

Concern

Don't know if there are too many wolves.

Only one wolf study was done in VGFN traditional territory in 1987-1988 and it recorded 116 wolves in 20 packs north of the Porcupine and 575 for the entire Porcupine Caribou. This is fairly low compared to other parts of the southern Yukon. Generally wolves kill 5,000 to 7,000 caribou per year or one caribou per wolf every two weeks, similar to wolves in Alaska. Traditional knowledge recounts large congregations of wolves (up to 150) in the past. The last such large group was seen in the 1970s. Elders say that in a wolf pack there are several hunters. These wolves travel ahead of the pack, hunting. They may kill moose or caribou and eat only the inner organs, then move on, leaving the rest of the kill for the pack. Traditional knowledge also referred to many cases of rabies in wolves and the fact that wolves can move great distances from Alaska through the Yukon to the NWT.

Solutions Get some idea of wolf abundance.

Scientific methods for estimating wolf populations are costly and generally only employed when a very serious threat is evident. Such threats usually come to the attention of governments through public comments. Thus, the best way to keep track of the general situation is to utilize such observations and those incidental from other studies.

Actions

Responsible parties, Time line

VGFN/YG

2001/02

2002/03

2003/04

2004/05

Collect wolf sightings from projects in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory.

The chief method here would involve Game Guardian interviews which could cover wolf sightings. (*See also muskox*) Sightings incidental to other studies may provide some information although likely not much in relation to abundance. There are also a number of other projects, such as Arctic Borderlands Ecological Traditional Knowledge Society, which collect similar information. The real challenge here is for VGFN to coordinate all such programs to minimize redundancy and community interviews while maximizing information sharing through a recording and retrieval system. (*See also Old Crow Flats – Waterfowl*) [2001-NY-AI-21]

Concern

In some places there are too many wolves for moose.

Presently, community members feel there appears to be many wolves in certain areas. The concern is that they could impact moose populations locally, particularly in areas where moose congregate during the winter.

Solution Look into wolf management for particular areas.

The approach to wolf management in the integrated plans has so far been focussed on the community actions related to wolves pressuring moose and caribou populations that the community relies on. The Yukon government has indicated that it will not support large scale "control" programs in these plans and that such actions are only for consideration in extreme crises where populations are at risk of extirpation. In this case, the community concern is mainly centred on wolf predation along the Porcupine River

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where moose hunting is concentrated. The purpose of such management is to provide for a reasonable harvest by humans while not endangering either the local wolf or moose populations. All such actions must conform to the principles of the Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.

VGFN/YG
2001/02

Hold wolf management workshop.

The objective of this action is to: a) talk about wolf ecology with the community; and b) discuss and provide instruction on wolf snaring if it is determined by the community to be necessary. [2001-NY-AI-22]