

Concern

Richardson sheep population does not have a management plan.

The North Richardson sheep population appears to have increased substantially from 543 animals in 1984 to a population of 1,339 in 1997. A survey carried out in the summer of 2001 indicated a decline in the population due to poor lamb survival likely caused by unfavourable spring weather conditions. In the South Richardsons only sheep near the highway have been studied. These numbered between 50 and 103 animals. Sheep hunting is important for Gwich'in and Inuvialuit in the Richardsons and is prohibited for Yukon non-First Nation resident and non-resident hunters although there is considerable interest both in the NWT and the Yukon to open up hunting there.

Solution Encourage development of a Richardson Mountains sheep plan.

Managing sheep in the Richardson Mountains is a complicated matter since the population straddles the Yukon/NWT border. Sheep are harvested by beneficiaries of two First Nation governments (VGFN, Gwich'in Tribal Council) and the Inuvialuit. There is interest in outfitting on the NWT side and in resident hunting on the Yukon side. Clearly, a coordinated sheep management plan is required for this area.

Actions

Responsible parties, Time line

VGFN/YG
2001/02

Contact Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board to discuss joint management of Richardson sheep.

A joint management plan for Richardson Mountain sheep will require a specially dedicated workshop set up along the lines of the integrated plan. The first step is to contact the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board about this. Note: combining such a gathering with a workshop about muskoxen management was also suggested. (*See Muskox*) [2001-NY-AI-13]

Concern

Little is known about sheep in the Fishing Branch area.

There is essentially no scientific information on sheep in the Fishing Branch area. No sport (licensed) sheep hunting is permitted. Traditional knowledge on sheep in the area is extensive and the general impression from elders is that the sheep population was high in the 1930s and 1950s but much lower from the 1970s to the present. The present status of the sheep in the Fishing Branch area is unknown.

Solution Collect available information on Fishing Branch sheep.

In the absence of any scientific information on Fishing Branch sheep, traditional knowledge is vital to the future of sheep in that area, particularly since such information points to a significant decline from the 1970s on.

Actions

Responsible parties, Time line

VGFN/YG
2001/02

Collect traditional knowledge on Fishing Branch sheep.

It was clear during the workshop discussions that considerably more information on sheep in this area existed in the community and that this will constitute the only historical perspective which will be very useful for future management. It will be up to the sheep biologist and the First Nation to work out an appropriate approach for obtaining this information. [2001-NY-AI-14]