# QUEBEC

# Cree Regional Authority Acknowledgement

Environment Canada would like to acknowledge Cree Regional Authority for preparing a summary report with the Aboriginal traditional knowledge shared by Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, Mistissini, Nemaska, Waskaganish and Eastmain to support the development of the national recovery strategy for Woodland caribou, boreal population (boreal caribou). The knowledge shared in their report was used to inform the recovery strategy for boreal caribou but has not been presented in this public compilation report.

**Project**

**Woodland Caribou**

Final project report

Submitted by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute

to Environment Canada

October 21, 2010

# Work methodology

This project mainly consists in integrating traditional Aboriginal knowledge into Environment Canada's (EC) Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Boreal population (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) in Canada.

EC gave the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI) a mandate to help it carry out the various stages of this project.

The species at risk project manager, Mario Gros-Louis, was in charge of this project.[1] A resource from outside the Institute, Serge Ashini Goupil of Ashini Goupil enr., was also involved.

The mandate mainly consisted in

- *gathering and interpreting essential basic data with a view to completing the Woodland Caribou recovery strategy;*
- *gathering and interpreting traditional ecological knowledge about the Woodland Caribou by Nation and by First Nation; and*
- *drafting a report.*

This report includes the entire project's work methodology. It gives a detailed analysis (background, results, interview fact sheets, and photos and maps) for the 15 communities with which we met. These communities are

- *Kitcisakik, Lac-Simon, Pikogan, the Timiskaming First Nation and Winneway for the Anishinabeg Nation;*
- *Pakua Shipi, Unamen Shipu, Nutashkuan, Ekuanitshit, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit, Essipit and Matimekush–Lac John for the Innu Nation; and*
- *Manawan and Opitciwan for the Atikamekw Nation.*

The report then presents a general analysis for each Nation. The report is divided into three sections: Section 1 deals with the *Anishinabeg*; section 2, the *Innu* and section 3, the *Atikamekw*.

To date, we have still not received confirmation about a meeting with the Naskapi.

To enable us to conduct these interviews, we first obtained and developed a schedule of meetings with well-known specialists from the communities. Given that the FNQLSDI has developed good relationship with most of these communities over the past few years, it was easy to confirm meetings. However, EC worked with us to help some of the communities target the right people to contact. Community visits were held from December 2009 to June 2010. During our meetings, the participants (30 in all) were informed of the collaborative approach between the FNQLSDI and EC. We started each of our meetings by asking them for permission to film and take pictures of the participants. A formal and verbal request (we used the consent form provided by EC) was also made regarding the use and sharing of information gathered in this project. All participants understood the terms and objectives[2] of the project and consent form, and offered their future collaboration. Everyone agreed to be filmed and photographed.

[1] Note that Mr. Gros-Louis has not been with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute since July 2010.

[2] Vocal recording confirming consent.

Note that much translation for the Innu Nation (from Innu into French) was necessary and explains the major delay in the entire project. The FNQLSDI has all of the raw data (meeting transcripts, photos and videos).

We and the EC representatives decided that during this project, we would not visit Mashteuiatsh or Wemotaci. Community stakeholders collected data for Essipit and Opitciwan. These data are transcribed in this report.

# Section 1: The Anishinabeg

## *Detailed analysis by First Nation*

A detailed analysis follows for each First Nation with which we met.

This section of the report includes background information, interview results and fact sheets, as well as photos and maps. There are detailed analyses for the communities of Kitcisakik, Lac-Simon, Pikogan, the Timiskaming First Nation and Winneway.

### Kitcisakik

## Background

We met with members of the community of Kitcisakik on December 3, 2009, as part of visits to five Anishinabeg communities that took place from December 3 to 8, 2009.

The community of Kitcisakik is located in the northern part of the Réserve faunique La Vérendrye in the Abitibi–Témiscamingue region of Quebec, about 90 km southeast of Val-d'Or. The community has a population of about 430. The main languages spoken are Anishinabeg and French.

The community is located on forest land under commercial development. The forest is part of the balsam fir-yellow birch stand, a mixed forest affected by fires and insect epidemics. The topography is undulating and many large bodies of water cover the territory (Grand Lac Victoria, the Dozois Reservoir, etc.).

Through [redacted], a community representative, we arranged meetings with three residents who could speak with us regarding First Nations knowledge (traditional Aboriginal knowledge) about the Woodland Caribou. When we arrived in the community, [redacted] was difficult to reach because he was away. We therefore met with [redacted], who was to be our translator for the day. We explained the project to her, and she suggested that she take over and help us meet with the three people preselected by [redacted].

For reasons unknown to us and beyond our control, none of those preselected came to meet with us. We therefore took the initiative to interview [redacted], who proved to be an ideal candidate for this project. This interview took place at her home and was conducted in French very cordially and openly. Valérie Courtois conducted the interview and Serge Ashini Goupil filmed it.

## Interview results

For the Anishinabeg residents of Kitcisakik, caribou is still an **important species** although moose can now be found throughout the Anishinabeg territory. The interview with [redacted] confirmed that caribou in the Kitcisakik area are in a precarious situation. Her knowledge of the animal, which she calls Adik in her language, does not come from a direct connection (e.g. caribou hunting), but rather, from **oral tradition**. In the map on page 12 of this report, she provided information on areas of caribou presence.

To validate what she said, she told us the **story** about the meeting between pike and a Kitcisakik man during which the fish announced that they were leaving for somewhere less polluted.

[redacted] also told us that caribou eat **lichens**.

She also told us about the **threats** affecting caribou. Intensive forest cutting, lack of lichens and the presence of wolves and black bears worry her. She also said that pollution and too many hunters in the area are factors that threaten caribou.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Anishinabeg (Algonquin)

**Community**: Kitcisakik

**Names of respondents**: [redacted]

**Interview date**: December 3, 2009. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French

**Translator present**: No

**Consent form signed by participants**[3]: **No**

| **General information** | Respondent: [redacted] |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | |
| Period of presence on the territory | |
| Aboriginal language | *Adik* – caribou<br><br>*Adikshish* – baby caribou |
| Caribou knowledge | Someone else's stories |
| Caribou hunting | |
| Caribou importance | |
| **Maps** | |

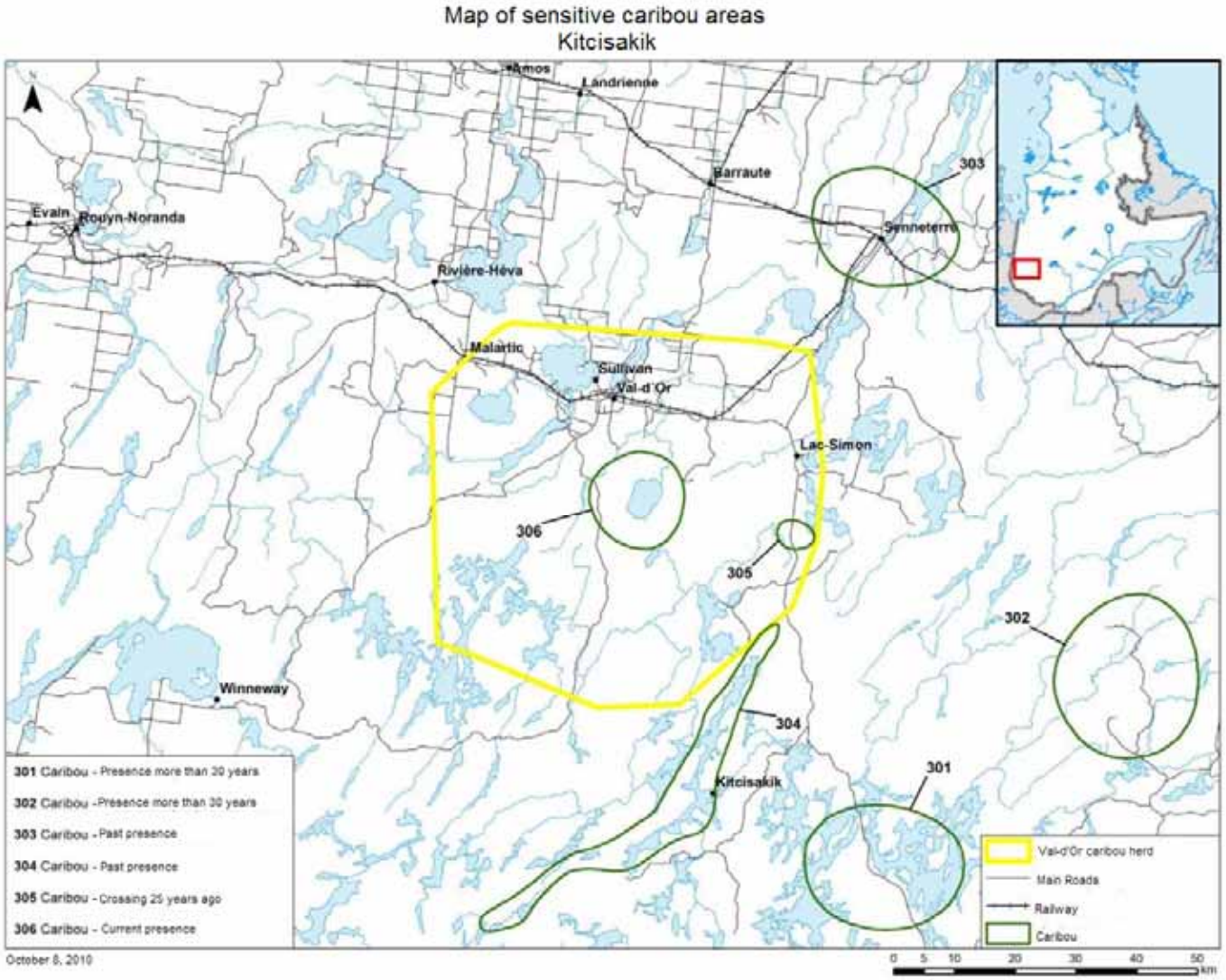
[3] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Areas of caribou presence | 1. Near Kitcisakik<br>2. Near Senneterre |
| Areas to protect for caribou | Near Dozois Lake |
| Various herds (differentiation) | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | Lichen (white) |
| Seasons | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | 1. Intensive forest cutting<br>2. Lack of lichens |
| Predation | Wolves and black bears, but not only for caribou |
| Parasites, illnesses | Pollution |
| Overhunting | Too many hunters |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | |
| Stories and rules | |
| **Additional Information** | |
| | Story of the meeting between pike and a Kitcisakik man (fish go somewhere less polluted) |

## Photos


MINOPIIAKOMA
KITCISAKIININIK
ANICINAPE AKIKAK
BIENVENUE
SUR LE TERRITOIRE DE LA
COMMUNAUTÉ DE KITCISAKIK

## Map


Map of sensitive caribou areas
Kitcisakik
Amos
Landrienne
Barraute
Senneterre
Evain
Rouyn-Noranda
Rivière-Héva
Malartic
Sullivan
Val-d'Or
Lac-Simon
Winneway
Kitcisakik
303
306
305
302
304
301
301 Caribou - Presence more than 20 years
302 Caribou - Presence more than 30 years
303 Caribou - Past presence
304 Caribou - Past presence
305 Caribou - Crossing 25 years ago
306 Caribou - Current presence
Val-d'Or caribou herd
Main Roads
Railway
Caribou
October 8, 2010
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
km

## Lac-Simon

### Background

We met with members of the community of Lac-Simon on December 4, 2009.

The community is located in the Abitibi region east of Val-d'Or on the western shore of Simon Lake and covers an area of 326 hectares. It has a population of about 1,200. The main languages spoken are Algonquin and French.

The community is located on a forest landscape, most of which is under commercial development. The forests are part of the balsam fir-white birch stand, a coniferous forest greatly affected by fires. In places in the community, there are many shrublands and peat bogs, especially in the western and southwestern parts.

Through a community representative, we arranged meetings with three residents who could speak with us regarding First Nations knowledge (traditional Aboriginal knowledge) about the Woodland Caribou.

Two interviews were conducted. The first was with a hunter of about 30 and the second with an elderly couple. The presence of a translator [redacted] made the job easier. The interviews were conducted at the team's community natural resources offices.

### Interview results

The information obtained from the first interview (with the hunter in his 30s) is sketchy because he has never seen a caribou even though he regularly sets foot in the territory (year-round). He calls the caribou **Adik**. The hunter obeys the hunting rules that allow him to keep an abundance of food.

He says that caribou need **white moss (lichen)** and that the moss is always present on the territory.

He says that the **threat** comes from forest fires (information is available in the map on page 18 of this report) and forest cutting, both of which force moose and other animals to flee. Predation by wolves and cougars is also a threat. This hunter also alludes to the presence of other First Nations (Cree), which causes depletion of the resource. He also says that climate change has a harmful effect on animals. In addition, deep snow makes it impossible for caribou to flee predators.

Information obtained in the second interview tells us that caribou is the elderly couple's third most eaten meal, behind moose and deer. In the past, there was an abundance of animals. Caribou do not occupy the territory as much, but the elders still noticed a significant decrease in their presence. They told us about the **presence** of two herds (see page 19 of this report) in the Val-d'Or region and that the area needs to be protected from forest fires.

Firs and the "beard" lichen that is found on trees, along with another lichen found on land, are part of the caribou's diet.

The **main threats** are the forest industry and the presence of wolves, cougars and black bears.

According to the elders, caribou have developed **illnesses** (impossibility to store fat) from forest industry dumping. Sport hunting is also a major threat because the goals are not the same as they are for First Nations. Sport hunters hunt for fun and are big wasters. Noise disturbances also have a negative impact on caribou because they scare them.

Lastly, there was no **wasting** in the past because all of the caribou's organs were used.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Anishinabeg (Algonquin)

**Community**: Lac-Simon

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: December 4, 2009. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French and Anishinabeg

**Translator present**: Yes

**Consent form signed by participants**[4]: **No**

| **General information** | Respondents: 2 people + 1 interpreter | Respondents: 1 person |
|---|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | They do not travel as much on the territory now. | He is regularly on the territory, in summer as much as in winter. He travels by snowmobile. He is a community hunter (shares game with the elders). |
| Period of presence on the territory | Different locations for each season (see their indications on the map). They spent the fall near Cooper Lake.<br><br>Winter: see map. | Year-round |
| Aboriginal language | *Adik* – caribou | *Adik* – caribou<br><br>*Adikshish* – small caribou |
| Caribou knowledge | There is a decrease in caribou populations. In the past, there was an abundance of animals; now there is a decrease, even in caribou. | He never saw any himself but he knows that caribou travel in families (herds) and have their own "trail" (path). |
| Caribou hunting | Governments no longer allow them to hunt (caribou or any other species?). | |

[4] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Caribou importance | It is their third most eaten meal (moose, then deer, then caribou). There is now a road sign that indicates caribou presence. | |
| **Maps** | | |
| Areas of caribou presence | There are two herds that live in a specific area (see map). | |
| Areas to protect for caribou | Forest fire zone | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Small caribou (Woodland Caribou) | Caribou and small caribou |
| **Caribou habitat** | | |
| Type of plant | Firs, "beard" lichens that are found on trees, along with another type of lichen found on the ground | White moss (always present on the territory) |
| Seasons | | |
| **Population trends** | | |
| Changes identified (young) | There are fewer caribou than there were before.<br><br>Wolves eat small caribou. | |
| **Threats** | | |
| Habitat change | The forest industry has altered the ecosystems. It takes everything. There is no food for the animals, which have an odd taste. Roads, forest cutting and dumping cause animals to disappear. The industry should leave small trees for regeneration. | Forest fires (68,000 hectares)<br><br>Forest cutting forces animals (moose) to flee. |
| Predation | Wolves, cougars and black bears (all of which eat small caribou) | Wolves and cougars<br><br>Cree hunters hunt on Algonquin territory and there are no more animals to hunt. |
| Parasites, illnesses | Caribou have developed illnesses (impossibility to store fat) from forest industry dumping. | Illnesses caused people and animals to migrate. |
| Overhunting | Yes, non-Aboriginal peoples hunt for fun and are big wasters. It is a cruel hunt that leaves Aboriginal peoples' larders empty. | There are many (hunting) camps. |
| Collisions with vehicles | | |
| Noise and light disturbances | Yes, caribou get scared and flee. | |

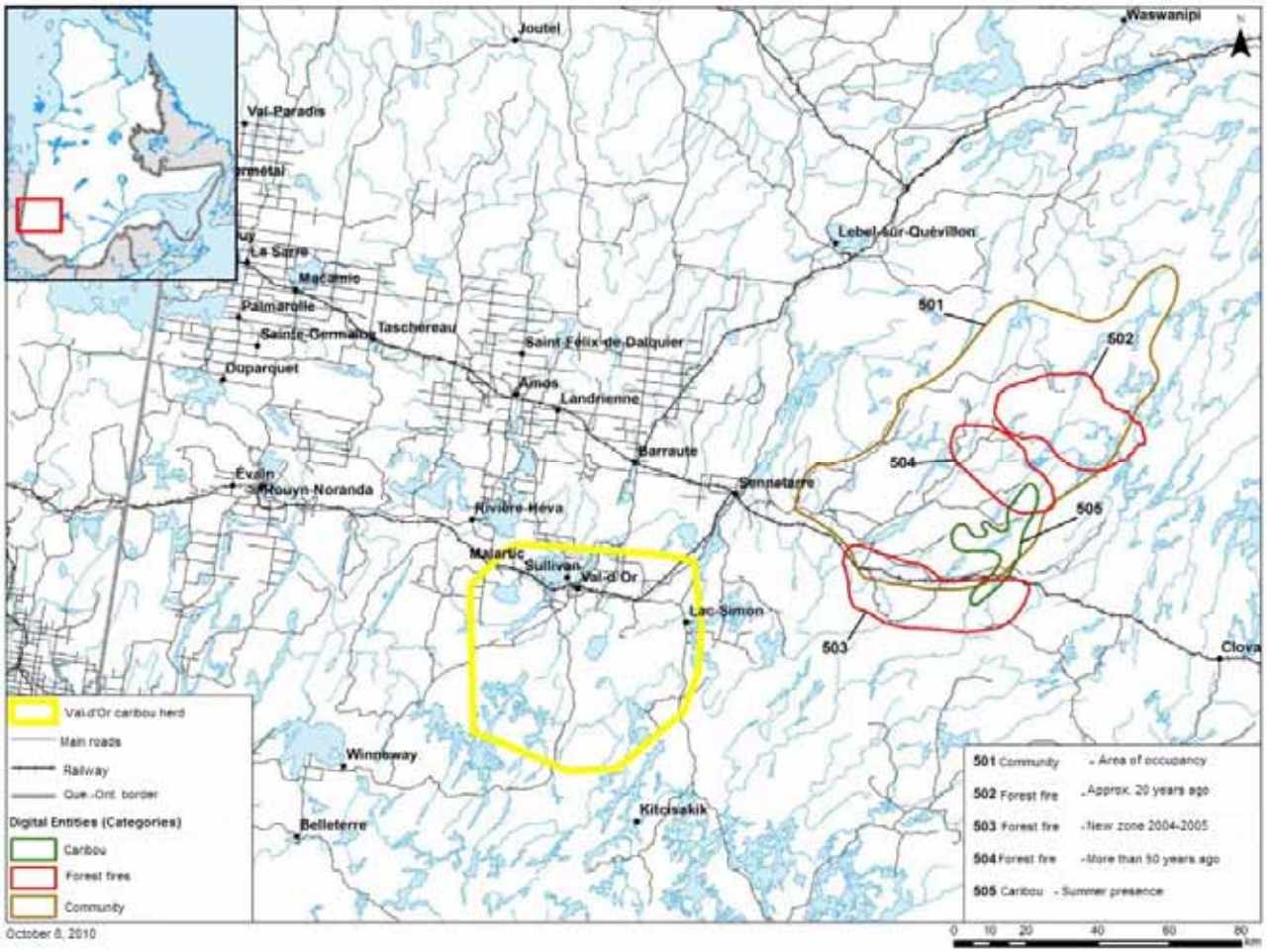
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Climate change | The snow comes too late and the rapids do not freeze. | There is a lot of snow and caribou have trouble fleeing predators. |
| **Traditional practices** | | |
| Know-how | Wolves have their own predation cycle: beavers in the fall and baby caribou in the winter.<br><br>The Anishinabeg still coexist well with caribou (good ecology). | |
| Stories and rules | There was no wasting in the past; all caribou organs were used (kidneys, intestines, etc.). | He hunts the number of animals that he needs and no more so as to let them reproduce (he hunts only males and small females).<br><br>They let the animals grow (e.g. they do not hunt partridges in the summer). He has to keep the food.<br><br>He changes hunting sites after every hunt. |
| **Additional Information** | | |
| | Forest cutting is responsible for animals disappearing.<br><br>Verbal consent from the elders: “It’s to help the animals.” | Caribou populations have decreased; caribou are fewer in number because of forest fires (the populations travel and migrate).<br><br>Caribou stay together to protect themselves. |

## Photos

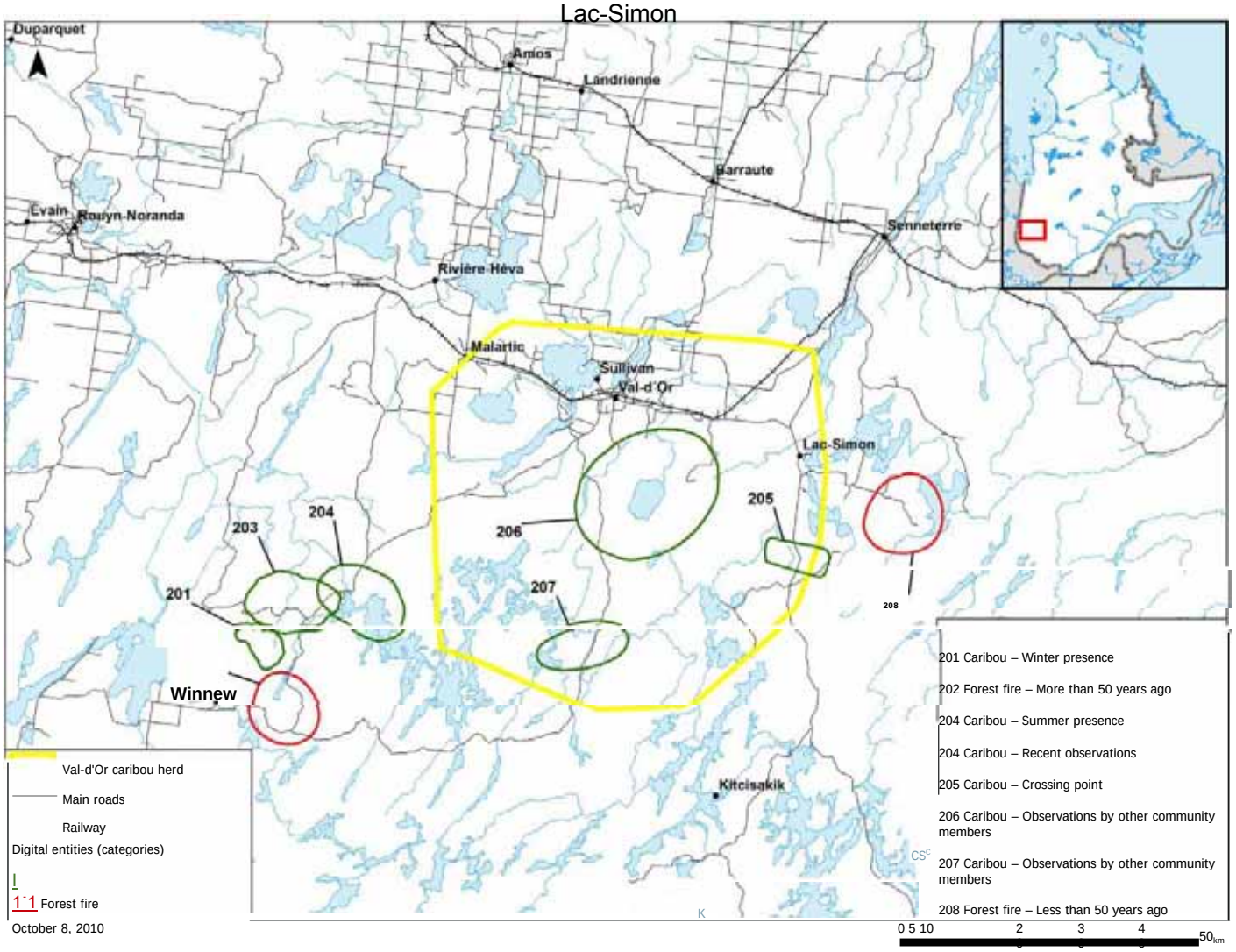

LAC SIMON 1 KM

## Maps

Map of sensitive caribou areas
Simon (Jesse) Lake



Map of sensitive caribou areas



# Pikogan

## Background

We met with members of the community of Pikogan on December 5, 2009. Pikogan is also known as the Abitibiwinni First Nation and occupies 90.5 hectares located about three kilometres from Amos on the western shore of Harricana River. The community has a population of about 800. The main languages spoken are Anishinabeg and French.

The community of Pikogan is located in the first sector of Abitibi to be colonized, at the very beginning of the 20th century. The economy is essentially based on agriculture, mining and forestry. The landscape is mainly agricultural and forested, and the forest plots are part of the balsam fir-white birch stand, a dry boreal forest affected by fires.

Through a community representative, we arranged meetings with three residents who could speak with us regarding First Nations knowledge (traditional Aboriginal knowledge) about the Woodland Caribou.

In the end, the interview was conducted in the presence of four people. The presence of a translator (John Mowatt) made the job easier. The interviews took place in one of the buildings in the community. A traditional meal was served afterwards. Valérie Courtois conducted the interview and Serge Ashini Goupil filmed it. All of the participants agreed to share information revealed in the interview with EC.

## Interview results

The people with whom we met told us that although they had not not seen any, they had heard tell of there being caribou that came from south of Val-d'Or. They said that when they were young, there were caribou north of Pikogan and added that there **are still caribou in fall and winter**. According to the people with whom we met, caribou are present in three areas (see map on page 24). The participants also told us that they had information about the presence of caribou north of the La Sarre area. The working map did not cover this region. This reality should be taken into account later.

The participants differentiate between northern and southern caribou (see table on next page). Regarding the issue about caribou **habitat** and the types of plants that caribou eat, our respondents told us that caribou look for dry elements, white moss (lichens and beard lichens), and roots, especially after forest fires and forest cutting. They have a particular liking for two types of moss that are found near marshes.

They **used** caribou hide for mattresses and ate the bone marrow and the stomach.

Our respondents also said that they noticed **worms in the caribou's heart and liver**. The participants told us that caribou meat is still quite good.
Caribou are no longer present near Pikogan because of **deforestation**. The other **threats** are from mining activities and agriculture. The presence of dams and transmission lines are other threats, as are temperature increases (heat means more flies) and the presence of wolves.

Two final points:

1. When moose are present, caribou leave because of a lack of food.
2. After a forest fire, caribou stay in the area for five to seven years (if there are no moose).

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Anishinabeg (Algonquin)

**Community**: Pikogan

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: December 5, 2009. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French and Algonquin

**Translator present**: Yes

**Consent form signed by participants**[5]: **No**

| | |
|---|---|
| **General information** | Respondents: 4 people |
| Experience on the territory | Moved to Pikogan in 1967 (man born in forest and woman lived in forest for 25 years).<br><br>Pick berries in spring and summer. |
| Period of presence on the territory | Mainly in spring, fall and winter.<br><br>Two ways of life: city and forest. |
| Aboriginal language | *Northern atik* (caribou);<br>*Southern atik* (caribou) |
| Caribou knowledge | Heard about caribou from south of Val-d'Or without having seen them.<br><br>In the past (when the elderly respondents were young), there were caribou north of Pikogan; there still are in fall and winter. There are no more near Pikogan because of deforestation. |
| Caribou hunting | In the past, caribou were hunted for survival only. |
| Caribou importance | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | Harricana area<br><br>Chicobi Lake (at the time)<br><br>Chisasibi River |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |

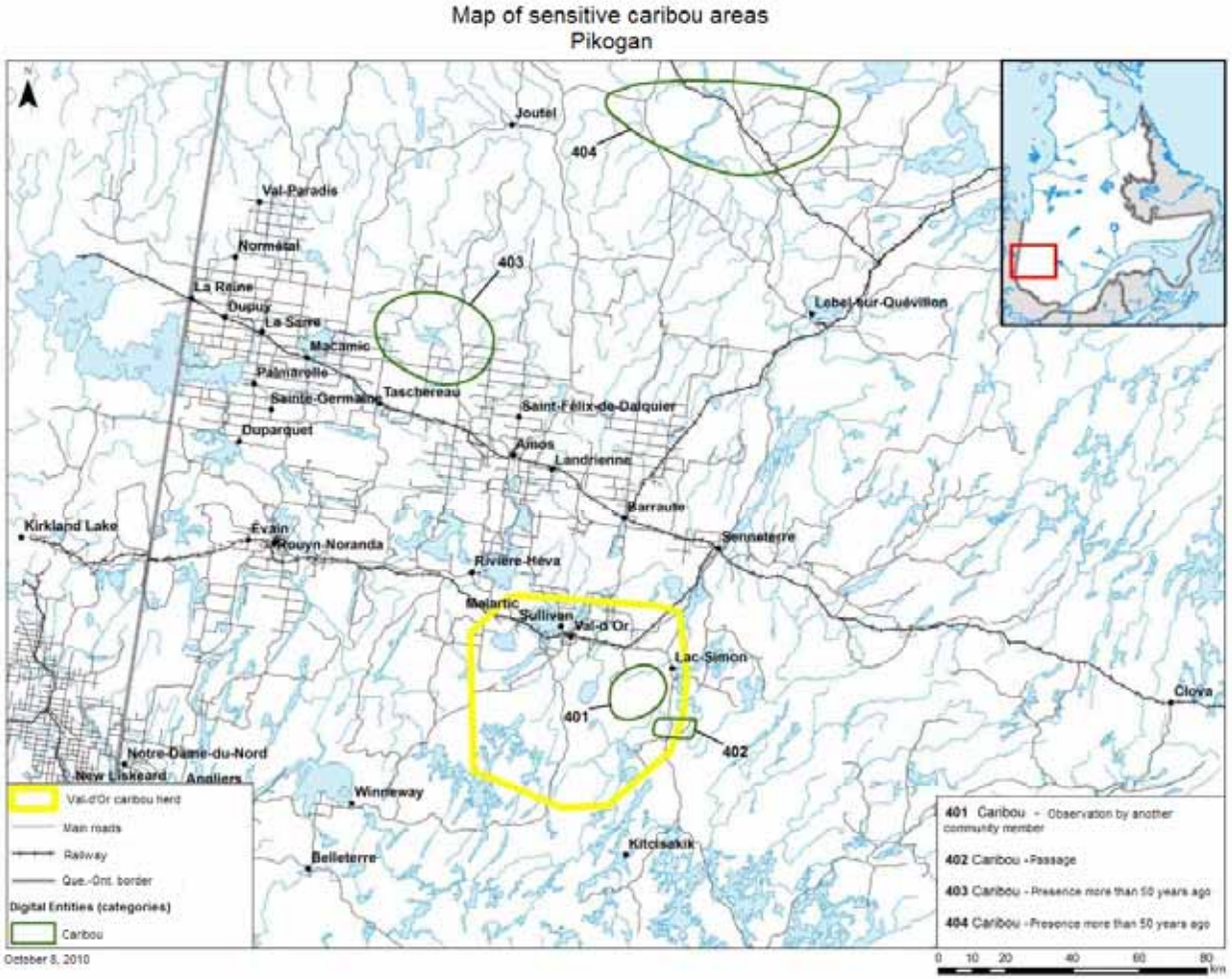
[5] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Type of plant | Caribou look for dry elements, including white moss (lichen and beard lichen) and roots after forest fires and forest cutting.<br><br>Two types of moss (near marshes).<br><br>Caribou dig to find moss in the winter. |
| Seasons | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | Small caribou are very good to eat.<br><br>During wolf attacks, caribou stay in herds with the small ones in the middle. |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | 1. Deforestation by forestry companies<br>2. Mines<br><br>3. Arrival of settlers (1930); presence of deer at that time |
| Predation | Wolves (Réserve faunique La Vérendrye) |
| Parasites, illnesses | Presence of worms in the caribou's heart and liver |
| Overhunting | |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | Hydro-Québec dams and transmission lines |
| Climate change | Heat means more flies. |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | 1. Bone marrow and stomach are eaten.<br><br>2. Caribou was like "candy."<br>3. Use of caribou hide (mattress) |
| Stories and rules | |
| **Additional Information** | |
| | When moose are present, caribou leave because of a lack of food.<br><br>After a forest fire, caribou stay in the area for five to seven years (if there are no moose). |

## Photos


Mino Picnok
Bienvenue à Pikogan

## Map


Map of sensitive caribou areas
Pikogan
Joutel
404
Val-Paradis
Normétal
403
La Reine
Dupuy
La Sarre
Macamic
Palmarolle
Sainte-Germaine
Taschereau
Duparquet
Saint-Félix-de-Dalquier
Amos
Landrienne
Barraute
Senneterre
Lebel-sur-Quévillon
Kirkland Lake
Evain
Rouyn-Noranda
Rivière-Héva
Malartic
Sullivan
Val-d'Or
Lac-Simon
401
402
Clova
Notre-Dame-du-Nord
New Liskeard
Angliers
Windeway
Kitcisakik
Belleterre
Val-d'Or caribou herd
Main roads
Railway
Que.-Ont. border
Digital Entities (categories)
Caribou
401 Caribou - Observation by another community member
402 Caribou - Passage
403 Caribou - Presence more than 50 years ago
404 Caribou - Presence more than 50 years ago
October 8, 2010
0 10 20 40 60 80
km

# Timiskaming First Nation

## Background

We met with members of the Timiskaming First Nation on December 7, 2009. The Nation is located on 2,428.08 hectares of land at the head of Lake Timiskaming and adjacent to the municipality of Notre-Dame-du-Nord. The First Nation is accessed via Route 101. When the community was incorporated in 1851, it had an area of more than 15,000 hectares. Lots were then ceded to companies and individuals. The community has a population of about 600. The main languages spoken are Anishinabeg and French.

The Timiskaming First Nation is located on an agricultural and forested landscape colonized in the early 20th century. The landscape is relatively smooth and it includes several huge linear lakes (Timiskaming, Rémigny, des Quinze, Beaudry, etc.). The forests, most of them used for logging, are mixed, with a dominance of yellow birch and fir.

Through a community representative, we arranged meetings with three residents who could speak with us regarding First Nations knowledge (traditional Aboriginal knowledge) about the Woodland Caribou.

The interview was conducted in English in the presence of three people. The interviews took place in one of the buildings in the community. Valérie Courtois conducted it and Serge Ashini Goupil filmed it. All of the participants agreed to share information that came out of it with EC. Note that we produced a map that goes beyond the area defined by the map that EC provided. Information is written inside the Ontario boundary.

## Interview results

The people interviewed had little information about caribou. They heard that there were caribou in the area in the 1930s and 1940s and that they were present on Lake Winneway (see information on the map on page 29). They call caribou **Adik** in their language.

Caribou **habitat** must contain white moss (lichens).

The main **threats** are those related to colonization (agriculture), as well as forestry and the construction of forestry truck roads. These activities/events forced caribou to flee northward. Natural predation by wolves, coyotes and black bears must be considered a threat. The observation of climate change (arrival of various birds and animals) and an increase in the number of snow geese seem to be a concern among the people with whom we met. Lastly, the ice crust no longer comes at the same time as in the past and there is less snow than before.

It was also pointed out that **contaminants** in moose liver (linked to the foundry in Rouyn-Noranda) can also be considered a threat.

The people interviewed brought up the importance of establishing **protected areas** (corridor-type) that would include marshes.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Anishinabeg (Algonquin)

**Community**: Timiskaming First Nation

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: December 7, 2009. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: English

**Translator present**: No

**Consent form signed by participants**[6]: **No**

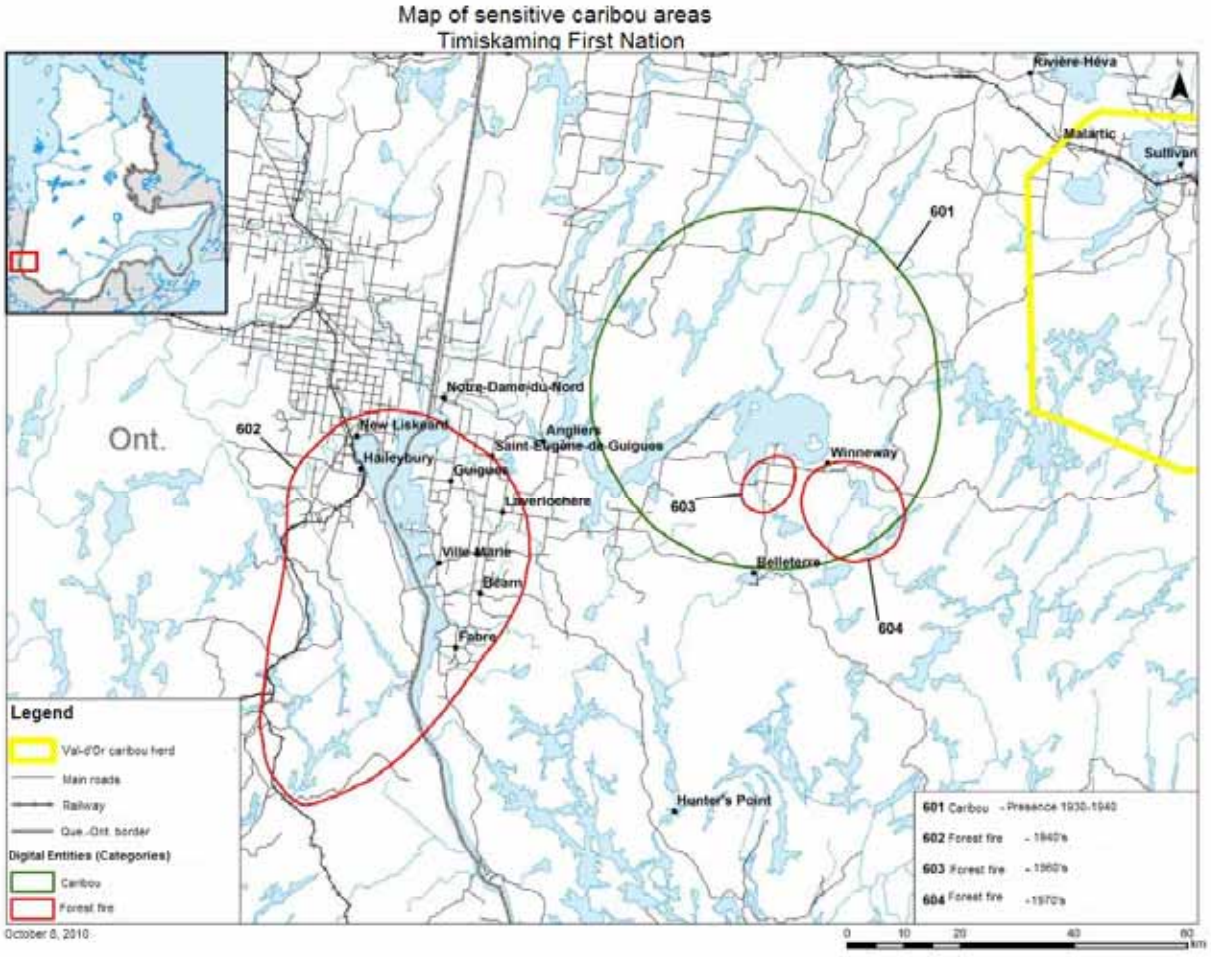
| **General information** | Respondents: 3 people |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | Regular and past experience. (They recall the forest fires of the 1960s.) |
| Period of presence on the territory | Regular for environmental (contamination) monitoring |
| Aboriginal language | *Adik* – caribou |
| Caribou knowledge | They heard that there were caribou in the area in the 1930s and 1940s. |
| Caribou hunting | |
| Caribou importance | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | Presence of caribou on Lake Winneway in the past |
| Areas to protect for caribou | Marshes and corridors between the protected areas |
| Various herds (differentiation) | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | White moss |
| Seasons | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | Colonization (settling of farmers) has forced caribou to flee northward. |

[6] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| | Forestry and forestry truck roads have also contributed to this. |
| Predation | Wolves, coyotes and black bears (no known interaction between these and Cervidae) |
| Parasites, illnesses | Liver problems in moose (cadmium; linked to the foundry in Rouyn-Noranda) |
| Overhunting | |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | Arrival of various birds and animals because of climate change (e.g. greater number of snow geese in the area than in the past).<br><br>The ice crust no longer comes at the same time as in the past and there is less snow than before. |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | |
| Stories and rules | |
| **Additional Information** | |
| | There is an overpopulation of raccoons in the area; they eat partridge eggs. |

**Photos**


## Map


Map of sensitive caribou areas
Timiskaming First Nation
Ont.
Rivière-Héva
Malartic
Sullivan
601
602
603
604
Notre-Dame-du-Nord
New Liskeard
Haileybury
Angliers
Saint-Eugène-de-Guigues
Guigues
Lavérendrye
Winneway
Ville-Marie
Béarn
Fabre
Belleterre
Hunter's Point
Legend
Val-d'Or caribou herd
Main roads
Railway
Que.-Ont. border
Digital Entities (Categories)
Caribou
Forest fire
601 Caribou - Presence 1930-1940
602 Forest fire - 1940's
603 Forest fire - 1960's
604 Forest fire - 1970's
October 8, 2010
0 10 20 40 60
km

## Background

We met with members of the community of Winneway on December 8, 2009. Winneway is located 114 kilometres east of Ville-Marie in the Témiscamingue region and on the south shore of the Winneway River. The community extends over 37.84 hectares and has a population of about 350. The main languages spoken are Anishinabeg, English and French.

The community of Winneway is located on the shores of the more than 15,000-ha Lake Simard in a sector with undulating topography. The forest, in large part under commercial development, is part of the balsam fir-yellow birch stand, a mixed forest affected by fires and insect infestations.

Through a community representative, we arranged meetings with three residents who could speak with us regarding First Nations knowledge (traditional Aboriginal knowledge) about the Woodland Caribou.

The interview was conducted in English with one elder and two specialists. The interviews took place in one of the buildings in the community. Valérie Courtois conducted it and Serge Ashini Goupil filmed it. All of the participants agreed to share information that came out of it with EC. However, we noted in this meeting that participants were more reluctant to provide information than participants in the other four Anishinabeg communities we met with as part of this project. If possible future steps were necessary, they would require a specific action plan for this community. We believe that (important and relevant) information may be available.

## Interview results

For Winneway, information regarding the caribou is still **sketchy**. The information obtained confirms the presence of caribou 100 years ago and its disappearance because of the arrival of moose. The respondents confirmed that the caribou hunted came from the north (the Matagami area). If caribou were to return to the area, people would hunt them again because they **enjoy the meat**.

The practice of **hunting in non-compliance with the rules** was a concern to the people interviewed; Aboriginal people have been hunting game for thousands of years. Overhunting by non-Aboriginals for trophies and not for food yields the current result (no caribou). According to the stakeholders with whom we met, it is therefore important to only hunt for subsistence.

The main **threats** are primarily in relation to major forest fires in the area between 1950 and 1970. Major clearcutting in the area has forced certain species to flee for a certain period of time. The absence of a corridor between habitats is also a major threat because it causes division of the herd. The high number of wolves and black bears, increased consanguinity within the herd, and water contamination are also threats.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Anishinabeg (Algonquin)

**Community**: Winneway (Long Point)

**Names of respondents**: [redacted] and two unnamed respondents

**Interview date**: December 8, 2009. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: English

**Translator present**: No

**Consent form signed by participants**[7]: **No**

| | |
|---|---|
| **General information** | Respondents: 3 people |
| Experience on the territory | |
| Period of presence on the territory | |
| Aboriginal language | *Adik* – caribou |
| Caribou knowledge | There were some in the region about 100 years ago and they disappeared because of, among other things, the arrival of moose.<br><br>Caribou used to go onto an island to feed (see map). |
| Caribou hunting | Young people go farther north (near Matagami) to hunt caribou; they then bring them back to Winneway. |
| Caribou importance | No longer important (to be confirmed). It has almost disappeared from the area; it is nearly gone from the area. Were caribou to return, they would certainly be hunted for their meat, which is liked. |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | The southeastern area of the Decelles Reservoir (according to information obtained) |
| Areas to protect for caribou | Establish buffer zones around areas with food appropriate for caribou— one zone for the summer and another for the winter with a transition corridor between the two. |
| Various herds (differentiation) | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | |
| Seasons | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| **Threats** | |

[7] Vocal recording confirming consent.

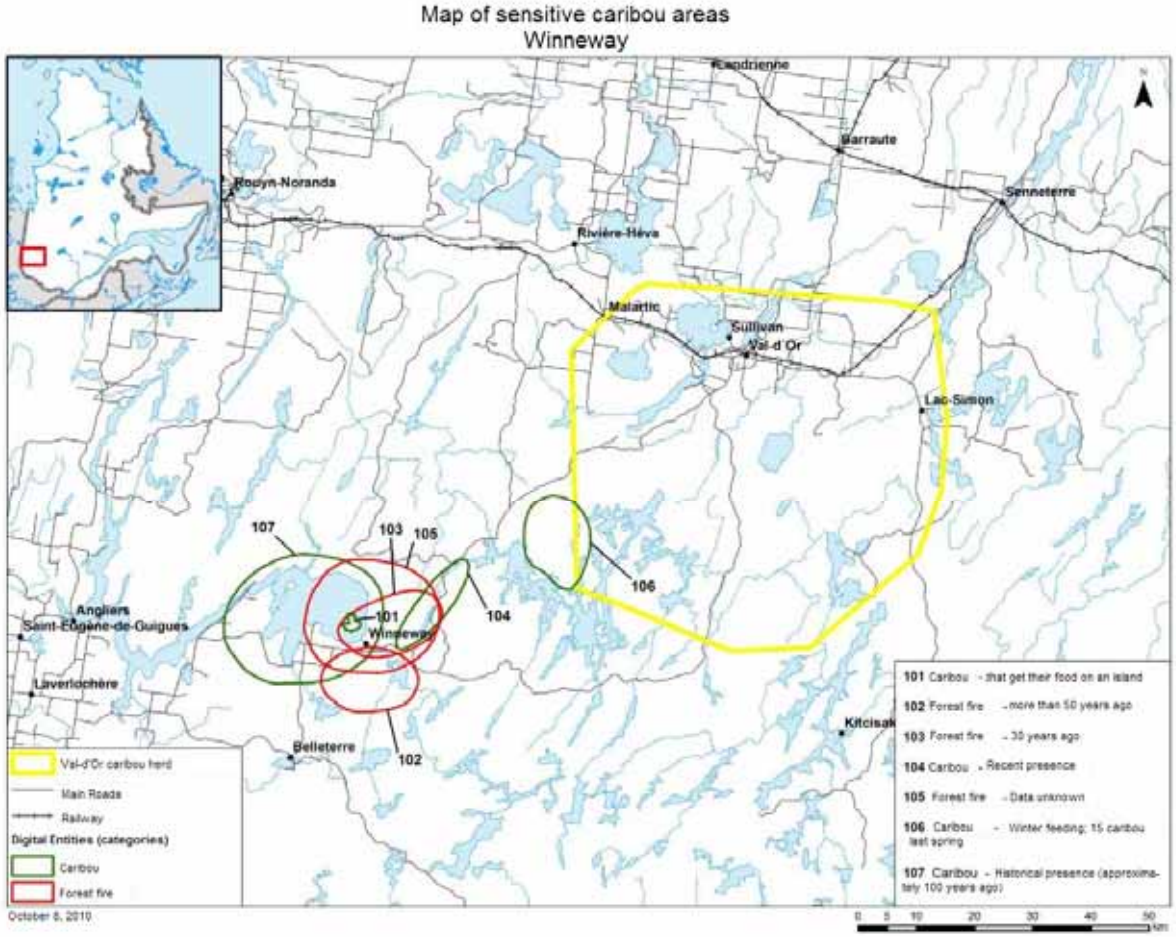
| | |
|---|---|
| Habitat change | Major forest fires in some sectors (1950–1970)<br><br>Major clearcutting in the area, which forced some species (e.g. moose) to flee for some time<br><br>Isolation of the herd (no corridor between habitats) |
| Predation | There are large numbers of wolves and black bears in the area. |
| Parasites, illnesses | Consanguinity in Woodland Caribou herds.<br><br>Forest water is not drinkable.<br><br>Hares are sick. |
| Overhunting | Overhunting by non-Aboriginal people |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | Aboriginal people have been hunting game for thousands of years; overhunting by non-Aboriginal people (for trophies and not for subsistence) has led to the current situation. |
| Stories and rules | Only what is needed must be taken. |
| **Additional Information** | |

## Photos

Unavailable


Railway
Digital Entities (categories)
Caribou
Forest fire
106 Caribou - Winter feeding; 15 caribou last spring
107 Caribou - Historical presence (approximately 100 years ago)
October 6, 2010
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
km

## Map


Map of sensitive caribou areas
Winneway
Cadrienne
Barraute
Rouyn-Noranda
Senneterre
Rivière-Héva
Malartic
Sullivan
Val-d'Or
Lac-Simon
107
103
105
106
104
101
102
Angliers
Saint-Eugène-de-Guigues
Winneway
Lavérlochère
Belleterre
Kitcisak
Val-d'Or caribou herd
Main Roads
Railway
Digital Entities (categories)
Caribou
Forest fire
101 Caribou - that get their food on an island
102 Forest fire - more than 50 years ago
103 Forest fire - 30 years ago
104 Caribou - Recent presence
105 Forest fire - Data unknown
106 Caribou - Winter feeding; 15 caribou last spring
107 Caribou - Historical presence (approximately 100 years ago)
October 6, 2010
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
km

## *General analysis for the Anishinabeg Nation*

Our understanding and preliminary analysis regarding the Anishinabeg Nation confirm that there are no caribou in the area or that their situation is quite precarious. The extent (in numbers) of the knowledge of the people with whom we met varies from one First Nation to another based on whether or not caribou are present on their territory.

For all five First Nations with which we had meetings, the main threats were predation by wolves and the impact of forestry and agriculture on habitats. Sport hunting also has a negative impact on caribou because Anishinabeg and sport hunters have different hunting rules.

The people interviewed seemed to agree that habitat protection and corridor conservation are essential to ensuring caribou survival. Lastly, climate change was a concern for all of the people with whom we met.

# Section 2: The Innu

## *Detailed analysis by First Nation*

A detailed analysis follows for each First Nation with which we met.

This section of the report includes background information, interview results and fact sheets, as well as photos and maps. There are detailed analyses for the communities of Pakua Shipi, Nutashkuan, Matimekush–Lac John, Unamen Shipu, Pessamit and Uashat mak Mani-Utenam.

## Pakua Shipi

### Background

We met with members of the community of Pakua Shipi on January 18, 2010, during a tour of two Innu communities in the same week: Pakua Shipi and Nutashkuan.

The community is located in the eastern part of Nitassinan, which is traditional Innu Nation territory, and in the Lower North Shore region south of Blanc-Sablon and north of Chevery. It is located on the western shore of the Saint-Augustin River, 550 kilometres northeast of Sept-Îles. It is accessible only by boat and airplane. The community has a population of about 300. The main languages spoken are Innu and French.

The community of Pakua Shipi is located on rocky land with very craggy hills, not far from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The valleys are narrow and run along the north-south axis. In the coastal stretch, the vegetation is part of the maritime tundra and consists of stunted white spruce trees. Inland, we quickly come to the black spruce-moss stand.

We held the meeting in the band council offices. The interview was filmed and recorded. The presence of a translator made it easier.

### Interview results

The issue of non-Aboriginal people wasting caribou meat was of concern to the elders because it is not like the Innu to act that way. A significant effort is made in the community to **educate new generations not to**

**be wasteful** and to bring caribou heads and hides back to the community. Through education, young people must learn what must be done with a caribou hide: making mittens and boots, using sinew and even scraping the bones and breaking them into pieces. They are then boiled and the fat is collected.

**Legends** must also be passed on to young people to teach them about respect for caribou.

Regarding **habitat** and the presence of **food**, the area still has some very good locations. Food is still quite abundant. According to the elders who attended, northern caribou or barren-ground caribou (Kashkanaatik) are smaller (they wander more) whereas southern caribou are larger and better. Southern caribou live in the forest and eat, among other things, a type of foliage not found in the tundra: nipnamoa. Caribou calve in marsh lands and on islands because in these locations, they are protected from wolves. They used and occupied the entire **territory** in the Pakua Shipi area many years ago. They went to the Nutashkuan area and returned to Pakua Shipi, then headed back north.

The elders expressed **concern** about construction of the dam on the Mécatina River; they fear that it would flood and completely alter the territory.

They added that there was significant **hunting pressure** on the part of non-Aboriginal hunters and the Innu. More than 2,000 caribou were killed in the area in a two-year period. Snowmobiling had a major impact on caribou populations; there was a significant decrease. Today, caribou are much more stressed and they run in all directions not only because of helicopters, but also because of hunters.

One of the **main issues** brought up by the elders at the meeting in Pakua Shipi concerned the Quebec-Labrador border, which is near the community, and the Pakua Shipi Innu's caribou hunting area. The elders who attended the interview said that those in charge of caribou monitoring and protection (in Labrador) regularly prevent caribou from going south of the Labrador border so that Quebec Innu cannot kill them. This prevents caribou from moving around freely.

In addition, using collars (to locate them) is not a good idea. The Innu present said that both levels of government should work together on caribou **conservation**. They added that Woodland Caribou is a new category that did not exist in the past. They said that caribou protection must be extended on a very large scale: to all of Quebec

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Pakua Shipi

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: January 18, 2010. Interview conducted by Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French

**Translator present**: Yes (Mathias Mark)

**Consent form signed by participants**[8]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | The Innu are frightened of game wardens and are confined to the territory. The Quebec and Newfoundland governments should come to an agreement. |
| Period of presence on the territory | |
| Aboriginal language | *Kashkana-atik* – caribou |
| Caribou knowledge | Multiple uses for caribou; all parts of the animal are used.<br>Caribou calve on marsh lands or islands. |
| Caribou hunting | The hunting and full use of the caribou are a sign of respect. |
| Caribou importance | Caribou are not to be wasted.<br>Caribou is to the Innu what beef is to White people. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | See geographic maps. |
| Areas to protect for caribou | The entire area of the territory in question must be protected (Quebec and Labrador). |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Woodland Caribou is a new category (created).<br>Barren-ground caribou are smaller, while Woodland Caribou are larger and taste better.<br>Barren-ground caribou are whiter than Woodland Caribou, which are brown and have predominantly white feet with some black colouring. |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | Nipinamoa: a type of foliage that does not grow in the tundra; a plant found in marsh areas.<br>Caribou eat algae and grass. |
| Seasons | Caribou stay in marsh lands throughout the summer. |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | Caribou are much leaner today than they were in the past because of the stress they experience by being followed by helicopters, among other things. Their marrow is paler than it was in the past. |

[8] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | Caribou migration<br>Dam construction threatens caribou. |
| Predation | |
| Parasites, illnesses | Liver disease due to a change in diet |
| Overhunting | Hunting pressure by the English in the past.<br>Waste of meat left on site |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | Appearance of snowmobiles = increase in the number of caribou killed.<br>Introduction of radio collars. |
| Climate change | |
| Other | Game wardens and helicopters that frighten them into fleeing or confine them to one location |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | Use of hide and bones; collecting fat from the animal |
| Stories and rules | There are legends, but the Innu want to keep them to themselves.<br>Caribou have been mistreated in the past.<br>Waste is not permitted and caribou are not sold.<br>Young Innu are asked to bring caribou heads and hides back to the community.<br>Caribou must be respected. |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | |
| | |

## Photos


## Map

At the participants' request, no map will be published.

# Nutashkuan

## Background

We met with members of the community of Nutashkuan on January 19, 2010. The community is located at the mouth of the Natashquan River on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 336 kilometres east of Sept-Îles. The community extends over 20.3 hectares and has a population of about 900. The main languages spoken are Innu and French.

The territory surrounding the community of Nutashkuan is rather uniform, with large stretches of sand. Behind the coastal dunes is an infinite number of small lakes and ponds within vast expanses of peat bogs. The hinterland forest is mossy, coniferous and dominated by black spruce.

## Interview results

The elders interviewed in Nutashkuan have **two names** for caribou: Mushuau-atik and Menaskua-atik. Mushuau-atik live more to the north whereas Menaskua-atik are southern caribou that are almost extinct. One difference between the two is the antler size; the Mushuau-atik's is larger. Taste, size and build are the same for both types of caribou. However, the northern caribou is slimmer because it is always moving about. Another reason why the northern caribou is slimmer is because of military flight training that has taken place over Labrador for many years. According to the respondent, the presence of water (rerouting of rivers, flooding) has an impact on caribou: it gets scared and hides.

One of the elders said that caribou do not need **much space** to live. In the winter, they live off of their fat supply or look in the snow for food. Caribou, like bears, do not need much space. Because of their dislike for flies, caribou avoid lakes and marshes. They prefer knolls and mountains, especially the higher ones. The elders say that Woodland Caribou populations are increasing in their sector. They add that after a forest fire, caribou leave but later return.

The elders say that caribou protection involves forbidding caribou marketing and cleaning up the animal's habitat (they refer to mining sites). They also add that they try to **protect the Woodland Caribou** by killing barren-ground caribou, but that it is still difficult to tell the difference between the two (woodland and barren-ground).

Regarding predation, wolves remain caribou's worst **predator**. The elders disagreed with each other regarding noise. Caribou can be afraid of motor vehicle and chainsaw noise. However, if snowmobiles are used with their lights turned off, they can easily come close to the animal. Major work in a given area (e.g. La Romaine hydroelectric project north of Ekuanitshit) can have an impact on caribou distribution. The elders say that caribou will move around in the north. One of the elders said that he has seen caribou with parasites in its neck and that he thought only the northern caribou had problems with liver parasites.

The elders say that climate change favours caribou because food is more abundant and the weather is warmer. However, it can become difficult for caribou to feed themselves in the winter because the snow can be thicker and for that reason, caribou must dig more to find food.

Equal sharing of the animals among all the hunters present, preserving meat using racks (*Teshepetan*) and **respect for the animal were important rules and practices** that must still be followed and taught.

The elders who attended the interview said that **protecting** caribou starts by not wasting it. It is also important for people to have a good knowledge of their own needs to ensure that they do not kill too many. Hunters were careful with caribou; they did not want to kill it for no reason because their survival depended on it. One of the men present said that he never heard that caribou were at risk. He said that if they are, they must absolutely be killed according to need. It must not be wasted by anyone (non-Aboriginal people or Innu). If it is, the animals will punish the Innu.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Nutashkuan

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: January 19, 2010. Interview conducted by Anne-Marie André St-Onge (with Serge Ashini Goupil present)

**Interview language**: Innu

**Translator present**: Yes

**Consent form signed by participants**[9]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | They have access to territory passed on by their ancestors. |
| Period of presence on the territory | Because of a death, there was a period when no one was on it. The third person's territory is the Aguanish area. |
| Aboriginal language | *Mushuau-atik* – barren-ground caribou<br>*Menaskua-atik* – Woodland Caribou |
| Caribou knowledge | Woodland Caribou live in small groups and do not wander as much as barren-ground caribou. |
| Caribou hunting | |
| Caribou importance | Caribou must be respected. Their meat is essential to the Innu.<br>The caribou is the Innu's animal, just like cows and chicken are for White people. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | Woodland Caribou live on mountains and knolls.<br>Woodland Caribou live around wooded areas, while barren-ground caribou live more to the north. |

[9] Vocal recording confirming consent.

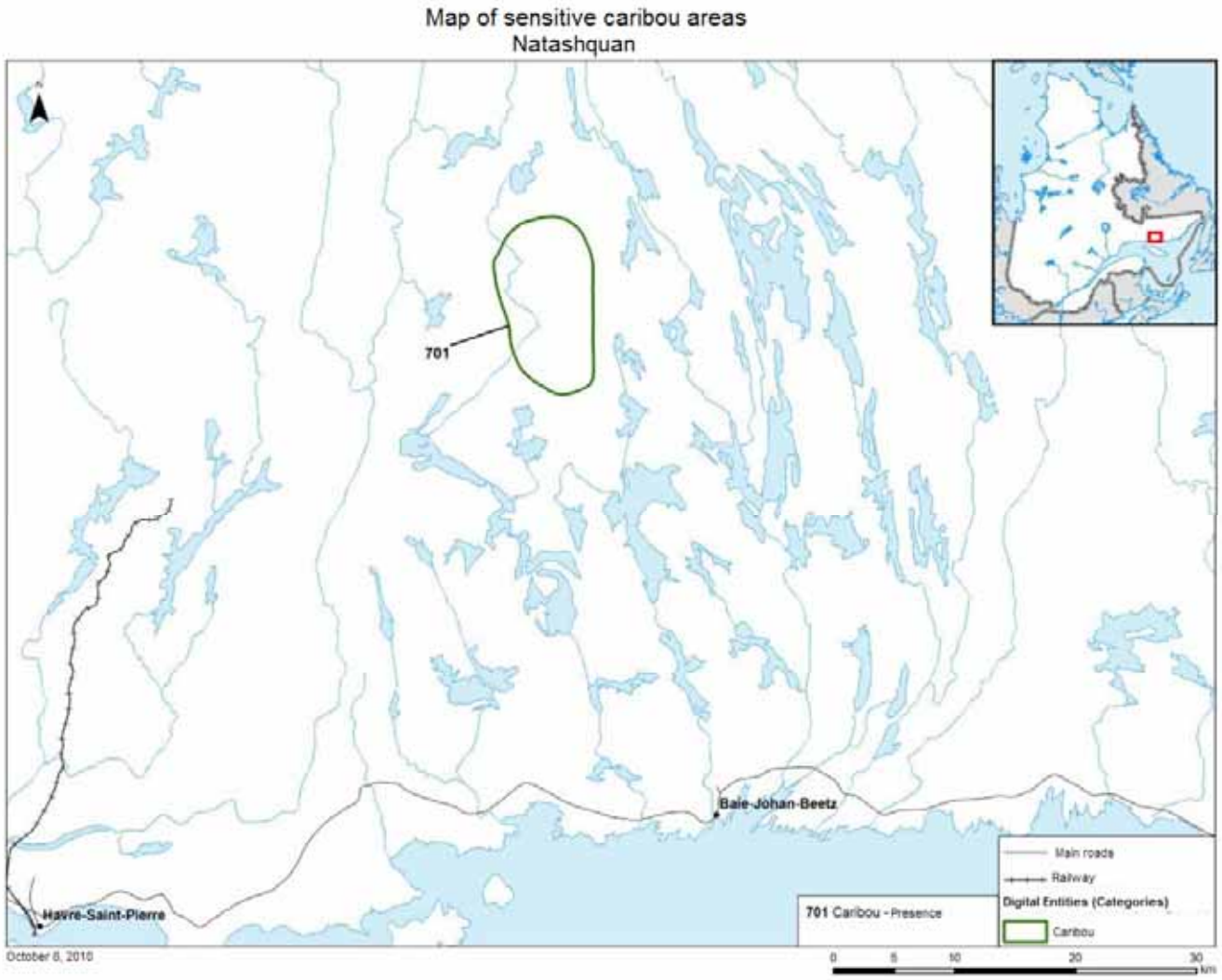
| | |
|---|---|
| | In the summer, they live in dense forests and do not wander much. |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Barren-ground caribou antlers are larger than those of Woodland Caribou.<br>Northern caribou are leaner, while Woodland Caribou are fatter because food is more readily available to them. Both animals taste the same.<br>Both types of caribou meet and the Innu hunt only the number of caribou they need.<br>Knowing that Woodland Caribou are protected, the Innu try to kill only barren-ground caribou so as to protect Woodland Caribou. |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | Caribou eat white moss (lichen). |
| Seasons | They avoid marshes in the summer because of the flies. |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | Woodland Caribou herds continue to increase in size. |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | Floods and river diversions disrupt caribou migration. The construction of dams, such as La Romaine dam, and other work (on ?) disrupt caribou and all the other animals. |
| Predation | Wolves prevent Woodland Caribou from moving about. They are the most feared predator of animals, including caribou.<br>In the past, wolverines were also predators of caribou. |
| Parasites, illnesses | Presence of parasites in the necks of caribou. These parasites also attack the livers of barren-ground caribou. |
| Overhunting | Hunting by non-Aboriginal people solely for profit |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | Military flights disturb caribou; they scare them. Caribou are frightened by the sounds of chainsaws and the wind, as well as by light. |
| Climate change | Temperature increases make food more readily available to caribou. Hunters can dress less warmly in the winter. |
| Other | Overhunting by young people who kill more caribou than they need |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | Drying caribou meat to avoid wasting it. It is essential to pass this on to young people.<br>*Neweken* – flour made with dried meat<br>*Pashteuiash* – dried meat<br>*Makushani* – feast where everyone shares the food brought and celebrates. The Innu were/are careful not to waste anything or leave anything on the ground.<br>Making snowshoes is important and requires caribou sinew (hide). |

| | |
|---|---|
| Stories and rules | Out of respect for caribou, they must not be wasted. The animals themselves could punish the Innu.<br>A per-person caribou quota must be established.<br>The bones must not be left on the ground; this offends Pepekesik (God). *Teuikan* – drum that led hunts, in a sense, because many of them took place in the hunters' dreams.<br>The spirit of the caribou is important; it must not be lost.<br>Out of respect for the caribou, no one must sell its meat.<br>Sharing of the caribou hunt needs to be well managed. |
| | |
| Additional information | |
| | |

## Photos


BIENVENUE
A
MATSHITEU

## Map


Map of sensitive caribou areas
Natashquan
701
Baie-Johan-Beetz
Havre-Saint-Pierre
Main roads
Railway
Digital Entities (Categories)
Caribou
701 Caribou - Presence
October 6, 2010
0
5
10
20
30
km

# Essipit

## Background

The community of **Essipit** is located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, near Baie des Escoumins, 40 kilometres northeast of Tadoussac. It extends over 87.6 hectares and has a population of about 175. The main languages spoken are French and Innu.

Although the community is relatively urbanized, the hinterland is mostly woodland with a dominance of mixed forests with a large proportion of deciduous trees. The topography is well defined, with deep valleys that run along the north-south axis. Glacial deposits are often thin and interspersed with bedrock outcrops.

Interviews in Essipit were conducted by a community representative in April 2010 at a supper. The vast majority of the people interviewed still live in the community and have had the opportunity to occupy and use the territory for hunting, fishing and trapping for many years. Their caribou knowledge comes mainly from their parents, families or past observations because currently they rarely, if ever, have a chance to see caribou, and they no longer have the opportunity to kill or eat it because the community now has a moratorium on this hunt to allow populations to increase.

## Interview results

Most of the people present said that caribou is a species that they would like to **hunt again** in the future. This is why they are currently taking steps to protect it.

The people present had no information regarding **stories, rules and traditional practices** that would help to protect and preserve caribou.

The people interviewed **did not know much about caribou habitat**, although they identified the terrestrial and arboreal lichens. The maps on the pages that follow locate the former habitats.

The participants closely link the arrival of forest activities (between 1930 and 1940) to the **disappearance of caribou**. Currently, poaching caribou and chasing them on snowmobiles are major issues. Snowmobile use is made easier by forest cutting and the presence of penetrating roads.

Lastly, the people said that **maintaining large protection embankments** which minimize development, and the required scientific data for knowing the caribou's needs, are essential to its survival.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Essipit

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: April 2010. Interview conducted by Michael Ross

**Interview language**: French

**Translator present**: No

**Consent form signed by participants**[10]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | |
| Period of presence on the territory | Annual presence on the territory |
| Aboriginal language | Not used much |
| Caribou knowledge | Limited knowledge, although passing down information orally remains important |
| Caribou hunting | |
| Caribou importance | They would prefer caribou in locations where there are few moose. There are so few remaining caribou that moose are now more widely hunted in traditional practice. Still, caribou are important to the Essipit Innu. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | See maps provided. |
| Areas to protect for caribou | Proposed biodiversity reserve – Akumunan<br>The Olaf protection embankment and the replacement embankments on an alternating basis<br>Poulin de Courval Lake (south of the lake) |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Atuk |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | Terrestrial and arboreal lichens |
| Seasons | |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | Forestry has had a significant impact on caribou presence. |
| Predation | Humans, bears, wolves |
| Parasites, illnesses | |
| Overhunting | |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |

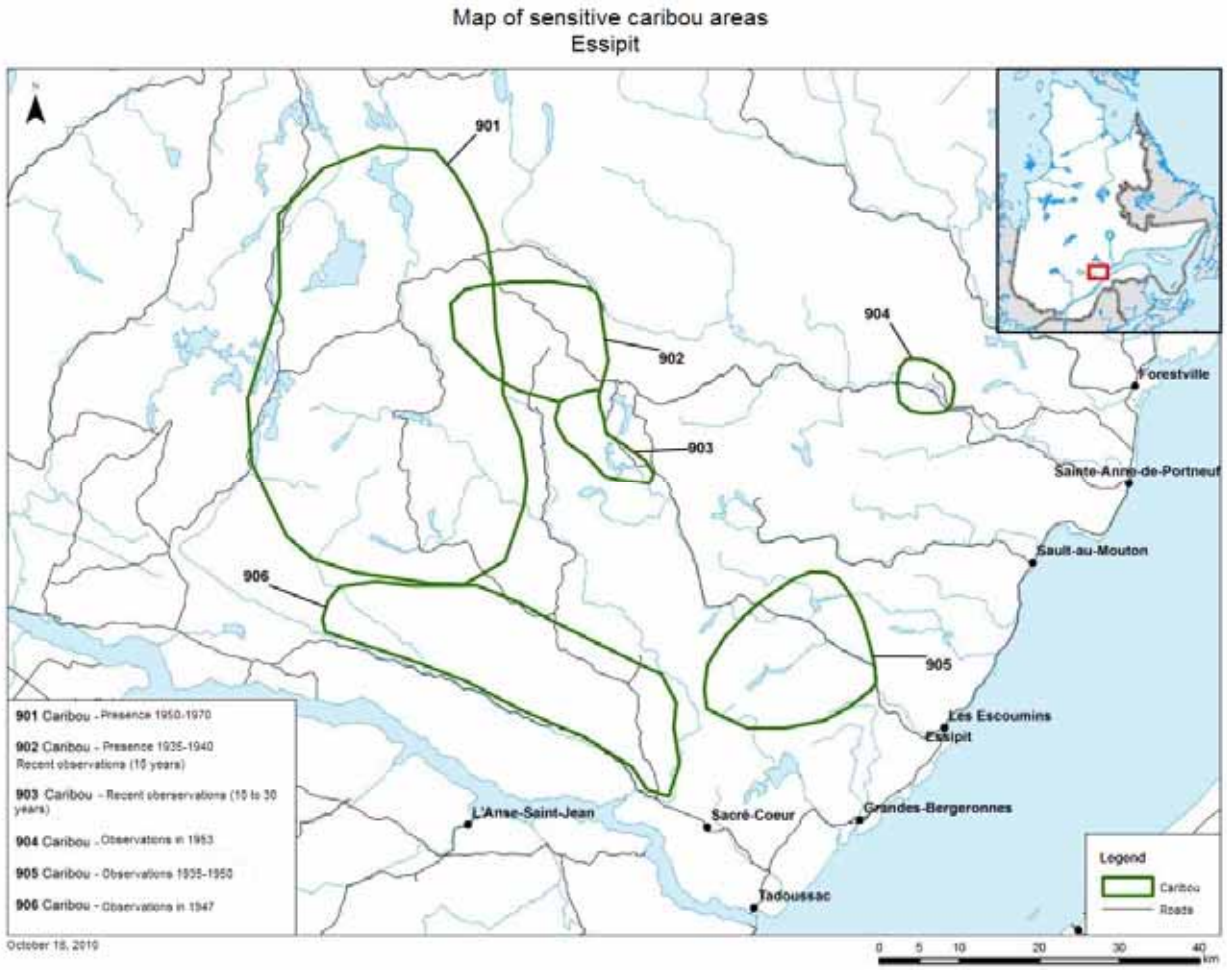
[10] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Climate change | |
| Other | |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | |
| Stories and rules | |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | |
| | It is very important to maintain connectivity between the Lac des Cœurs herd and the Pipmuacan and Portneuf herds. There also appears to be a natural connectivity to the south, in the direction of the proposed Rivière Sainte-Marguerite aquatic reserve. |

## Photos

No event photos

## Map


Map of sensitive caribou areas
Essipit
901
902
903
904
905
906
Forestville
Sainte-Anne-de-Portneuf
Sault-au-Mouton
Les Escoumins
Essipit
L'Anse-Saint-Jean
Sacré-Coeur
Grandes-Bergeronnes
Tadoussac
901 Caribou - Presence 1950-1970
902 Caribou - Presence 1935-1940
Recent observations (10 years)
903 Caribou - Recent observations (10 to 30 years)
904 Caribou - Observations in 1953
905 Caribou - Observations 1935-1950
906 Caribou - Observations in 1947
Legend
Caribou
Roads
October 18, 2010
0 5 10 20 30 40
km

**Interview notes:** [redacted] and [redacted] saw lone individuals in the Achistin Lake area in the fall of 2008 and a group of four individuals on Jacqueline Lake in the winter of 2005.

There were many observations further southeast than the current herd distribution on Lac des Cœurs. There were many observations until 1935–1940—and even some up to 1950—of caribou around Bernier, Polette, Mercier and Grandes Bergeronnes lakes. [redacted] said, "Grandma made caribou Pishus (moccasins) around 1930-1935. My father [redacted], who was born in 1907, had previously seen caribou in the area of Bernier Lake in the 30s and 40s. That's when the harvesting sites started up and the caribou disappeared not long after that." [Translation] [redacted] said, "My grandfather hunted caribou at the 9e Milles bridge and in the area of Bernier Lake in the 40s. He died in 1948." [Translation] [redacted] grandfather also saw his first moose around 1930-1935. He had never seen one before and thought it was a horse. Most of the people present had heard their parents say that in the past, there were caribou at Bernier Lake and the 9e Milles bridge. Most of the Essipit Innu hunted caribou in these parts before moose colonized the territory.

In the past 10 years, [redacted] saw small groups or lone caribou and many tracks in the area of Girard Lake and south of Renard Lake.

There were more observations on Gorgotton Lake in the winter (a large lake that provides protection against predation). A herd of several caribou was seen in the winter in the early 1980s and another herd of 10 to 12 in the winter of 1998–1999.

[redacted] saw caribou at Camp Sablon when they worked in the woods from the 1950s until the 1970s. There were many herds in the area of Camp Sablon. They previously saw caribou in the area of Portneuf Lake (at the head of Laflamme Lake). [redacted] saw caribou around Laflamme Lake and the Tagi River. There was a large caribou passage on Lac aux Brumes and Lac des Six Milles.

[redacted] saw tracks of three to four caribou at Chute-à-Boulé, about 20 miles from Portneuf in 1953.

[redacted] father killed five caribou in the area of the Sainte-Marguerite River in 1947. Her family ate more caribou than moose. When companies started to fell trees in the forest, the herds decreased in size and the number of caribou did likewise. In this same period, and even a bit before it, it is assumed that there was a moose invasion.

In the winter of 1935 (February), [redacted] saw three caribou on Marche-Serré Lake. There were many holes (snow dug up to get at lichens) created by caribou. Caribou had been there for a long time because there were very large holes. The hunters tried to kill one caribou, but to no avail. He saw a lot of tracks (there had to be between 15 and 20 caribou) in the area of the Ross River and Thomas Lake around 1935–1940.

## *Innu Strategic Alliance*

We met with members of Innu communities of the Innu Strategic Alliance during a community hunt held on lands that are part of traditional Innu Nation territory (Nitassinan in the Labrador region).

This meeting brought together five communities (Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Unamen Shipu, Pessamit, Ekuanitshit and Matimekush–Lac John) and was held from February 19 to 24, 2010, at which time chiefs, political representatives, hunters and their families were taking part in a community caribou hunt.

We had the permission of the Alliance chiefs to participate in this hunt, film it and conduct interviews related to the caribou issue and, by that very fact, to discuss the Woodland Caribou situation. Note that our presence was on the condition that no mapping data be included in this report to Environment Canada.

The interviews were conducted inside traditional Innu tents and also outdoors with Innu elders, chiefs and hunters. More than 150 people took part in this hunt. The interview participants from the five Innu Strategic Alliance communities agreed to allow their comments to be forwarded to Environment Canada. This was the case for the communities of Unamen Shipu, Matimekush–Lac John, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit and Ekuanitshit.

# Unamen Shipu

## Background

See page 51.

The community of **Unamen Shipu** (La Romaine) is located 400 kilometres northeast of Sept-Îles on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. The community extends over 70.3 hectares. It has no year-round access to roads and must use more expensive transportation to access the nearest service centre. The community has a population of about 1,000. The main languages spoken are Innu and French.

The community of Unamen Shipu is located on rocky, undulating topography. Inland, bedrock outcrops give way to thin glacial deposits. In the coastal stretch, the vegetation is part of the maritime tundra zone with stunted white spruce trees. Going toward the hinterland, we quickly come to the black spruce-moss stand.

## Interview results

The Innu of Unamen Shipu said that it was important to **continue** hunting caribou and to pass on the rules about the caribou spirit. It is still essential for the new generation to conserve the practices and **proper conservation techniques** for caribou and its parts. Nothing must be wasted. Caribou must also be left free and Innu must be allowed to take what they need. Collars should not be used to monitor caribou; this practice shows disrespect for them. The Innu have great respect for caribou. It is imperative not to kill too many; its spirit must always be respected. Bones and remains must be placed on the *Teshepetan* (racks) so that the caribou will be abundant the following year.

Regarding caribou **health**, caribou flesh and meat are no longer the same. Caribou are lean, they run everywhere and are more stressed. The reason: helicopters. Their marrow is also smaller.

One elder said that the government **should not influence** caribou herds by grouping them together. Caribou are mixed. Current **disturbances** and the presence of helicopters make it more difficult to kill caribou. Previously in the Unamen Shipu area, hunters could walk to places where they could hunt and kill caribou.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Unamen Shipu

**Names of respondents:**

**Interview date**: February 22, 2010. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: Innu and French

**Translator present**: Yes (Adéline Mark)

**Consent form signed by participants**[11]: **No**

| | |
|---|---|
| **General information** | |
| Experience on the territory | |
| Period of presence on the territory | |
| Aboriginal language | |
| Caribou knowledge | |
| Caribou hunting | |
| Caribou importance | Caribou is food of the Innu just as beef and bologna are food of White people. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Barren-ground caribou are white in the winter and Woodland Caribou are brown. Their meat also tastes different. |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | White moss and new roots that grow in the summer. They also eat plants that resemble the Labrador tea plant, but ones with a flower in the centre. They eat grass. |
| Seasons | |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | Caribou are leaner than they were in the past and their meat is paler because of the stress caused by helicopters.<br>Their marrow is thinner; it is difficult for them to put on fat. |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | Moose arrived in this area less than 40 years ago. |
| Predation | The wolf is one of the caribou's predators. The Innu could live in harmony with it in the past. |

[11] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Parasites, illnesses | |
| Overhunting | |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | Non-Aboriginal people try to put all of the caribou in one group. |
| Climate change | |
| Other | Collars fastened too tightly kill caribou.<br>Soporific injections are given to caribou to guide them and gather them together. |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | The Innu do not waste any caribou parts; they can all be used (e.g. for snowshoes, moccasins, clothing). |
| Stories and rules | The spirit of the caribou must be respected; nothing must be left on the ground.<br>In the past, caribou bones and parts that could not be used were placed on racks, *Teshepetan*, so that caribou would return the following year. This is a rule of respect.<br>The Innu cannot be prevented from hunting for their food on their territory. |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | It is assumed that there is a dump for caribou carcasses in the area; it is used by officers from Newfoundland following meat confiscations.<br>Officers in helicopters have also killed caribou and left all of the meat on the ground. The Innu took the meat.<br>The Innu must defend their ancestral rights and hunting is one way of doing so. |
| | |

## Photos

## Map

The Innu Strategic Alliance chiefs requested that we not collect mapping data during the interviews. This was the case for the communities of Unamen Shipu, Matimekush–Lac John, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit and Ekuanitshit.

# Ekuanitshit

## Background

See information on page 51.

The community of Ekuanitshit is located where the Mingan and St. Lawrence rivers meet, 28 kilometres west of Havre-Saint-Pierre. It extends over 1,919 hectares and has a population of about 500. The main languages spoken are Innu and French.

The Mingan River delta sands form the foundation on which the community of Ekuanitshit sits. As is the case for a good portion of the Moyenne-Côte-Nord region, an indurated layer makes the coastal plain soil impermeable and conducive to the development of large peat bogs. The hinterland quickly becomes rocky as superficial deposits get thinner. The coniferous forest, dominated by fir and black spruce, is never very dense.

## Interview results

The participation of Ekuanitshit Innu in the February 2010 caribou hunt is a **major statement** because it shows how important it is to the Innu to **carry on their traditions**. The Innu used every part (lungs, intestines, brain, head, eyes, tongue, meat and hide) of the animal. They used racks to preserve and store caribou to guard against anything lying about. Never do the Innu consider their hunts illegal because they look only to carry on their traditions.

The Innu often noticed that caribou remains (only the buttocks and shoulders were taken) had been left abandoned near the road to Labrador. The Innu never do that.

Caribou were used for **making** snowshoes, moccasins, drums and mattresses. One of the interview participants said that the Innu do not want to be told what to do and when. Governments must instead understand that for the Innu, **the relationship with caribou must last** and that continuing tradition practices and passing on First Nations knowledge is closely related to the **survival** of the Innu Nation. The Innu are intelligent and must continue to pass their knowledge on to the new generation. Traditional life is very important; it is their school and the reason why it is so important to learn their culture on their territory—it is essential to **passing on** Innu culture.

Innu participation in this hunt confirms their will to clearly assert their rights. The message must be sent to government that this is Innu territory and that to ban Innu from hunting on it will not work. The Innu **watch over and protect** caribou. They hunt it for subsistence only and that is why the animal is not wasted. This is the ultimate proof of **respect** for caribou. Major **development** by governments (mining, hydroelectricity, forestry) has a huge impact on the quality of the territory.

In response to a question about caribou management, one stakeholder said that the government should agree to let the Innu manage the hunt as they have done for thousands of years. To do this, perhaps the solution lies in the creation of an **up-to-date Innu guideline** regarding the traditional Innu hunt, which would involve several Innu communities. It is one **possible way to talk about caribou survival**.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Ekuanitshit

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: February 22, 2010. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French and Innu

**Translator present**: Yes

**Consent form signed by participants**[12]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | The Innu must have access to the territory to pass on their culture. |
| Period of presence on the territory | |
| Aboriginal language | |
| Caribou knowledge | |
| Caribou hunting | Hunting restrictions are now applied to the Innu. Caribou are important to the Innu; they ensure their survival. |
| Caribou importance | The Innu have been monitoring and protecting caribou for a long time. It is important that they continue to hunt caribou for subsistence. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Barren-ground caribou are smaller than Woodland Caribou. |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | |
| Seasons | |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | |
| Predation | |
| Parasites, illnesses | |

[12] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Overhunting | |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | |
| Other | |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | The hide must be removed from the dead caribou and fat made from the bones, before the remains are placed on a rack.<br>The meat is cut into strips and dried. The offal is also eaten. The brain is used for tanning the caribou's hide.<br>The hide and fur can be used for mattresses. The hide can be used to make snowshoes, moccasins and drums. |
| Stories and rules | Out of respect for caribou, they must not be wasted. |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | The government would like to have control over everything, even Innu hunting. The Innu would like to manage their hunting activities themselves. |
| | |

## Photos

## Map

The Innu Strategic Alliance chiefs requested that we not collect mapping data during the interviews. This was the case for the communities of Unamen Shipu, Matimekush–Lac John, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit and Ekuanitshit.

# Matimekush–Lac John

## Background

See page 51.

The community of Matimekush is located on the shores of Pearce Lac, about 510 kilometres north of Sept-Îles. The community of Lac John is located 3.5 km from Matimekush and from the centre of Schefferville. The community has no year-round access to the highway system and must use more expensive transportation (plane) or the train to access the nearest service centre (Sept-Îles). The area of the community of Matimekush is 68 hectares; that of Lac John is 23.3 hectares. The community has a population of about 760. The main languages spoken are Innu and French.

The community of Matimekush is located on landform of long knolls and low, straight, stretching hills that correspond to the Labrador Trough and have many lakes between them. Since the early 1950s, open pit iron ore mining has greatly altered the landscape. There is a combination of rock and thin glacial deposits on the knolls and hills. There are mostly open coniferous forests dominated by black spruce.

## Interview results

The specific context of the caribou hunt held in February 2010 brought out several important points regarding the community of Matimekush–Lac John. Caribou remains a **very important animal** in Innu culture and the **hunting concept differs** completely between what non-Aboriginal people consider sport hunting and what the Innu consider a community hunt.

The Innu say that some hunters can kill several caribou (dozens) and redistribute it to families in the community. Often, these families are needy. **Hunting is not a game; it is very serious business**. The Innu never hunt for the fun of it.

The outcome of a hunt is **of prime importance**. Nothing must be wasted; the entire caribou must be used, whether for food, fat or use of the hide for making moccasins. Innu survival depends on caribou.

The **territorial issue** (negotiations with governments, the Quebec-Labrador border, drowning of the land by dams and mining operations) is of great concern to the Innu of Matimekush–Lac John.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Matimekush–Lac John

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: February 20, 2010. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French

**Translator present**: No

**Consent form signed by participants**[13]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | The Innu have travelled the entire territory in Quebec and Labrador.<br>Aboriginal people have no borders.<br>Because one Innu family's territory is flooded, this family cannot go there anymore.<br>Helicopters now disturb caribou and disrupt traditional hunting activities. |
| Period of presence on the territory | Thousands of years |
| Aboriginal language | |
| Caribou knowledge | |
| Caribou hunting | Community hunting is important; it allows for redistribution of caribou among the Innu in the communities. |
| Caribou importance | The caribou is part of the Innu; they cannot survive without it. Caribou is the Innu's basic food. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Caribou from George River go down to the community hunting zone in Labrador where the February 2010 hunt was held. According to the hunters present, these are not Woodland Caribou. |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | |
| Seasons | |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| | |
| **Threats** | |

[13] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Habitat change | There are iron mine holes along the caribou's migratory path. |
| Predation | |
| Parasites, illnesses | |
| Overhunting | Sport hunting by Americans (large males, large antlers) |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | Mine exploration (blasting) in the Schefferville area makes caribou flee. |
| Climate change | |
| Other | Relocation (or diversion) of caribou by using seaplanes and helicopters |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | Difference between the Innu and White people: their relationship with caribou. The Innu respect the caribou and do not waste any of its meat. |
| Stories and rules | Out of respect for caribou, they must not be wasted. The Innu hunt for subsistence. Sharing and respect are very important. The caribou offers itself to Innu hunters. Its meat is redistributed to the Innu community. |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | According to the Innu, the government controls the relocation of caribou to allow for sales to Americans (through outfitting operations). Caribou are diverted to help outfitters make more money. |
| | |

## Photos

## Map

The Innu Strategic Alliance chiefs requested that we not collect mapping data during the interviews. This was the case for the communities of Unamen Shipu, Matimekush–Lac John, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit and Ekuanitshit.

# Uashat mak Mani-Utenam

## Background

See page 51.

The community of **Uashat** is located on the western outskirts of Sept-Îles whereas **Mani-Utenam** is located 16 kilometres east of Sept-Îles. The community is accessible by road year-round. The total population living in the two communities is about 3,000. The main languages spoken are Innu and French.

The community of Uashat underwent major urbanization in the wake of development in the city of Sept-Îles in the early 1950s. The community of Mani-Utenam is located on the deltaic sands of the Moisie River. As is the case for a good portion of the Moyenne-Côte-Nord region, an indurated layer makes the coastal plain soil impermeable and conducive to the development of large peat bogs. The hinterland quickly becomes rocky as superficial deposits get thinner. The coniferous forest, dominated by fir and black spruce, is never very dense.

## Interview results

The first respondent interviewed said that caribou from the George River migrated toward Labrador around 1938 and from then on, they were called **Woodland Caribou**. He explained that its current disappearance is because of **sport hunting** practiced by Labrador residents. The caribou that are currently in the sector affected by the community hunt are from the George River.

To the Innu, it is important not to hunt if meat for food is not required. However, if the **Innu rules are obeyed**, there should be no problems. According to this respondent, the Innu must respect and carry on the **values of their parents**. Respect for nature is essential and the Innu express it by sharing without wasting. Lastly, the person said that for the Innu, there are no laws. Their rule is to pay attention to and respect animals.

The second respondent said that one of the problems now is the division created by governments with regard to **implementing boundaries** between Quebec and Labrador and the **administrative division** between Quebec and Labrador Innu. He also brought up the importance of **new generations** getting involved and participating in this type of community hunt in order to understand and participate in passing on information about the caribou.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Uashat mak Mani-Utenam

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: February 22, 2010. Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois

**Interview language**: French and Innu

**Translator present**: No

**Consent form signed by participants**[14]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | |
| Period of presence on the territory | |
| Aboriginal language | |
| Caribou knowledge | |
| Caribou hunting | The Innu do not want to be prohibited from hunting caribou. |
| Caribou importance | The Innu live on caribou meat in the same way that White people live on beef and chicken. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | Around 1938, caribou from the George River headed south and became Woodland cCribou, a new category.<br>These Woodland Caribou (wiped out by Newfoundland hunters) came from the George River (from the tundra). |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | |
| Seasons | |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | |
| Predation | |
| Parasites, illnesses | |
| Overhunting | |

[14] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | |
| Other | |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | |
| Stories and rules | It is important to share caribou in order to respect it.<br>What is obtained from the forest must be shared and not wasted. |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | The Innu feel/sense that their rights are threatened. |
| | |

## Photos

## Map

The Innu Strategic Alliance chiefs requested that we not collect mapping data during the interviews. This was the case for the communities of Unamen Shipu, Matimekush–Lac John, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit and Ekuanitshit.

# Pessamit

## Background

See page 51.

The community of Pessamit (Betsiamites) is located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, 54 kilometres southwest of Baie-Comeau. The community extends over 25,242 hectares and has a population of about 3,000. The main languages spoken are Innu and French.

The community of Pessamit is surrounded by the vast deltaic sands of the Betsiamites, Outardes and Manicouagan rivers. These rivers were greatly altered by hydroelectric developments in the 1950s and 1960s. The coastal plain consists of large peat bogs and the forest is moist boreal balsam fir.

## Interview results

The Innu hunters present said that the caribou hunt on their territory of interest remains a traditional activity practiced by a few families that hunt **small caribou herds**. For some years, the concept of the vulnerable or threatened caribou has been present and hunting restrictions are now in place. The territory is now **mapped** in order to determine the locations where caribou must not be hunted.

Government approaches regarding **caribou protection** lead the Innu to no longer hunt, as is the case in the Nitassinan region of Pessamit areas. However, why not talk about forest cutting, dams and mines? They all **destroy** caribou habitat. According to the elders, forest cutting caused caribou that used the forest to head northward. Sport hunting is lucrative for governments. However, for the Innu, hunting is their language, their culture. If the Innu can no longer hunt caribou, they can no longer carve it up.

One **solution proposed** by hunters in Pessamit consists in the government not interfering and in the entire Innu Nation (including Labrador Innu) **working together** to manage the caribou.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Innu

**Community**: Pessamit

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: February 21, 2010

Interview conducted by Valérie Courtois and Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French

**Translator present**: No

**Consent form signed by participants**[15]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | Hunting in small groups followed by sharing caribou |
| Period of presence on the territory | |
| Aboriginal language | |
| Caribou knowledge | |
| Caribou hunting | In the past, the Innu participated in species monitoring activities by reporting the number of caribou hunted to game wardens. |
| Caribou importance | |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Southern caribou went to join northern caribou because of forest cutting. |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | |
| Seasons | |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | Forest cutting and dams should be monitored more closely.<br>People are quick to point the finger at Aboriginal peoples when a species becomes at-risk.<br>Dam construction disrupts caribou. |
| Predation | |
| Parasites, illnesses | |

[15] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| Overhunting | |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | |
| Other | Loss of culture among young Innu because of hunting restrictions imposed.<br>Loss of language and know-how (carving up).<br>The sale of permits enables individuals to make money off of caribou and this is not part of the Innu value system. Hunting is for survival. |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | Innu ancestors ate a lot of caribou. Today, that is replaced by moose. |
| Stories and rules | In the past, hunting was done in small groups and the hunters shared everything afterward. |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | Environment Canada should focus more on large companies (forestry, mining). |
| | |

## Photos


## Map

The Innu Strategic Alliance chiefs requested that we not collect mapping data during the interviews. This was the case for the communities of Unamen Shipu, Matimekush–Lac John, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit and Ekuanitshit.

## *General analysis for the Innu Nation*

Our understanding and analysis regarding the Innu Nation confirm that caribou is still a very important species in the culture of this Nation; it is even an integral part of its cultural survival. The respondents with whom we met show great respect for the animal.

Most of the communities have vast knowledge about caribou. However, the communities of Pessamit and Essipit have less knowledge because there are currently very few caribou in their hunting sectors. It seems that when forest cutting picked up and when the moose came, the presence of caribou in these areas was negatively impacted.

For all First Nations with which we had meetings, the main threats are predation by wolves and the impact of forestry on habitats. Sport hunting also has a negative impact on caribou because the hunting rules and the concept of respecting the animal are not the same for the Innu as they are for the sport hunters.

The people interviewed seemed to agree that habitat protection and corridor conservation are essential to ensuring caribou survival. Climate change is a concern for all of the people with whom we met.

Major work must be implemented to allow for solutions to be sought so that the Innu (as many communities as possible) can influence and truly collaborate on all future approaches to managing and protecting the species.

Lastly, the Innu said that the traditional community caribou hunt is a right and that they will continue to exercise it.

# Section 3: The Atikamekw

## *Detailed analysis by First Nation*

A detailed analysis follows for each First Nation with which we met.

This section of the report includes background information, interview results and fact sheets, as well as photos and maps. There are detailed analyses for the communities of Manawan and Opitciwan.

## Manawan

### Background

The community of Manawan is located 120 kilometres west of La Tuque and 72 kilometres north of Saint-Michel-des-Saints on the south shore of Métabeskéga Lake and covers 773 hectares. The community has a population of about 2,000. The main languages spoken are Atikamekw and French.

The community of Manawan is located in a forestry sector that is, in large part, under commercial development that began at the end of the 19th century. The forest is part of the balsam fir-yellow birch stand, a mixed forest. The undulating topography has seen its hydrology greatly altered with the construction of dams on the upper Saint-Maurice.

The community interview was conducted on June 11, 2010, after several declined requests. It was held in Manawan with three elders and a translator present. The territory is occupied year-round.

### Interview results

**Atikw** is what they call caribou. Caribou remains a **little-known animal** and it is difficult for community residents to be familiar with its living habits. What they do know is that it was difficult to kill it. However, many people like caribou meat.

There is evidence of the presence of caribou in the area because several antlers were found. Stacking them was a **sacred rite**. There was great respect for caribou, and the three elders remember these rules and stories. The elders said that if a hunter could not kill the animal, it was because he had shown a lack of respect for it in the past.

The elders said that **non-Aboriginal hunting practices** are not good techniques and that using bait such as salt has an impact on the meat's taste.

The elders added that before the railway was constructed and the **habitats changed** (arrival of forest cutting), caribou were present. There was significant lichen cover in the area. The habitat that caribou used in the area consisted of jack pine forests and areas north of Kemp Lake because there was a lot of caribou lichen there. Major forest fires in the area in the 1920s had harmful effects on caribou.

**Predators** (wolf packs) also had an impact on its disappearance.

The elders concluded by saying that it was important to **encourage passing on good hunting techniques** to new generations to ensure respect for the animal. In this day and age, most young people do not know the rules governing killing the animal or the right way to kill it.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Atikamekw

**Community**: Manawan

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: June 11, 2010. Interview conducted by Serge Ashini Goupil

**Interview language**: French

**Translator present**: Yes (Kevin Dubé)

**Consent form signed by participants**[16]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | Significant |
| Period of presence on the territory | Year-round |
| Aboriginal language | Yes |
| Caribou knowledge | Very little |
| Caribou hunting | |
| Caribou importance | Caribou were present in the past.<br>They would like to see caribou back in the sector again. |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | See map. |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | Lichen |
| Seasons | |
| | |

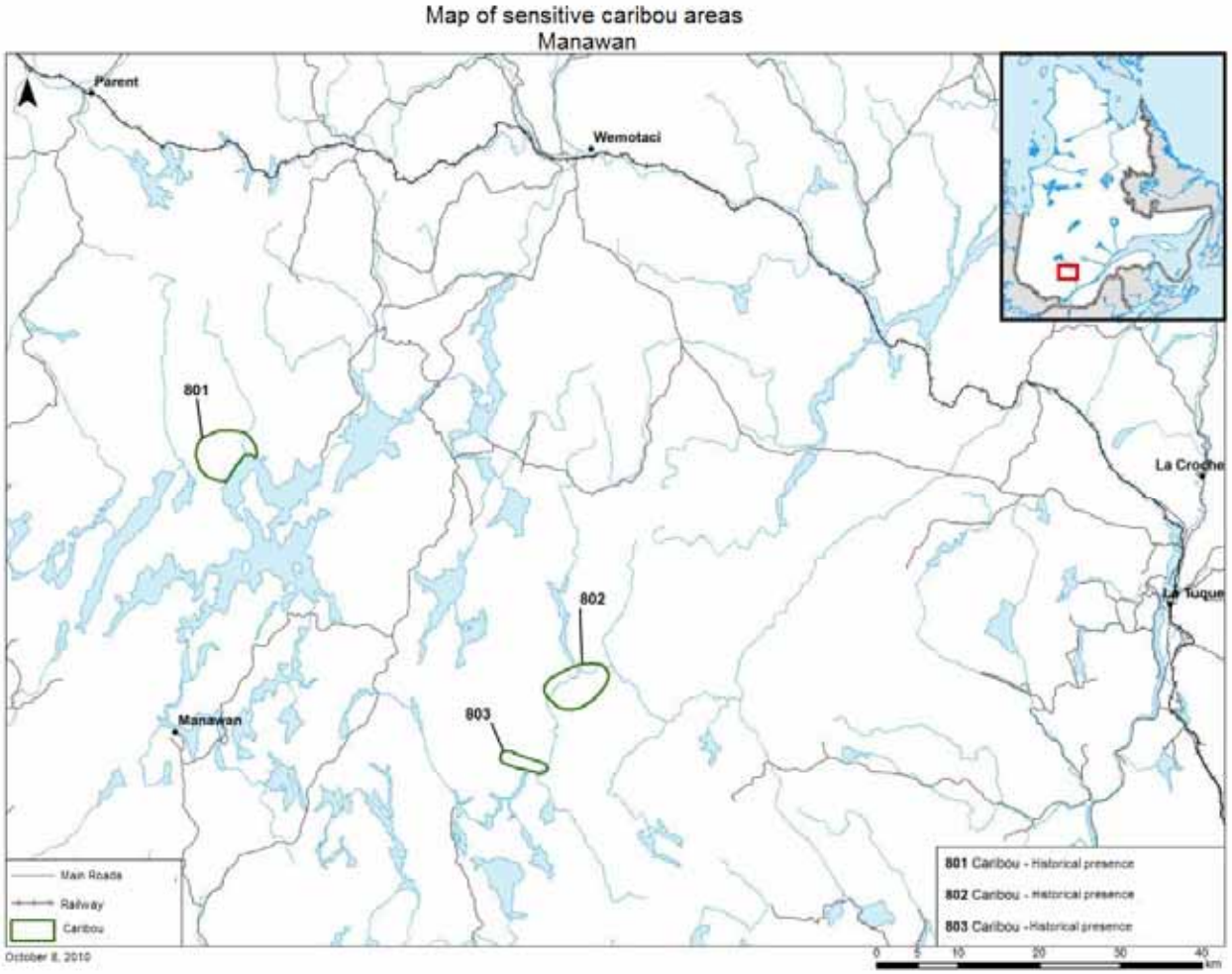
[16] Vocal recording confirming consent.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | |
| Predation | |
| Parasites, illnesses | They know about those that affect deer and fear that they may be transmitted to moose. |
| Overhunting | Bad hunting |
| Collisions with vehicles | |
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | |
| Other | |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | Proper hunting techniques must be taught to young generations of First Nations once again. |
| Stories and rules | The most important rule is not to disrespect the animal. |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | |
| | Must work together on harmonization measures with land users, particularly the forest industry. |

## Photos

No event photos

## Map


Map of sensitive caribou areas
Manawan
Parent
Wemotaci
La Croche
La Tuque
Manawan
801
802
803
Main Roads
Railway
Caribou
801 Caribou - Historical presence
802 Caribou - Historical presence
803 Caribou - Historical presence
October 8, 2010
0 5 10 20 30 40
km

# Opitciwan

## Background

We met with members of the community of Opitciwan in August 2010. Following an agreement with community representatives, work was carried out by the Opitciwan environment service.

The community of Opitciwan is located on the north shore of the Gouin Reservoir in the Haut-Saint-Maurice region, 143 kilometres south of Chibougamau, about halfway between the Lac Saint-Jean plain and the Abitibi region. Opitciwan extends over a territory of slightly more than 9 square kilometres and covers 773 hectares. The community has a population of about 2,000. The main languages spoken are Atikamekw and French.

The community of Opitciwan is located on the northern boundary of the balsam fir-white birch stand in a sector where black spruce is increasingly spreading. The forest industry has been ubiquitous since the early 20th century. The undulating topography saw its hydrology completely altered by the construction of the vast Gouin Reservoir in 1918.

## Interview results

The **presence of caribou** in the Opitciwan area goes back a long time for the two elders interviewed in the project. There were encounters with caribou, which is called **Atikw** in Atikamekw, when the elders had a seminomadic lifestyle. It has been at least 60 years since the last caribou was seen in the Opitciwan area.

The caribou hunt was related to the Atikamekw way of life and the Nation had to move about with caribou migrations. An interesting **legend** has it that caribou and moose talked to each other in the past. The moose told the caribou that it could leave because from then on, it (the moose) would feed the Atikamekw. Caribou are said to have contributed to the survival of the Atikamekw in the past.

There were caribou everywhere around the Gouin Reservoir. The Innu used caribou as **food** and to make **clothing** (from its hide) and **tools** (from its bones). The Atikamekw hunted caribou mostly in the winter.

Caribou **were seen mainly in the forest** among the black spruce and balsam firs, where arboreal and terrestrial lichens are found, and in peat bogs, where caribou were found in large numbers in the past.

It is assumed that there were four fearless caribou herds on the territory. There were no moose in those days. Today, the opposite is true. The elders also said that as more moose settled on the territory, more caribou disappeared.

Forest cutting is probably the main reason for the disappearance of caribou in the area. The construction of the **railway** and dams in the area and an increased human presence added to the disappearance of caribou. The arrival of the moose, and especially the increase in its **natural predators** (wolves and bears), also had an impact on caribou. Lastly, the **pressure of non-Aboriginal hunting** and the loss of the old softwood forest (because of logging), coupled with the resulting habitat changes, have had a negative impact on caribou.

## Interview fact sheet

**First Nation**: Atikamekw

**Community**: Opitciwan

**Names of respondents**:

**Interview date**: August 2010. Interview conducted by Sébastien Bolté of the Service de l'environnement d'Opitciwan.

**Interview language**: Atikamekw

**Translator present**: Yes

**Consent form signed by participants**[17]: **No**

| **General information** | |
|---|---|
| Experience on the territory | Significant and ongoing |
| Period of presence on the territory | Year-round |
| Aboriginal language | Yes, Atikamekw |
| Caribou knowledge | Very little. It stems from living traditionally in their early childhoods. Knowledge was also passed down orally. |
| Caribou hunting | |
| Caribou importance | |
| | |
| **Maps** | |
| Areas of caribou presence | Yes, around the Gouin Reservoir |
| Areas to protect for caribou | |
| Various herds (differentiation) | Atikw |
| | |
| **Caribou habitat** | |
| Type of plant | Arboreal and terrestrial lichens |
| Seasons | |
| | |
| **Population trends** | |
| Changes identified (young) | |
| | |
| **Threats** | |
| Habitat change | Related to intensive forestry in the sector, the construction of dams and the railway. Loss of the old softwood forest. |
| Predation | Increased presence of bears and wolves with the arrival of the moose |
| Parasites, illnesses | |
| Overhunting | Pressure from non-Aboriginal peoples |

[17] Vocal recording confirming consent.

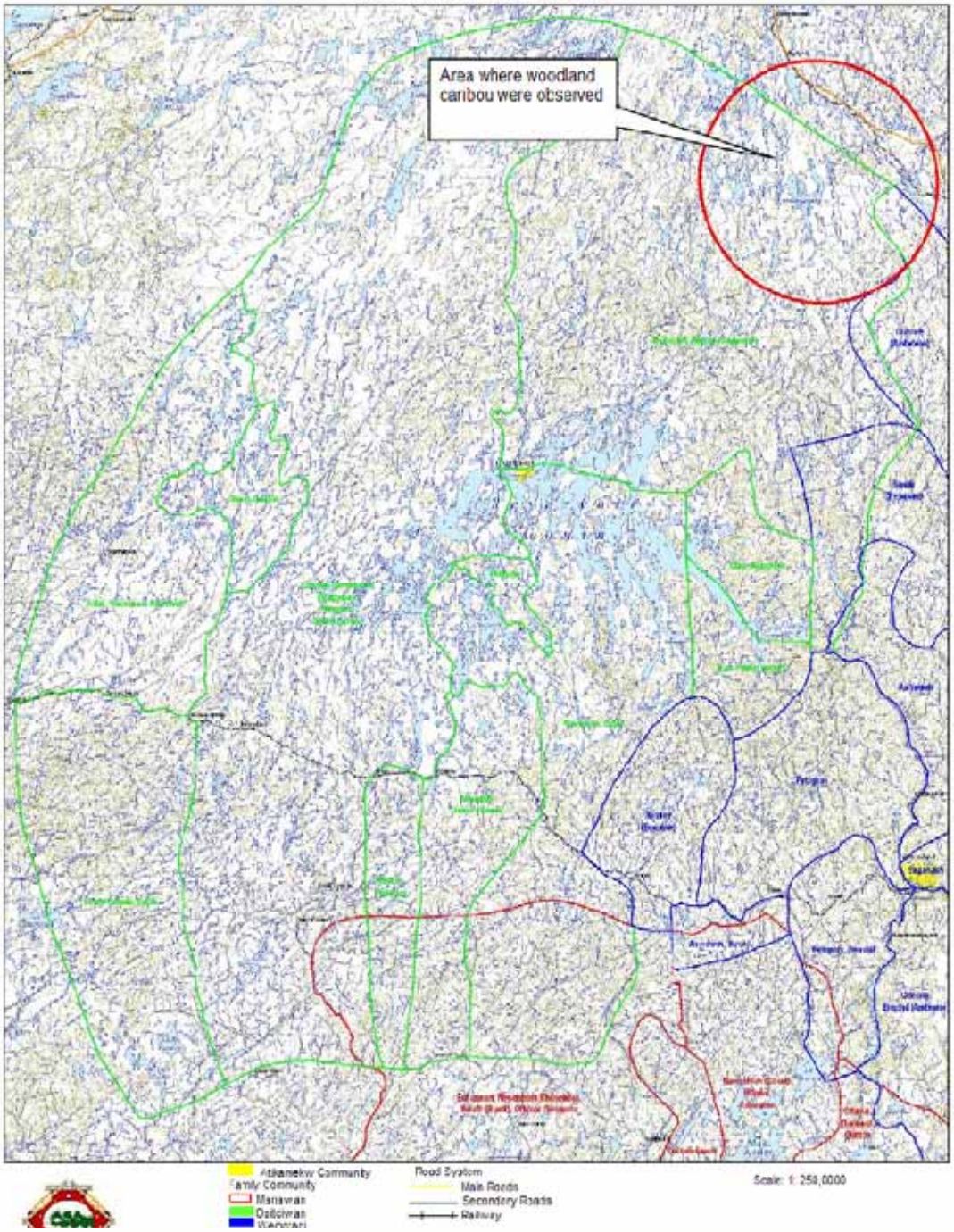
| | |
|---|---|
| Noise and light disturbances | |
| Climate change | |
| Other | |
| | |
| **Traditional practices** | |
| Know-how | |
| Stories and rules | |
| | |
| **Additional Information** | |
| | |

## Photos

No event photos

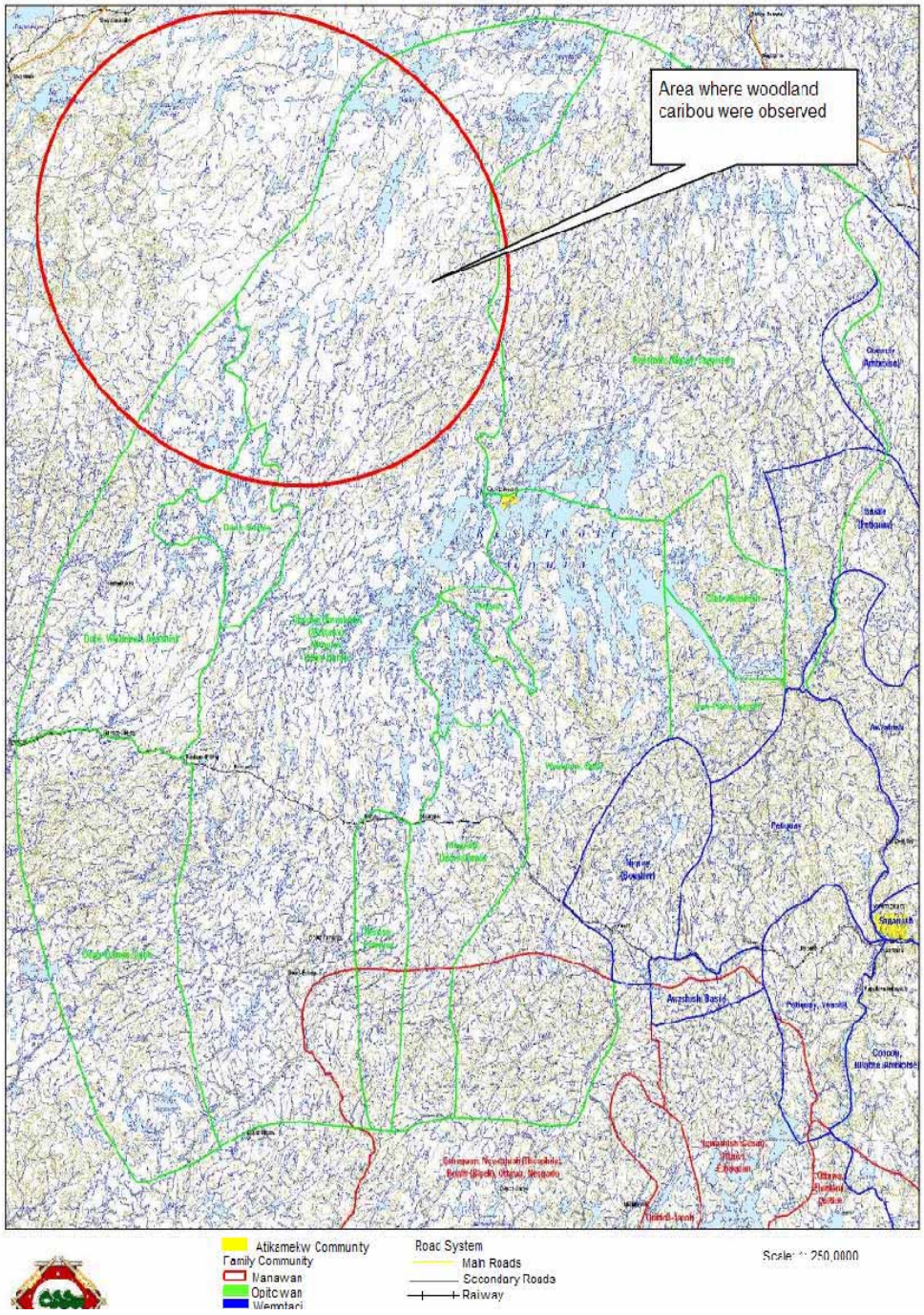
# Annex 1

## Opitciwan family territory



## Annex 2

**Opitciwan family territory**



## *General analysis for the Atikamekw Nation*

Our understanding and preliminary analysis of the Atikamekw Nation confirm that caribou is an endangered species in this sector. Not much recent information is available because there are few elders who vouched for the presence of or saw these caribou. The observations lack detail and do not really provide any information about the type of habitat, especially in relation to the food that caribou eat.

However, it is interesting to note that the respect that hunters must have for the dead animal (in the case of the Atikamekw, moose) is a key point that came out of the interviews.

It is also important to note that the presence of caribou is desirable in this area and that this possibility should be closely combined with raising awareness about best practices (rules) to be implemented for hunting by new generations.

The increasing number of industrial activities (dams, forestry, etc.) in the area do not favour this possibility.

*Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat*

Bureau du Nionwentsïo

# GATHERING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ON THE WOODLAND CARIBOU

**Document prepared by the Bureau du Nionwentsïo**
**Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat**

**For Environment Canada**
Quebec Region

**March 31, 2010**

# GATHERING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ON THE WOODLAND CARIBOU

Summary:
Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) has undertaken an enormous project involving the collection of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) from First Nations throughout the Woodland Caribou's range to use these data as part of the national recovery strategy for boreal caribou.

To this end, the CWS, in collaboration with First Nations, reached agreements on TEK, which led to the development of projects involving information-gathering from those with knowledge on this species.

The Huron-Wendat Nation has occupied its territory, the NIONWENTSÏO, since time immemorial. It has been well-placed to witness the gradual decline and disappearance of caribou on its territory.

Although the Anglo-Huron Treaty of 1760 gave the Huron-Wendat Nation the authority to occupy, use and trade on its territory, government authorities evicted the Nation from this territory. This eviction was advantageous to hunting and fishing clubs, and the creation of the Parc national des Laurentides. At the time, Huron hunted caribou and had amassed specific knowledge on the species. Before the advent of logging, there was sufficient habitat and inaccessible territory for caribou to thrive. We can therefore make a direct link between the violation of the Nation's rights and the disappearance of the species.

Significant disruptions in its traditional activities prevented the Huron-Wendat community from perpetuating its knowledge and culture. However, in spite of serious restrictions, legal proceedings, arrests and imprisonments, several activities endured, enabling the Nation to retain some knowledge, or at least transmit this knowledge.

Moreover, several members of the Nation were able to work as hunting and fishing guides in select clubs where caribou was harvested.

Although based on individual recollections, TEK relates to the Nation's collective rights. It is therefore important that this knowledge be used in such a way that the Nation can put it in context and protect the rights associated with it. To this end, the use of TEK must be facilitated by a species management policy exchange process. It remains essential that the Huron-Wendat Nation receive support to work collaboratively with government bodies.

## 1. The mandate

Following discussions, the goal of this project was to

- create an interview questionnaire that meets Environment Canada's (EC) objectives in order to develop a boreal caribou recovery strategy;
- meet several community members likely to have TEK or ecological knowledge on the boreal caribou; and
- identify trends in or explanations of the boreal caribou's past, present and future evolution, based on TEK.

## 2- The questionnaire

The questionnaire (Fig. 1) is the product of several discussions and analyses of prior EC work and similar work to develop a strategy that will foster discussion with Huron-Wendat respondents.

This questionnaire was used as a guide in several telephone interviews and meetings with Nation respondents.

## 3- Scope of TEK

TEK is much more than specific individuals' recollections. It reveals information about the animal's instincts and behavioural patterns, as well as the resources for its management. By sharing this knowledge and the values it conveys, a perspective on collective rights emerges.

The application of TEK therefore demands a like-minded construct based on the limitations and goals it represents.

A framework must be established in which to use this TEK, which, although it may belong to individuals, also belongs to the entire Huron-Wendat Nation because of the collective rights it conveys.

**FIGURE 1**

Outline of partially guided interview on boreal caribou

Gathering traditional knowledge on the Woodland Caribou (boreal population) from Aboriginal communities in Quebec (Wendake community, Huron-Wendat Nation).

Respondent identification

- Name
- Age:
- How many days per year do you spend in the Nionwentsïo territory?
- What is your favourite time of year to spend in this territory?
- What activities do you perform in this territory?

Caribou of the past: mapping locations

- What types of activities did you perform in this territory when you were younger?

- What is your perspective on the importance of Woodland Caribou *(Please indicate and explain your choice)?*

  Very high  High  Moderate to Low  Very low

Please explain: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

- Did your parents ever tell you about caribou on the Réserve faunique des Laurentides (Parc des Laurentides)?
- Did they talk about caribou elsewhere in the Nionwentsïo territory?
- In your opinion, what factors led to the decline of the caribou population?

Identification of local population required

- Did you see caribou when you were a child? If so, in what area?
- In what type of forest are these caribou found (old-growth forest, young forest, clearings)?
- In your opinion, do caribou use the same areas from one season to another?

The Nation's vision

- How would you like to see the caribou's situation change in the future?
- In your opinion, how important is caribou compared to moose?
- Given that the protection of caribou is one factor that could be harmful to moose habitat, do you feel it appropriate to favour one species to the detriment of the other?

## 4- Respondents met and results obtained

The original Woodland Caribou population has not been in the NIONWENTSÏO for more than two generations. Its disappearance is the result of drastic restrictions in non-Aboriginal regulation with respect to territory access and resource use. Hunting and fishing legislation, the development of numerous private clubs in the 1880s and the creation of the Parc national des Laurentides in 1895 took a toll on the lifestyle of many Huron-Wendat families that relied on fish and wildlife resources such as caribou. Because access to the territory was restricted for members of the Nation, they had to perform their traditional activities surreptitiously, which inevitably led to a decrease in the number of Huron-Wendat who visited the NIONWENTSÏO regularly during the first half of the 20th century.

As a result, we were unlikely to obtain extensive information with this survey from Huron-Wendat who hunted Woodland Caribou or used TEK on this animal and its management in their lifetimes. However, at first glance, it was plausible to think that some elders still remembered discussions, stories and information about the original Woodland Caribou population from previous generations. These respondents were the focus of this process. The professionals of the Bureau du Nionwentsïo, where a program was developed to gather information on traditional Huron-Wendat activities, met with eight elders and members of the community to give them the questionnaire. These elders are Huron-Wendat from the [redacted], [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] families and were chosen based on their knowledge of the territory and of community practices and customs. Two group meetings were also held as part of this project.

As mentioned above, given the context and the specific history of the NIONWENTSÏO, these meetings confirmed that the elders had difficulty providing information on several elements of the questionnaire. However, most remembered this species, present in the Huron-Wendat territory long ago, and were able to confirm that their parents, grandparents or other older elders had indeed spoken to them about it.

One such elder, a member of the [redacted] family, remained on the land allocated to the Triton Fish & Game Club with his family for quite a while in his youth. During this period, he had the opportunity to trap, hunt and fish in this area of the NIONWENTSÏO with his father and older brother. It was then that his father passed Huron-Wendat practices and knowledge about the area on to him. During our meeting, Mr. [redacted] remembered that his father had told him about caribou that could be found on Huron-Wendat territory long ago. He pointed out that they were “large caribou” and he believed the population to be relatively abundant. He also said that the original caribou were different from “northern caribou” and compared them to “(...) caribou currently present in the Gaspé Peninsula.”

An elder we met with from the [redacted] family pointed out that his father, a former Huron-Wendat hunter and guide who is now deceased, told him that there had been caribou in the Nation's territory in the past. Mr. [redacted] even specified that although caribou was an integral part of the elders' diet at the time, Huron-Wendat did not hunt this large game excessively during the second half of the 19th century. Members of the Nation did hunt this animal, but did so less intensely than they did other fur-bearing animals, such as the beaver and the American marten.

Another elder from the [redacted] family clearly identified the original Woodland Caribou population as a resource that provided the leather necessary for clothing in the past, as indicated in this transcription of an excerpt from the interview:

- Interviewer question:

*"How did the Huron-Wendat trappers dress in the past?"* •[translation]

Huron-Wendat answer:

*"They dressed similarly to others of that period: cloth pants, moccasins made of cowhide, or, if they were lucky and killed a moose, they skinned it and made clothing and mittens. I even saw pants made of moosehide because there was primarily moose in our area. In the beginning, in the old days, there was still caribou in the Parc des Laurentides because I remember older people telling me about them; caribou hide was good for making various types of clothing."* [translation]

Mr. [redacted] also said that his childhood memories include the fact that his father had a caribou foot in his canoe shed at his Wendake residence. He has no doubt that this caribou came from Huron-Wendat territory and not from a remote, northern area. It was therefore the foot of a Woodland Caribou that had been killed either by Mr. [redacted]'s father or another Huron-Wendat.

Similarly, an elder from the [redacted] family who long ago visited the Club Saint-Vincent, located in the Jacques-Cartier River basin near Tewkesbury, said that he remembered that caribou heads exhibited in several former club camps definitely came from the original Woodland Caribou population present in the area in the past.

During our meeting, another elder from the [redacted] family gave us more details about the original Woodland Caribou population. His paternal and maternal grandfathers passed information on to him about specific hunting grounds that Huron-Wendat hunters favoured in the past. This community elder identified three areas with large bodies of water: (1) **Jacques-Cartier** Lake, in the Jacques-Cartier River watershed; (2) **Trois-Caribous** Lake, in the Batiscan River basin; and (3) **Lac des Neiges**, in the Montmorency River basin, including Rivière des Neiges. In the past, the Huron-Wendat were therefore accustomed to shooting the caribou necessary for the group's survival in these three areas.

According to this elder and his grandfathers, Huron-Wendat primarily hunted Woodland Caribou in the spring. This was because the meat was of higher quality at that time of year: “The meat had a higher fat content because the caribou had run less and eaten all winter when they emerged from their pastures.” [translation] These pastures are open areas where caribou moss can be found. With respect to the Woodland Caribou’s specific behaviour, he said that the animal also ate a lot of black moss found on lower sections of coniferous trees.

This elder of the [redacted] family also shared very interesting information on the original Woodland Caribou population’s seasonal movement within the NIONWENTSÏO. His grandfathers told him that at the time, caribou moved between the general area north of what is currently the town of Saint-Raymond, in the western section of the NIONWENTSÏO, and the area located north of the town of La Malbaie, in the eastern section of the Huron-Wendat territory.

With respect to the caribou’s movement within the territory, we asked this elder for specifics on its location at various times of year. Based on the information that he obtained from Huron-Wendat elders in the past, the species appears to have occurred north of La Malbaie during the winter season. Based on his account, since Huron-Wendat primarily harvested this species in the spring, Nation members appear to have favoured caribou hunting grounds located in what is currently the Charlevoix area. Clearly, this does not exclude past caribou harvests in the western section of the NIONWENTSÏO, as we will see elsewhere in a subsequent report; however, this oral tradition reveals the importance of large, high-altitude plateaus in the eastern section in hunting this animal, specifically.

Moreover, this same elder of the [redacted] family shared a Huron-Wendat interpretation of the decline of the original Woodland Caribou population in the NIONWENTSÏO. One of his grandfathers pointed out the significance of non-Aboriginal overexploitation to him, particularly in the Charlevoix area, including the current towns of Baie-Saint-Paul and La Malbaie. In the past, the animals could be found in the area during the winter; however, as mentioned above, non-Aboriginal people overhunted them. According to this community elder, the impact of this overexploitation was devastating because a blanket of snow made hunting easier.

Note that it is entirely possible that other Huron-Wendat elders have information regarding the original Woodland Caribou population. Our survey was by no means exhaustive, since we met with eight elders for this project.

Huron-Wendat respondents all had the opportunity to provide pertinent information on the Nation's perception of Woodland Caribou, as specified in the questionnaire. These concerns are grouped and summarized in item 5 of this report. The respondents we met with all brought up the necessity of establishing a policy regarding the Nation's involvement in Woodland Caribou management. To this end, a member of the Nation was invited to sit on the provincial team of the Woodland Caribou recovery committee to ensure that the community participates as a Nation in the co-management of this species.

## 5. Group meeting

The issue of Woodland Caribou was addressed during two group meetings.

Issues discussed:

- According to Huron rights, can a Nation member harvest Woodland Caribou?
- Given that traditional large game harvesting currently focuses on moose, which animal's habitat (caribou or moose) should be preserved on a priority basis?
- Which tools must the Huron-Wendat Nation use to ensure that Woodland Caribou is protected while ensuring that the Nation's rights are respected?
- Given that the current population was introduced and is therefore different from the population initially present, what considerations should it be given?
- Why should so much effort be made to protect this species when the habitat is so damaged?

Discussion results:

- Although in past centuries Woodland Caribou was a wildlife resource essential to the community's lifestyle and economic practices, the Huron-Wendat Nation has never put a great deal of hunting pressure on this species.
- The wolf may have played a role in the past and may still be doing so today.
- Measures taken to protect caribou habitat do not interfere with those taken to protect moose habitat.
- The re-introduced Woodland Caribou population must be protected, although it must be distinguished from the original population.
- The Huron-Wendat Nation must develop a Woodland Caribou management policy, in

accordance with the community's management rights.

## 6- Seigneurie du Triton (*ref. Seigneurie du Triton website*)

La Seigneurie du Triton is located approximately 10 kilometres east of the town of Lac-Édouard.

Several buildings were erected within NIONWENTSÏO boundaries between 1893 and 1897. In the 1870s, when the railway connecting Quebec City to the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean area was being built, only Aboriginal people frequented the territory that is occupied by the Seigneurie du Triton today.

The *Triton Fish & Game Club* was originally founded in 1893. After the Second World War, the club employed nearly 500 people, many of whom were Aboriginal people (Montagnais and Huron-Wendat). Descendants of former Triton employees are still living and can share quantitative data on caribou harvests during this period. Table 1 presents statistics provided by a member of the Nation on harvests of large game, including caribou, which illustrate the end of caribou harvesting on club land.

It is clear that the decrease in caribou harvesting was followed by an increase in moose harvesting. We can merely speculate on the reasons for the decline and the relationship between moose and caribou; however, this is particularly interesting because the habitat in this area did not experience significant disturbances at the time.

## 7- Management issues

The Woodland Caribou is a species that moves throughout the territory. Habitat fragmentation can therefore impact it significantly.

Critical habitat depends on the availability of old-growth fir forests that contain arboreal lichen. This territory receives the greatest amount of snow in Quebec, and ground lichen is not readily available in the forest when there is an abundance of snow.

Intensive forest cutting and the development of certain types of roadways are dividing the species' habitat.

The ecosystem approach, including old-growth forest availability, is a determining factor in the protection of caribou habitat. Moose and caribou habitats must be managed to meet the needs of both species. Moreover, the decline of the caribou population was simultaneous with the rise of the moose population. It would be useful to be able to explain the reasons behind this relationship if, for example, the habitat changes, the species become incompatible, parasites have a significant impact, and so on.

Woodland Caribou habitat is particularly affected by the forestry industry and other natural disturbances, such as spruce budworm. Habitat restoration conflicts with forestry industry needs.

The Nation intends to ensure that each section of the territory has all of the ecosystemic attributes necessary to provide the quality of biodiversity representative of the area's potential. In the restoration process, it is important to ensure that reconstructed habitats are connected.

**TABLE 1**

Large game harvesting; *Triton Fish & Game Club,* 1910 to 1923

| YEAR | CARIBOU | MOOSE | DEER | BEAR |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1908 | 9 | 8 | 0 | 1 |
| 1910 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 1911 | 12 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| 1912 | 3 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| 1914 | 5 | 21 | 0 | 1 |
| 1915 | 4 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| 1916 | 3 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| 1917 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| 1918 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| 1919 | 1 | 17 | 1 | 0 |
| 1920 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 2 |
| 1922 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| 1923 | 0 | 15 | 0 | |

Note: Caribou were seen at the Triton in 1941
Source: Data provided by the [redacted] family.

## 7. Conclusion and recommendations

### Traditional ecological knowledge:

- The Huron-Wendat Nation possesses knowledge on the use of the territory, as well as its ancestors' knowledge on caribou management.
- There is a great deal of information in the interview documentation and in the Nation's archived documents. Extracting pertinent information requires a significant amount of time and considerable interpretation skills.
- This knowledge must be used in accordance with the Nation's territory and resource management process.
- Caribou hunting was an important activity in the past, even though the number of caribou shot was not necessarily high.
- The Huron-Wendat confirm their right to hunt on their territory. However, they also confirmed their right to reserve with respect to harvesting caribou.
- Woodland Caribou must be preserved for future generations.
- If the Nation's rights had been respected in the first place, we would not find ourselves in this situation today.
- Measures taken to preserve caribou habitat do not appear to interfere with those taken to preserve moose habitat.
- The ecosystem approach, as envisioned by the Nation, particularly application of minimum ecological integrity thresholds, must be encouraged in the territory.
- The Huron-Wendat Nation is committed to its involvement in the entire boreal caribou management process within its territory, including the national recovery strategy, and to having a Nation representative on the provincial recovery team. (Note: The representative must receive the funding necessary both to participate in this process and to hold consultations with the Nation).
- The protection of the Nation's rights is a priority for the Nation and a fiduciary duty of the federal Crown. Efforts must be combined to fulfill both of these responsibilities.

# Annex 1

## Interview fact sheet

| |
|---|
| Meeting location: |
| Date: Time:<br>Duration: |
| **Individuals conducting the interview:** |
| Name: Organization: |
| Name: Organization: |
| Observers: |
| **Participants:** |
| |
| Name: Community: |
| Age: |
| Other details: |
| Name: Community: |
| Age: |
| Other details: |
| Language used during the interview: |
| Use of an interpreter: Yes___No___ If so, indicate his/her name: |
| |
| Consent form signed by participants: Yes___No___ |
| Comments |

# Annex 2

## Excerpt of the strategy that the Bureau du Nionwentsïo wishes to adopt for the species at risk program by March 31, 2010

**Goal**

The goal of this program is to obtain tools and as much information as possible to protect the Nionwentsïo territory. Among other things, the program will ensure that those who use the territory are made aware of species that may be at risk. Moreover, we want to give more weight to protecting all species in the territory. We also hope to highlight the fragility of these resources and to show that if they are well managed, the territory could still be used our Nation for many generations to come. In our opinion, the most important aspect of this program is the use of information on certain species to improve the protection of the Nionwentsïo territory.

Certain questionable practices on the part of forestry companies and the MRNF threaten the Nation's rights, activities and interests. This often results from the overall deterioration of the territory. Therefore, in addition to applying the forestry harmonization process, we can strengthen our protection methods using information on certain threatened wildlife species present in the territory.

**Protection strategy**

**Woodland Caribou:** The boreal caribou is a species that is popular with various stakeholders in the territory. The population that interests us is that of the Réserve faunique des Laurentides. This population has stabilized at about 75 individuals (no need to explain the importance of protecting this species). A representative of the Huron-Wendat Nation attends boreal caribou recovery team meetings at the provincial level to learn more about the recovery programs developed by other stakeholders in the territory.

This species needs mature forest in order to survive in winter because these stands are its primary food source at that time of year. These same stands are targeted for forestry operations by logging companies. Studies of the ecosystem approach reveal that the minimum thresholds for certain sections of mature forest are troubling. This also impacts several wildlife species that use this part of the forest. The forest structure can no longer be considered healthy.

# Annex 3

## Gathering traditional knowledge on Woodland Caribou (boreal population)

**DELIVERABLES**

- Carry out interviews with respondents (elders).
- Create a summary report of traditional Aboriginal knowledge on the boreal caribou. The report must include
  1. A summary of the information gathered from the community;
  2. Maps that provide a summary of the information gathering during the interviews; and
  3. Six hard copies of the final reports in French and a soft copy of the report in Word or PDF format.

**BACKGROUND**

The federal government's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) requires the development and implementation of a recovery strategy for all threatened species, including Woodland Caribou (boreal population), hereinafter referred to as boreal caribou. SARA recognizes that traditional Aboriginal knowledge must be taken into account in the development and implementation of recovery strategies and in the identification of critical habitat. Boreal caribou was and is still present in the territory of several Aboriginal communities in Quebec. We must meet with the members of these communities to gather traditional knowledge on boreal caribou. Environment Canada representatives asked the targeted communities how they wish to assist with the collection of traditional Aboriginal knowledge on boreal caribou. The Huron-Wendat Nation of Wendake indicated its desire to carry out this project independently. The Nation has the skills and expertise necessary to complete this type of project.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this mandate is therefore to gather traditional Aboriginal knowledge on boreal caribou and its habitat from the Aboriginal community in Wendake.

**THE WORK**

The mandate is two-fold:

- Firstly, the mandated organization must interview the respondents (elders) from the community.
- Secondly, it must create a summary report that provides an overview of traditional Aboriginal knowledge on boreal caribou and its habitat gathered from the community.

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

The collection of data will respect First Nations principles regarding property, control, access and possession. The data will remain the property of the interview participants, the community and the Nation. Thus, Environment Canada will have access to the report on traditional Aboriginal knowledge on boreal caribou for the purposes of the boreal caribou recovery strategy and the identification of boreal caribou critical habitat.

# Annex 4

## Woodland Caribou

In 2003, the boreal caribou (also known as the Woodland Caribou in Quebec) was listed as a threatened species under the federal government's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). This Act calls for the implementation of a recovery strategy for all threatened species. Environment Canada is therefore developing a national recovery strategy for the boreal population of Woodland Caribou (hereinafter referred to as boreal caribou).

A recovery strategy is a planning document that indicates the measures to take to combat or reverse the decline of a threatened species. The national recovery strategy for boreal caribou will set out national objectives and describe the research and management activities necessary to help in the species' recovery. Inasmuch as possible, it will also delineate the boreal caribou's critical habitat, enabling all federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal bodies, or any other stakeholders, to take measures to protect this habitat.

SARA recognizes the importance of traditional Aboriginal knowledge and indicates that it must be taken into account in the development and implementation of recovery strategies. Environment Canada is therefore asking for your participation to ensure that this knowledge on the boreal caribou is given the proper consideration in the development of the national recovery strategy and in the delineation of the boreal caribou's critical habitat. The type of knowledge sought relates specifically to the size and trends of local populations, changes observed in their range, key areas of habitat used, threats to populations, and the state of their health.

The collaborative development of the national recovery strategy will be based on upcoming consultations on key elements of the program. Environment Canada will train three advisory groups that will lead the consultations and guide the development of the recovery strategy. One of these groups will include representatives from Aboriginal organizations.

Environment Canada anticipates that the boreal caribou recovery strategy will be posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry for a 60-day comment period in the summer of 2011.

Environment Canada thanks you for your cooperation and your efforts to protect boreal caribou.

# Annex 5

## Integration of traditional Aboriginal knowledge into the national recovery strategy for the boreal population of Woodland Caribou

**DRAFT VERSION**

## Woodland Caribou questionnaire

First approach to using an interview questionnaire on traditional Aboriginal knowledge on the boreal population of Woodland Caribou (boreal caribou)

**List of proposed questions**

**Writing the report / General information**

What is your name? (if the individual wishes to disclose it)

In what year were you born? (if the individual wishes to disclose this information). *These data will be used to situate, on a time scale, the boreal caribou data given to us.*

Which community do you live in? Have you always lived there?

How much time do you spend on the land each year? During which months do you usually spend time on the land?

What types of activities do you currently perform on the land? What sorts of activities did you perform on the land when you were younger? When/how/during what part of the year do you generally encounter/observe caribou?

What is the name for boreal caribou in your language?

What importance do boreal caribou have for you and your community?

**Mapping exercise**

Can you point out on this map (small-scale map of the area, including all markers of major developments):

Areas:

- of the land where you currently spend time, and areas where you spent time in the past. Point out the areas you are most familiar with. How long have you been familiar with these areas?
- where you currently see caribou and have seen them in the past in winter OR that are important to the caribou during the winter?
- where you currently see caribou and have seen them in the past in summer OR that are important to the caribou during the summer?
- where you currently see caribou and have seen them in the past during the calving period OR that are important to the caribou during the calving period?
- have been burned in a forest fire in the last 50 years?
- have been burned in a forest fire more than 50 years ago?
- that you feel are the most important to protect for boreal caribou?

**Range limits**

Which herds, populations or groups of caribou do you recognize in your area? How do you differentiate them from one another? Do several herds mix together or do they overlap? Can you delineate the ranges of the local populations you are familiar with?

Have you ever seen boreal caribou outside the known or recorded range on this map?

**Use of habitat**

What sorts of plants and land features are used by boreal caribou? Are different plants and land features used at different periods during the year?

**Population trends**

Has the number of boreal caribou in your area changed over time?

a) Do you see a greater or a fewer number of caribou now compared to when you were younger?
b) Compared to the number your parents or grandparents told you about, would you say there are more or fewer caribou now?

Have you ever taken part in a traditional boreal caribou hunt? If so, have you changed your hunting practices due to the decline in boreal caribou populations?

Do you still hunt boreal caribou? Are caribou easier or more difficult to hunt now? Do you prefer hunting other species? Which ones and why?

**Survival of the young** (issues affecting a given area based on information from the scientific review)

For example, lower than anticipated (for areas in which the survival of the young is lower than anticipated based on the number of disturbances). Western science has estimated that few of the young in this area live to become breeding adults. Do you agree? Why or why not?

For example, higher than anticipated (for areas in which the survival of the young is higher than anticipated based on the number of disturbances). Western science has estimated that many of the young in this area live to become breeding adults. Do you agree? Why or why not?

**Factors that led to the decline or growth of local populations (threats)**

## *Habitat*

What types of activities change or destroy boreal caribou habitat in your area?

What changes have you noticed in the land since you were a child that could have changed the way caribou use the territory?

## *Forest fires*

How do forest fires affect the boreal caribou's use of the territory?

Do they return to burned areas? If so, how long do they wait before returning? What do they do in these areas when they return?

## ***Industry and development***

Have you seen boreal caribou use or avoid areas that have been affected by industrial activities or development? Can you provide specific examples?

## ***Predation***

Are there more predators, such as wolf, bear or lynx, in areas with boreal caribou now than in the past?

Have you seen changes in the number of prey species, such as beaver, deer, muskox, bison, moose or barren-ground caribou in areas with boreal caribou?

Are some of these prey species new to your area?

If the number of predators were tochange, do you think this would affect boreal caribou?

If the number of species of prey were to change, do you think this would affect boreal caribou?

## ***Caribou parasites and illnesses***

Have you seen changes in the health of the caribou in your area? (For example, body condition, size, behaviour, parasites or an increase in mortality)

In your opinion, what is the cause of these changes?

Have you noticed a connection between caribou health and the arrival of new species?

## ***Noise and light disturbances***

Have you noticed that noise and light disturbances caused by planes, snowmobiles, ATVs or industry are harmful to the boreal caribou in your area?

If so, how do these disturbances affect the caribou?

Have you noticed areas in which these disturbances cause greater problems?

Do you have any suggestions on how to resolve this issue?

## ***Overhunting***

Has the boreal caribou in your area been overhunted?

Have there been changes in the hunting pressure put on the boreal caribou in your area?

### ***Vehicle collisions***

Based on your experience or observations, do collisions between caribou and vehicles occur in your area?

What is the magnitude of these collisions? For example, how many collisions occur and how frequent are they?

Are there specific areas in which vehicle collisions occur more often? If so, which areas are these?

Do you have any suggestions for resolving this problem?

### ***Climate change***

Have you noticed changes in climate, such as snow conditions, temperature or precipitation in your area?

If so, have you noticed whether or not these changes have affected the boreal caribou or its habitat in your area? How so?

### ***Threats – general observations***

Based on your experience or observations, are there other factors that have a negative impact on caribou that we have not yet discussed? If so, what are they?

In your opinion, which of these threats have the greatest impact on the boreal caribou in your area?

What mitigating measures or solutions could be used to counter these threats?

### ***Other useful observations or practices***

Do you know of any conservation practices or activities that your people or others use now or have used in the past to conserve boreal caribou?

# *Yenshenk* – Caribou

## The Huron-Wendat Nation's Traditional Use and Knowledge of Woodland Caribou Between the 17th Century and the 20th Century

**Report prepared by the**

**Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat**

Bureau du Nionwentsïo

**Submitted to Environment Canada**
**Canadian Wildlife Service**
**April 2010**

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**Cover page: GALE, Dennis (1828–1903),** *Hunting Caribou***, ca. 1860, watercolour heightened with white, 15.000 x 22.500, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), W.H. Coverdale Collection of Canadiana, Acc. No. 1970-188-1961.**

# Table of Contents

## Mandate

This report stems from a research mandate granted by Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service to the Bureau du Nionwentsïo of the Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat on October 21, 2009. The mandate was amended on March 31, 2010, to add historical and anthropological research to the recommended project approach. It consisted mainly in taking into account historical archives and documentation in order to better understand traditional Huron-Wendat knowledge of the Woodland Caribou.

More specifically, the mandate consisted in using the documentation retained by the Huron-Wendat Nation to do the following:

- Conduct an inventory of relevant documents
- Develop a documentary research protocol in order to highlight relevant data
- Collect data from the selected documents
- Present the findings of this research

Following preliminary research using historical sources, professionals at the Bureau du Nionwentsïo and Environment Canada officials agreed to limit the mandate to the following three aspects, given the considerable amount of information concerning the Woodland Caribou of the Nionwentsïo in the Nation's documentation, and time constraints:

1) Historical use
2) Historical habitat based on Huron-Wendat hunting grounds
3) Population movements and reasons for the decline of the caribou

# Introduction

The Bureau du Nionwentsïo of the Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat has a wealth of information on the Nation's historical use of Woodland Caribou. This research report provides only an overview of this information and an interpretation of its scope; given the time constraints associated with the mandate, the report is not based on an exhaustive empirical foundation. Also, over the past several years, through historical and anthropological research on the Nation, the Bureau du Nionwentsïo has collected a considerable amount of data on various aspects of the Woodland Caribou in the Nionwentsïo, from its origins to today. Clearly, we cannot take advantage of this corpus of data here because of the nature of the mandate. All of these data on traditional Huron-Wendat use and the caribou population itself could be highlighted and used by the Huron-Wendat Nation and Environment Canada for future projects on the Woodland Caribou.

This report will focus mainly on three aspects of the historical relationship between the Huron-Wendat Nation and the Woodland Caribou; each aspect will make up a separate part of the report:

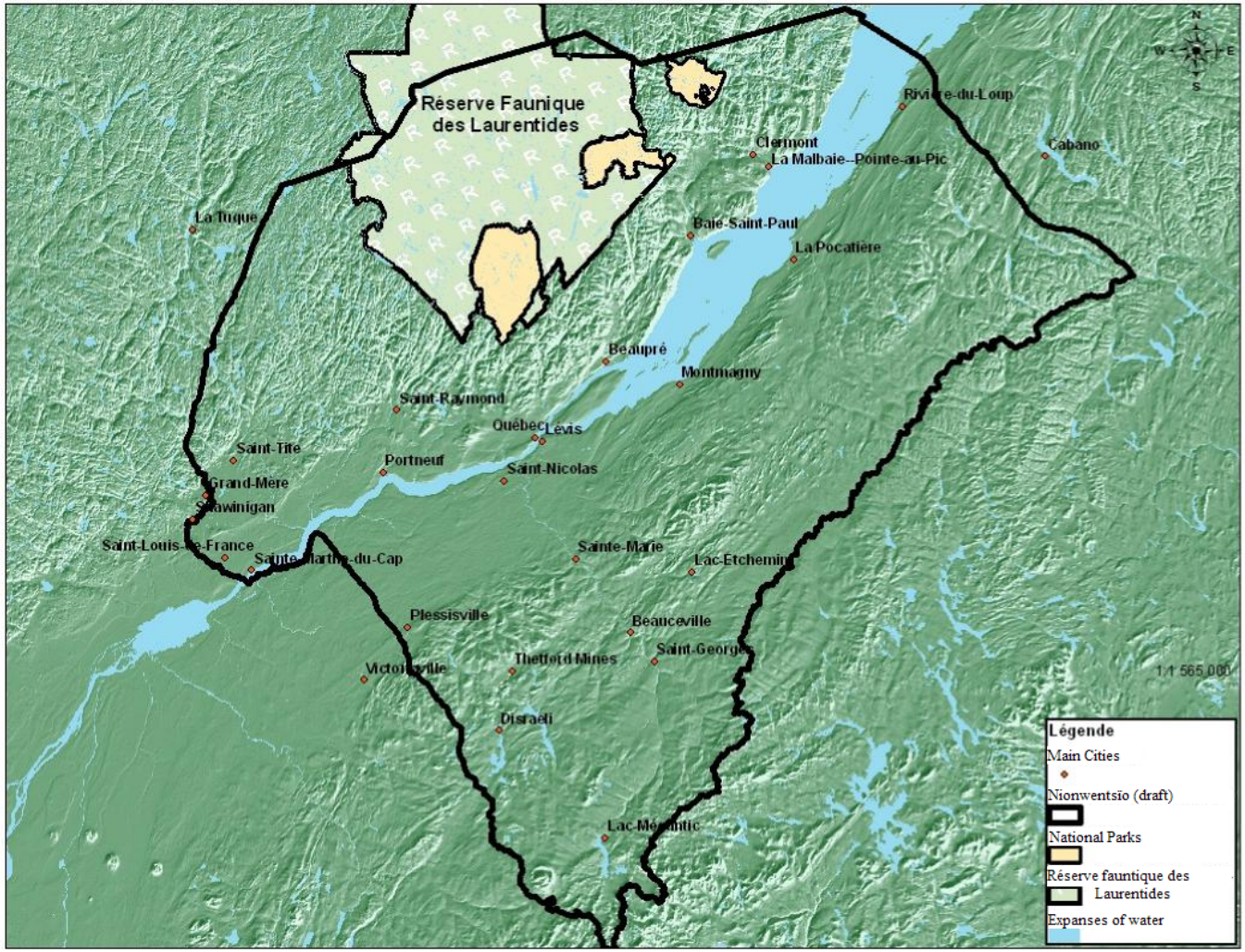
**1)** Traditional use of the Woodland Caribou

**2)** Historical habitat based on Huron-Wendat hunting grounds

**3)** Huron-Wendat interpretations of caribou population movements and reasons for the decline of the caribou

For information purposes, Map 1 shows the approximate boundaries of the Nionwentsïo, the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat Nation in Quebec, protected by the Anglo-Huron Treaty of 1760. The Huron-Wendat term *Nionwentsïo* means "Our magnificent territory" in English.

**Map 1:** Approximate boundaries of the Nionwentsïo



# 1. Traditional use of the Woodland Caribou

In this first part of the report, we will begin with a basic examination of the importance of the Woodland Caribou to the Huron-Wendat Nation's way of life and economy. We will then discuss the main Huron-Wendat uses for this species. We will cover how the caribou was (1) a food source for the Nation; (2) a source of raw materials for making everyday and handicraft objects and (3) a contributor to the Nation's economic development through the work done by the Huron-Wendat to guide sport hunters.

## 1.1 The importance of caribou to the way of life and economy of the Huron-Wendat Nation

The traditional use of the Woodland Caribou by the Huron-Wendat is closely linked to the changes to the Nation's economy that took place in the 17th century. Recent historical and anthropological research has shown that since at least 1650, the hunting and trapping of fur-bearing animals gradually became a larger part of the Huron-Wendat Nation's way of life and economy. Combined with other forms of forest land resource use, such as fishing or plant harvesting, these activities came to make up the foundation of the Huron-Wendat economy.

Historically, the Huron-Wendat hunted all the big game species in the Nionwentsïo: caribou, moose, black bears and, more recently, deer or white-tailed deer. Hunting for big game, including caribou, was once done at specific times of the year, and was only part of the economic cycle that characterized the Huron-Wendat Nation in the 18th century and the first few decades of the 19th century. Father Louis Davaugour, an early-18th-century Huron-Wendat missionary, had clearly noted this, as indicated by what he said in a letter to his superior dated 1710.[1]

[1] DAVAUGOUR, Louis, 1899 [1710], "Letter of Reverend Father Louis Davaugour to Reverend Father Joseph Germain, superior General of the Canadian Missions, Concerning the Mission of Lorette in New France, 1710" (translated from Latin) in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, edited by R. G. Thwaites. Vol. LXVI, CLXXXIV, 146-172. From the website http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations_66.html.

Davaugour listed the various activities practiced by the people of the Nation at the various seasons and the months of the year. Therefore, we will take a brief look at the main components of this cycle to better understand how use of the caribou resource fits in. The missionary stated that at the end of the summer, after the grain harvest, the people of the Nation focused specifically on beaver hunting. The hunt for this particular species, which was sought after for its meat and pelt, spanned a period of two to three months. Around All Saints Day (November 1), the Huron-Wendat returned to the village of Lorette (now Wendake) to take part in religious ceremonies. Immediately afterwards, they returned to the forest until early December. The hunters then returned to the village for Saint Francis Xavier Day on December 3, and to celebrate the Immaculate Conception on December 8.[2]

Aside from religious ceremonies, the months of December and January were devoted to taking advantage of the resources relatively close to the village. In this regard, Father Davaugour referred to ice fishing and small game hunting, particularly hare and partridge hunting. During these two months, the Huron-Wendat generally returned to their homes in the village in the evenings, seldom spending the night outside the house. Father Davaugour said that over the course of this period, if the cold or the rain kept them inside, they would spend their time making "raquettes," i.e., snowshoes, which they used "...in fearlessly treading the snow when pursuing the larger animals, through the forest, or over plains covered with deep snow." The missionary also explicitly referred to the practice of hunting big game, quite likely large cervids such as moose and deer, but also caribou.[3]

According to this same account by Father Davaugour, the two-month period from December to January during which the Huron-Wendat focused on activities in the area surrounding the village normally ended on February 2, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin. Davaugour recounted that as of that date, Huron-Wendat hunters returned to the forest. He added the following comment regarding the "larger animals" that the Huron-Wendat chased through the snow on snowshoes:

> When they have recognized the footprints or the haunts of those creatures, they migrate thither with their whole families; and they do not revisit their village and their homes before the vernal breath of the zephyrs has begun to melt the snow.[4]

[2] DAVAUGOUR, Louis, 1899 [1710], p. 151.
[3] DAVAUGOUR, Louis, 1899 [1710], p. 153.
[4] DAVAUGOUR, Louis, 1899 [1710], p. 153.

According to Father Davaugour, when the Huron-Wendat hunters spotted dens or the tracks of big game at that time of year, they went to the location where the dens or tracks had been spotted with their whole families, i.e., women, children and possibly even elderly people.[5] When this happened, the missionary did not see them again until spring. Although Father Davaugour's mention of "haunts" undoubtedly refers to black bear hunting, the use of the term "footprints" can clearly be associated with hunting large cervids, notably, caribou.

In the same letter to his superior, Father Davaugour also described the economic activities and way of life of the Huron-Wendat community during spring and summer. His words suggest that people had returned from the hunt and were in the village for Easter celebrations in April. Community members then sowed the cornfields and subsequently devoted their time to fishing. At that time, the Huron-Wendat also cut down "aged trees" for birch bark and raw materials to build their canoes. Finally, Father Davaugour said that corn was harvested around September 13.[6] The Huron-Wendat returned to the beaver hunt in the fall, and then continued their annual economic cycle based mainly on forest resources.

The words written by Father Davaugour in 1710 show that the Huron-Wendat hunted caribou most often in winter, during the months of February and March, and in early April. Obviously, this does not mean that caribou were not hunted at other times of the year, such as the fall. This economic cycle continued throughout the 18th century and until the 1830s, at which time there were changes to the Huron-Wendat way of life and economy. At that time, non-Aboriginal people began more radically colonizing and developing the Nionwentsïo. These events had major repercussions on the Huron-Wendat Nation. Faced with the shrinking of its territory and vital space, the Huron-Wendat community adapted, and as a result, handicrafts and everyday objects, such as moccasins and snowshoes, were traded on a larger scale than ever before.

As the territory was colonized, resulting in loss of space for the people of the Nation, the population of the Huron-Wendat Nation increased. Despite these constraints, the Huron-Wendat pursued their traditional activities of hunting, fishing, trapping and plant harvesting over the course of the 19th century. Historical documentation indicates that among these activities, caribou hunting remained an important economic practice.

However, in the late 19th century, the Huron-Wendat Nation encountered new difficulties that took a toll on several families in the Nation: the first wildlife harvesting legislation as well as the

[5] According to our research, as of the mid-18th century, big game hunting gradually became a male-dominated activity among the Huron-Wendat.
[6] DAVAUGOUR, Louis, 1899 [1710], p. 153.

creation of countless hunting and fishing clubs with exclusive rights beginning in the 1880s. In 1895, when the immense Parc national des Laurentides was created, members of the Nation who occupied the Nionwentsïo and were already using its abundant resources were no longer allowed access to that area. Huron-Wendat documents, stories and oral tradition explicitly show that Nation members never stopped going to the Nionwentsïo, including the areas around private clubs and the Parc national des Laurentides. However, they were considered poachers.

Since caribou hunting was an integral part of Huron-Wendat customs and practices, there were instances in which members of the Nation were arrested and prosecuted for hunting this species in the Parc national des Laurentides. For example, note the complaints about Huron-Wendat Guillaume "Pit" Sioui[7] (1846–1911) and one of his sons, Lorenzo Sioui[8] (1879–1961). As indicated in the excerpt, these Nation members were charged with illegally hunting caribou in the Parc des Laurentides from February 1 to 20, 1909, in the "temps prohibé par la loi, " or off-season:

> To Pitre Sioui Senior of the Parish of St. Ambroise de la Jeune Lorette in the Québec City District,
>
> WHEREAS on information and complaint under oath you have been charged by Edward Thomas Davies Chambers before the undersigned District Magistrate in and for the Québec City District with illegally hunting caribou in the off-season between February first and February twentieth, nineteen hundred and nine in the Parc national des Laurentides, Québec City District.
>
> Therefore, Pitre Sioui Senior, on conviction of said offence, you have become liable to a penalty of not less than forty dollars and not more than fifty dollars, with costs, and, in default of payment, imprisonment for a period of not less than fifteen days and not more than three months.[9] [translation]

Note that the hunting practiced at that time by the Huron-Wendat in the Parc national des

[7] See Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Quebec City centre (BAnQ-Q), Court of the Sessions of the Peace collection (TP12), Greffe de Québec [Québec City court office] (S1), Matières criminelles en général [general criminal matters] (SS1), Records – 1908–1975 (SSS1), containing 1960-01-357/190, No. 123, "Assignation sur la dénonciation et plainte de E. T. D. Chambers vs Pitre Sioui, père" [summons on the information and complaint of E.T.D. Chambers against Pitre Sioui Senior], March 17, 1909.

[8] See Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Quebec City centre (BAnQ-Q), Court of the Sessions of the Peace collection (TP12), Greffe de Québec (S1), Matières criminelles en général (SS1), Records – 1908–1975 (SSS1), containing 1960-01-357/190, No. 122, "La plainte de E. T. D. Chambers vs Lorenzo Sioui pour chasse et tué des caribous dans le temps prohibé" [complaint by E.D.T. Chambers against Lorenzo Sioui for hunting and killing caribou in the off-season], March 16, 1909; Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Québec City centre (BAnQ-Q), Court of the Sessions of the Peace collection (TP12), Greffe de Québec (S1), Matières criminelles en général (SS1), Records – 1908–1975 (SSS1), containing 1960-01-357/190, No. 122, "Assignation sur la dénonciation de plainte de E. T. D. Chambers vs Lorenzo Sioui pour procès-sommaire" [summons for summary proceedings on the information and complaint of E.T.D. Chambers against Lorenzo Sioui], March 17, 1909.

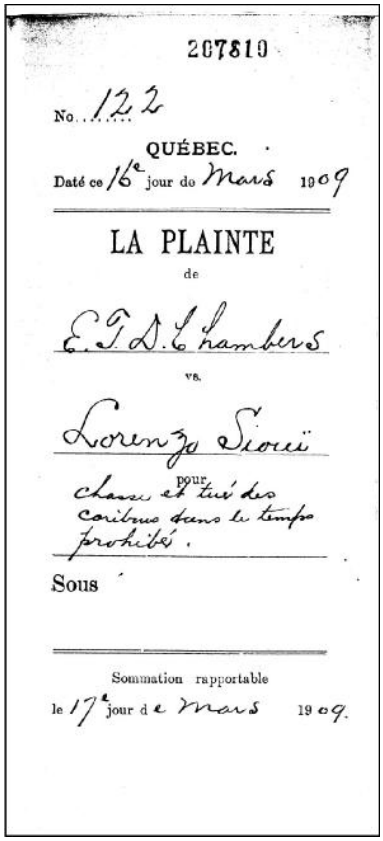
[9] Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Quebec City centre (BAnQ-Q), Court of the Sessions of the Peace collection (TP12), Greffe de Québec (S1), Matières criminelles en général (SS1), Records – 1908–1975 (SSS1), containing 1960-01-357/190, No. 123, "Assignation sur la dénonciation et plainte de E. T. D. Chambers vs Pitre Sioui, père," March 17, 1909.

Laurentides was completely legal, even though it was not considered legal by government authorities, and did not constitute a reprehensible act under the protection granted by the Anglo-Huron Treaty of 1760. However, it was not until 1990, more than eight decades later that, based on the *Sioui* case, Supreme Court of Canada judges recognized traditional Huron-Wendat activities as lawful.

Following the creation of private clubs and the Parc des Laurentides, the Huron-Wendat continued to hunt and fish in the Nionwentsïo, but inevitably to a lesser extent, adapting as best they could to access constraints and hounding by gamekeepers. Many Huron-Wendat also served as guides, particularly for caribou hunting, in the Parc national and the various private clubs, such as the Triton Fish & Game Club. The relationship between Woodland Caribou and the Huron-Wendat Nation endured until the disappearance of the original population sometime around the 1940s.

Now that we have briefly examined the importance of caribou to the Nation's way of life and economy from the 17th century to the 20th century, we will look at the main Huron-Wendat uses of this resource.

**Figure 1:** Style of cause of the complaint filed against Lorenzo Sioui (1879–1961) for hunting caribou in the Parc national des Laurentides in 1909.[10]



267819

No. 122

QUÉBEC.

Daté ce 16e jour de Mars 1909

LA PLAINTE

de

E. T. D. Chambers

vs.

Lorenzo Sioui

pour

Chasse et tué des caribous dans le temps prohibé.

Sous

Sommation rapportable

le 17e jour de Mars 1909.

[10] Excerpt from: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Quebec City centre (BAnQ-Q), Court of the Sessions of the Peace collection (TP12), Greffe de Québec (S1), Matières criminelles en général (SS1), Records – 1908–1975 (SSS1), containing 1960-01-357/190, No. 122, "La plainte de E. T. D. Chambers vs Lorenzo Sioui pour chasse et tué des caribous dans le temps prohibé," March 16, 1909.

## 1.2 Hunting and trapping of the species, a food source for the Nation

The archives contain many references to the use of Woodland Caribou by the Huron-Wendat Nation from the 18th to the 20th century. For the Nation, caribou was first and foremost a high-quality food source. It was an integral part of family diets for over two centuries. At the time, the Huron-Wendat harvested caribou in two ways: hunting and trapping.

Hunting was mainly done with firearms. In his personal journal dated 1776, German Friedrich Valentin Melsheimer, chaplain of the Brunswick Dragoons, a regiment of German mercenaries who supported the British in the American War of Independence, recounted how he had the opportunity to meet the Huron-Wendat in their village of Lorette (now Wendake). A very curious man and a keen observer, he described the Huron-Wendat Nation, clearly highlighting the practice of hunting caribou, which he called "reindeer":

> Their choicest amusement is the chase. With the most marvelous swiftness, they pursue on their snow-shoes an elk or reindeer, never failing to overtake it. They all now use firearms, only making use of the bow and arrow, when powder is too dear.[11]

Like Father Davaugour, Melsheimer talked about the use of snowshoes by the Huron-Wendat—in other words, referring to hunting trips in late fall, winter or early spring, when there is a snow cover in the forests of the Nionwentsïo. In this regard, he noted the impressive speed and remarkable efficiency of the Huron-Wendat hunters. Also, according to the chaplain, the Huron-Wendat were still able at that time to hunt caribou using bows and arrows, particularly when the powder needed for firearms was too expensive.

There are other mentions in the historical documentation of the 18th century confirming that the Huron-Wendat hunted caribou. For example, there is a handwritten letter from one of the Huron-Wendat missionaries of that era, Father Étienne Girault de Villeneuve. In a letter addressed to the British colonial administration dated January 30, 1778, missionary Girault passed on a request from Huron-Wendat warriors for powder and lead shot, which they needed for a planned caribou hunting trip:

> Since the warriors of the village would like to go caribou hunting and do not have any powder or lead shot, they very humbly implore Your Excellency to kindly give them some. They will be forever indebted to Your Excellency[12].... [translation]

[11] MELSHEIMER, F.V., 1927 [1776], "Journal of the Voyage of the Brunswick Auxiliaries from Wolfenbüttel to Quebec" in Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, *Transactions of The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec*, 166. Le Soleil Limitée, Québec City, New Series, No. 20.

[12] HALDIMAND, Sir Frederick, Unpublished Papers and Correspondence, 1758–1784, British Library, Add. Mss.

In addition to the parallel between this passage and the words of German chaplain Melsheimer, it can be noted that the particular season of the year in which the Huron-Wendat planned a hunting trip specifically for this species was late January.

Therefore, members of the Huron-Wendat Nation were able to hunt the Woodland Caribou of the Nionwentsïo on trips specifically devoted to hunting this animal. They also hunted caribou using firearms on trips more directly aimed at trapping fur-bearing animals such as beaver and marten. This type of caribou hunting continued throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and into the first few decades of the 20th century. Figure 2 shows Grand Chief Nicolas Vincent *Tsawenhohi* (1771–1844), painted by British military artist Philip J. Bainbrigge around 1840. The clothing and equipment, such as the snowshoes and the gun, are fairly representative of early-19th-century Huron-Wendat hunters. Note the big game, in this case a caribou, depicted on the ground near Grand Chief *Tsawenhohi*.

21777, Correspondence with the Indian Residents, 1777–1783, [Letter from Girault to Carleton], Jeune-Lorette, January 30, 1778, 1 p.

**Figure 2:** Grand Chief Nicolas Vincent *Tsawenhohi* (1771–1844), painted by British military artist Philip J. Bainbrigge in 1840.[13]

Huron-Wendat caribou trapping is a relatively well-documented traditional practice. Joseph Xavier Perrault, editor of *La Revue agricole*, described in detail the method used by the Huron-Wendat in the account of his expedition in the fall of 1863 from Quebec City to the Lac Saint-Jean region[14] with provincial surveyors John Neilson and Joseph Hamel. The expedition members were on a Huron-Wendat hunting trail between Petit Lac à l'Épaule and Lac des Roches (called "Lac Caribou" at the time) when surveyor Joseph Hamel nearly got caught in a caribou snare that had been set by Huron-Wendat hunters in the area:

[13] BAINBRIGGE, Philip John (1817–1881), *Portrait of Canadian Indian Nicolas Vincent wearing snowshoes*, 1840, watercolour on pencil, 12.7 cm x 10.2 cm, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).
[14] PERRAULT, [Joseph-Xavier], [1863], *Exploration de Québec au Lac St. Jean*. Excerpt from *La Revue agricole*. Toupin Building, Montreal, 62 pp.

> We had barely travelled a mile when we came to an irregularly shaped lake (Petit Lac à l'Épaule), which we crossed on the ice. We got back on the beaten trail and after crossing a fairly large hill we reached Lac Caribou [Lac des Roches] around noon....
>
> The Indians also tend to set pretty clever caribou snares, but one of them nearly caused a serious accident. Each snare consists of a strong strap arranged in a noose and laid out on the ground on a trail frequented by caribou or moose. Attached to the top of a young, very flexible tree, the snare is held down to the ground by a branch or a small post set out as a trap. As soon as the animal steps inside the noose, the pole lifts up forcefully and holds one of the caribou's legs off the ground, throwing it off balance. The caribou is unable to get out of the trap it fell into.
>
> Unfortunately, one of these traps had been set on the trail we were following between two creeping roots, leaving a space ten inches deep and three feet wide. We had previously avoided this danger with a certain number of men by jumping from one root to another without suspecting the trap that had been set. However, Mr. Hamel brushed against the noose and set it off, to the great fright of Mr. Neilson, who was following closely behind and was nearly struck in the face. The Indians said that if a man got caught in the snare, he would have been pulled off the ground by his feet, and his forehead would have hit against the roots, causing a serious, if not mortal, injury.[15] [translation]

A variation of this Huron-Wendat caribou trapping method was confirmed by the findings of interviews with elders of the Nation, particularly Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953), conducted in the 1940s by Georges Boiteau. Mr. Gros-Louis practiced traditional Huron-Wendat hunting and trapping in the late 19th century and early 20th century and gained his knowledge directly from his father, Daniel Gros-Louis (1856–1939), his uncle, Félix Gros-Louis (1853–1933) and other great hunters of the Nation. This is why great credibility must be given to his words, which hold invaluable ethnographic richness. This is how Boiteau reported the words of Mr. Gros-Louis, who, in the late 1940s, told the story of how the Huron-Wendat went about setting caribou snares:

> First, they chose a lucky spot on a caribou trail or their own hunting trail. They dug a hole two or three inches deep and at least one foot wide. A few steps from the hole, on the side of the trail, they firmly drove in two long, sturdy posts parallel to the trail and spaced about one foot apart; they crossed one over the other and attached them with spruce root. Then, they cut a log about 15 feet long and balanced it on the join between the two crossed posts. At the end of the log, near the hole, Huron hunters very carefully attached the snare, which was a 16-strand rope[16] that formed a circle with a diameter of 2.75 feet when it was unrolled. Then, all they had to do to complete the trap was build the bridge.

[15] PERRAULT, [Joseph-Xavier], [1863], p. 9.

[16] "They [the caribou] went through a 12-strand rope," said Harry Gros-Louis.

> On the side of the hole where the end of the log had to be held, they used the same set-up as for the above-mentioned traps: the post, the 'onglette', the 'bois d'étende' and the rope. They put in a small post, on top of which they made sure to leave a small piece of a branch, at a right angle. At the bottom of the post, at an inch or more from the ground, they attached an 'onglette' in such a way that it went across the hole and the caribou trail at the same time. Then, they set the trap. They lowered the end of the log until it rested on the small post, ran one end of the rope over the log, looped it around the end of the branch on the small post, adjusted the 'bois d'étende' at the other end of the rope and rested the 'bois d'étende' against the 'onglette'. They then built what they called the bridge. They placed thin pieces of wood on the 'onglette' at right angles, set out in tiered rows like a cage. They threw a thin layer of moss or leaves over the pieces of wood to make the arrangement look more natural. That was the bridge, on which they set the snare. When an animal stepped on the bridge, naturally, the bridge caved in, the 'onglette' lowered, the 'bois d'étende' shot up quickly and forcefully, and the log balancing on the join between the long posts pulled and tightened the snare around the top of the animal's leg.
>
> The Huron told us that the caribou "remained caught by the pastern" but that they "caused quite a bit of damage." They could not go far; the log was too heavy for them to drag a long way, and "they didn't make it twenty-five feet."[17]

The caribou trapping method, including the different variations, was deeply rooted in the practices, customs and culture of the Huron-Wendat Nation. As Mr. Gros-Louis said, "We have always hunted in the same way as our ancestors did 250 years ago."[18] [translation] Note that according to Boiteau's interviews, the snare method of capturing caribou was completely unknown to the Innu of the Lac Saint-Jean region, who claim to have used other methods.[19] In other words, it is a truly Huron-Wendat method, not a cultural borrowing from adjacent Algonquian peoples, which shows once again how close the members of the Huron-Wendat Nation were to the Nionwentsïo and how important its wildlife resources, in this case the Woodland Caribou, were to them. This type of trapping method could only have been developed through a lengthy trial and error process, i.e., through extensive experience with traditional forest life.

[17] Account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953) in Georges Boiteau, 1954, *Les chasseurs hurons de Lorette* [the Huron hunters of Lorette]. Master's thesis in history, Université Laval, Quebec City, pp. 129–130.
[18] Account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953) in Georges Boiteau, 1954. p. 134.
[19] Account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953) in Georges Boiteau, 1954, p. 132.

Huron-Wendat trapping of Woodland Caribou was mainly done in the fall and early winter. When the snow cover was fairly deep, in addition to hunting with firearms as previously mentioned, members of the Nation were able to use other complementary methods. Below is another account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953), who once again shares ancient Huron-Wendat knowledge related to this animal and how it was caught:

> I often saw herds of 25 caribou. I killed quite a few with my hatchet. Killing a caribou takes two hours of running in snowshoes. You have to keep running; it takes two hours to tire it out. After exactly two hours, it clears a space in the snow with its rear, backs up into it properly, and then waits for us, facing me. So you have to be quick, and you have to watch it intently and watch yourself as you approach. You swing the hatchet from left to right, moving like that to avoid the antlers because they will easily gore you; all of a sudden, you strike it in the neck with the hatchet. Large caribou lose their antlers around the holiday season. Sometimes we'd see some that still had antlers on one side only, but the small ones lose their antlers before the big ones. Females do not lose their antlers. They have small antlers. We called them "little baskets" because they're shaped like a small basket. Not all female caribou have antlers, but many do.[20] [translation]

That is the story told by Mr. Gros-Louis, who often saw herds of up to 25 Woodland Caribou himself, about how he frequently killed these animals using a simple hatchet. His words also show how he was in close contact with this species in his active life as a hunter. This Huron-Wendat's references to and observations on caribou antlers are very telling in this regard.

Now that we have briefly looked at how the Woodland Caribou was a food source for members of the Huron-Wendat Nation and how they went about hunting and trapping it, we will examine how this species was used to make many everyday and handicraft objects.

### 1.3 Use of caribou to make everyday and handicraft objects

Our archival research, the historical documentation and Huron-Wendat oral tradition indicate that the Woodland Caribou was once a preferred source of raw materials for making everyday objects. Some parts of this animal were also used to make various types of handicraft objects.

A previous report highlighting the knowledge of today's Huron-Wendat elders regarding the original Woodland Caribou population showed that in the past, the Nation used this animal's hide to make clothing. The words of an elder in the Picard family in this regard are clear: "...in the old days, there was still caribou in the Parc des Laurentides because I remember older people telling

[20] Account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953) in Georges Boiteau, 1954, p. 131.

me about them; caribou hide was good for making various types of clothing."[21]

The documentation confirms that the Huron-Wendat used to make moccasins and mittens out of caribou hide. We know that after New France was conquered by the British, the Huron-Wendat entered into a number of very remunerative contracts with government authorities to provide various types of supplies to the British regiments of the Citadelle de Québec. James MacPherson LeMoine pointed out this information in his 1882 work entitled *Picturesque Quebec: a sequel to Quebec past and present*:

> British rule, in 1759, if it did bring the Hurons less of campaigning and fewer scalps, was the harbinger of domestic peace and stable homes, with very remunerative contracts each fall for several thousands of pairs of snow-shoes, cariboo mocassins and mittens for the English regiments tenanting the Citadel of Quebec....[22]

Every fall, the Huron-Wendat obtained contracts for the production of thousands of pairs of snowshoes, mittens and moccasins made from the hide of big game, in this case caribou. Of course, the Huron-Wendat wore these moccasins and mittens themselves as well. It is also clear that this type of trade, in which caribou hides were extremely useful, may have occurred during the French Regime, i.e., before 1760, as several historical documents tend to show. Other documentary sources confirm that caribou hide was once used by Nation members to make mittens, gloves and certain specific parts of moosehide moccasins that were commonly bought by non-Aboriginal persons.[23]

[21] BUREAU DU NIONWENTSÏO, 2010, *Gathering Traditional Knowledge on the Woodland Caribou*, report submitted to Environment Canada, Quebec Region, by the Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat, March 31, 2010, p. 6.
[22] LEMOINE, James Macpherson, 1882, *Picturesque Quebec: a sequel to Quebec past and present.* Dawson, Montreal, p. 463–464.
[23] GÉRIN, Léon, 1996 [1901], "Le Huron de Lorette. A quels égards il est resté sauvage" [the Hurons of Lorette: the ways in which they remained primitive] *in* Denis Vaugeois (Ed.), *Les Hurons de Lorette*: 31–38. Septentrion, Sillery.

Caribou hides were also highly valued by Huron-Wendat hunters when they travelled across the Nionwentsïo for hunting and trapping. During these expeditions, which lasted for long periods in the fall, winter and very early spring, Nation members set up a number of camps and many members used caribou hides to protect themselves from the cold. This was stated by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953), who considered caribou hide to be much better than moosehide for this purpose:

> Whenever possible, we took a caribou hide for our beds. We never used fir branches. We much preferred caribou hide to moosehide for sleeping: moosehide sheds, it gets fur everywhere. Caribou isn't dirty like moose; it's a beautiful soft hide with a lot of fur. To soften it, we stretched it, scraped it and then laid it flat outdoors. We left it out in the cold; the cold worked on it and it became soft as though it had been tanned.[24] [translation]

Parts of the Woodland Caribou harvested by Huron-Wendat hunters were also used to produce more exclusively commercial handicraft items. This was the case for caribou hooves, which were used to make one of the handicraft specialties of the Huron-Wendat of Lorette (now Wendake): wall pockets.[25] These were sold mainly to non-Aboriginal customers. Several of these beautiful items, which could also be made from moose hooves, have lasted through the years and are now displayed in various museums and owned by private collectors. Figure 3 shows examples of these wall pockets that were clearly made out of caribou hooves.

[24] Account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953) in Georges Boiteau, 1954, p. 135.

[25] According to Ruth B. Phillips, wall pockets made from the hooves of large cervids were a Huron-Wendat specialty. See Ruth B. Phillips, 1998: *Trading Identities. The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900*. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montréal, pp. 234–236.

**Figure 3:** Wall pockets made out of caribou hooves, a Huron-Wendat handicraft specialty, 19th century[26]

## 1.4 The Huron-Wendat, well-known guides for sport hunters

To conclude this first section presenting the traditional use of Woodland Caribou by the Huron-Wendat, the work historically done by many Nation members as sport hunting guides should be highlighted. Note that the Huron-Wendat began working as hunting and fishing guides in the Nionwentsïo long before the creation of the first private clubs or the Parc national des Laurentides, in 1880 and 1895, respectively. This practice is in a way the direct "ancestor" of the many outfitters that now exist in Huron-Wendat territory. The more explicit references in the archives to the Huron-Wendat working as hunting and fishing guides are from the first half of the 19th century.

[26] Image source: Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW).

In the early days, these sport hunters were mainly British military officers, most of whom were attached to the Citadelle de Québec. Caribou, like moose, was a top-choice big game species for these non-Aboriginal hunters. Since these hunters were unfamiliar with the hunting grounds and the strategies for finding and killing these animals, they systematically called on the Huron-Wendat, the only people who could help them experience the caribou hunt, which was said to be particularly exhilarating.

As previously mentioned, many Huron-Wendat also worked as guides for hunting and fishing activities, including caribou hunting in the early years, at the famous Triton Fish & Game Club and other private clubs. Guiding hunting and fishing activities, including caribou hunting, was so important that it came to be an integral part of Huron-Wendat culture and tradition.

## 2. Historical habitat based on Huron-Wendat hunting grounds

In the second part of the report, we will focus on the historical habitat of the original Woodland Caribou population by examining where the Huron-Wendat hunted and trapped this species. We will use this approach to identify the specific places in the Nionwentsïo that may have been the animal's preferred habitat, at the very least in the 19th century and early 20th century. Two main types of information will be presented:

**1)** Information on where the Huron-Wendat themselves went to hunt and trap caribou

**2)** Information on where the Huron-Wendat guided non-Aboriginal people, British military officers and others to hunt caribou for sport

The caribou hunting historically practised by the Huron-Wendat may be better understood when it is examined from the perspective of the hunting expeditions of the sportsmen who were guided through the forest by Nation members. These sport hunters often left accounts of their expeditions, unlike the Huron-Wendat, who very rarely produced these types of documents. Some of these accounts have been kept in the archives and their many details shed new light on the caribou hunting practised at the time by the Nation. For example, specific Huron-Wendat hunting grounds, i.e., the parts of the Nionwentsïo where Nation members normally caught caribou, are often clearly identified. It can be assumed that Huron-Wendat guides, who were directly responsible for the success of the expeditions on which sportsmen sometimes spent astronomical amounts, brought their clients only to places they were already familiar with in that they had had a successful caribou hunt there or had seen the species there multiple times. Furthermore, in their accounts, the sport hunters often described how the Huron-Wendat guides went about locating caribou and added details regarding traditional Huron-Wendat knowledge on this animal and its behaviour. In other words, in reading these documents, it is clear that the Huron-Wendat knew full well where to find caribou in the Nionwentsïo.

## 2.1 Presence of caribou throughout the Nionwentsïo in the past

In general, historical sources suggest that the original Woodland Caribou population was once found practically all throughout the Nionwentsïo. In other words, in the 18th and 19th centuries and the early 20th century, this animal could be hunted by the Huron-Wendat in the region covered by all the large river basins from Mauricie to Charlevoix, i.e., the Saint-Maurice, Batiscan, Sainte-Anne, Jacques-Cartier, Montmorency, Sainte-Anne (river mouth in Beaupré), Gouffre and Malbaie rivers. The Huron-Wendat also hunted caribou beyond the watershed divide, which separates the rivers that flow into the St. Lawrence River from those that flow into the Saguenay and Lake Saint-Jean. This area included the upstream portions of the Metabetchouane, ,Chicoutimi and Pikauba rivers, and the Rivière aux Écorces and the Rivière à Mars. Caribou could also be hunted in certain parts of the Nionwentsïo south of the St. Lawrence River. It would appear that caribou were once relatively abundant in the Nionwentsïo. This was clearly stated by Huron-Wendat Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953): "There were a large number of caribou on our hunting grounds."[27] [translation]

## 2.2 "Les Jardins" and the northeastern part of the Nionwentsïo: a community hunting area

As we will see further on, journalist André-Napoléon Montpetit had the opportunity to visit Lac des Neiges in the winter of 1875–1876 and spend a few days with a Huron-Wendat family hunting group formed by Thomas Sioui (1820–1900) and several of his sons. At the time, these hunters from the Nation had a camp on the shores of Lac des Neiges. Montpetit, a seasoned writer, left a detailed account of this expedition in an excellent article entitled "Neuf jours chez un trappeur" [nine days with a trapper], published in a newspaper of the time called *L'Opinion publique* between June and August 1876.[28] As Montpetit spent days and evenings in the company of Thomas Sioui, Sioui told him many hunting stories that took place in various parts of the Nionwentsïo. One of these stories pertained specifically to an expedition on which Sioui guided military officers in "les Jardins":

> We left Quebec City around the end of the holiday season, in early February. We had gotten a lot of snow that season; the weather was ideal for moose hunting. We went behind Château-Richer and headed straight north. After three days of walking, we arrived in "*les Jardins* " without coming across a single track. Our officers were

[27] Account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953) in Georges Boiteau, 1954, p. 126.
[28] MONTPETIT, [André-Napoléon], 1876: "Neuf jours chez un trappeur," *L'Opinion publique*. Montreal; June 8, 15, 22 and 29; July 6, 13, 20 and 27; and August 3, 1876.

> really exhausted and asked to rest for a few days. We did as they said: we lit a large fire to burn the snow, and we set up their tent on leaves, or moss, actually. Our arrangements were simpler: we settled into holes dug in the snow, facing the big fire. Then, after having a drink and a big meal, wrapped in blankets, we slept like babies.
>
> - Sorry for interrupting, Mr. Siouï, but what do you mean by "*les Jardins*"?
>
> - Oh! You don't know about "*Les Jardins*"! said Mr. Siouï, as if to say you poor ignorant man![29] [translation]

Montpetit continued reporting the words of Thomas Sioui, who explained the origin of the name "Les Jardins." It was actually a large part of the Nionwentsïo that was once ravaged by fire:

> "*Les Jardins*," sir, cover a vast expanse of land, ravaged by fire long ago, starting about 40 miles from the St. Lawrence River and including the area between the Saguenay and the Saint-Maurice, maybe 50 to 60 miles long and 30 to 40 miles wide. The forest burned to the ground. If you walk through it in the summer, you'll see charred tree trunks, some half rotten, others with blackened beams or tines resembling gigantic moose antlers, standing over brambles or young tree shoots. Bears frequent "*les Jardins*" in the summer, attracted by the blueberries and raspberries that grow abundantly there.It must have been a terrible fire that ravaged this region, a fire that passed over the mountains and leapt from one river to the next, and that wasn't even stopped by lakes several miles long. Nothing was spared: the wildlife was completely destroyed. The only animals around are bears or moose and caribou, which are powerful enough to cover large distances in a short amount of time. This destroyed forest still seems to exude the smell of death; birds don't even stop to rest there on their migration routes and there are few fish in the rivers and lakes. [translation]

[29] MONTPETIT, [André-Napoléon], 1876: "Neuf jours chez un trappeur," *L'Opinion publique*. Montreal, July 27, 1876, p. 356.

> There is nothing more monotonous than the look of this solitude over which hangs a deathly silence. You go from a valley to a mountain, a mountain to a lake, a lake to charred rock masses, from which you can see a plain, intersected by streams, ponds or rivers, without the scenery changing. As far as the eye can see there are tangles of toppled trees, extensively blackened or burnt, under which Douglas maples, striped maple brushwood and service tree shoots that the moose and caribou are fond of are struggling to grow. Here and there, standing out against the blue horizon in the summer and the uniform snow surface in the winter, are large tree trunks with no branches—some on mountains, some in small valleys....
>
> Uncultivated, barren wasteland, void of resources, hopeless, where anything that isn't dead is stunted, that's "*les Jardins.*"
>
> - So that name was given to the region mockingly?
>
> - Exactly, sir: *Cemetery* would have been a more fitting name.However, I must admit that as a hunter, I've made more than one nice kill there. It's a very worthwhile hunting ground. In the summertime, the caribou, which have been chased out of the forest, take refuge there in large herds. Either they find abundant moss or tender buds to eat, or they hope that in this open terrain, from which they can see enemies and hunters from far away, they will find shelter and protection, counting on the litheness of their legs, which, at the first crack, get them out of the shooting range of the longest range guns.[30] [translation]

The area known as "Les Jardins" was a wide strip of land about 40 miles inland, between the Saint-Maurice and Saguenay rivers, that spanned a distance of about 50 miles long and 30 miles wide. This fire-ravaged region was less productive than in the past, particularly in terms of fur-bearing animals, but in the 19th century it was a very worthwhile hunting ground for big game, especially caribou. Thomas Sioui said that he had harvested some fine specimens there himself. The Huron-Wendat elder explained to Montpetit that in the summer, caribou herded together in large numbers in les Jardins because they found abundant moss and tender buds to eat there. Thomas Sioui also said that caribou found protection in les Jardins and felt more at ease there because they could see predators and hunters from far away.

At one time, the Huron-Wendat considered the northeastern part of the Nionwentsïo, including Malbaie River and the surrounding area to the Saguenay River, to be a community area for the Nation. Because of specific ecological, topographical and geographical characteristics, this area, which included "les Jardins," was used in particular for hunting big game, namely black bears, but also large cervids such as moose and caribou. Huron-Wendat caribou hunting grounds must be considered in relation to our historical and anthropological research on the Nation's land tenure. We know that in the past, Huron-Wendat families were settled in the watersheds of the Sainte-Anne, Jacques-Cartier and Montmorency rivers, as well as east of the Saint-Maurice to the

[30] MONTPETIT, [André-Napoléon], 1876, p. 356.

Sainte-Anne River. These families occupied parts of land intensively, without limiting themselves to those parts, and other Nation members recognized this predominance. It seems that even though the land on the southern bank of the St. Lawrence River may have been formerly occupied by families, it served a similar purpose in that it was used for moose hunting, although caribou were sometimes killed there as well, as previously indicated.

We will now look at an example of a Huron-Wendat caribou hunt in the northeastern part of the Nionwentsïo. We will explore some very specific places where Nation members normally hunted this animal. Then, in separate sections, we will identify other Huron-Wendat caribou hunting grounds from east to west in the Nionwentsïo, particularly in the watersheds of the Montmorency, Jacques-Cartier, Sainte-Anne and Batiscan rivers.

## 2.3 The northeastern part of the Nionwentsïo: example of a Huron-Wendat caribou hunting trip in the fall of 1863

One of the most detailed stories in the archives about the caribou hunt led by Huron-Wendat guides took place right in that northeastern region of the Nionwentsïo. The story of that expedition[31] specifically dedicated to caribou, which took place in the fall of 1863, was written by a military officer who was guided by a group of Huron-Wendat. Among these Huron-Wendat guides was François "La Plume"[32] Gros-Louis *Hatsenharonkwas* (1811–1871), known for being a particularly skilled Huron-Wendat hunter.

This manuscript is made up of daily entries from November 5 to December 6 in which the author describes the day's events, sometimes in great detail. On the way to the actual hunting grounds, the expedition group first took usual Huron-Wendat trails and routes. The group got to Mare du Sault, where the Montmorency River widens, via the Huron-Wendat trail connecting Lac à Noël, Lac à Régis, Lac à l'Épaule, Petit Lac à l'Épaule, Lac des Roches and Lac des Sylphes. From Mare du Sault, they took the Provençal Lake trail to Lac des Neiges. Then, they took the Huron-Wendat portage in the northeasternmost part of the immense Lac des Neiges, to Malbaie Lake and then Malbaie River. It was around this point that the caribou hunt began.[33]

Naturally, the military officer was sure to note the places he visited for hunting purposes as he

[31] Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW), [Story of a hunting expedition with François Gros-Louis], November 5 to December 6, 1863, n.p.
[32] François Gros-Louis *Hatsenharonkwas* (1811–1871) was nicknamed "La Plume" [the feather] by members of the Huron-Wendat Nation because his quick movements evoked the lightness of a feather, according to Huron-Wendat oral tradition.
[33] Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW), [Story of a hunting expedition with François Gros-Louis], November 5 to December 6, 1863, n.p.

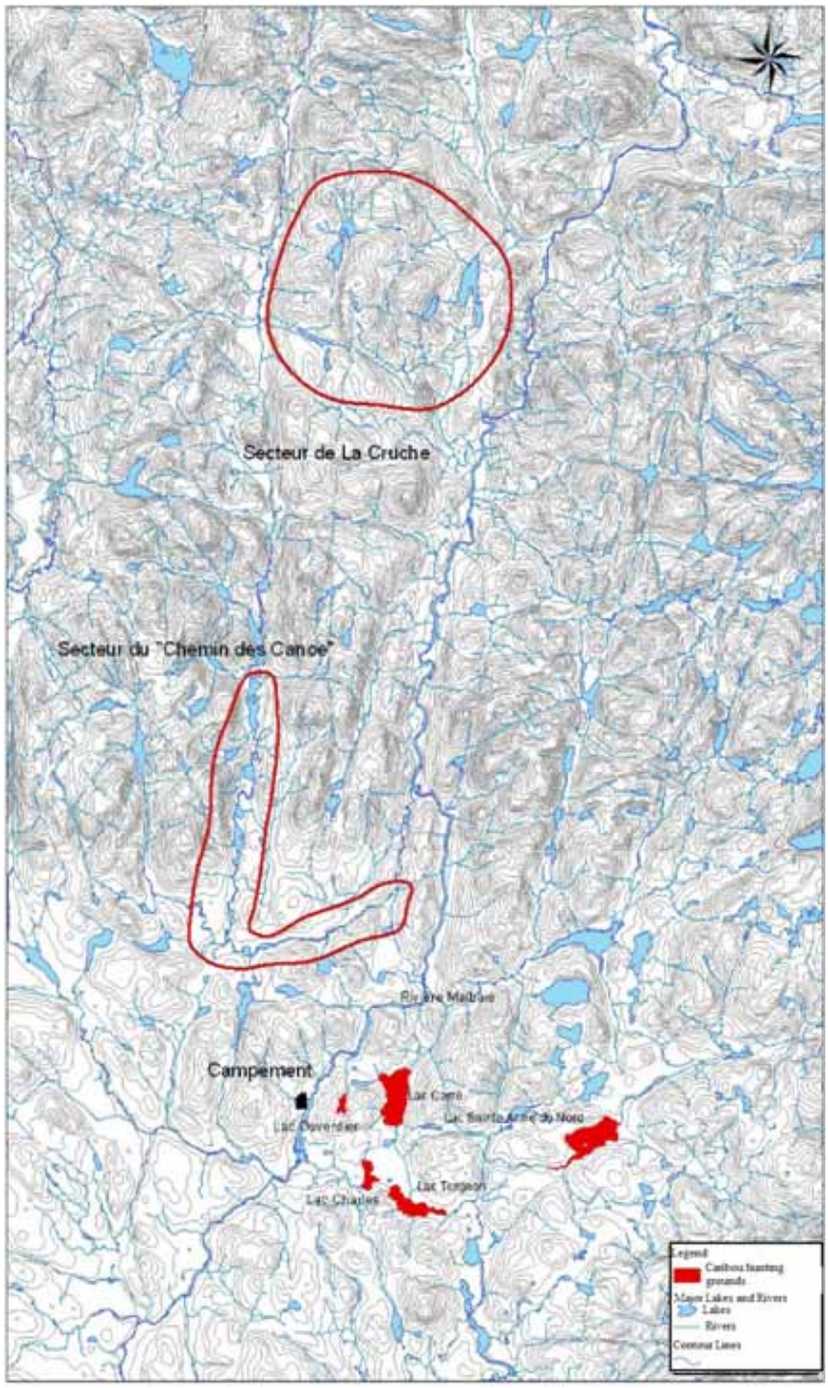
followed his invaluable Huron-Wendat guides across this region. These places were most often water bodies whose names were mentioned to the sport hunter by the Huron-Wendat guides. The majority of these hunting grounds, presented in Table 1, can be located. Map 2 shows the hunting grounds of known location. For information purposes, it indicates the approximate location of the expedition's main camp on the banks of the Malbaie River, not far from Carré Lake.

**Table 1:** Caribou hunting grounds on the 1863 expedition with François "La Plume" Gros-Louis Hatsenharonkwas[34]

| **Place names from the story** | **Location** |
|---|---|
| "jardin"<br>"Grand Jardin" | Area in the upstream portion of Malbaie River, just upstream of the confluence with Rivière de l'Enfer |
| "Lac Carré" | Carré Lake |
| "Lac Charles" | Charles Lake |
| [none] | Duverdier Lake |
| "Lac Longue" | Turgeon Lake |
| "Chemin des canoes" | Rivière du Chemin des Canots area |
| "Lac St Anne" | Sainte-Anne du Nord Lake |
| "La Cruche"<br>"Jardin La Cruche" | Lac de la Cruche area |
| "Lac des loutres" | Possibly Lac de la Jeune Loutre |
| "Lac d'eau over the high mountains" | Unknown |
| "Jardin des ours" | Unknown |
| "Jardin [semihelle]" | Unknown |

[34] Source: Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW), [Story of a hunting expedition with François Gros-Louis], November 5 to December 6, 1863, n.p.

**Map 2:** Caribou hunting grounds on the 1863 expedition with François “La Plume” Gros-Louis *Hatsenharonkwas*



The map shows that this caribou hunting expedition focused on four main areas in the northeastern part of the Nionwentsïo:

**1)** The areas surrounding Carré, Charles, Turgeon, Duverdier and Sainte-Anne du Nord lakes

**2)** The Rivière du Chemin des Canots area

**3)** The "jardin" or "Grand Jardin" in the upstream portion of the Malbaie River, just upstream of the confluence with Rivière de l'Enfer

**4)** The "La Cruche" area, including Lac de la Cruche.

The locations of three hunting grounds in particular—"Lac d'eau over the high mountains," "Jardin des ours" and "Jardin [semihelle]"—remain unknown to this day. The name "Lac des loutres" may refer to what is now Lac de la Jeune Loutre, located between Malbaie River and Rivière du Chemin des Canots.

Note that expedition members saw caribou tracks on most of the hunting grounds visited. They often came across caribou, but the sport hunter was unable to kill them. Therefore, although many caribou were seen, a single animal was finally killed by the group on November 19, in the "Jardin" or "Grand Jardin" area, which is likely located in the upstream portion of the Malbaie River, southeast of the confluence with Rivière de l'Enfer. It was a female, and females were better to eat at that time of year, the military officer explained in his journal. Two other caribou that were with that female, including one medium-sized male that the sport hunter barely missed, managed to escape.[35]

Those specific places in the Nionwentsïo were caribou hunting grounds that the Huron-Wendat were familiar with and often frequented. At the time of the account, i.e., in the mid-19th century, those places were undoubtedly part of the preferred habitat of the original Woodland Caribou population.

In addition to the fairly detailed description of the specific hunting grounds, the 1863 account by the military officer contains references to Huron-Wendat knowledge of the Woodland Caribou's behaviour in these parts of the territory in particular. Several times, the group encountered poor caribou hunting conditions.

[35] Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW), [Story of a hunting expedition with François Gros-Louis], November 5 to December 6, 1863, n.p.

Upon reading the sport hunter's story, it can be seen that recognizing these poor conditions, the group even spent a few days hunting beaver, on the initiative of the Huron-Wendat guides.[36] On days when hunting conditions were poor, the Huron-Wendat explained to the military officer why they thought it was unproductive to hunt caribou at those times. The sport hunter noted this information on November 21, when he and the guides went to Turgeon Lake, called "Lac Longue" at the time:

> Saturday 21th off at 7 oc – round by the Lac Longue – beautiful country for stalking – never saw a sign of an animal. In fact it is useless going out without snow on the ground, for the cariboo only come out of the deep woods then, to eat the moss on the opens, which is too dry at other time – at least this is how the Indians explain it.[37]

The Huron-Wendat said that in their opinion, it was pointless to hunt in those conditions, i.e., without snow on the ground. According to them, the caribou in that specific area came out of the deeps woods to feed only when snow had dampened the moss in the open parts. At other times, this moss was too dry, which explained the absence of caribou in the more open spaces.

After having examined the story of this hunt that took place in the fall of 1863 in the northeastern part of the Nionwentsïo, we will now focus on another expedition, part of which took place in the same area over the following decades. In doing so, we will learn more about the "La Cruche" area, which was undoubtedly a preferred caribou hunting ground for the Huron-Wendat of the past, particularly because of its high productivity.

## 2.4 The "La Cruche" area

The "La Cruche" area, explicitly identified in the previous story about the hunt in November and December 1863, is also referred to in other documents about the original Woodland Caribou population in relation to the Huron-Wendat Nation. In the historical documentation, we found the account of a caribou hunt in the "La Cruche" area that took place at the very end of the 19th century or the beginning of the 20th century. This story was written by Ferdinand van Bruyssel,[38] a former consul-general of Belgium who lived in the country for many years.

[36] Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW), [Story of a hunting expedition with François Gros-Louis], November 5 to December 6, 1863, n.p.
[37] Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW), [Story of a hunting expedition with François Gros-Louis], November 5 to December 6, 1863, n.p.
[38] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, *Jean Vadeboncoeur et Marie-Anne Lafrance, Canadiens Français* [Jean Vadeboncoeur and Marie-Anne Lafrance, French Canadians]. Éditions de la Revue Mondiale, Paris, pp. 19–87.

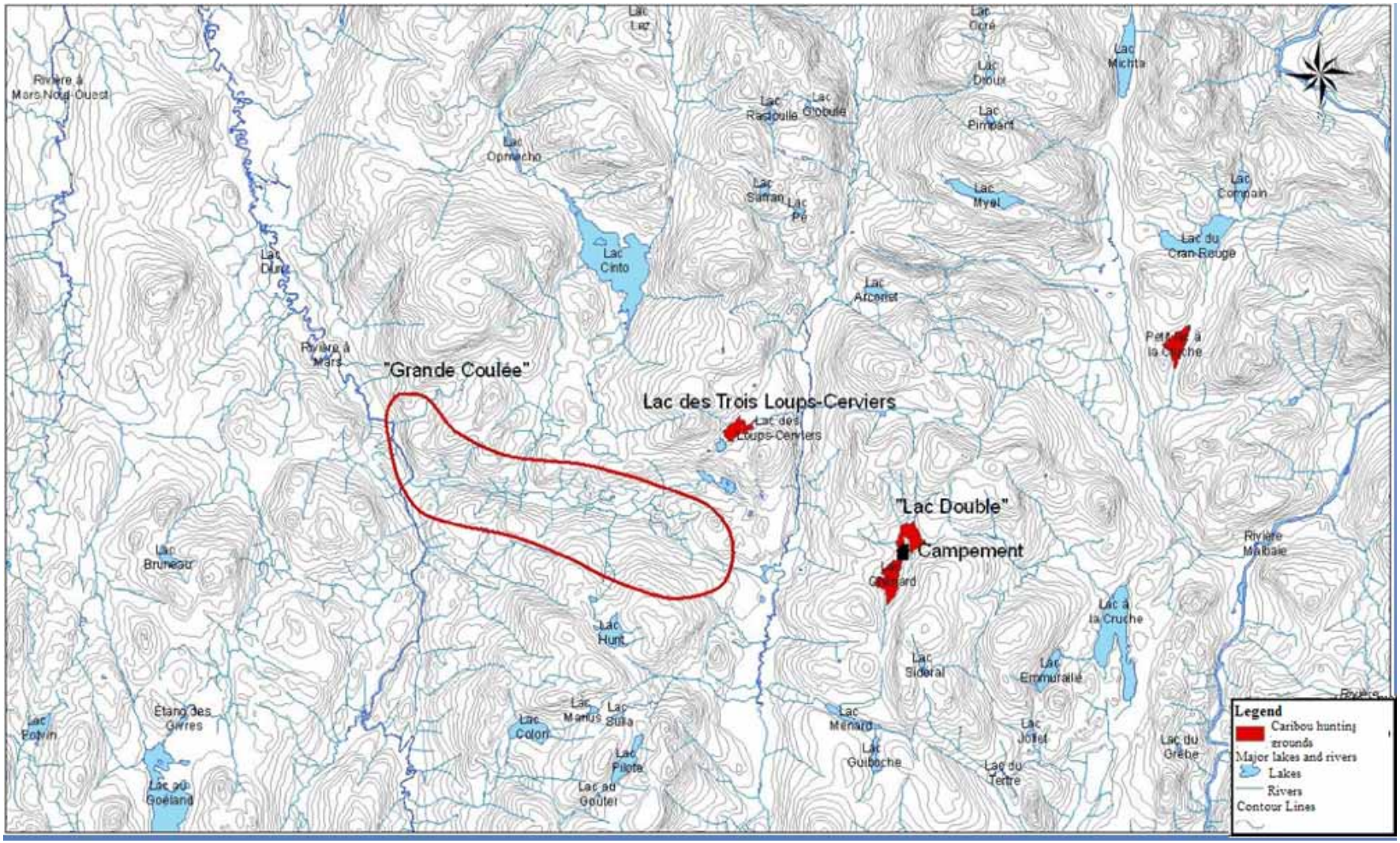
Ferdinand van Bruyssel had the opportunity to participate in the caribou hunt in the Parc des Laurentides, north of the village of Saint-Urbain, in the company of other non-Aboriginal sport hunters and three Huron-Wendat guides: Francis Gros-Louis (1836–1911) and Félix Gros-Louis (1853–1933), both sons of François "La Plume" Gros-Louis *Hatsenharonkwas* (1811–1871), and Télesphore Picard (1875–1959). Since none of the non-Aboriginal people participating in the hunt knew the area, the sport hunter said that they relied on "skilled hunters of the Huron tribe" to ensure the venture's success.[39] Therefore, it is clear that these Huron-Wendat hunters were already familiar with the area in question.

The expedition recounted by van Bruyssel took place in early November. The guides went ahead of the non-Aboriginal hunters to set up camp, and the group agreed to meet in "La Cruche," which, at the time, could be reached by horse-drawn carriage with the inhabitants of Saint-Urbain by a former colonization road. According to van Bruyssel's account, the Huron-Wendat had set up camp on a point at "Lac Double," approximately four kilometres from the meeting point in "La Cruche."[40] Our analysis indicates that this body of water corresponds to what is now Chenard Lake, northwest of Lac de la Cruche.

Van Bruyssel's account is detailed enough for us to piece together the specific places that were visited on this caribou hunting expedition. Map 3 shows these main hunting grounds and indicates where the people on the expedition set up camp.

[39] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, pp. 19, 57–58.
[40] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, pp. 57–66.

**Map 3:** Main caribou hunting grounds on Ferdinand van Bruyssel's expedition with three Huron-Wendat guides, late 19th century to early 20th century



The following is an account by van Bruyssel describing how the first two caribou, three-year-old males, were caught on “Petit lac de la Cruche” (see Map 3) with Huron-Wendat guides Francis and Félix Gros-Louis:

> On a hike as unproductive as the previous day’s, the three hunters patiently followed the guides who took turns “beating the path” (1). Around noon, from a high point, Mr. Gaskell took out his binoculars to examine the horizon; Félix simply used his naturally good eyesight. In the distance, they saw Petit lac de la Cruche, on which there were two black dots that appeared to be moving.
>
> - Wow! Look at the caribou, said the Huron, but we were downwind; if Francis agreed, we would have to run to the right, make a big detour and approach from the other side of the lake; if they left without being scared away, we could still follow their tracks.
>
> Francis nodded his head in approval and the guides came down a long slope, sometimes sliding, sometimes running, and quickly did a wide detour on the plain; they led the out-of-breath hunters to the edge of the lake. But before reaching it, they had to stop for a moment to load the rifle, for fear that the sharp-eared animal might hear the sound of the metal. When Francis saw that his “master” had caught his breath, he pointed to a higher spot and said:
>
> - If you go there without rustling the leaves, you’ll see them if they’re still on the lake. Mr. Gaskell started to crawl toward the indicated spot. As soon as he got there, those waiting anxiously behind him saw him raise his Winchester, shoot to the right without giving himself time to aim, quickly work the lever of his rifle, and shoot a second time, turning more to the left. Two caribou, having suddenly seen a man’s head appear almost above them, took off in a flash, when they were hit in the head by a bullet, shattering the atlas vertebra....
>
> The victims were three-year-old males that were of no interest as hunting trophies.
>
> After taking out their knives and the hatchets they wore on their belts, Francis and Félix began skinning and cutting up the animals....
>
> Soon after, Francis said to his table companion:
>
> - Go get the sled to transport the meat to the camp after I cut it up.
>
> Delighted at the thought of eating unlimited amounts of this venison, which was his favourite meal, Félix left in a hurry.

> **(1)** The light snow, which had not frozen superficially or been blown around and packed by the storm, was packed down by the snowshoes of the leader, to the benefit of those walking in the same tracks.[41] [translation]

The next morning, the sport hunters awoke to the sound of Félix Gros-Louis's voice telling them to hurry up because a "big caribou" was crossing the lake and heading toward the camp. Van Bruyssel summarized the hunt for the third caribou on "Lac Double," i.e., Chenard Lake (see Map 3), very close to the camp, as follows:

> Around dawn, half-dressed, Jean was putting on two pairs of thick wool socks when Félix poked his head inside the tent and whispered:
>
> - Come quick, a big caribou is crossing the lake and coming this way!
>
> - Go ahead, Jean, since you're ready, instructed Mr. Gaskell, who had woken up with a start.
>
> The boy didn't wait to be told again; without stopping to put on moccasins, he took his overcoat, shoved his hands in his mittens, grabbed his rifle, which was leaned against a forked branch (2) outside, and followed Félix; it was so cold that the snow was dry, protecting his feet against any dampness. Thanks to the cluster of trees, the end of the point, at the front of which was the camp, could be reached without being seen by the caribou, approaching downwind alongside the opposite shore. Maybe it was looking for a stream to drink from. When Jean was about 125 metres from the caribou's side, the young hunter positioned the gun in the small of his shoulder to aim, and gently pulled the trigger; the shot fired and the dum-dum bullet went straight to the target; the large reindeer stumbled and its legs gave way; it got up with difficulty, but then fell down, dying, a few steps further.
>
> - Wow! Look at those antlers, cried Félix, finishing the animal off with his knife.
>
> It was a grey-legged Woodland Caribou. It had antlers with many palmated tines; the right ones were the same as the left, while two others coming out at head level were longer and protruded forward. Arctic tundra caribou (1), known as "yellow foot" caribou, can also be found in the Parc des Laurentides. Their lower tines resemble those of their woodland relatives; however, they have no upper tines apart from the crown. Both types of caribou often have beautiful antlers.
>
> (2) In the winter, hunters left their guns outside to prevent the warm vapours indoors from condensing on the metal.
>
> (1) *Rangifer arcticus*[42].[translation]

This caribou, which seemed to have large antlers, was a "grey-legged Woodland Caribou." Van Bruyssel, probably reporting the information passed on at that time by the Huron-Wendat guides, made a distinction between this "grey-legged" caribou and the so-called "yellow foot" caribou that

[41] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, pp. 69–71.

were also found in the Parc des Laurentides. In his account, he compared the so-called "yellow foot" caribou to the "Arctic tundra" caribou, specifying that the latter has different antlers.

After eating at the camp, the non-Aboriginal sport hunters followed the Huron-Wendat guides in a specific hunting area called the "Grande Coulée." There, they found a herd of 30 to 40 females and young caribou, grazing on lichen:

> After getting up from the table, the hunters went to join the guides who had finished their work. The guides showed them the incredible antlers before starting to walk in the direction of the "Grande coulée."
>
> That morning, in that low-lying area, there was a herd of 30 to 40 females and young caribou, grazing on lichen they uncovered with their large hooves. The horn-like hoof rims caribou develop act as snowshoes do for people: they help the animal hold itself up in the snow and even in muddy swamps.
>
> One after the other, the caribou raised their heads, and took off successively; even though the dominant wind was not in their direction, all it took was an unexpected air current that carried the smell of humans to them. However, the hunters had taken precautions.
>
> - Shoot quickly, Alfred, ordered Mr. Gaskell, we have to provide meat for Beaupré.
>
> Alfred promptly obeyed, but did not seem to hit anything, at first sight. However, we saw big blood spots in the tracks. In cases like that, the best thing to do is to quietly make a little fire to warm up, and light your pipe; you have to wait patiently for about half an hour. When the injured animal is not immediately chased, it lies down in pain soon after; then you can get to it. However, if someone chases it right away, it gets terrified and could run far away.
>
> Alfred and Félix quietly went back up the path where the herd disappeared and soon found the injured animal; it was fully stretched out and could only get up on its forequarters, but remained in a defensive position, ready to strike with either of its front hooves. A bullet to the head ended its suffering.
>
> This time, the guides had brought their toboggan in order to avoid having to return to the camp for it; of course, they wanted to avoid the chore of carrying a large quantity of venison on their backs. The hunters continued to make their way to Rivière à Mars, which was six or seven kilometres from Lac Double. In the *Coulée*, the snow had been trampled and in many places scraped away by caribou, but no caribou were to be seen.[43] [translation]

That was how a fourth caribou was killed by expedition members. The "Grande Coulée" is a deep valley linking the area surrounding "Lac Double," i.e., Chenard Lake, and the upstream portion of

[42] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, pp. 74–75.
[43] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, pp. 76–77.

Rivière à Mars (see Map 3). Clearly, it was a hunting ground that the Huron-Wendat knew well.

In his account, van Bruyssel said that two other caribou had been harvested: the first in an unidentified location, and the other, which had huge antlers, with Félix Gros-Louis on "Lac des Trois Loups Cerviers." The name of this lake, as reported by Van Bruyssel, came from a past hunting expedition on which Félix Gros-Louis, accompanied by Colonel Rhodes, came across three lynx in that area. This shows that that Huron-Wendat normally hunted in that area.[44] "Lac des Trois Loups Cerviers" quite likely corresponds to what is now Lac des Loups-Cerviers, located less than three kilometres from Chenard Lake.

Van Bruyssel's account of this expedition with Huron-Wendat guides Francis Gros-Louis, Félix Gros-Louis and Télesphore Picard identifies four caribou hunting grounds that were once frequented by the Huron-Wendat Nation:

**1)** Petit lac de la Cruche

**2)** The "Grande Coulée," between Chenard Lake and the upstream portion of Rivière à Mars

**3)** Chenard Lake

**4)** "Lac des Trois-Loups Cerviers," probably what is now Lac des Loups-Cerviers.

These locations were undoubtedly part of the original Woodland Caribou population's preferred habitat in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

## 2.5 The Lac des Neiges area

The Lac des Neiges area was also a choice caribou hunting ground for the Huron-Wendat Nation. For example, we previously discussed the writings of journalist André-Napoléon Montpetit, who, in the winter of 1875–1876, had the opportunity to spend a few days on Lac des Neiges at the hunting camp of Huron-Wendat Thomas Sioui (1820–1900) and his sons. As Montpetit points out, at the time he met this hunting group, it was focusing mainly on hunting fur-bearing animals:

> On Lac des Neiges, Thomas Siouï hunts mainly marten, mink, beaver and otter. He has set nearly 300 traps in the area, within a radius of seven or eight miles; almost every night, he comes back to sleep in his cabin, which he worked to make

[44] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, p. 85.

as comfortable as possible.[45] [translation]

While Montpetit was staying with Thomas Sioui and his sons, he found that caribou hunting was also part of the traditional activities they practised in the area surrounding Lac des Neiges. The following is the journalist's account of a morning a few days after he arrived at the Huron-Wendat camp on Lac des Neiges:

> Did you see Joseph this morning? asked Thomas Siouï, winking, after pulling the end of a pipe from his mouth, filling his nostrils with smoke.
>
> - Hey, yeah! Where did he go? He left more than half an hour ago.
>
> - He went to check his traps.
>
> - In this weather?
>
> - Oh! Nothing could stop him; he had a good dream; I think he dreamt of his girlfriend, and that's a lucky dream. He was all smiles this morning; Georges, who noticed, went with him. I'd be very surprised if they came back empty-handed.
>
> - But Mr. Siouï, you're a serious, educated man. Do you really put faith in dreams?
>
> - I'd like to deny it, but it would be in vain, my friends, because every time one of us dreams of women, children or fresh meat, we always hunt something; it never fails. This time, it's Adélaïde, Jos' girlfriend..., a good, brave girl who must have prayed for us, and I don't doubt the effect of her prayers. The weather hasn't been good, our traps aren't in good shape, and yet, I'm confident. Wait and you'll see.[46] [translation]

Joseph Sioui, Thomas's son, had dreamt of his girlfriend, Adélaïde, which was a good sign for the day's hunt, like any dream about women, children or fresh meat. Montpetit did not think much of this, but was surprised when Joseph came racing back to the camp:

> Quick! Quick! The guns! Give me the guns! There are lakes on the little caribou! Hurry up! It was Joseph, who came bursting in and, without being able to see in our pitch-black hole, threw two dead marten and one mink at me and headed for the guns.
>
> Are you crazy, Joseph? asked Thomas, the bowl of his pipe between his fingers and the stem touching his bottom lip; you're saying there are lakes on the little caribou?
>
> - I'm not crazy, and I repeat that there are seven caribou on the little lake, within firing range from the left shore.

[45] MONTPETIT, [André-Napoléon], 1876, "Neuf jours chez un trappeur," *L'Opinion publique*. Montréal, July 6, 1876, p. 321.
[46] MONTPETIT, [André-Napoléon], 1876, p. 330.

- Ok, now we understand! Let's go, then! Are they lying down?

- The lakes? asked Joseph.

- No, the caribou?

- Of course they're lying down. I told you they're waiting within firing range on the right side.

- You just said they were on the left side!

- Left or right, what does it matter, as long as there are caribou we can shoot?

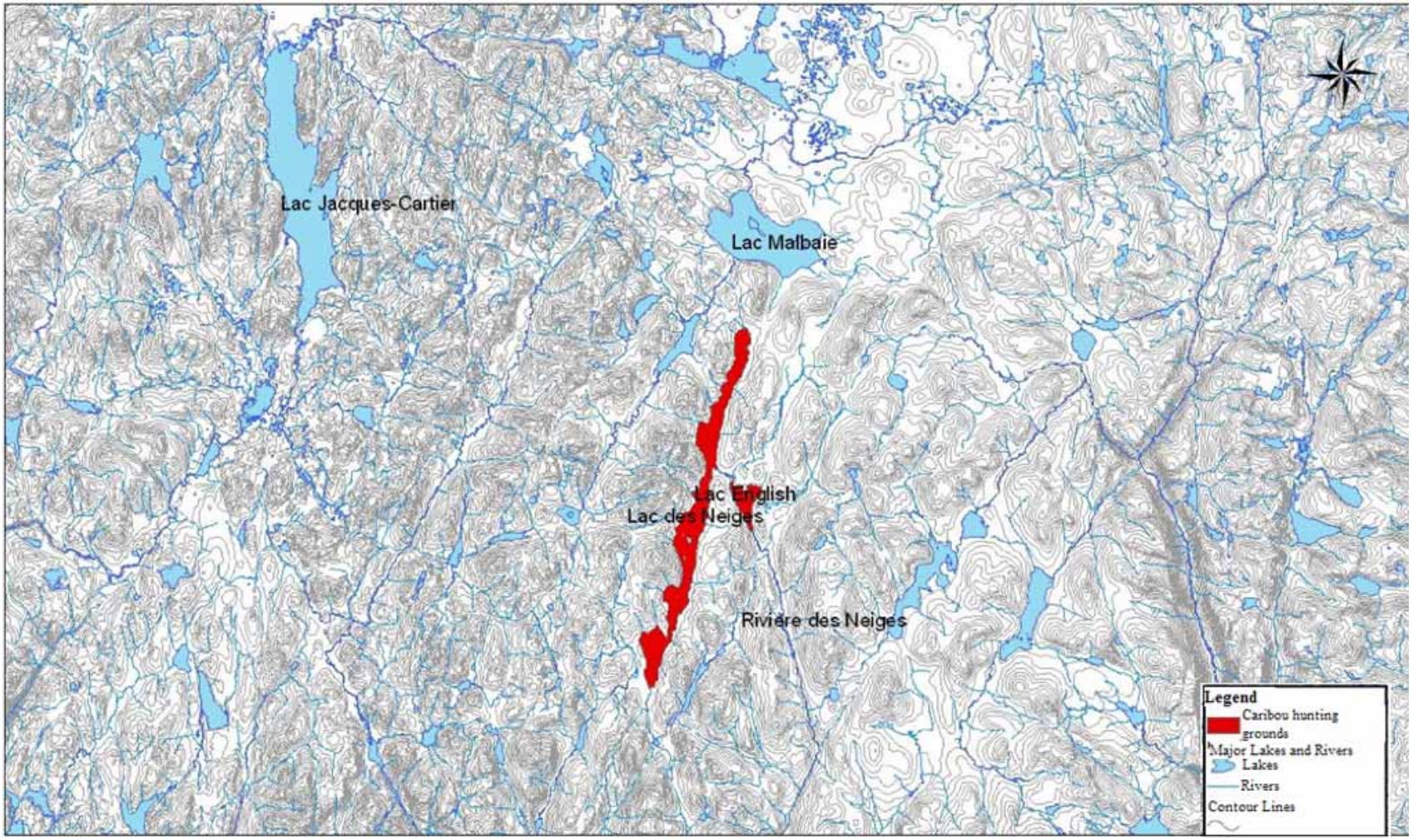
During this conversation, they took out and loaded their guns. A second later, the father and his three sons, with four guns, ran out onto the ice covering *Lac des Neiges*. They brought the double-barrelled breech-loading rifle owned by Wilbrod, who stayed behind long enough to get dressed to follow them.

The *little lake* they were referring two is located half a mile northwest of Lac des Neiges. It took no time at all, as might be expected. Wilbrod got there just as Thomas fired a shot from two arpents or more away at a group of seven caribou, lying down right in the middle of the lake. None were hit, but they all panicked and ran in every direction toward the forest. However, before reaching it, either the reflection helped them find their way, or they felt the need to stick together to help each other, and three came back together in one spot and four others came back together in another spot. A second shot was fired at the first three caribou, which immediately headed toward the forest, followed by the other four, but soon one of them slowed down and remained far behind. Kill! Kill! The four Siouï sons reloaded their guns and rushed at the noble animal, while Wilbrod and Thomas returned to the camp with their tails between their legs.[47] [translation]

While checking the traps set to catch fur-bearing animals, young Joseph Sioui had seen a group of seven caribou lying on the "little lake" located about half a mile from Lac des Neiges. It makes sense that it was English Lake, a widening of Rivière des Neiges, which flows out of Lac des Neiges. Map 4 shows Lac des Neiges and English Lake, where the caribou were found.

[47] MONTPETIT, [André-Napoléon], 1876, p. 345.

**Map 4:** Lac des Neiges and English Lake, a widening of Rivière des Neiges



In this 1876 account, Montpetit reported how the young Huron-Wendat hunters returned two hours later, satisfied that they had harvested a superb caribou weighing more than 200 pounds:

> After two hours, Pitres and Mathias arrived, tired and exhausted. Pitres came across six of the caribou as they were resting standing up, on alert, but by the time he raised his gun to his shoulder, they were gone. He knew that Joseph had followed the seventh one because he heard a gunshot in the direction he went.
>
> Joseph soon appeared, out of breath, red-faced and bright-eyed: he had killed the caribou, 10 to 12 arpents from the cabin.
>
> The dogs were harnessed to the sled and in less than an hour, had brought the caribou to the cabin door. It was a superb animal that weighed at least 200 pounds. For supper, we had a delicious caribou steak.
>
> "So! said Thomas Siouï, what do you think of Joseph's dream now? Two marten, a mink and a caribou in one day! Adélaïde brought us good luck, didn't she?[48] [translation]

This excerpt shows that Lac des Neiges and the surrounding area was a caribou hunting ground for the Huron-Wendat Nation. Like the locations identified in previous sections, this area was undoubtedly part of the original Woodland Caribou population's preferred habitat, at the very least in the mid-19th century and subsequent decades.

## 2.6 The Jacques-Cartier River and the Rivière à l'Épaule area

A previous report on the traditional knowledge of today's elders regarding the original Woodland Caribou population in the Nionwentsïo[49] showed that Jacques-Cartier Lake was once a preferred Huron-Wendat hunting ground for this species. The archives and historical documentation confirm that the general area of the Jacques-Cartier River watershed was frequented by Huron-Wendat hunters, particularly for this purpose.

[48] MONTPETIT, [André-Napoléon], 1876, p. 345.
[49] BUREAU DU NIONWENTSÏO, 2010: *Gathering Traditional Knowledge on the Woodland Caribou*, report submitted to Environment Canada, Quebec Region, by the Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat, March 31, 2010.

This is one of the things that we learn from the statement made by Grand Chief Nicolas Vincent *Tsawenhohi* (1771–1844) before the House of Assembly of Lower Canada on February 4, 1824.[50] On that date, the Grand Chief was asked questions by a committee assigned to examine the opportunities to colonize "Crown lands." Multiple stakeholders, including settlers, explorers, surveyors such as Surveyor General of Lower Canada Joseph Bouchette, and other officials appeared before the House of Assembly to describe to the best of their knowledge the colonization opportunities in the areas that had not yet been explored. In this regard, the committee examined the region between the Saint-Maurice and Saguenay rivers, as well as Lake Saint-Jean. It was in this context that the Grand Chief of the Huron-Wendat Nation came to share some of his knowledge on these places he had travelled up and down many times when practising his traditional hunting, fishing, trapping or plant harvesting activities.

Grand Chief *Tsawenhohi* referred explicitly to caribou in this February 1824 statement. The committee asked him what animals the Huron-Wendat caught in the area located between the Valcartier settlement and the Chicoutimi River:

> **Q.** [Committee's question] What kind of game do you catch?
>
> **R.** [Grand Chief *Tsawenhohi*'s answer] Beaver, otter, marten, a few muskrat, and when the ice melts, ducks. Sometimes we come across caribou.[51] [translation]

The Grand Chief identified beaver, otter, American marten and muskrat as the main fur-bearing species harvested in the region, but caribou was the big game the Huron-Wendat hunted most in that area in particular.

Other historical sources confirm that the Huron-Wendat used to hunt Woodland Caribou in the greater Jacques-Cartier River watershed region. Rivière à l'Épaule, for example, is identified as a more specific location where the Huron-Wendat Nation hunted this species. In the first part of this report, we referred to the account of Joseph Xavier Perrault regarding the exploratory expedition between Quebec City and Lake Saint-Jean[52] that he went on in the fall of 1863. By following a Huron-Wendat hunting trail, the "explorers" came across a Huron-Wendat hunting camp on the south shore of Lac à l'Épaule. However, those Huron-Wendat were not at the camp at that time. They had probably gone to check the traps they set in the surrounding area. According to the fairly detailed description of the camp given by Perrault in his article, a caribou leg was

[50] VINCENT, Nicolas Tsawenhohi, 1824: [Statement by Nicholas Vincent Tsawenhohi before the House of Assembly of Lower Canada on February 4, 1824], *in* Lower Canada, Legislative Assembly, *Journals of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada*: n.p. John Neilson, Québec City, Vol. XXXIII, Appendix R.
[51] VINCENT, Nicolas Tsawenhohi, 1824.
[52] PERRAULT, [Joseph-Xavier], [1863].

stuck in the end of a stick in the snow, indicating that caribou was one of the species the hunting group ate. The presence of caribou meat also shows that the Huron-Wendat caught this species in the area surrounding Lac à l'Épaule, at a reasonable distance from the camp:

> We got back on the trail to Lac L'Epaule, which took us to the middle of the lake's length. Unfortunately, because the lake was so deep and wide, ice hadn't formed yet and we were forced to follow the trail around its shores. As we were walking, we came across a camp. We could tell by the still-smoking ashes that the hunters had left it that same morning.
>
> A HURON CAMP.
>
> On first sight, what struck us about this open camp a few steps from the lake is the extreme trust with which the Indians leave everything they have under the traditional protection of the forest cover. It seems that they still have something of a national pride that causes them to scorn the vices of palefaces and look down on the simplest precautions against theft, which they have never known. "No thieves in the woods," one of the Indians said one day when looking for an object that we had misplaced at the camp, and the Indians must really have been convinced of this to leave their guns, provisions and game like they do. Basically, everything they own is left in their open camps while they go away for weeks at a time, looking for game that has crossed their hunting path or checking traps for otters, marten, minks, beavers, moose or wolverines. The Indians whose camp we came across were on one of those excursions. Since we couldn't obtain information from them, we began a general search to find out about their hunt. The cabin, which was six feet wide and consisted of just an inclined plane, made of overlapping pieces of bark leaned against a few sticks, exposed to the south and closed on the right and left sides to form a full shelter against winds from the north, east and west. Across from the camp, there was an immense overturned spruce whose roots were still covered with soil, forming a shield against winds from the south and a hearth for the bivouac fire. There was a log still smoking from that morning's breakfast, and our cook soon lit it to prepare lunch. As soon as we arrived, we saw a superb caribou leg on the end of a stick driven into the snow. The temptation was too strong, and after trying this new food, we thought it to our advantage to exchange our salt meat for fresh meat....
>
> On the back of the board, we provided details on our exploration with news from the village, then after rest time was over, each person took his pack and we left to go camp on a mountain near Lac des Neiges, for which we found the trail east of our route.[53] [translation]

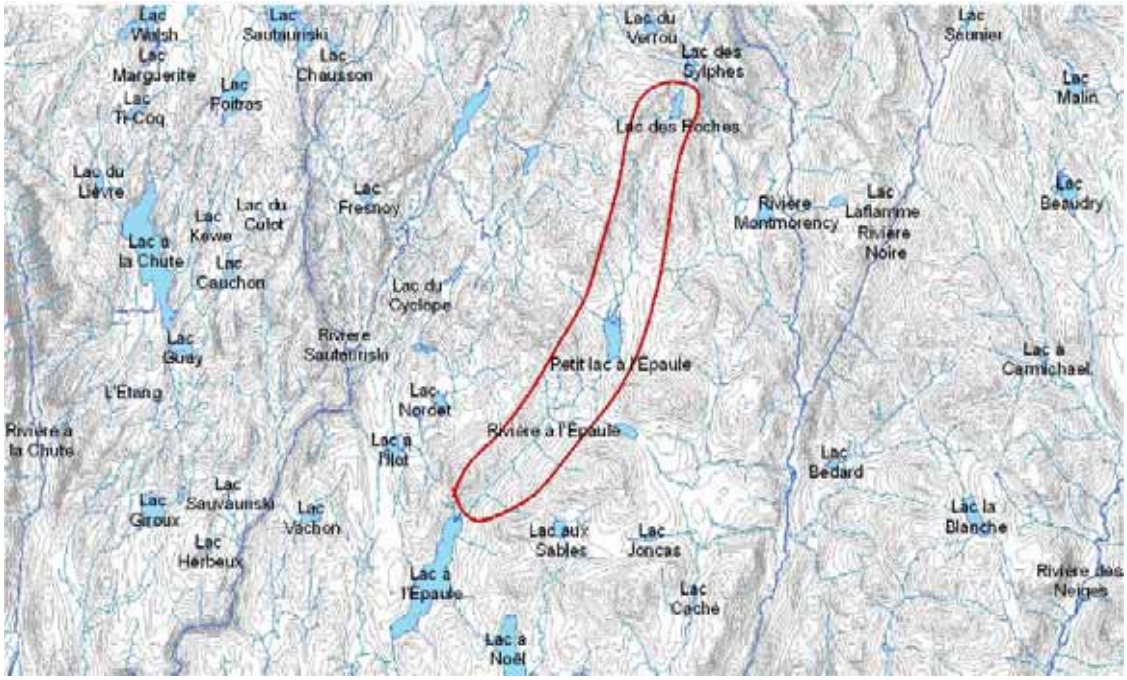
Earlier in the report, we also saw that while following the Huron-Wendat trail shortly after leaving this camp, Hamel, the surveyor, was nearly caught in a caribou snare that had been set by Huron-Wendat hunters: "Unfortunately, one of these traps had been set on the trail we were following... Mr. Hamel brushed against the noose and set it off, to the great fright of Mr. Neilson,

[53] PERRAULT, [Joseph-Xavier], [1863], p. 8.

who was following closely behind and was nearly struck in the face."[54] [translation] The event occurred on October 25, 1863, between Petit Lac à l'Épaule and Lac des Roches, along the head of Rivière à l'Épaule and in the northern part of the valley. Map 5 shows this caribou hunting ground frequented by the Huron-Wendat.

[54] PERRAULT, [Joseph-Xavier], [1863], p. 9.

**Map 5:** Hunting ground near Rivière à l'Épaule and surrounding area




It is interesting to note that we have another historical source that explicitly confirms that caribou were caught by this group of Huron-Wendat hunters. The British military officer whose account we saw in section 2.3 actually passed through the same places with the Huron-Wendat guides about two weeks after the expedition of surveyors Neilson and Hamel. Furthermore, he mentioned in his manuscript that on November 8, he had come across three "Indians" who had "trapped" a caribou:

> Saturday nov 7th up at 6 oc. got off at 7.20 passed Lac de noel, Lac d'Epaule & grand Lac d'Epaule...
>
> Sunday 8th up at 5 oc. off at 7.30.[...] we came upon tree [*sic*] Indians who had trapped a cariboo. They set noose for them made of hide & fastened to a tree. these men had been 3 months in the wood trapping.[55]

Therefore, these Huron-Wendat hunters had been in the area for three months, i.e., since about mid-August. They had just caught a caribou with a snare made out of hide.

In the past, this specific Huron-Wendat hunting ground was undoubtedly part of the preferred habitat of the Woodland Caribou population in the Nionwentsïo. The same is true of the greater

[55] Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW), [Story of a hunting expedition with François Gros-Louis], November 5 to December 6, 1863, n.p.

Jacques-Cartier River watershed region, as indicated by Nicolas Vincent *Tsawenhohi,* the Grand Chief of the Huron-Wendat Nation, in early 1824.

## 2.7 Lake Jambon and the area surrounding the Tourilli River

To continue our inventory of Huron-Wendat caribou hunting grounds, we will look at the western part of the Nionwentsïo. In this respect, it is important to examine the writings of Georges Moore Fairchild Jr., who had the opportunity to accompany the Huron-Wendat on many hunting, fishing and trapping expeditions, some of which lasted several months. To illustrate how close he was with Nation members, we would like to point out that the Huron-Wendat went as far as to name Fairchild honourary chief and give him the name "On-we-as-ta-rien," meaning "Man of Thoughts."[56]

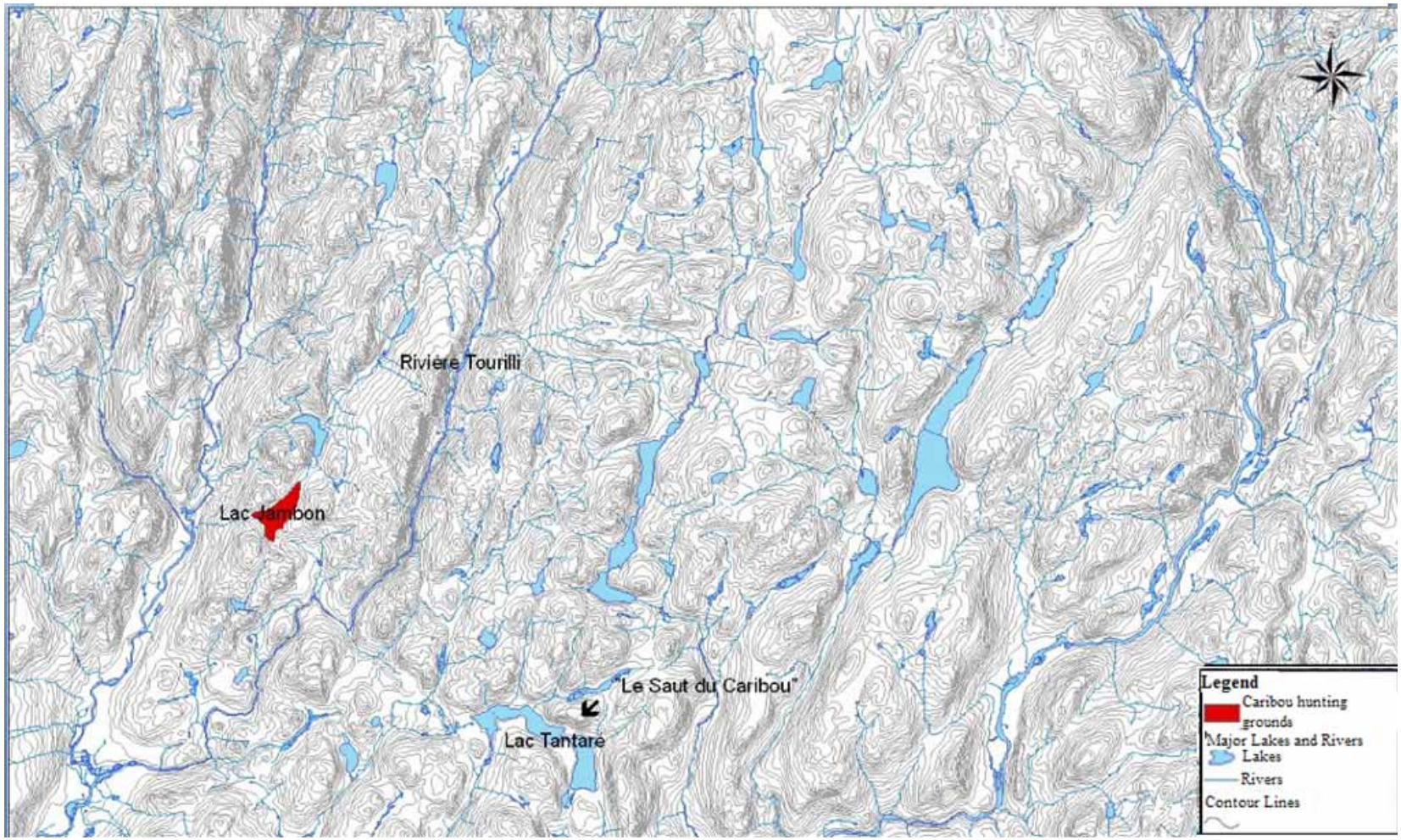
Several times, Fairchild refers to Huron-Wendat hunters catching Woodland Caribou. An analysis of his accounts identifies Lake Jambon and the area surrounding the Tourilli River as specific areas frequented by Nation members to catch caribou and other species. The following is how Fairchild described Lake Jambon in an account of a forest expedition with Huron-Wendat guides:

> Lake Jambon is a lovely sheet of water with some six or eight miles of shore line. It is situated almost at the mountain level, and is immense depth and of such wondrous clearness that I believe a sixpence could be seen at a depth of fifty feet in its waters....
>
> The men [Huron-Wendat guides] had built a great camp fire at the water's edge, and before we turned in for the night they treated us to an improvised concert and many stories of hunting and trapping adventures about this section. In the fall and winter the shores of this lake are much resorted to by caribou.[57]

At a big campfire on the lake's edge, the Nation members who were with Fairchild shared many stories of hunting and trapping adventures that took place in the area. Clearly, these stories of hunting adventures around Lake Jambon included accounts of catching Woodland Caribou, since Fairchild added that in the fall and winter, many caribou were found on the shores. Map 6 shows Lake Jambon and the area surrounding the Tourilli River.

[56] See FAIRCHILD, George Moore, 1907, *From my Quebec Scrap-Book.* Frank Carrel, Quebec City, pp. 244, 267–273.
[57] FAIRCHILD, George Moore Jr., 1896, *Rod and Canoe, Rifle and Snowshoe in Quebec's Adirondacks.* Frank Carrel, Quebec City, pp. 100–101.

**Map 6:** Lake Jambon and the area surrounding the Tourilli River



One of Georges M. Fairchild's favourite Huron-Wendat guides was Charlo Gros-Louis (1820–circa 1890), a great Huron-Wendat hunter who is mentioned in several other historical documents. On long expeditions in the Nionwentsïo, Charlo Gros-Louis told the sport hunter the story of a winter caribou hunt his father once went on in that area with another Huron-Wendat hunter. In recounting the story of a fishing expedition, Fairchild refers to a mountain located on the north shore of Tantaré Lake called "Caribou Leap" or "le Saut du Caribou":

> We resume our places on the rafts, and passing through the inlet that connects the lakes, we enter the second. Rising abruptly from its shore some hundreds of feet is Caribou Leap, a mountain so named from an event which happened many winters ago. Charlo's father and companion, while hunting, started a caribou far above the lakes. The snow was deep and yielding, and they rapidly gained upon it. The caribou made for mountain, his pursuers still closely following, and a shot from Charlo's father wounding it, it dashed wildly toward the precipice, and with one bound sprang from its edge and fell lifeless at the foot.[58]

With the help of his companion, Charlo Gros-Louis's father, François Gros-Louis (1790–1870), had driven a caribou out "far above the lakes," i.e., far north of the Tantaré "lakes," in the area around the Tourilli River. The mountain's name (see Map 6) was inspired by the caribou's jump into the precipice as the Huron-Wendat hunter shot it. This event, which confirms that Nation members hunted caribou in this area, apparently occurred in the first half of the 19th century.

Fairchild also explicitly referred to the specialized knowledge of Huron-Wendat Charlo Gros-Louis regarding hunting and the Woodland Caribou's behaviour, as can be seen in this excerpt from his writings:

> Shortly before we reached camp on the preceding evening we found what I took to be a single caribou track crossing our old trail, but my Indian said that there were three, that they had travelled a long distance and were not feeding, but they would undoubtedly stop at the little lake on the mountain to sleep, and feed about the shores in the morning.
>
> A look, at peep of day, disclosed it was snowing.
>
> "Bon," exclaimed Charlo, "we get em caribou, no fear."
>
> The Indian was right, we stalked those caribou up wind on the lake border to within thirty yards. My shot dropped the buck to his knees, and Charlo finished him with another. The does we allowed to escape, though they circled about their fallen leader for some moments in a most distraught manner, and we might easily have killed them both.[59]

[58] FAIRCHILD, George Moore Jr., 1896, p. 108.
[59] FAIRCHILD, George Moore Jr., 1896, pp. 198–199.

This passage shows that Huron-Wendat hunters such as Charlo Gros-Louis had extremely detailed knowledge on the Woodland Caribou's behaviour in connection with the area that the Huron-Wendat normally frequented. In this case, by looking at tracks in the snow, the Huron-Wendat was able to determine that there were three caribou and that they were travelling a long distance and were not feeding. The Huron-Wendat hunter also knew that these three caribou would spend the night near a little lake on the mountain and feed there the next morning. It is difficult to determine the geographic location of this hunt; however, it seems most likely that it occurred in the area surrounding the Tourilli River, since we know that Charlo Gros-Louis often hunted in that part of the Nionwentsïo.

Like Lake Jambon, the area surrounding the Tourilli River, a Huron-Wendat caribou hunting ground, was once undoubtedly part of the species' preferred habitat.

## 2.8 Épinette Lake and "Lac Brule"

Georges Moore Fairchild Jr. later provided the full account of a caribou hunt with the Huron-Wendat in his 1907 book entitled *From my Quebec Scrap-Book*, more specifically in the chapter called "Ten Days' Caribou Hunt."[60] The expedition took place after the advent of the railroad, probably sometime in the 1890s. Fairchild was accompanied by Jack Pelton, an American from New York City.

In his account, Georges M. Fairchild specified that the sport hunters were accompanied by two Huron-Wendat guides, members of the Picard and Sioui families whom he called "mighty hunters."[61] In early winter, the group went to a little camp that Fairchild had on the edge of "Lac Epinette." Fairchild said that he saw many caribou tracks on the route to the lake. Paraphrasing Sioui, one of the guides, the sport hunter specified how the Huron-Wendat had determined where the animals were going ("Lac Brule"):

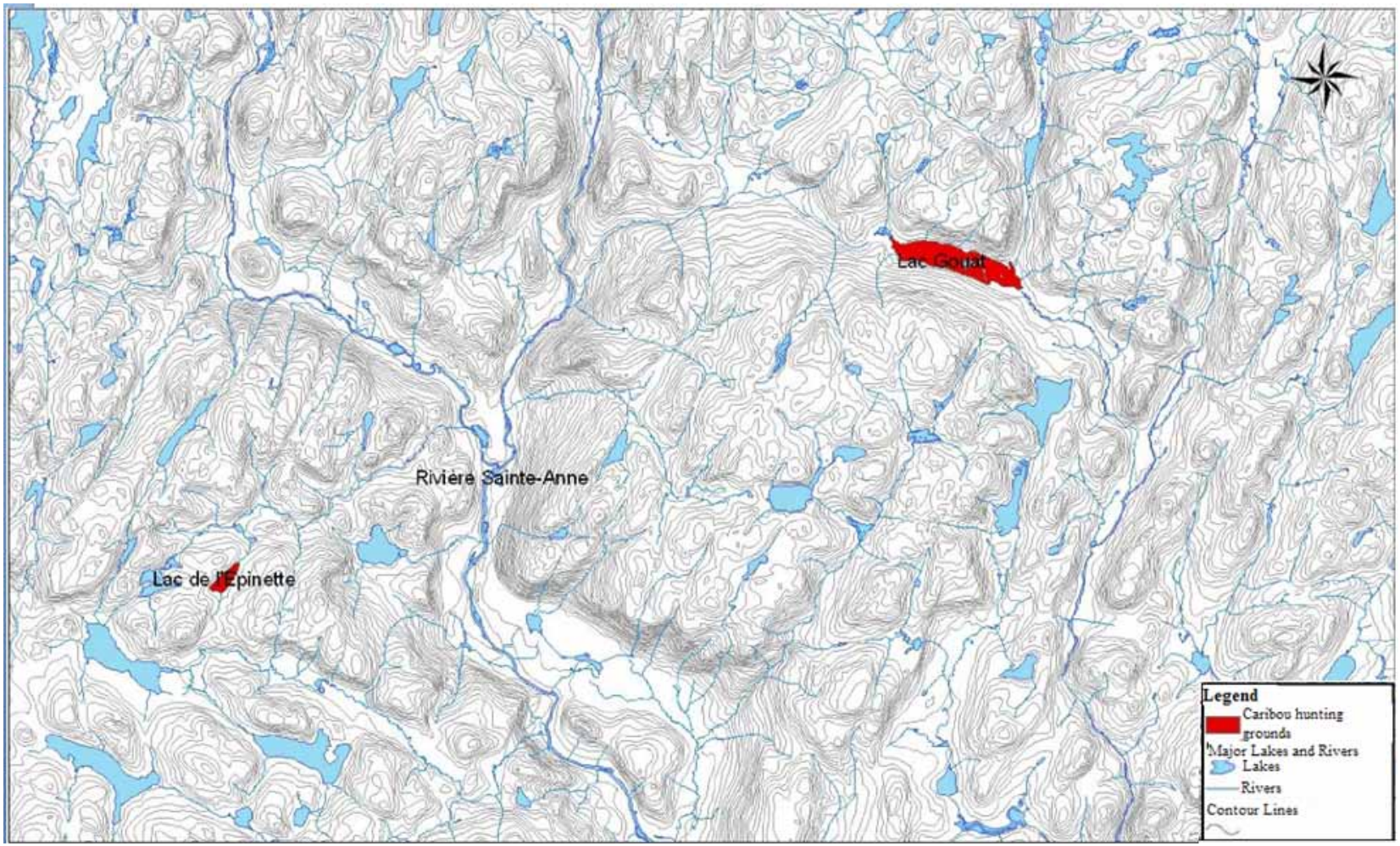
[60] FAIRCHILD, George Moore, 1907: *From my Quebec Scrap-Book*. Frank Carrel, Quebec City, pp. 241–250.
[61] FAIRCHILD, George Moore, 1907, p. 244.

> Tracks of caribou soon became numerous, but Sioui proclaimed them "wan day ole, him go for lac Brule, see mebbe nex day." Isn't it great?" said Pelton as he came puffing up the trail. [...][62]

The Huron-Wendat hunter thought that the caribou were heading for "Lac Brule" and that they might be able to catch up with them the following day. Old maps of this area[63] show that the "Lac Brule" in question is none other than what is now Gouat Lake. "Lac Epinette" corresponds to the lake that is still called Épinette Lake, located about 10 kilometres southwest of Gouat Lake. Map 7 shows these two lakes.

[62] FAIRCHILD, George Moore, 1907, p. 248.
[63] See the maps of former private hunting and fishing clubs kept at the Bureau du Nionwentsïo of the Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat.

**Map 7:** Épinette Lake and Gouat Lake



Pelton, the American, hunted with Sioui, the Huron-Wendat at Épinette Lake, while Fairchild went to Lac Brulé with Picard, a guide:

> To Pelton and Sioui I resigned Lac Epinette, while Picard and I trudged off silently into the bush, and across the mountains to Lac Brule. Tracks of caribou, and comparatively fresh, were found about the lake, but no caribou in sight, We sat on a fallen tree in the sunshine on the border of the lake and ate our frugal and frozen lunch. At night fall we again reached camp, with not a caribou to our record.[64]

No caribou were seen that day on Lac Brulé, but there were tracks in the area surrounding the lake. This fact, along with the possibility raised by Sioui the night before, indicates that this location was indeed a specific place where the species could be hunted.

The inexperienced Jack Pelton harvested a male caribou at the outlet of Épinette Lake with the invaluable coaching of Sioui, as indicated in the following part of the account. This male had antlers, which, according to the Huron-Wendat hunter, was unusual at that time of the year:

> Pelton met me at the camp door with "What luck, O scribe?"
>
> "None," I replied, as I slipped out of my snowshoes, "and you my worthy novice?"
>
> "Rather poor," answered the worthy, "only a buck, but O! Scribe! while Sioui tells me it is unusual for a buck to have horns at this season of the year, mine has a grand pair." Then Pelton's enthusiasm burst forth. "It's the greatest sport in the world, Scribe, absolutely immense, I shot that caribou within two hours after I left camp, just down at the discharge."
>
> "Luck," said I, "always favors the greenhorn, and I congratulate you."
>
> Days followed days of alternating failure or successes, days in which it stormed and the snow whirled about our little camp and left great drifts before the door. It was then we took to fishing through the ice for the camp supply of trout for the Friday fast day, but we feasted mainly on caribou roasts and steaks, and we were as boys let loose for a holiday, and frolicked accordingly.
>
> We brought our pleasant outing to a close when we each killed a caribou on the same day, and the legal limit was reached. Then we reluctantly took the back trail.
>
> "Absolutely immense," said Pelton, as we shook hands at the car steps, "you may look for me again next winter.[65]...."

Therefore, at the time of this hunting expedition, i.e., at the very end of the 19th century or very early in the 20th century, the area surrounding Épinette and Gouat lakes was undoubtedly part of the original Woodland Caribou population's preferred habitat.

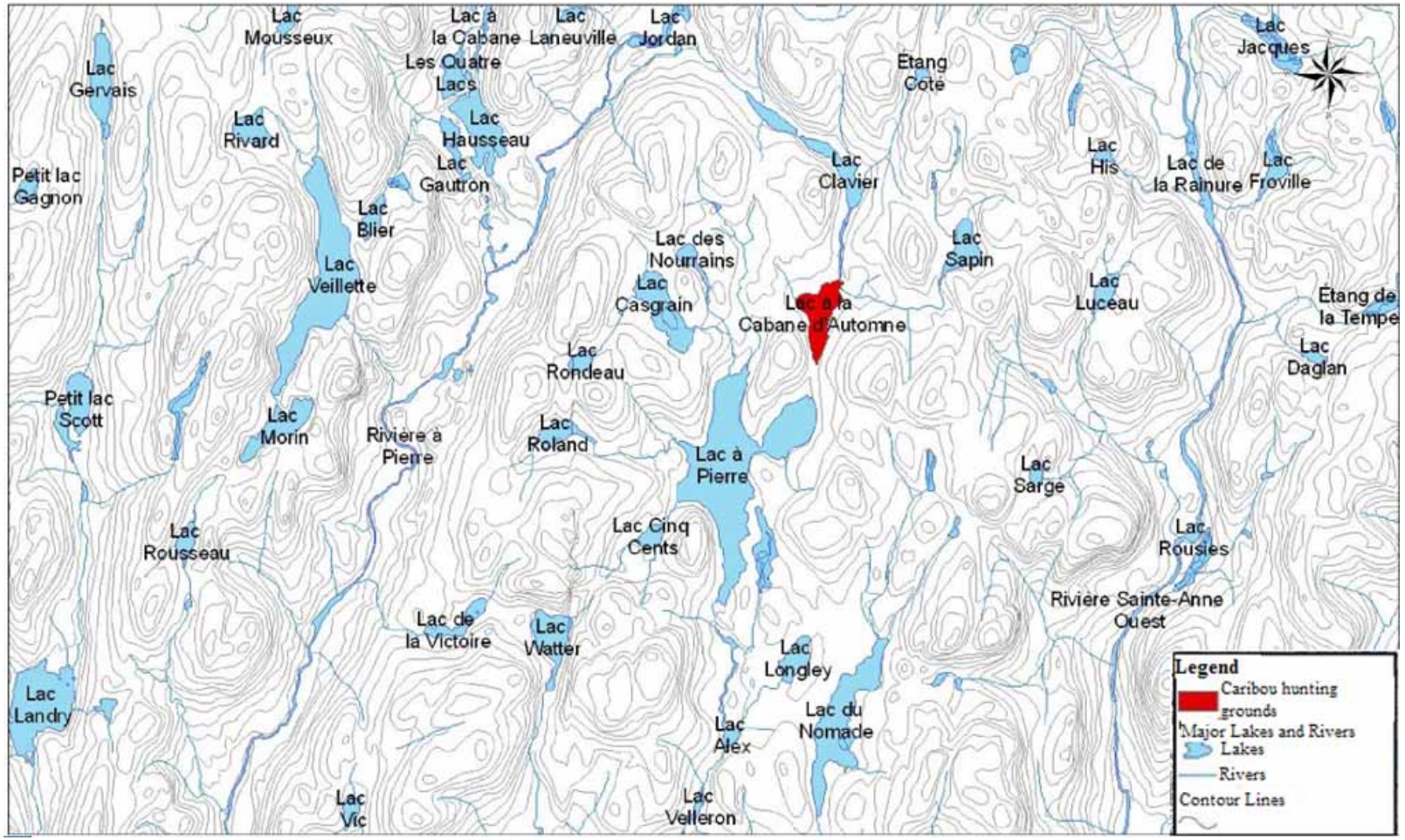
[64] FAIRCHILD, George Moore, 1907, p. 249.
[65] FAIRCHILD, George Moore, 1907, pp. 249–250.

## 2.9 Lac à la Cabane d'Automne area

The Lac à la Cabane d'Automne caribou hunting ground was identified through archaeological digs carried out under the auspices of the Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat in the summer of 2000. These digs were carried out mainly on two Huron-Wendat sites, located respectively on Lac à la Cabane d'Automne (CgEx-2) and Clavier Lake or Lac à la Cabane d'Automne 2 (ChEx-1).[66] Map 8 shows the location of Lac à la Cabane d'Automne.

[66] CHRÉTIEN, Yves, 2000: *Le projet de la cabane d'automne. Premières interventions archéologiques sur les anciens territoires de chasse hurons* [Cabane d'Automne project. First archaeological interventions on former Huron-Wendat hunting grounds]. Archaeological research report presented to the Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat, Wendake, 141 pp.

**Map 8:** Lac à la Cabane d'Automne



Archaeological site CgEx-2, at Lac à la Cabane d'Automne, preserved the remains of a Huron-Wendat hunting and trapping camp linked in particular to fall and winter activities. The site was used intensively from the 1880s to sometime in the 1890s. The faunal remains at the CgEx-2 site, consisting of animal bones, were analyzed at the Ostéothèque de Montréal, making it possible to determine which animals had been caught by the hunting group and at least partially cut up at the camp. It is interesting to note that this analysis indicated, in addition to the main fur-bearing animals, the presence of bones of the three large cervids historically present in the Nionwentsïo: moose, deer and caribou.[67]

Of course, it is unlikely that the Huron-Wendat transported these animals over long distances after catching them, which shows that these three large cervids, including caribou, must have been hunted in the area surrounding Lac à la Cabane d'Automne in the late 19th century. Therefore, it seems that this area was also part of the Woodland Caribou's preferred habitat at that time.

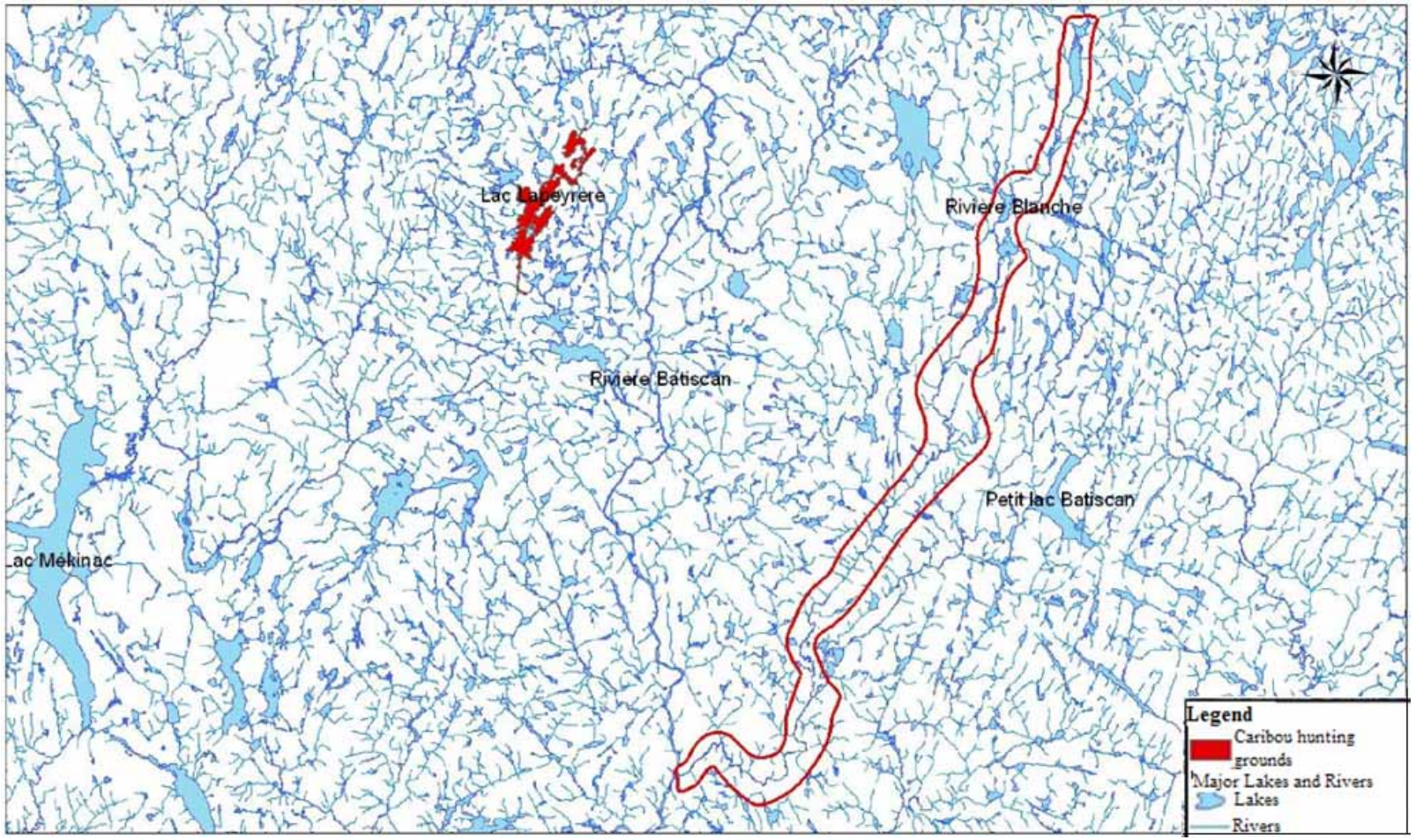
### 2.10 Blanche River, *Yenshenk*

The Blanche River caribou hunting ground (see Map 9) can be identified thanks to the original place names in the Huron-Wendat language. One of the Huron-Wendat names for this river is *Yenshenk*, meaning "caribou." The original Huron-Wendat name was corrupted by the first surveyors to become "Rivière Linchèque," which can be seen in the historical documentation of the 19th century.

This toponymic marker obviously suggests that the Blanche River was once a caribou hunting ground known to and used by the Huron-Wendat Nation. It seems equally obvious that this area was formerly a place where caribou were found, which is why it can be considered as undoubtedly being part of the species' preferred habitat in the past.

[67] CHRÉTIEN, Yves, 2000, pp. 70–73.

**Map 9:** Blanche River and Lapeyrère Lake



## 2.11 Lapeyrère Lake

Lapeyrère Lake was formerly called "Lac des Îles." The area surrounding this lake is clearly part of the caribou hunting grounds that were once frequented by the Huron-Wendat Nation (see Map 9). Available historical data indicate that there were often a good many caribou in the area surrounding "Lac des Îles." In fact, Huron-Wendat hunters said that they had counted 27 caribou tracks in fresh snow one morning in February 1906.[68] Therefore, this area was clearly part of the preferred habitat of the original caribou population in the Nionwentsïo, at the very least in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

According to anthropologist Frank G. Speck, in the 19th century, the area surrounding Lapeyrère Lake was the preferred hunting ground of Magloire Romain (1839–1911) and Alexandre Picard (1822–1888) of the Huron-Wendat Nation. They had erected their winter camp on the shores of this immense lake.[69] Caribou was, without a doubt, one of the types of big game prized by this hunting group.

Figure 4 shows artwork dated 1867, entitled *Cariboo Hunting, Lac au Lisle*.[70] This scene painted by John B. Wilkins was likely set on the shores of the lake now called Lapeyrère Lake.

[68] Accounts by Huron-Wendat hunters, recorded mainly in the 1940s. See Boiteau, *Les chasseurs hurons de Lorette*, p. 125.
[69] SPECK, Frank, G., 1927: "Huron Hunting Territories in Quebec." *Indian Notes* IV (1): 8.
[70] WILKINSON, John B. (active 1865–1915), *Cariboo Hunting, Lac au Lisle*, 1867, watercolour and gouache over graphite on wove paper, 31.900 x 18.600 cm, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana, Acc. No. R9266-426.

**Figure 4:** *Cariboo Hunting, Lac au Lisle*, painted by John B. Wilkinson, 1867

## 3) Huron-Wendat interpretations of caribou population movements and reasons for the decline of the caribou

In this report, we have seen that the Huron-Wendat hunted caribou in the Nionwentsïo, at the very least from the 17th century to the first decades of the 20th century. Until the mid-19th century, caribou and moose were the main large cervids taken by Nation members in the part of the Nionwentsïo located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River.

However, sources indicate that from about the 1870s, the Woodland Caribou population increased considerably. Although they had been present in these areas in the past, large numbers of them could now be found in the Huron-Wendat territory. This caribou population increase was pointed out by Huron-Wendat elders in the interviews conducted by Georges Boiteau in the 1940s.[71]

What little information there is in the archives and the historical documentation on caribou population movements and the reasons for the decline of the caribou often highlights the effect of interactions with another species: the wolf. This factor was clearly pointed out by Huron-Wendat Absalon Gros-Louis (1916–1986), one of the sons of Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953), in a research interview conducted in the early 1980s. When he was younger, Mr. Gros-Louis had the opportunity to travel around the territory then covered by the Triton Fish & Game Club with his father, who was one of the wardens of this establishment near the end of his active life. This is what he had to say about the decline of the caribou:

> But at that time, there were a lot of caribou too, eh; there were plenty of caribou...
>
> Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, 'cause there were a lot of caribou. 'Cause I remember in 1925, when we got there [the Triton Fish & Game Club for the warden job], I was young, but when we got into the woods, even though I couldn't work like the men, I enjoyed following dad around in the summer, on my summer vacation, you know, I followed dad in the woods everywhere and I remember him saying "hey look, look at that, a caribou herd has passed through here." There were caribou droppings here and there and caribou tracks, too; they walked around in the portages. At some point, wolves arrived and around the years '35, '36, there were fewer and they went to the north, and there were deer, too, lots of deer, oh yeah, deer, but they couldn't withstand the attack of the wolves, so...the deer seem to be coming back a bit in the area. Other than that, the moose survived.[72] [translation]

When Huron-Wendat Harry Gros-Louis Senior was interviewed in the 1940s, he also explicitly

[71] BOITEAU, *Les chasseurs hurons de Lorette*, p. 124.
[72] Interview with Absalon Gros-Louis (1916–1986), February 26, 1982, Archives du Conseil de la Nation huronne-wendat (ACNHW).

linked the decline of the Woodland Caribou in the Nionwentsïo to the arrival of wolves, a species that in the past had not been present in the Nation's territory. The following is the story of the first time he saw wolves on an expedition with his father, Daniel Gros-Louis (1856–1939), in the Lacs de la Cabane d'Automne area:

> Wolves, we didn't know about that; neither did the older people. They had never come into the country. The first time I saw one, I was with my dad at Lacs-de-la-Cabane-d'Automne. My God, I was so young, a little boy; I'd say no more than 10 or 11 years old. I looked down at the snow and I thought: those must be wolf tracks, they weren't like the other tracks. On the way back to the cabin that evening, I told my dad. Obviously, he didn't believe me. The next day, I saw 10 wolves together, but I didn't shoot because to tell you the truth, I was scared. I told my dad again, but he still didn't believe me. Then, that evening, there was a devil of a racket. My dad started to believe it. Before then, wolves were a legend: long ago, some Indians had told us about them, but we had never seen any, and neither had the older people. Wolves became an epidemic; they hunted and destroyed caribou in the Laurentides area.[73] [translation]

This expedition in the area surrounding the Lacs de la Cabane d'Automne took place when Harry Gros-Louis Senior was barely 10 years old, which brings us back to 1888. It shows that up until then, Huron-Wendat Daniel Gros-Louis had never seen a wolf in the territory that Nation members normally frequented. This was also the case for the elders of the Nation at that time, as indicated in the excerpt. According to Harry Gros-Louis Senior, wolves chased away the caribou and therefore became a veritable epidemic.

In the years preceding the publication of former consul-general Ferdinand Van Bruyssel's 1934 work, Huron-Wendat Félix Gros-Louis (1853–1933), one of the guides on Van Bruyssel's caribou hunting expedition, had shared with him a similar interpretation of the decline of the caribou. Indeed, this Huron-Wendat hunter also pointed out the impact of wolves on the decline of the caribou population.[74]

On a related note, the Huron-Wendat of the past recalled that the moose that once lived in the Nionwentsïo, before the Woodland Caribou left, were different from those that subsequently "repopulated" the territory. This information was found in interviews with Huron-Wendat elders in the 1940s. Huron-Wendat Ernest Bastien (1883–circa 1952) recounted what he had heard from the "older people" of the Nation as follows:

> The older people said that the moose that populated the country before the caribou were "the old moose" and that those that took the place of the caribou were "the

[73] Account by Harry Gros-Louis Senior (1878–1953) in Boiteau, *Les chasseurs hurons de Lorette*, p. 126.
[74] VAN BRUYSSEL, Ferdinand, 1934, p. 68.

> young moose" or "the new moose." They called the former population "the old moose" because they had longer legs and their fur was more yellow; they called the more recent population "the young moose" or "the new moose" because they had shorter legs and their fur was more brown. The older people said that the old moose came from the North, and that the new moose came from Abitibi.[75] [translation]

Elder Ernest Bastien pointed out the difference between the "old moose," i.e., those that were there before a larger number of caribou arrived, around 1870, and the "young moose" or "new moose," which took the place of the Woodland Caribou. According to the Nation's elders, the former were taller and were more yellowish in colour, whereas the latter were shorter and their fur was more brownish. These "young moose" or "new moose," which replaced the Woodland Caribou, originally came from Abitibi, while the moose that were present in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries came from the North.

These words written by Huron-Wendat Ernest Bastien stimulate reflection on traditional Huron-Wendat knowledge of the interactions between moose and caribou populations. As with Huron-Wendat interpretations of caribou population movements and reasons for the decline of this species in the Nionwentsïo, there is very little information on the subject. It undoubtedly warrants more in-depth investigation in the Nation's archives and historical documentation.

[75] Account by Ernest Bastien (1883–1952) in Boiteau, *Les chasseurs hurons de Lorette*, p. 126.

# Conclusion

Since time immemorial, the Huron-Wendat have maintained a close relationship with the Woodland Caribou of the Nionwentsïo. This relationship lasted until the decline of the original caribou population in the first half of the 20th century. In the first part of this research report, we looked at how the Huron-Wendat Nation traditionally used Woodland Caribou by first examining how this species was important to the community's way of life and economy. We looked at how caribou, a food source for the Nation, was hunted and trapped in the past, and how parts of this animal, such as its hide, were used to make everyday and handicraft objects. We also showed how the Huron-Wendat worked as guides for non-Aboriginal persons, notably British military officers of the Citadelle de Québec and other sport hunters looking for caribou in the Nionwentsïo.

In the second part, we focused more specifically on the historical habitat of the Woodland Caribou in the Nionwentsïo. In this regard, we identified some 20 caribou hunting grounds, spread out between the large Saint-Maurice and Saguenay rivers, that the Huron-Wendat normally frequented in the past. We noted that these specific caribou hunting grounds were also sections of the territory that were undoubtedly part of the species' preferred habitat at various times. In the third part of the report, we reviewed the main information taken from the archives and the historical documentation on Huron-Wendat interpretations of caribou population movements and reasons for the decline of the species in the Nionwentsïo. In this respect, we pointed out that according to the Nation's elders who lived in the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, another animal species, namely, the wolf, may have had a significant impact on the caribou population.

Of course, additional data on the traditional use of Woodland Caribou by the Huron-Wendat could be gathered from the archives and the historical documentation. The same goes for the inventory of the caribou hunting grounds frequented by the Nation that can be directly associated with the historical habitat, since our analysis is far from exhaustive in this regard. Also, as we said in the introduction, over the years, the Bureau du Nionwentsïo has collected a considerable amount of data on various aspects of the Woodland Caribou in the Nionwentsïo, from its origins to today. This information could undoubtedly provide a deeper understanding of the Woodland Caribou and its historical habitat.

In any case, we must emphasize the importance of efforts to manage the current population of reintroduced Woodland Caribou, since these animals are an integral part of the Nionwentsïo. In this regard, we cannot overstress the vital importance of the Huron-Wendat Nation to the management of the species and its habitat. Maybe one day, if habitat quality is good enough, the Huron-Wendat can once again see this species in abundance in the Nionwentsïo and re-establish their relationship with an animal that was once a key part of the lives of the Nation's forefathers.