

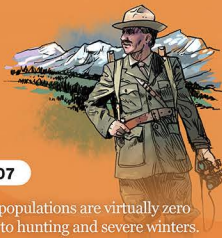
PAST

Caribou population decline begins



Pre-1900

Hundreds of caribou range widely in the mountain habitat that will become Jasper National Park. There are few elk or wolves.



1907

Elk populations are virtually zero due to hunting and severe winters. Early park managers introduce wildlife management practices that have unintended effects on caribou. Wolves are viewed as vermin and are regularly shot and poisoned.

1920-1959

Elk are reintroduced to Jasper from Yellowstone National Park. Without predators, the number of elk grows from 88 to thousands.



1959

Predator control practices end. Wolf populations quickly expand with plenty of elk to eat.



1970-2000

Wolf packs expand their territories into caribou habitat. At the same time, more people are traveling into caribou habitat. Caribou populations begin to decline.



Records show that the number of mountain caribou in Jasper used to be much larger and more widely distributed. In 1974, John G. Stelfox, a wildlife biologist and researcher for the Canadian Wildlife Service, estimated there were at least 200 and as many as 650 caribou in the southern areas of Jasper National Park between 1915 and 1973. Since then, the population has dropped to less than 100.

Learn more:



parks.canada.ca/caribou-jasper

PRESENT

Caribou populations are too small

Caribou will eventually disappear from Jasper without help.

Learn more:



parks.canada.ca/caribou-jasper

Today

Current conditions in Jasper can now support larger caribou herds. However, the Brazeau and Tonquin herds are too small and the number of breeding females is too few to recover on their own.

2000-2015

Caribou numbers steeply decline in Jasper National Park, dropping by more than half.

2006

Parks Canada focuses on monitoring caribou, protecting caribou habitat, and managing wildlife to maintain naturally low wolf and elk populations.

2009

The last five caribou of the Banff herd die in an avalanche.

2015-present

Biologists see the remaining three Maligne caribou for the last time in 2017. The Brazeau and Tonquin herds begin to stabilize at low numbers. Parks Canada continues to adapt and expand protections for caribou.

Over the past decade, Parks Canada has acted to reduce threats to caribou. Actions include reduced speed zones on roads, guidelines for aircraft and hikers, and restrictions on recreation and development in caribou habitat. Caribou habitat is closed in winter to prevent human trails from giving wolves easy access to the herds. Caribou research and monitoring is ongoing, using technologies like remote cameras, scat DNA analysis, and GPS radio collars.

FUTURE

Rebuilding caribou populations



Build

Build a conservation breeding centre in Jasper National Park.



Capture

Capture a small number of wild caribou from local and potentially regional populations. Bring them to live in the breeding centre.



Raise

Raise a herd of caribou at the breeding centre where calves are born each year.



Release

Release young caribou aged 10 to 14 months into the wild Tonquin herd. Repeat each year until the herd reaches at least 200 animals within 10 years.



Adapt

Learn from experiences and observations in the initial years of the program. Explore releasing caribou from the program into other areas of the park where caribou will have disappeared.



Recover

Nature takes over and hundreds of caribou once again roam the mountains of Jasper - thriving on their own.

Jasper National Park is a unique, protected place where mountain caribou may have the best chance of recovery. The best option to recover small caribou herds in Jasper is through a conservation breeding program, in collaboration with Indigenous partners and provincial governments. By rebuilding the dwindling herds of caribou in Jasper National Park, we will ensure the continued existence of some of the world's southernmost caribou.

Learn more:



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