

Woodland Caribou

Rangifer tarandus caribou (Boreal Population)

STATUS	Extirpated 	Threatened 
Threatened 	Extirpated 	Not Listed 



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Species Description

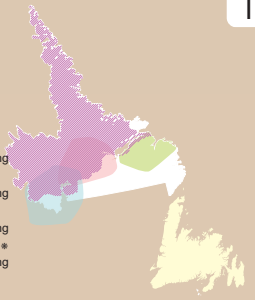
The Woodland Caribou is a medium-sized member of the Cervidae (deer) family with distinctively large crescent-shaped hooves. In the spring, it has dark brown hair with a creamy white neck, mane, shoulder, and underside. The dark brown colour later turns to light brown. Unlike other members of the deer family, males and most females typically have antlers during part of the year. Compared to other caribou subspecies, the Woodland Caribou's antlers are thicker, broader, and their legs and heads are longer.



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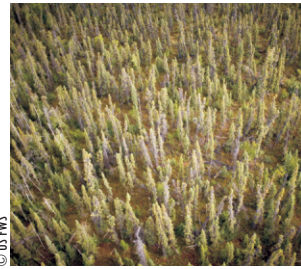
Woodland Caribou are found across the boreal forest region of Canada. At-risk populations in southern Labrador number about 3500 individuals.

-  George River *
Migratory in forest-tundra.
 -  Mealy Mountains Herd **
Sedentary and forest-dwelling
 -  Red Wine Mountains Herd **
Sedentary and forest-dwelling
 -  Lac Joseph Herd **
Sedentary and forest-dwelling
 -  Newfoundland Island Population *
Sedentary and forest-dwelling
- At Risk ** Not At Risk *



Habitat

The boreal population of Woodland Caribou in Labrador is a forest dwelling caribou that lives in open, old conifer forests with abundant lichens, or areas of peat lands mixed in with upland. They require large, continuous tracts of undisturbed habitat, and are not migratory like many other caribou. During the calving period, pregnant cows travel to isolated, relatively predator-free areas where nutritious forage is available, such as lake islands and shores, and peat lands.



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Although subject to type and quality of habitat, at least 10,000 to 15,000 km² are required to sustain a boreal caribou population.

Interesting Points

- Its large hooves provide flotation in snow and soft ground and assist in digging through snow to forage on lichens and other ground vegetation.
- Boreal caribou once ranged across most of Atlantic Canada.
- Caribou occur in Eurasia as well, and are called reindeer in Europe.
- Woodland Caribou are called “Napattumiutait Tuktuit” in Inuktitut and “Minashkuau Atik” in Innu Aimun; the English name is thought to come from the Mi'kmaq word “xalibu” which means “the ones who paws.”



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Woodland Caribou are considered non-migratory since they undertake much smaller migrations within their habitat than do the barren-ground caribou

Similar Species

Other caribou subspecies are almost identical but have thinner and narrower antlers, and their legs and heads are shorter.

Threats to Survival

- Illegal hunting.
- Increased predation due to roads and other linear corridors created in developed areas, and the presence of new prey species in this altered habitat.
- Habitat alteration as a result of human land-use activities and forest fires.
- Climate change and severe weather.
- Parasites and disease, noise and light disturbance, vehicle collisions, and pollution.



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Antlerless Woodland Caribou browsing



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Road fragmented landscape

How You Can Help

Help stop poaching by reporting illegal hunting activities at www.stoppoaching.ca or at 1-877-820-0999. Support habitat protection for this wide-ranging species.

Contacts and Information

Contact: NL DEC Wildlife Division (709) 637-2026

Info: www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/