



The boreal caribou recovery strategy

Boreal caribou are threatened

Boreal caribou have seen their numbers decrease by more than 30% over the last 20 years.

Changes to their habitat from both human-made and natural sources, and increased predation as a result of these habitat changes, have led to their decline across Canada.

Some boreal caribou are at risk because of other factors, mainly over-harvesting.

They are assessed as threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and listed as a threatened species under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

Boreal caribou

Boreal caribou are members of the deer family and are smaller than moose. Both males and females have antlers.

Contrary to migratory caribou, boreal caribou are sedentary and live in small groups of fewer than 15 animals. They inhabit the boreal forest.

Boreal caribou are found in Canada only from the northeast corner of Yukon east to Labrador, and as far south as Lake Superior in Ontario.





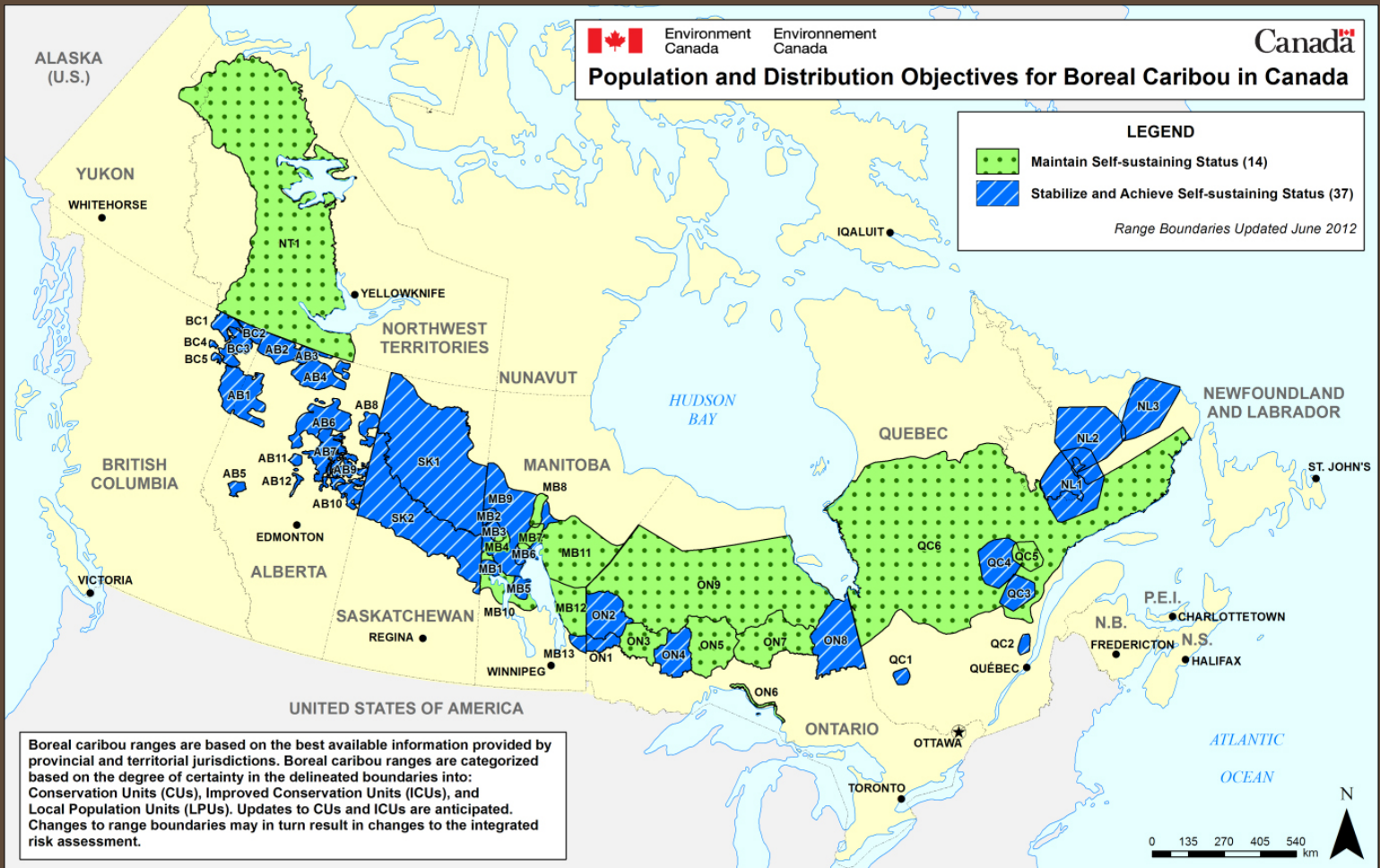
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Recovering boreal caribou

Environment Canada has published a recovery strategy for boreal caribou that aims to achieve self-sustaining local populations across Canada. A local population is self-sustaining when:

- It has more births than deaths;
- It is large enough to resist natural catastrophes and human pressures (e.g. industrial development, hunting, etc.);
- It does not need active intervention from humans (e.g. killing predators);
- It can persist over the long-term (over a number of decades).

Across Canada, 14 local populations are already self-sustaining; these are to be maintained at their current status. 37 local populations are not self-sustaining; these are to first be stabilized and then recovered to self-sustaining status.



Identifying critical habitat for boreal caribou

Critical habitat is the habitat needed to achieve the recovery goal of self-sustaining local populations.

Critical habitat for boreal caribou is identified as:

- The area within the boundary of each range that provides at least 65% undisturbed habitat; and
- The habitat characteristics required by boreal caribou: calving sites, wintering areas, etc.

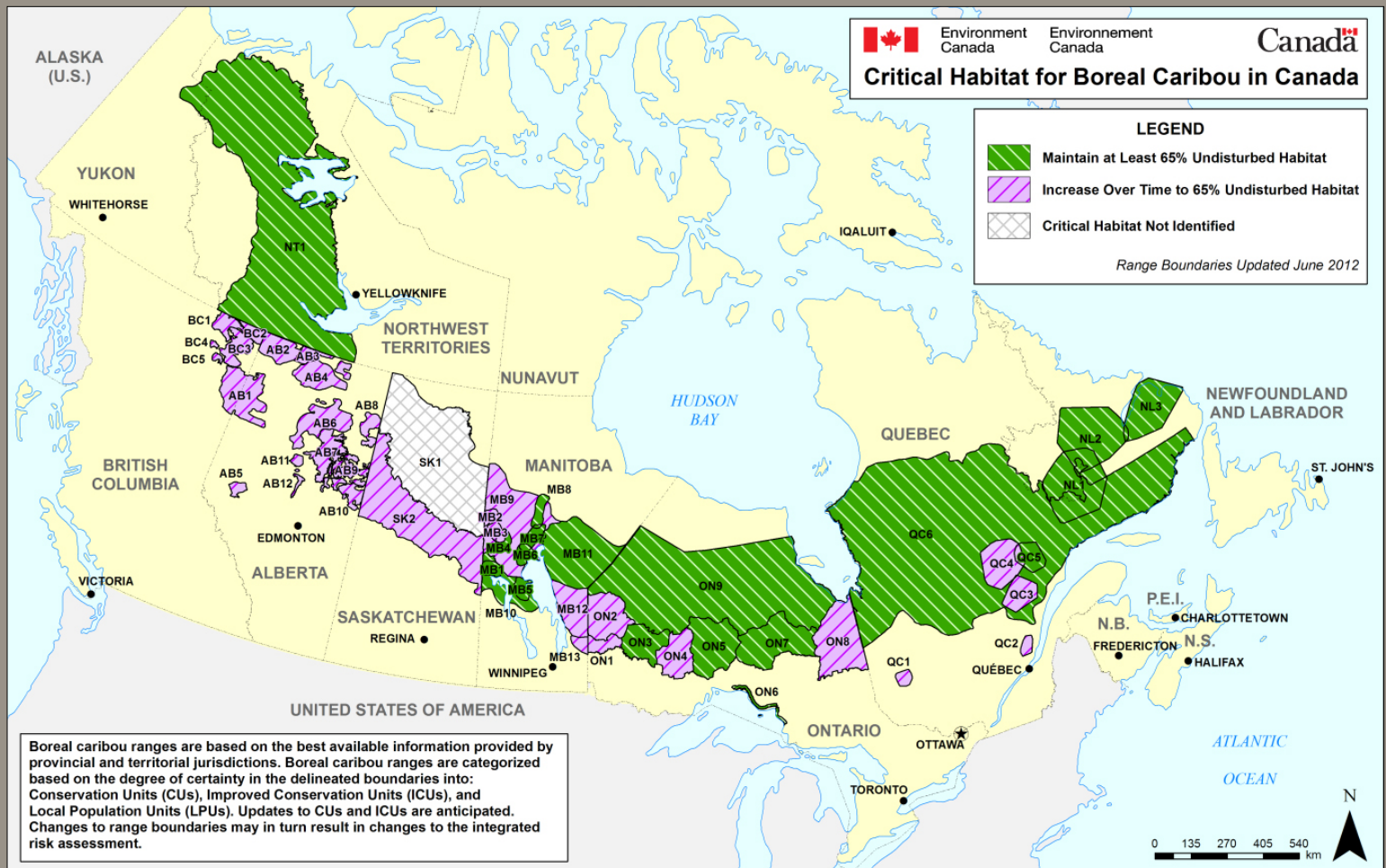
Destruction of critical habitat is determined on a case by case basis. Destruction would result if part of the critical habitat were degraded, either permanently or temporarily, such that it would not serve its function when needed by boreal caribou.

Activities likely to destroy critical habitat include those that:

- Compromise the ability of a range to maintain or achieve 65% undisturbed habitat;
- Reduce connectivity, which is the presence of continuous tracts of habitat that boreal caribou use to move on the land;
- Increase predator access to undisturbed areas; or
- Remove or alter habitat characteristics that boreal caribou need.

In northern Saskatchewan, boreal caribou face a unique situation: their habitat is mainly disturbed by fire and less so by human activities. More information will be collected before critical habitat can be identified in the Boreal Shield range (SK1) in northern Saskatchewan.





Next steps

The next steps in boreal caribou recovery are the development of range plans and action plans by the responsible jurisdictions, mainly provinces and territories. Environment Canada will continue working closely with jurisdictions throughout their development. Aboriginal people, stakeholders and the public will be invited to participate in the process.



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For more information

To find out more about boreal caribou recovery, please contact us at the following address:

Environment Canada
 Inquiry Centre
 10 Wellington Street, 23rd Floor
 Gatineau (Quebec)
 Canada K1A 0H3
 Telephone: 819-997-2800
 Telephone (toll free): 1-800-668-6767
 Fax : 819-994-1412
 TTY: 819-994-0736
 Email: : enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca
 Website: www.sararegistry.gc.ca

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