

Finlayson caribou herd late winter census – 2022

The Finlayson herd population size has been estimated seven times since 1982. A two-phase population survey (stratification and then an intensive census) was flown in late winter 2022. The purpose of the survey was to estimate abundance, distribution, calf recruitment, and adult sex ratios. These measures, when monitored over time, are indicators of herd population trends.

Summary of results

Date: February 22 – 25 (stratification)

February 27 – March 3 (census)

Hours flown: 21 (stratification)

48 (census)

Population estimate:

3,359 (95% CI: 3,085 – 3,634)

Calf:Cow ratio: 18:100

Bull:Cow ratio: 47:100

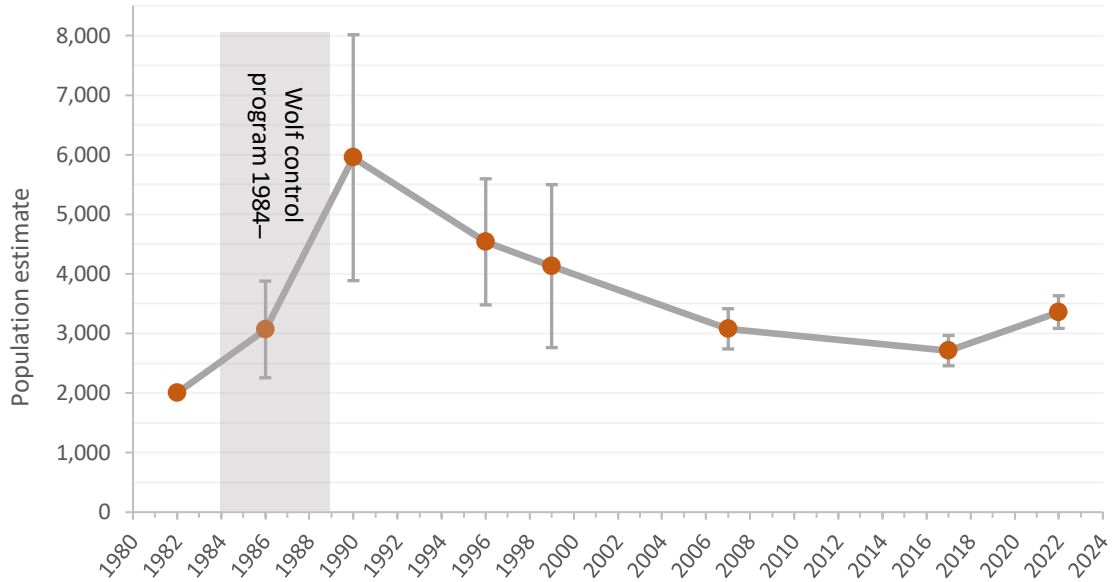
Population trend

The herd's size was last estimated in March 2017 at about 2,700 animals, continuing a downward population trend from a high point since the end of wolf control measures in the 1990s. Based on the results of the 2022 census, the Finlayson caribou herd is likely stable or increasing, marking the first time since 1990 that the herd has not exhibited a declining trend.

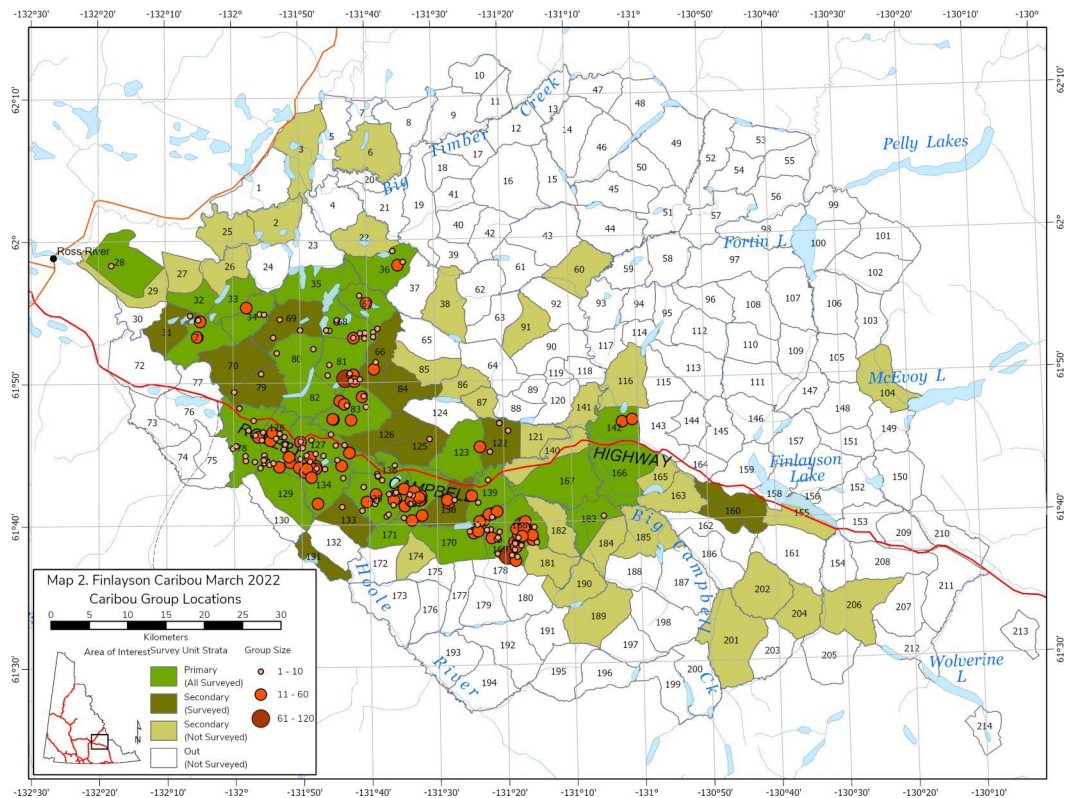
Management

The Finlayson caribou herd is part of the Northern Mountain population of woodland caribou. In response to community concerns the herd was declining, an intensive population recovery program began in 1983. As a result of these recovery efforts, the herd reached a peak population size of nearly 6,000 animals in 1990. Fall composition surveys have been conducted annually since 1982. A final report on the 2022 Finlayson caribou population survey is also available, and provides additional details and implications for management and monitoring of this herd.

Finlayson caribou herd population estimates, 1982 – 2022.



Caribou locations and group sizes from the 2022 census.



For more information, please contact

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