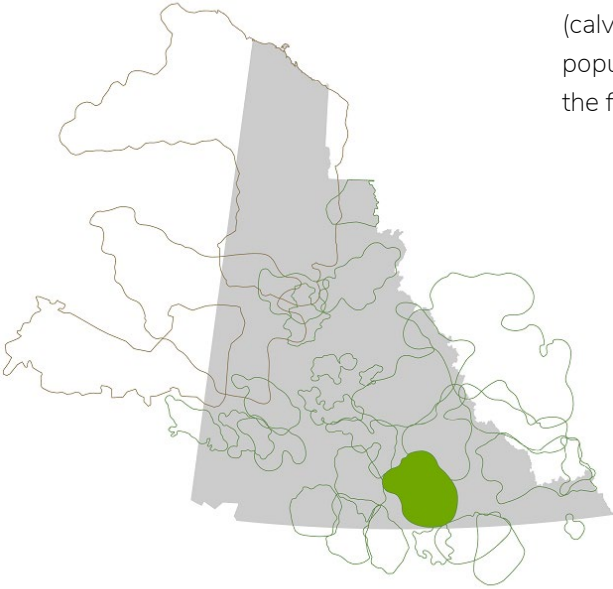




Wolf Lake Caribou 2023 Fall Composition Survey

Fall composition surveys are one of the primary monitoring tools for caribou management in the Yukon. From these surveys we get an index of fall recruitment (calves per 100 cows) and sex ratios (bulls per 100 cows), which are indicators of population trend when monitored over time. The composition survey in 2020 was the first time the Wolf Lake caribou herd had been surveyed since 1998.



Caribou herds of Yukon (Wolf Lake Highlighted)

Summary of 2023 results

Date: October 6-10, 2023

Hours Flown: 21.8

No. of Caribou Observed: 510

Calf:Cow ratio: 27:100

Bull:Cow ratio: 46:100

Population Trend: Unknown. An average snowpack and favorable spring conditions in 2023 likely contributed to higher calf recruitment than in previous years. Average recruitment over the last four years (16 calves per 100 cows) is still below what is considered necessary for a stable population (20–25 calves per 100 cows); however, the 2023 value is encouraging. Additional years of monitoring recruitment will improve our understanding of population trend.

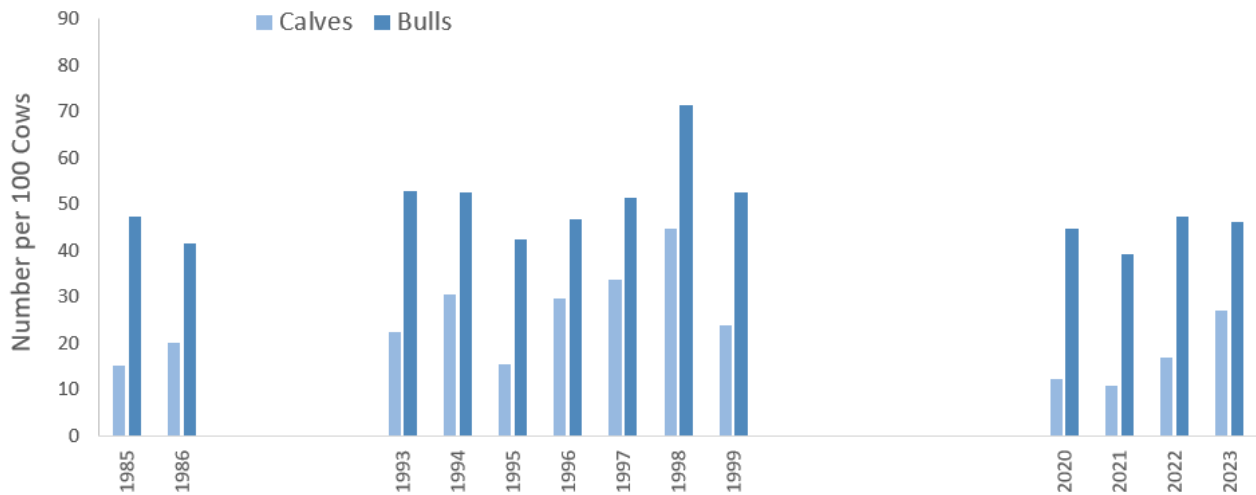


Figure 1. Wolf Lake caribou herd recruitment and sex ratios from composition surveys 1985-2023.

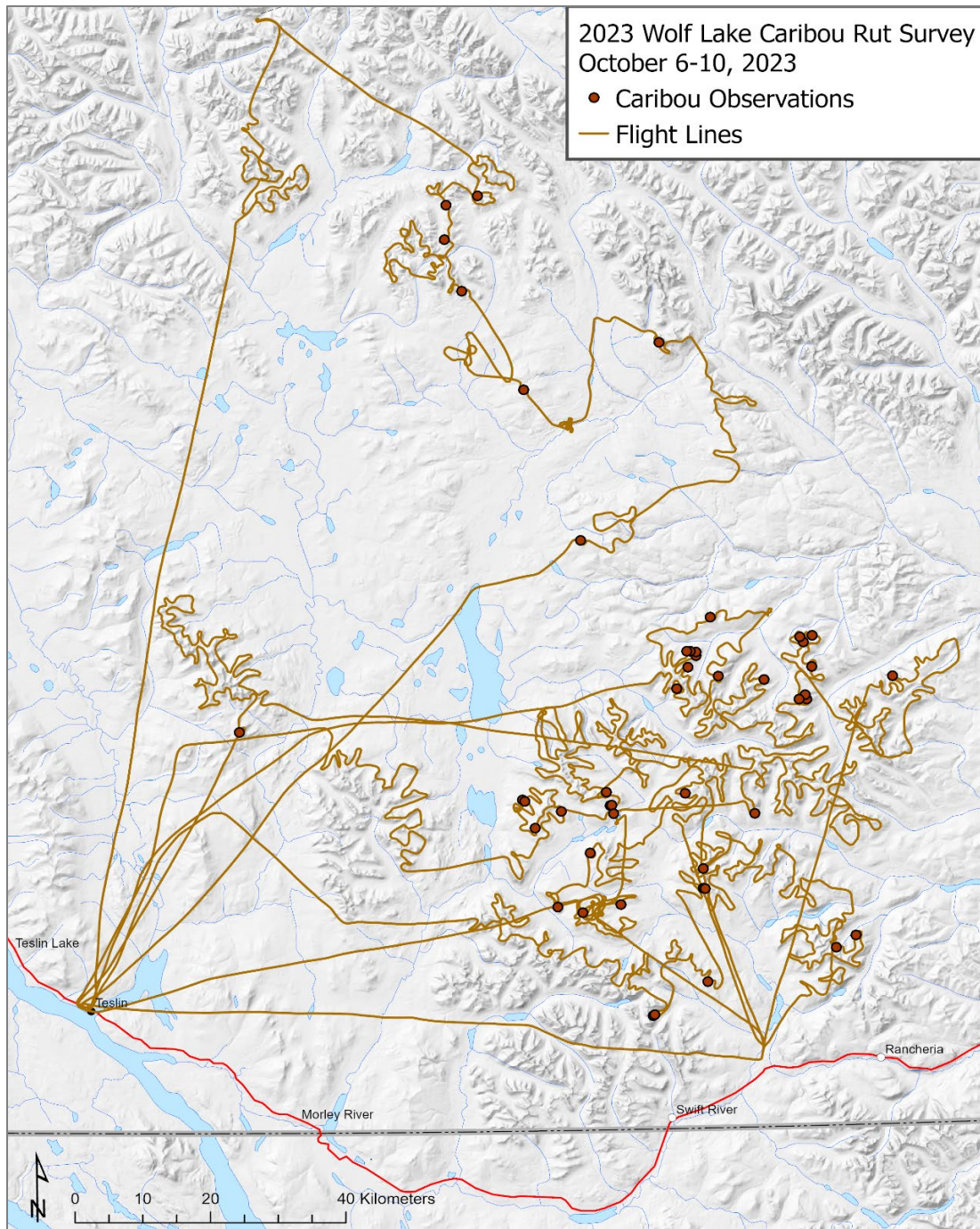
Management

The 2023 composition survey is year 4 of a 5-year monitoring program, which includes GPS collaring, a population survey and annual composition surveys. Our results at the end of the program will help clarify the overall population numbers and trend. It will also help us evaluate the sustainability of the current level of harvest on the Wolf Lake herd which includes First Nations and licensed (resident and non-resident) hunting.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Map 1. Flight paths and caribou observations from the 2023 Wolf Lake fall composition survey in the Yukon, conducted October 6–10, 2023.

Acknowledgements

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