



Fish and Wildlife Branch, mission statement and core principles

Document Approval:



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Fish and Wildlife Branch, Department of Environment

Mission statement: To conserve all wildlife¹, and their interrelationships with each other, and their environment, while respecting Aboriginal Rights and Title, the provisions of Yukon's modern treaties², and the diverse needs of Yukoners.

Context: To support and achieve the priorities identified in the Minister of Environment's mandate letter, and that emerge year to year, while still describing the stable, long-term goals of the department reflecting our core principles.

Our core principles³:

- 1) **Naturally, self-sustaining wildlife populations** are the principal management objective.
- 2) Wildlife populations are managed within their **natural range of variation** to the best extent possible.
- 3) **Management of human activity**, including harvest, disturbance, and land use, is the **primary tool** available for recovering or maintaining wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- 4) The **interests of all consumptive and non-consumptive users** are recognized and considered in the management of wildlife populations.
- 5) Where wildlife populations are self-sustaining, **the interests of users are prioritized** to meet the subsistence needs of Aboriginal peoples before the needs of Yukon residents, and the needs of Yukon residents before those of non-residents.
- 6) Management is guided by **scientific, traditional, and local knowledge** to the best extent possible.
- 7) When knowledge is limited, management is guided by a **precautionary approach**⁴.
- 8) Management strives to be **adaptive**.
- 9) Management decisions are **ecosystem-based** where possible.

¹ 'Wildlife' is defined as all organisms that grow or live wild in an area without being introduced by humans.

² Yukon's modern treaties include Yukon First Nations Final Agreements and related Self-Government Agreements, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

³ Our core principles inform staff and the public how we strive to reach department and branch goals and how we accomplish priorities identified in the Minister of Environment's mandate letter.

⁴ The precautionary approach emphasizes anticipation, prevention and mitigation of uncertain risks, for which definitive scientific, traditional, and/or local evidence is not available. It counters a widespread presumption in regulatory systems in favor of allowing development/economic activity to proceed where there is uncertainty about its impacts [Cooney, R. (2004). *The Precautionary Principle in Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management: An issues paper for policy-makers, researchers and practitioners*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. xi + 51pp.]