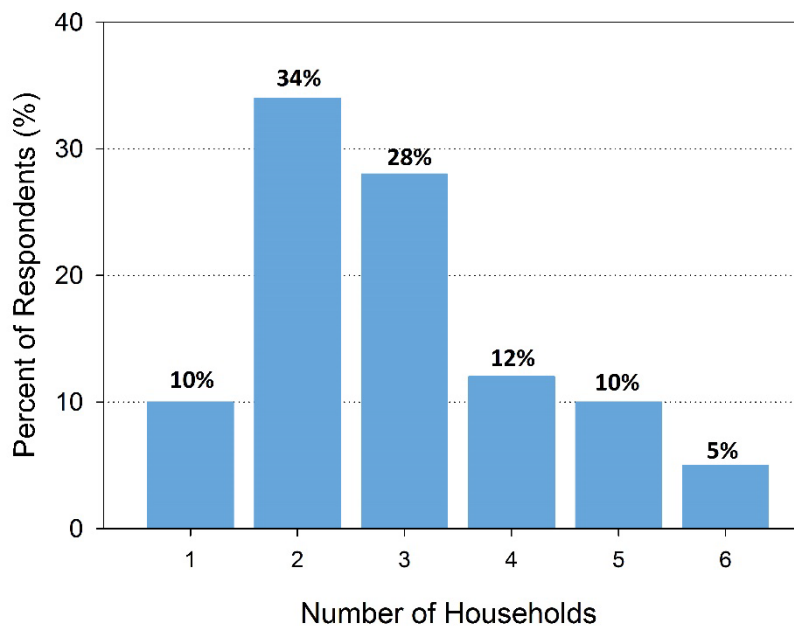


Figure 9. Percent of households that respondents (n = 58) shared meat from their woodland caribou hunt in 2023. Values above the bars are the percent of respondents for each category.

Perceptions while hunting woodland caribou

Respondents ($n = 272$) were mixed regarding perceived change in the abundance of woodland caribou in the areas they hunted over the past five years (Q19; Table 11). Few respondents believed that caribou abundance had increased (10%) or decreased (17%), many thought they had stayed the same (44%). An appreciable percent of respondents (29%) did not know if the abundance had changed in the past five years, most likely because they had not hunted the same area before or in the past five years.

Respondents ($n = 324$) also had mixed responses regarding perceived change in the number of other hunters in the areas they hunted this year compared to the past five years (Q17; Table 11). Few (7%) believed that the number of other hunters had decreased, many thought they had stayed the same (40%) or increased (29%). An appreciable percent of respondents (23%) did not know if the number of hunters had changed in the past five years, most likely because they had not hunted the same area in 2023 or in the past five years.

Most respondents (75%; $n = 272$) reported feeling that the amount of linear access features (e.g., roads, trails, cutlines, etc.) had stayed the same in the last five years in the area where they hunted woodland caribou (Q18). A small percent of respondents believed that the amount of linear features increased (8%) or decreased (7%) during the past five years, while 10% did not know how they changed (Table 11).

Table 11. The number and percent of respondents ($n = 272$) that indicated their perception of caribou abundance (Q19), number of other hunters (Q17), and number of linear features (Q18), had changed over the past five years where they hunt woodland caribou.

Response	Caribou Abundance		Other Hunters		Linear Features	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Increase	28	10%	93	29%	23	8%
Decrease	45	17%	24	7%	20	7%
Stay the same	121	44%	131	40%	203	75%
Don't know	78	29%	76	23%	26	10%

Most of 1,095 respondents (70%; n = 796) did not believe that development in caribou ranges had a negative impact on caribou hunting (Q20; Table 12). The remaining 30% of respondents reported that development had a negative impact on caribou hunting in 1 or up to all caribou ranges. The number of respondents reporting that development had a negative impact on caribou hunting for specific caribou herds is provided in Table 12. However, caution is urged in interpreting these results because most respondents likely would have knowledge of caribou hunting in only a few caribou ranges, so most likely did not comment on those populations for which they lacked knowledge.

Table 12. Number of respondents (n = 1,095) indicating that development in caribou ranges had a negative impact on caribou hunting by caribou herd.

Herd	Number of Respondents	Number	Number of Respondents
Aishihik	65	Labiche	20
Atlin	72	Liard Plateau	17
Bonnet Plume	31	Little Rancheria	72
Boreal	20	Nelchina	26
Clear Creek	94	Moose Lake	19
Coal River	35	Pelly Herds	42
Ethel Lake	48	Porcupine	64
Finlayson	78	Redstone	22
Fortymile	55	South Nahanni	54
Hart River	59	Tatchun	41
Horseranch	23	Tay River	41
Klaza	61	Wolf Lake	42
Laberge	84	None of above	769

Selecting woodland caribou hunting areas

A total of 1,096 respondents reported the top three reasons underlying where they decided to hunt woodland caribou in 2023 (Q22), with top reasons most frequently selected being the likelihood of finding caribou (34% of respondents), the possibility of harvesting other species (30%), and exploring a new area (26%). Additional reasons selected as the top three are included in Table 13. These results varied from the 2016 survey where respondents identified the following characteristics, in order of priority, when selecting an area to hunt woodland and migratory caribou: lack of other hunters (54% - this answer was not available in the 2023 survey), accessibility (49%), ability to find and harvest other species (46%), ease of finding caribou (45%), remoteness (39%), landscape scenery (33%), ease/type of travel (30%) and other (5%).

Table 13. Results from Question 22. Ranking of reasons for selecting caribou hunting areas by respondents (n = 1,096).

Population	Rank	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Likelihood of finding caribou	1	378	34%
Possibility to harvest other species	2	327	30%
Explore new areas	3	282	26%
Remoteness	4	266	24%
Ease of access into the area	5	219	20%
Landscape scenery	6	197	18%
Where you have always hunted	7	194	18%
Good knowledge of the area	8	160	15%
Status of the caribou population	9	139	13%
Not likely to see motorized vehicles or boats	10	127	12%
Other	11	115	10%
Success stories from other hunters	12	66	6%

Respondents were asked, hypothetically, what would stop them from hunting woodland caribou in an area where they had been hunting in the past (Q23). They were asked to select up to three reasons. Most of the 1,096 respondents indicated a decrease in caribou abundance (60%) and too many other hunters (55%), followed by too many harvest regulations (22%). All reasons selected are listed and ranked in Table 14.

Table 14. Results from Question 23. Ranking of reasons for why respondents (n = 1,096) would stop using areas previously used to hunt woodland caribou.

Population	Rank	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Decrease in caribou abundance in the area	1	654	60%
Too many other hunters	2	603	55%
Too many harvest regulations	3	239	22%
Too many motorized vehicles	4	209	19%
Increased human disturbance	5	190	17%
Desire to explore new hunting areas	6	161	15%
Decrease in availability of other big game species	7	130	12%
Cost of access	8	122	11%
Other	9	104	9%
Ecosystem change (e.g., fire, flooded, shrubs)	10	87	8%

Motivations of woodland caribou hunters

Respondents were presented with nine potential motivations for hunting woodland caribou and asked to select up to three reasons why they hunted them (Q21). Most respondents reported hunting for the meat (93% of 1,096 respondents). The second most selected reason was because it was an enjoyable outdoor activity (52%). The third most selected reason was as a social activity with friends or family (21%). Other motivations of woodland caribou hunters were varied and are ranked in Table 15. Interestingly, in 2013, we asked an open question: “What part of your caribou hunting experience were you most satisfied with?”, hunters reported that simply being out on the land was the most satisfactory aspect of their hunt followed by “successful hunt”. With a similar question, in 2023, obtaining food was the most

frequently selected option, followed by an enjoyable outdoor activity, which is like being out on the land. This means that either respondents behave differently when having options vs open questions, or that hunters have shifted their hunting satisfaction from being out on the land as a primary reason to, now, obtaining food.

Table 15. Results from Question 23. Ranking of reasons for why respondents (n = 1,096) hunt woodland caribou.

Population	Rank	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
To obtain food	1	1,022	93%
As an enjoyable outdoor activity	2	567	52%
As a social activity with friends or family	3	228	21%
To see caribou in the wild	4	150	14%
To teach others how to hunt	5	108	10%
For the sport/challenge of it	6	88	8%
To learn more about caribou	7	86	8%
For the hide and/or antlers	8	83	8%
To improve my hunting skills	9	53	5%
Other	10	41	4%

Knowledge about caribou and hunting

Respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed about statements regarding their knowledge about caribou and hunting caribou (Q24-27; Table 16).

Woodland caribou hunter satisfaction

In 2012, over 75% of caribou seal holders reported being satisfied with their caribou (woodland and migratory) hunting experience. Similarly, in this survey, respondents were generally satisfied with their opportunity and experiences hunting woodland caribou in 2023 (i.e., between 71% and 81% were satisfied or very satisfied within the four satisfaction-related

questions). Most also indicated that they would be satisfied even if a woodland caribou was not harvested during their hunt (Table 17).

Interestingly, in 2013, we asked an open question: “What part of your caribou hunting experience were you least satisfied with?” Hunters reported that an unsuccessful hunt was the least satisfactory aspect of their hunt. In 2023, 73% of hunters responded being satisfied or very satisfied with their caribou hunting experience even if no caribou were harvested.

Table 16. Summary of results from questions posed to caribou hunters with respect to their knowledge about caribou and caribou hunting. Included are the sample size (n), median response, and frequency distribution of responses.

Question	n	Median	Frequency Distribution				
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q24. I am confident I can tell the difference between a bull and cow caribou.	1,388	Strongly Agree	1,016 (73%)	240 (17%)	62 (4%)	32 (2%)	38 (3%)
Q25. I am aware of which caribou herd I am hunting.	1,384	Strongly Agree	893 (65%)	312 (23%)	100 (7%)	50 (4%)	29 (2%)
Q26. I am aware of the status (increasing, decreasing, stable) of the caribou herd I am hunting.	1,379	Agree	509 (37%)	495 (36%)	240 (17%)	96 (7%)	39 (3%)
Q27. I am aware of the rights and regulations that apply to other hunters around me.	1,385	Strongly Agree	855 (62%)	368 (27%)	90 (6%)	39 (3%)	33 (2%)

Table 17. Summary of results from questions posed to caribou hunters with respect to their satisfaction hunting caribou in 2023 (Q28-31). Included are the sample size (*n*), median response, and frequency distribution of responses.

Question	<i>n</i>	Median	Frequency Distribution				
			Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Q28. Overall, how satisfied were you with your woodland caribou hunting experience during the 2023/2024 hunting season?	318	Satisfied	85 (27%)	141 (44%)	65 (20%)	21 (7%)	6 (2%)
Q29. Overall, how satisfied were you with the opportunities to hunt woodland caribou during the 2023/2024 hunting season?	318	Satisfied	79 (25%)	155 (49%)	54 (17%)	24 (8%)	6 (2%)
Q30. How satisfied could you be with your woodland caribou hunt even if you did not harvest a caribou?	940	Satisfied	311 (33%)	449 (48%)	122 (13%)	43 (5%)	15 (2%)
Q31. How satisfied could you be with your woodland caribou hunt even if no one in your party harvests a caribou?	962	Satisfied	251 (26%)	456 (47%)	158 (16%)	75 (8%)	22 (2%)

A hypothetical caribou management scenario

We explored a hypothetical management scenario to gauge respondents' acceptability to potential management actions. Specifically, we asked respondents to consider ten management actions that potentially could be taken in response to the need to restrict licensed harvest for conservation purposes and state whether they found them acceptable or unacceptable (Q32). Responses varied for each of the hypothetical management actions, with some respondents finding each extremely acceptable, extremely unacceptable, and in-between these extremes (Table 18). A median response of "acceptable" was provided by respondents for the potential management actions of initiating a PHA, registration hunt, threshold hunt, closure during the rut or restricting outfitting quotas. However, aggregate responses were varied for the other five potential management actions, with a median response of "neither", highlighting the variation in how respondents felt about these solutions (Table 18).

Table 18. Summary of results from questions posed to caribou hunters with respect to their comfort level with caribou hunting management scenario (questions 28 to 31; Appendix 1). Included are the sample size (*n*), median response, and frequency distribution of responses.

Question	<i>n</i>	Median	Frequency Distribution				
			Extremely Acceptable	Acceptable	Neither	Unacceptable	Extremely Unacceptable
Q32.1. Establish a Permit Hunt Authorization (PHA) area	1,346	Acceptable	176 (13%)	615 (46%)	307 (23%)	183 (14%)	65 (5%)
Q32.2. Establish a threshold hunt	1,359	Acceptable	196 (14%)	724 (53%)	262 (19%)	123 (9%)	54 (4%)
Q32.3. Establish a registration hunt	1,358	Acceptable	132 (10%)	630 (46%)	346 (25%)	195 (14%)	55 (4%)
Q32.4. Reduce outfitter quotas	1,361	Acceptable	580 (43%)	381 (28%)	252 (19%)	107 (8%)	41 (3%)
Q32.5. Encourage a voluntary closure for resident hunters	1,356	Neither	124 (9%)	496 (37%)	392 (29%)	249 (18%)	95 (7%)
Q32.6. Establish a full closure for resident hunters	1,358	Neither	97 (7%)	357 (26%)	354 (26%)	349 (26%)	201 (15%)
Q32.7. Shorten the hunting season	1,372	Neither	83 (6%)	449 (33%)	317 (23%)	359 (26%)	164 (12%)
Q32.8. Establish access restrictions	1,359	Neither	146 (11%)	402 (30%)	339 (25%)	331 (24%)	141 (10%)
Q32.9. No new action	1,364	Neither	125 (9%)	438 (32%)	491 (36%)	234 (17%)	76 (6%)
Q32.10. Rut closure	1,364	Acceptable	248 (18%)	548 (40%)	345 (25%)	179 (13%)	44 (3%)

Hunting migratory caribou

While our survey was focused on resident hunters that hunted woodland caribou in 2023, we also asked some questions regarding the hunting of migratory caribou during the 2023/2024 hunting season. For the 2023/2024 hunting season, only eight of 1,400 respondents (0.6%) reported hunting the Nelchina population, while 39 (2.8%) hunted the Fortymile population, and 57 (4.1%) hunted the Porcupine population (Q33–35). Reasons why respondents did not hunt these migratory populations are provided in Table 19. Overwhelmingly, the ‘other’ reason provided for not hunting migratory populations was because respondents were focused on hunting other species (i.e., moose) in 2023/2024.

Table 19. Number and percent of respondents (n = 324) that indicated their reason(s) why they did not hunt migratory caribou during the 2023/2024 hunting season (Q33–35). Respondents could list more than one reason, so percentages for each population exceed 100%.

Reason	Porcupine		Fortymile		Nelchina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
I did not know about this particular hunt	28	2%	39	3%	194	14%
The herd was not around	156	11%	69	5%	52	4%
Not enough time	546	39%	539	39%	504	36%
No hunting partners	123	9%	114	8%	102	7%
Hunting area is too far or hard to access	324	23%	274	20%	200	14%
I hunted caribou elsewhere	-	-	243	17%	267	19%
I plan to go before 31 March	9	1%	13	1%	3	<1%
I am concerned about the herd's status	-	-	31	2%	35	3%
Other	427	31%	364	26%	368	26%

Over half of the respondents (52%; n = 725) had never hunted the Porcupine caribou herd in their lifetime (Q36), while 14% had hunted the herd only once. Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) hunted Porcupine caribou less than five times, whereas 12% hunted them five times or more during their lifetime.

We asked those respondents that hunted the Porcupine caribou herd more than once (n = 481) if they had noticed an increase in human disturbance (e.g., roads, seismic lines, trails, oil and gas developments, etc.) in the herd's range in the past five years (Q37). Of those respondents that could answer (n = 373), 73% said that they did not see any change in the past five years. The remaining respondents felt there was either minor (18%) or significant (9%) change in human disturbance on the herd's range.

Qualitative analysis of comments

Above we focused on a quantitative analysis of the survey data. However, at the end of the survey the participants had the opportunity to provide comments. An independent consultant summarized the main themes in the comments provided by 527 individuals (38% of respondents). A separate report was produced and is available upon request. The key findings of the qualitative analysis included:

- Over one third (36%) of all survey comments identified priorities to guide decision-making within the YG harvest management regime related to caribou. The most frequently identified priority was upholding a sense of fairness (e.g., “all regulations should apply to everyone, equally”), followed by prioritizing local hunters, resident hunters, and/or hunters who “need the meat”. Other priorities identified by survey participants included ensuring the conservation and sustainability of the species, as well as ensuring informed, transparent, and participative decision-making.
- Under half (48%) of the comments that were received described perspectives on and suggestions for management tools and regulatory changes within the caribou harvest management regime. Many of these comments described the need for increased restrictions on outfitters and subsistence^[1] hunters, as well as implementing reporting requirements for subsistence hunters. Survey participants also commented on rut closures and predator control, typically expressing support for the use of these management tools. Support for tools such as predator control were often tied to the perspective that the harvest management regime should prioritize management tools that do not place restrictions on licensed resident hunters.
- Other management tools discussed by survey participants included permit hunts, access restrictions, communication and education, re-opening hunting areas and loosening restrictions, threshold hunts, voluntary closures, limiting disturbances to caribou and caribou habitat, limiting successful hunters or number of seals available to one hunter, voluntary closures, habitat enhancement and protection, improving caribou monitoring and data management, collaboration with Indigenous authorities, lengthening Yukon residency time requirements for hunting licenses, and bow-only areas or seasons.

- Thirteen percent (13%) of comments addressed observations of and concerns about caribou populations in general and specific caribou herds, as well as impacts to them. Most of the herd-specific comments focused on the Porcupine Caribou Herd, identifying concerns about unsafe and unethical hunting practices, overharvesting, and impacts unrelated to hunting (e.g., climate change). The Finlayson Caribou Herd was also discussed more frequently by survey participants, with many arguing the herd should be reopened to licensed resident hunters.
- A similar number of survey comments (12%) described negative perceptions of specific groups of hunters, including subsistence hunters, outfitters and their clients, and trophy hunters.
- Some survey comments (3%) noted concerns about food security and rising costs (e.g., cost of food, costs associated with hunting).
- Other survey comments (2%) addressed the need for greater enforcement of hunting regulations.

^[1] Comments provided by survey participants highlighted the fact that many hunters identify with the concept of subsistence hunting, often described in contrast to “sport” hunting. However, in the context of this report, “subsistence hunters” refers more narrowly to those with subsistence harvest rights in the Yukon: “Subsistence harvest rights are the rights of Indigenous Peoples to do the following for food or traditional purposes: hunt; gather; fish; and trap. These rights are protected under the Canadian Constitution and Final Agreements. An Indigenous person hunting, fishing or trapping under subsistence harvest rights does not need a licence to do so.” (Government of Yukon, n.d.)

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Appendix 1: Caribou Hunter Effort Survey



Hunter Effort Survey
Caribou seal holders, 2023 Season

As a caribou seal(s) holder in 2023, you have been selected to participate in this survey, whether or not you actually hunted caribou in 2023/2024. The purpose of the survey is to get a better understanding of caribou hunter effort, satisfaction, and motivations, as well as your thoughts on caribou hunting practices. Your responses will help to manage caribou harvest in the future.

Participation in this survey is voluntary; however, your response is very important to us. **Please fill out the survey even if you did not participate in hunting activities during the 2023-2024 season.** The survey has 37 questions and should take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, there is a section where you can provide comments on the survey or on caribou hunting in the Yukon in general.

For more information about caribou herds, please refer to the enclosed map.

For more information about Game Management Subzones go to the website at:

<https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/env/env-overview-map-game-management-subzones.pdf>

Or

<https://mapservices.gov.yk.ca/GeoYukon/?&runWorkflo=LayerLaunch&layerOn=gma>

For general information about hunting and hunting regulations, visit

<https://yukon.ca/en/guide-hunting-yukon>

Questions about the survey? Phone the Wildlife Harvest Specialist (Department of Environment) at 867-471-3651

Questions about technical issues? Phone Yukon Bureau of Statistics at 867-667-8029 or email ybs.operations@yukon.ca

Survey results should be available online at www.env.gov.yk.ca later this year.



SECTION 1: HUNTING EFFORT

1. How many years have you been actively hunting caribou? *Actively means years you actually went out hunting caribou.* Number of years: _____ **[If # of years= 0 display Q2 then Skip to Q24]**
2. For the 2023/2024 hunting season, why did you purchase a caribou seal (select all that apply):
 - With the intent to specifically hunt caribou
 - For a multi-species hunt that includes caribou
 - In case I encounter a caribou on another hunt
 - I typically buy all the seals, whether I have hunting plans or not
3. For the 2023/2024 hunting season, did you get a Permit Hunt Authorization (PHA) for caribou?
 - Yes
 - No → **Go to Q6**
4. During the 2023/2024 hunting season, did you hunt caribou in the zone where you had a PHA?
 - Yes
 - No → **Go to Q4.1**
 - 4.1 Why not?
 - Not enough time
 - No hunting partner(s)
 - PHA area hard/expensive to access
 - I hunted elsewhere
 - Other (please specify): _____
5. **[Display only if Q3=Yes Do Not display if Q4=No]** During the 2023/24 hunting season, did you successfully harvest a caribou in your PHA zone?
 - Yes
 - No

For the remaining questions, we will ask questions primarily regarding your woodland caribou hunting experience. Woodland caribou are defined as caribou herds other than the Nelchina, Fortymile, and Porcupine (see caribou herd map). Migratory caribou refers to Nelchina, Fortymile, and Porcupine caribou herds.

6. This season, did you hunt woodland caribou?
 - Yes → **Go to Q7**
 - No → **Go to Q6.1**
 - 6.1. Why not? (select the main reason) → **Skip to Q20**
 - Not enough time → **Skip to Q20**
 - No hunting partner(s) → **Skip to Q20**
 - Hunting area with caribou hard/expensive to access → **Skip to Q20**
 - I hunted elsewhere → **Skip to Q20**
 - Other (please specify): _____ → **Skip to Q20**
7. This season, how many woodland caribou hunting trips did you take?
Number of trips: _____
8. As best as you can, indicate the number of days that you hunted for woodland caribou in the following Game Management Zones and month for the 2023/24 hunting season. Please count each partial day as 1 full day.
[Click Here to see the Yukon GMZ Map](#)

	Game Management Zone							
	1	2	3	4	5	8	10	11
August								
September								
October								

9. On average, including yourself, how many hunters were in your hunting parties this season?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 or more



10. Compared to the last time you held a caribou seal(s), did your woodland caribou hunting effort, in the 2023/24 hunting season:
- Increase
[Display if Q10=Increase] Why? _____
 - Decrease
[Display if Q10=Decrease] Why? _____
 - Stay the same
 - Not applicable – this is the first time I held a caribou seal
11. [Do not display if Q5= Yes] During the 2023/24, were you successful in harvesting a woodland caribou (i.e. you used your seal)?
- Yes
 - No

SECTION 2: HUNTING HABITS

12. Generally, how did you decide when to go hunting woodland caribou this season? (select all that apply)
- My hunting party's availability
 - I wanted to avoid other hunters (busy time)
 - I chose according to the weather
 - I chose a particular time that coincides with when I think caribou are around and accessible
 - I wanted to avoid the rutting period (mid-September to mid-October) to reduce the chance of having poor tasting meat
 - Other (please specify): _____
13. This season, what type of transportation did you use to travel to your general woodland caribou hunting area? (Select all that apply)
- Vehicle (Truck/Car)
 - Airplane
 - Snowmobile
 - ATV/Argo/Motorbike
 - Motorized boat
 - Non-motorized boat
 - Horseback
 - Skis/Snowshoes
 - On foot
 - Bicycle
 - Other (please specify): _____
14. This season, how did you actively hunt woodland caribou (excluding traveling to your hunting area)? (select all that apply)
- Vehicle (Truck/Car)
 - Snowmobile
 - ATV/Argo/Motorbike
 - Motorized boat
 - Non-motorized boat
 - Horseback
 - Skis/Snowshoes
 - On Foot
 - Bicycle
 - Other (please specify): _____
15. Approximately how much money did you personally spent hunting (all big game species) this season (including permits and licences, equipment, food, fuel, permits, accommodation, etc.)?
- None
 - \$1 to \$500
 - \$501 to \$1,000
 - \$1,001 to \$2,500
 - \$2,501 to \$5,000
 - \$5,001 to \$10,000
 - More than \$10,000
16. [Do not display if Q5 and/or Q11=No] Other than your own, how many households did you share your caribou meat with?
- None
 - 1



- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

SECTION 3: HUNTER OBSERVATIONS

- 17.** Compared to the previous 5 years, on your last woodland caribou hunting trip in 2023, did you feel the number of hunters you encountered:
- Increased
 - Decreased
 - Stayed the same
 - Don't Know
 - I did not hunt caribou in the previous 5 years, or in the same area twice → [Skip to Q20](#)
- 18.** to the previous 5 years, on your last woodland caribou hunting trip in 2023, did you feel that the amount of linear access (e.g., trails, roads, cutline, etc.):
- Increased
 - Decreased
 - Stayed the same
 - Don't know
- 19.** Compared to the previous 5 years, on your last woodland caribou hunting trip in 2023, did you feel that the number of caribou:
- Increased
 - Decreased
 - Stayed the same
 - Don't know
- 20.** Are there areas where you believe development has a negative impact on caribou (woodland and migratory) hunting? If yes, which herd(s)?
- Map with herds
 - Aishihik
 - Atlin
 - Bonnet Plume
 - Boreal
 - Clear Creek
 - Coal River
 - Ethel Lake
 - Finlayson
 - Fortymile
 - Hart River
 - Horseranch
 - Klaza
 - Laberge
 - Labiche
 - Liard Plateau
 - Little Rancheria
 - Nelchina
 - Moose Lake
 - Pelly Herds
 - Porcupine
 - Redstone
 - South Nahanni
 - Tatchun
 - Tay River
 - Wolf Lake
 - None of the above

SECTION 4: HUNTER MOTIVATIONS

- 21.** Which of the following are the main reasons why you hunt woodland caribou? (**Select up to 3**)
- To obtain food
 - To see caribou in the wild
 - To learn more about caribou
 - As an enjoyable outdoor activity/to spend time on the land
 - For the sport/challenge of it
 - To improve my hunting skills



- To teach others how to hunt animals
- As a social activity with friends or family
- For the hide and/or antlers
- Other (please specify): _____

22. Which of the following are the main criteria you use to select a woodland caribou hunting area? (Select up to 3)

- Ease of access into the area
- Remoteness
- Likelihood of finding caribou
- Status of the caribou population
- Landscape scenery
- Possibility to find and harvest other species
- Not likely to see motorized vehicles or boats
- Explore new areas
- Good knowledge of the area
- Success stories from other hunters
- Where you have always hunted (i.e., family ties, traditional area)
- Other (please specify): _____

23. Hypothetically, what would stop you from hunting woodland caribou in an area where you have been hunting in the past? (Select up to 3)

- Decrease in caribou numbers inhabiting this area
- Decrease in availability of other big game species
- Too many harvest regulations
- Too many other hunters
- Too many motorized vehicles
- Rapid change in the ecosystem (fire, vegetation becoming denser, etc.)
- Increased human disturbance (road, trails, mines, oil and gas, etc.)
- Desire to explore new hunting areas
- Cost of access
- Other (please specify): _____

SECTION 5: HUNTER KNOWLEDGE

For this section, rank how much you agree with the following statement:

24. I am confident I can tell the difference between a bull and cow caribou in the field during hunting season.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- Prefer not to say

25. When I hunt caribou in an area, I am aware of which caribou herd I am hunting.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- Prefer not to say

26. When I hunt caribou in an area, I am aware of the status (increasing, decreasing, stable numbers) of the caribou herd I am hunting.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- Prefer not to say

27. When I hunt caribou, I am aware of the rights and regulations that apply to other hunters around me (resident, non-resident (outfitter guided), non-resident (special guided), and subsistence hunters)

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- Prefer not to say

SECTION 6: HUNTER SATISFACTION

28. [Do not display if Q6=No and/or if Q1=0] Overall, how satisfied were you with your woodland caribou hunting experience during the 2023/24 hunting season?

- Very dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither dissatisfied or satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Not applicable/ Did not hunt this season
- Prefer not to say



29. [Do not display if Q6=No and/or if Q1=0]

Overall, how satisfied were you with the opportunities to hunt woodland caribou during the 2023/24 hunting season?

- Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neither dissatisfied or satisfied, Satisfied, Very satisfied, Not applicable/ Did not hunt this season, Prefer not to say

30. How satisfied could you be with your woodland caribou hunt even if you did not personally harvest a caribou?

- Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neither dissatisfied or satisfied, Satisfied, Very satisfied, Not applicable/ Did not hunt this season, Prefer not to say

31. How satisfied could you be with your woodland caribou hunt even if no one harvests a caribou in your party?

- Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neither dissatisfied or satisfied, Satisfied, Very satisfied, Not applicable/ Did not hunt this season, Prefer not to say

SECTION 7: MANAGEMENT SCENARIO-BASED QUESTIONS

32. Hypothetically, if restrictions to licensed harvest are necessary for conservation purposes, how acceptable do you think each of the management actions below are:

31.1) Establish a Permit Hunt Authorization (PHA) area

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.2) Establish a threshold hunt (close the licensed hunt once a certain number of caribou are harvested, i.e. Winter hunt for Nelchina or Fortymile caribou)

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.3) Establish a registration hunt (i.e., Summer hunt for Fortymile caribou; limited number of permits are issued for a certain number of days)

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.4) Reduce outfitter quotas

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.5) Encourage a voluntary closure for licensed hunters

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.6) Establish a full closure for licensed hunters

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.7) Shorten the hunting season

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.8) Establish access restriction

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.9) No new action (maintain existing harvest regulations)

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say

31.10) Rut closure

- Extremely unacceptable, Unacceptable, Neutral, Acceptable, Extremely acceptable, Prefer not to say



SECTION 8: NELCHINA, FORTY MILE, AND PORCUPINE CARIBOU

33. During the 2023/24 hunting season, did you hunt the Nelchina herd?

- Yes → [Skip to Q34](#)
- No → [Go to Q33.1](#)

33.1. Why not? (select all that apply)

- Did not know about this particular hunt/herd
- The Nelchina caribou were not around
- Not enough time
- No hunting partner(s)
- Hunting area too hard/far/expensive to access
- I hunted caribou elsewhere
- I plan to go before March 31
- I am concerned about the status of the herd
- Other (please specify): _____

34. During the 2023/24 hunting season, did you hunt the Fortymile herd?

- Yes → [Skip to Q35](#)
- No → [Go to Q34.1](#)

34.1. Why not? (select all that apply)

- Did not know about this particular hunt/herd
- The Fortymile caribou were not around
- Not enough time
- No hunting partner(s)
- Hunting area too hard/far/expensive to access
- I hunted caribou elsewhere
- I plan to go before March 31
- I am concerned about the status of the herd
- Other (please specify): _____

35. During the 2023/24 hunting season, did you hunt Porcupine caribou?

- Yes → [Skip to Q36](#)
- No → [Go to Q35.1](#)

35.1. Why not? (select all that apply)

- Did not know about this particular hunt/herd
- The Porcupine caribou were not around
- Not enough time
- No hunting partner(s)
- Hunting area too hard/far/expensive to access
- I plan to go before March 31
- Other (please specify): _____

36. What would best describe your Porcupine caribou hunting habits (in your lifetime)?

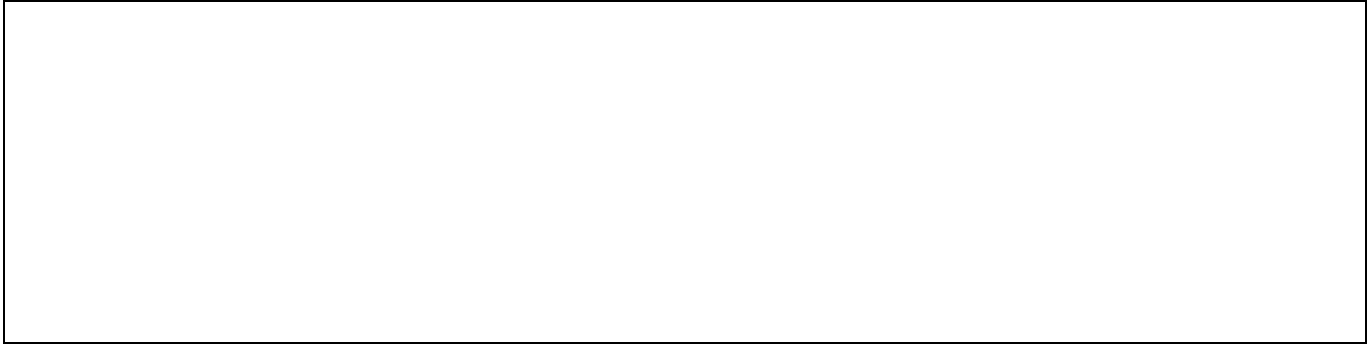
- I have never hunted Porcupine caribou → [End Survey](#)
- I have hunted Porcupine caribou once → [End Survey](#)
- I have occasionally hunted Porcupine caribou (less than 5 times)
- I have hunted Porcupine caribou numerous times (5 times or more)

37. In the Porcupine caribou region, have you noticed an increase in disturbance in the landscape (road, trails, mines, oil and gas, etc.) in the past 5 years?

- Yes, I have noticed significant increases in disturbance in the area
- Yes, I have noticed minor increases in disturbance in the area
- No, I have not noticed any increases in disturbance in the area
- Not applicable/Do not wish to say

SECTION 7: FINAL COMMENTS

Please feel free to leave comments about your caribou hunting effort, motivation, satisfaction, and observations, or your thoughts on caribou hunting practices, opportunities, and management.



End of the survey

