

Mealy Mountains Boreal Caribou

Winter 2022 Survey Findings



The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (Wildlife Division), Parks Canada, Labrador Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut Government, NunatuKavut Community Council, and the Torngat Secretariat partnered to design and conduct a survey of the Mealy Mountains Caribou population during the winter of 2022.

Two helicopter crews flew approximately 3,429 km of transects throughout the population's range over a period of five days in March. They observed a total of 713 caribou, of which 582 were seen on transect. This translates into a population estimate of 1,289 caribou with 90 per cent confidence that the true population size is between 993 and 1,585 caribou. Calf recruitment was strong this year, with calves making up almost 28 per cent of the population.

Comparing this finding to the results of previous surveys indicates that overall, the population has been declining over the past 20 years. This rate of change varies from year to year, but on average has meant a loss of approximately 2.8 per cent of the population per year. No caribou were observed in either the Flatwater/Strand area or the Crooks Lake area, both important winter ranges in previous years. Higher numbers were seen adjacent to Cartwright and along the South Coast. While calf recruitment was excellent this year, the adult population is declining.

Monitoring of the Mealy Mountains caribou population will continue through collaborations on the land and at the community level to inform our collective conservation efforts.



1,289 caribou
Population Estimate
2022

