Peter Mather

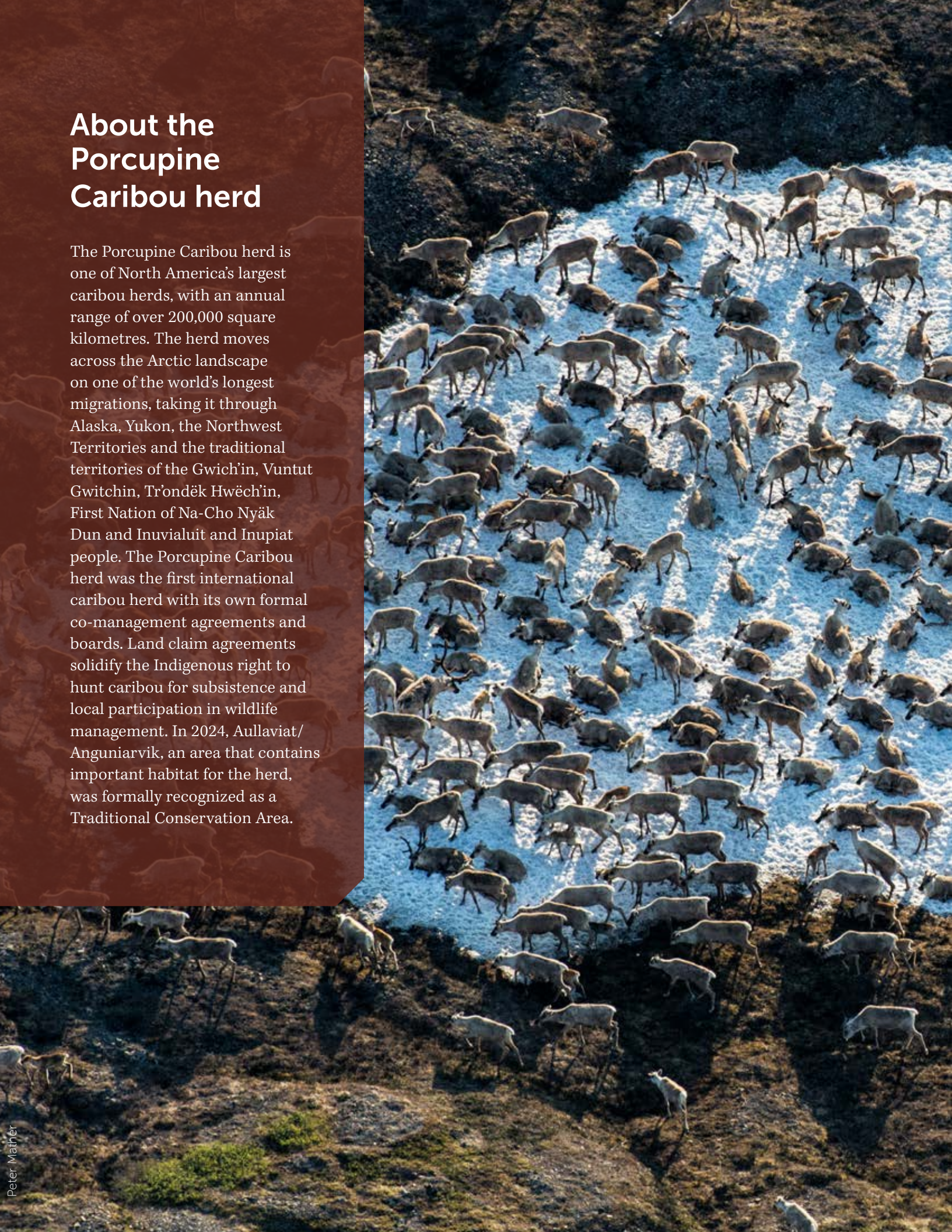
2026

Porcupine Caribou Herd Annual Monitoring Update

from the Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee
Annual Summary Report 2024-2025

About the Porcupine Caribou herd

The Porcupine Caribou herd is one of North America's largest caribou herds, with an annual range of over 200,000 square kilometres. The herd moves across the Arctic landscape on one of the world's longest migrations, taking it through Alaska, Yukon, the Northwest Territories and the traditional territories of the Gwich'in, Vuntut Gwitchin, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and Inuvialuit and Inupiat people. The Porcupine Caribou herd was the first international caribou herd with its own formal co-management agreements and boards. Land claim agreements solidify the Indigenous right to hunt caribou for subsistence and local participation in wildlife management. In 2024, Aullaviat/Anguniarvik, an area that contains important habitat for the herd, was formally recognized as a Traditional Conservation Area.



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About the Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee

The Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee (PCTC) coordinates research and monitoring of the herd collaboratively among management agencies, which is beneficial to partners and the herd. It provides technical information to co-management boards and agencies, First Nations, the Inuvialuit, and other governments.

Sonny Parker

Peter Mather

About this report

This report is a summary of the annual technical report prepared by the PCTC, which is informed by scientific and technical information. This report is for co-management boards and agencies, First Nations, the Inuvialuit, and other governments, and for people who are interested in science and monitoring related to the herd. It is intended to help the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) make recommendations on conservation and management of the herd and its habitat. The PCMB works with the Parties to the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* at the Annual Harvest Meeting to ensure both science and Indigenous knowledge is used by the Board in its recommendations.

This report will help the PCMB and others who care about the Porcupine Caribou herd make decisions:

- to conserve the herd and its habitat
- to ensure opportunities for customary and traditional uses of the herd
- to assist with collaborative management of the herd across boundaries and among governments and users of the herd

How are we gathering knowledge about the Porcupine Caribou herd?

The users of Porcupine Caribou have been following and learning about the herd and their yearly cycle for generations. Since the establishment of the PCMB and the plan for international conservation of the herd, scientists and managers have been finding ways to study and monitor the herd. This monitoring helps us learn more about the herd's health, habitat, population size, and behaviours, and to watch for changes in the herd.

INDICATORS

Indicators are pieces of information that can be studied over time to track changes in the Porcupine Caribou herd's numbers, health, and habitat. They are updated each year using measurements, analysis, and comparison tools.

What does the latest monitoring tell us about the Porcupine Caribou herd?

INDICATOR *Caribou Population*

Pat Cibeau

Photocensus

Why do we measure this? Knowing the overall number of caribou, or the population size, and how it changes over time is important for managing the herd, particularly when it comes to harvest.

How do we measure this? A successful photocensus relies on the herd congregating in few large, tight groups. Once the insects come out during the warm weather in early summer, the caribou respond by gathering into these groups, sometimes consisting of tens of thousands of caribou. To find the best time to photograph the caribou, the herd was monitored by satellite GPS collars and Alaskan pilots in late June 2025 to help researchers locate the caribou. In early July, planes flew over the groups and the caribou were photographed in the Richardson Mountains and in Alaska along the coastal plain and foothills. Caribou were then counted from the photos.

How often do we measure this? To monitor the population, researchers hope to estimate the size of the Porcupine Caribou herd every few years. A successful photocensus was completed in summer 2025. The photocensus method has been used to count the number of caribou since 1972. The last count was in 2017.

What did we learn?

Population estimate:

2013	197,228	(95% CI = 168,667 – 225,789)
2017	218,457	(95% CI = 202,106 – 234,808)
2025	143,135	(95% CI = 122,974 – 173,087)

(We are 95% confident the true population size of the herd is within this range)

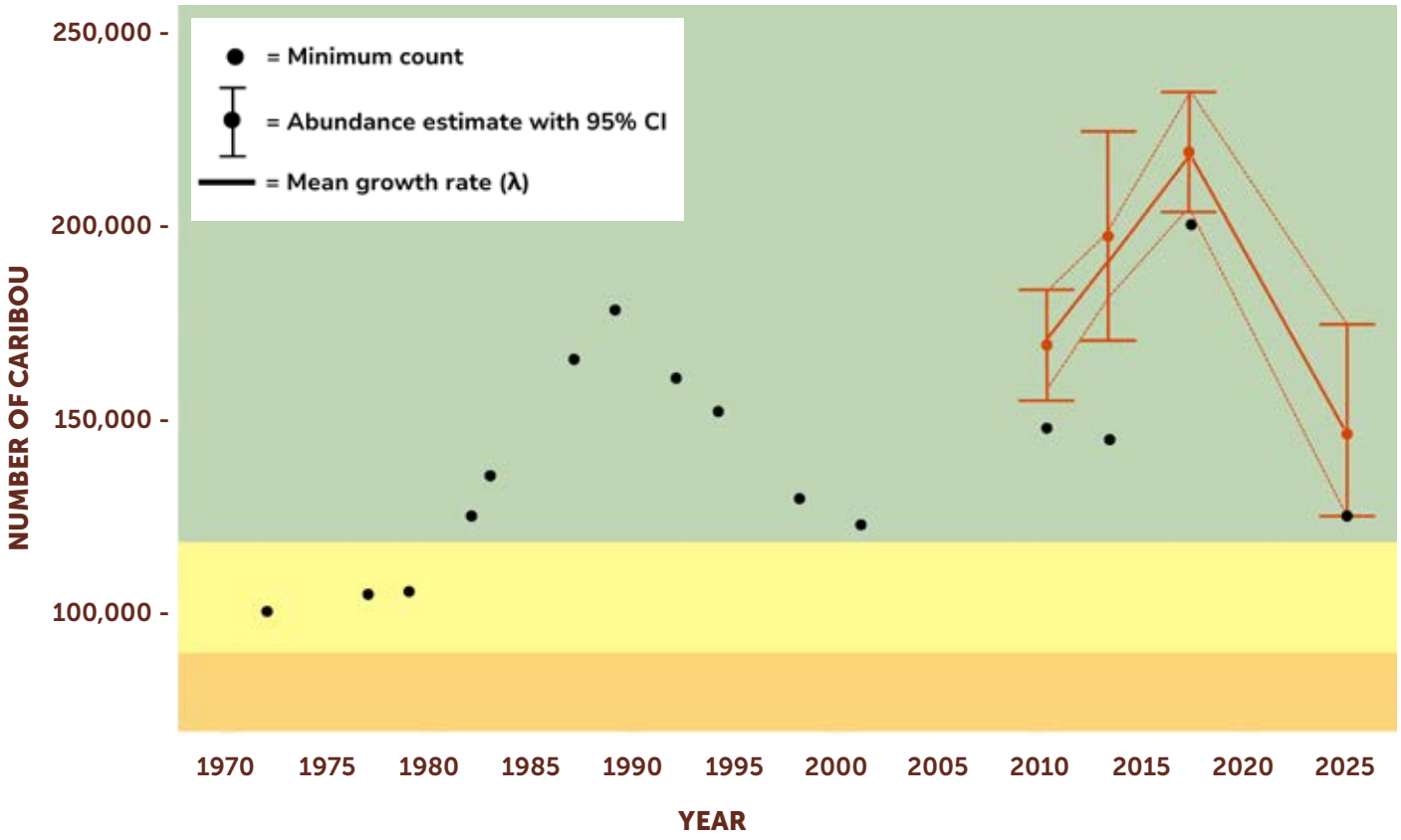


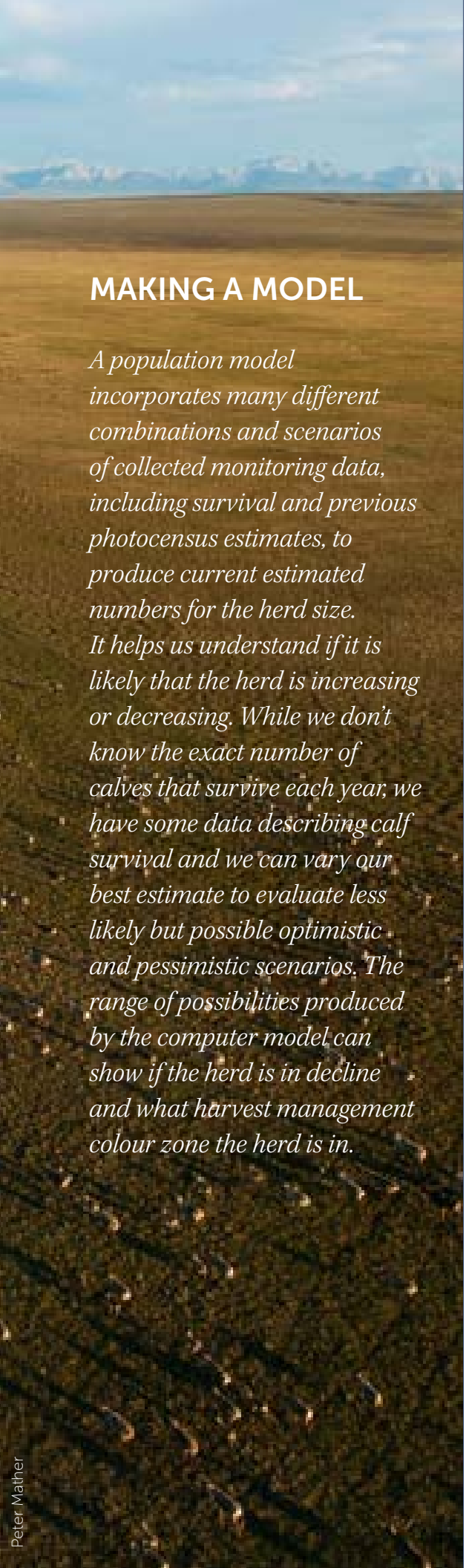
FIGURE 1 | PORCUPINE CARIBOU HERD POPULATION SIZE
Black dot: minimum count
Red dot: abundance estimate with confidence interval

From 1972 to 2001 the photocensus established a minimum count, which is not an estimate of the herd's total size. Since 2010, we have estimated the herd size more accurately. We use minimum counts and other information to estimate herd abundance along with our certainty about the number. The background colours show the Harvest Management Colour Zones as established in the Harvest Management Plan.

What does this tell us about the herd? The results of the 2025 photocensus are an estimated caribou count of 143,000 animals, a significant decline in herd size. This confirms what computer models and other indicators have shown us over the previous few years. The Porcupine herd has had population peaks and declines over the past decades. Since the first photocensus in the early 1970s, the herd has numbered from just over 100,000 to over 200,000 animals. Between 1989 and 2001, the herd declined at roughly a 3.5% rate. It recovered to 169,000 animals by 2010, and increased to 218,000 in 2017, its highest number since surveys began. Now, the number of caribou is decreasing. The herd size declined 5% between 2017 and 2025 and we think the decline is not finished.

CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

A confidence interval (CI) is a range of values that describes the uncertainty surrounding a number. It's a measure of our confidence that the number is between a given range, based on the data we have. A narrower range means we are more certain about the estimate, while a wider range means there is more uncertainty.



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MAKING A MODEL

A population model incorporates many different combinations and scenarios of collected monitoring data, including survival and previous photocensus estimates, to produce current estimated numbers for the herd size. It helps us understand if it is likely that the herd is increasing or decreasing. While we don't know the exact number of calves that survive each year, we have some data describing calf survival and we can vary our best estimate to evaluate less likely but possible optimistic and pessimistic scenarios. The range of possibilities produced by the computer model can show if the herd is in decline and what harvest management colour zone the herd is in.

Caribou Population

Population computer model

Why do we measure this? The computer model was developed as another way of estimating the size and trend of the Porcupine Caribou herd. It is especially useful when a photocensus cannot be completed, due to poor weather or when the caribou don't gather in large numbers. Estimates from the model can help us understand the amount of growth or decline that might be happening. Different inputs to the model (for example, a small increase in calf mortality) can show different trend lines and allow us to better understand impacts to the herd when changes happen.

How do we measure this? The model is built on a computer using information from herd indicators, such as photocensus numbers, estimates of the proportion of female caribou (cows) and adult males (bulls), harvest numbers, survival and calving success. The model produces many scenarios that, when considered together, show how likely it is that the caribou population is increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable, with an indication of how certain we are about each of the numbers.

How often do we measure this? An advantage of computer modelling is that it can be updated as new data come in, and the model can be run using different combinations of the monitoring data we collect. Doing so helps us understand how certain we are about the size and trend of the herd.

What did we learn? Most model results this year showed the herd remains within the Green Zone as identified in the Harvest Management Plan. The estimates produced by this year's population model show that the herd has declined significantly since 2023, and most show that the decline likely began before that time. The steepest decline occurred in 2024-25, when there was low survival of adult males, adult females, and calves, and low birth rates for 3-year-old cows.

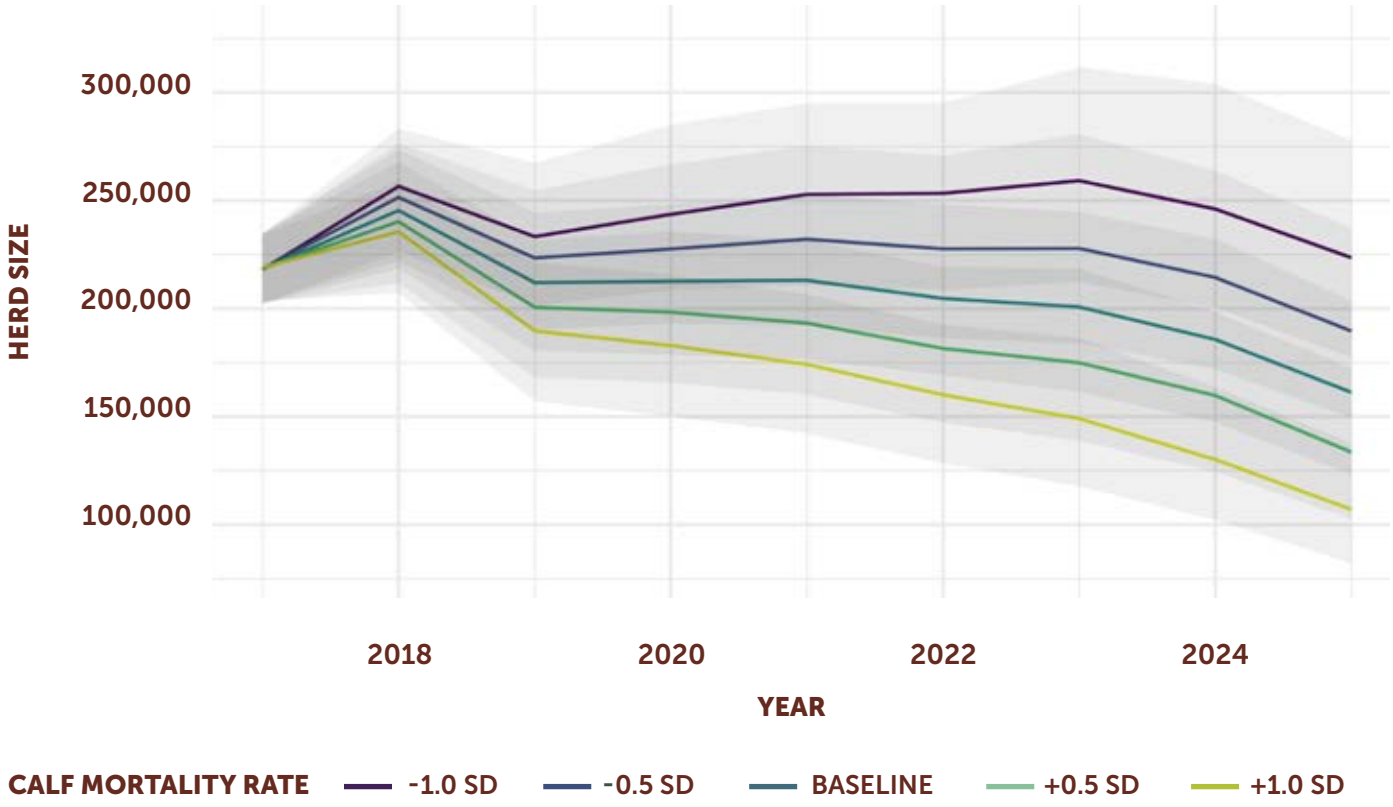


FIGURE 2 | COMPUTER MODEL OF HERD SIZE SINCE 2017

The computer model projects the population size of the Porcupine Caribou herd using different inputs. The coloured lines show the population size and trend using different calf mortality scenarios.

What does this tell us about the herd? The computer model is useful for showing the influence of different herd changes (like calving or survival rates) on the size of the herd. While the survival rates of adult female caribou are likely most influential in altering the herd's trend, the model demonstrates that in recent years, mortality of calves has played a key role as well. To reach the population sizes confirmed by this year's photocensus, the model suggests that although adult female survival rates have been lower in recent years (80–82%), they were not the sole driver of the decline; calf mortality was likely near 90% in some years.

INDICATOR *Survival estimates*

Survival Estimates

Why do we measure this?
Caribou survival is critical to the health of the herd. We consider adult female survival to be one of the most biologically important monitoring indicators for the herd. Small changes in the survival of adult females can make the difference between an increasing or decreasing herd. Trends or major changes in calf survival (between birth and one year), yearling female survival (females between one and two years old), or adult male survival (usually four years and older) are also critical to the health of the herd and may serve as early indicators of changes in the herd.

How do we measure this? Caribou wearing GPS collars are tracked throughout a year (from June to May) to determine an annual survival rate. When a collar stops moving, researchers can determine if the caribou died. We can use that information combined with the knowledge of which caribou have survived to estimate the percentage of the herd that died in a year.

How often do we measure this? Survival rates are calculated and monitored every year. The survival year goes from birth (June 1) to the following May 31.

What did we learn?

Adult females 2024-25 – 80% (5-year average is 87%)
Adult males 2024-25 – 65% (5-year average is 67%)
Yearling females 2024-25 – 80% (5-year average is 78%)
Short yearlings (9 months-1 year) 2024-25 – 88% (average is 86%)
Calves to three weeks old 2024-25 – 79% (5-year average is 85%)

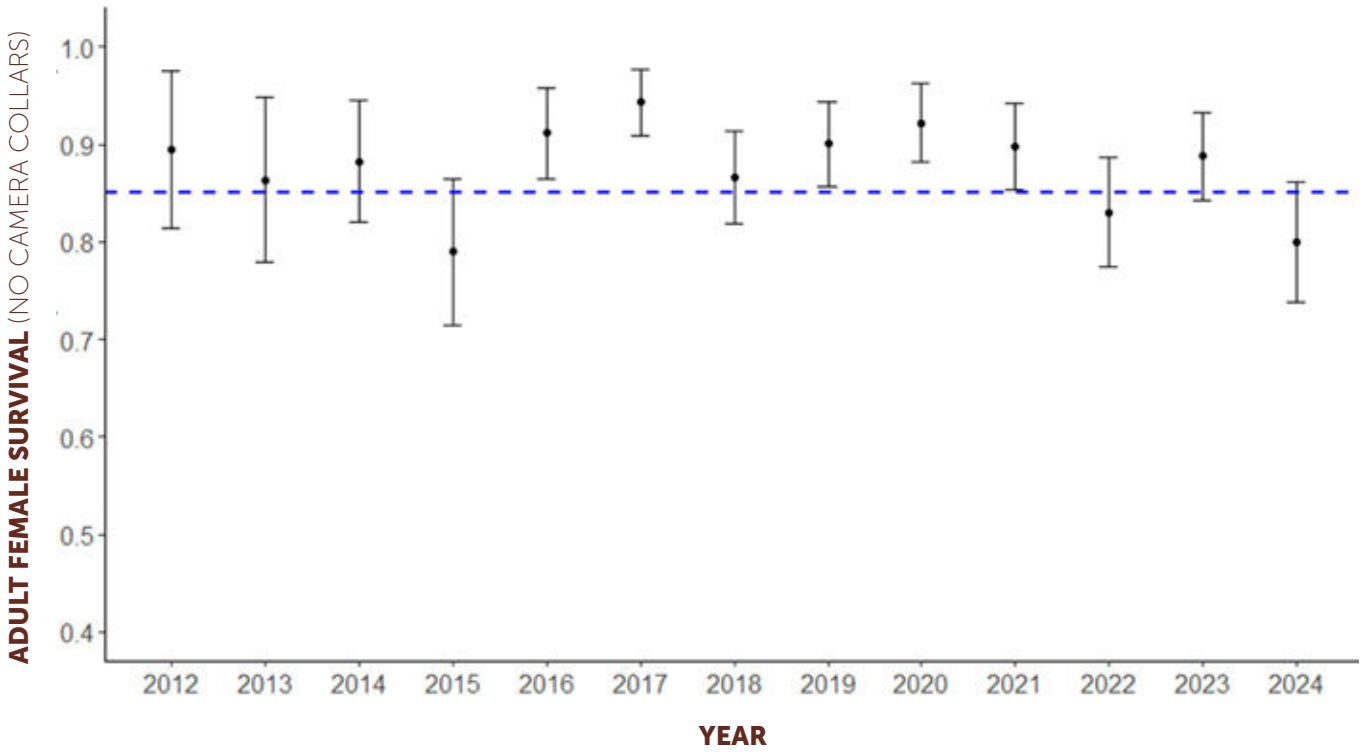


FIGURE 3 | SURVIVAL ESTIMATES OF ADULT FEMALE PORCUPINE CARIBOU

The figure shows survival estimates for female caribou with confidence intervals. Adult female survival rates have declined in recent years compared to the previous decade. Generally, the herd needs at least 85% (shown as a blue line) of its adult females surviving each year for a stable or increasing population.

What does this tell us about the herd? Adult female survival in 2024-25 was 80%, the lowest rate recorded since 2015, and lower than the 85% minimum threshold for a stable or increasing herd. Male caribou survival rates were slightly lower than the 5-year average for the second year in a row, however this rate has been low since 2020. Yearling female caribou survival was slightly higher than average, but many calves died in spring, just before their first birthday, meaning few 2024 calves remained by June 2025. Lastly, three-week calf survival for calves born in June 2025 was lower than average. Adult female survival is a big factor in population stability, but low calving rates and low calf survival rates can also show that the herd is in decline. The Porcupine herd has had fairly high post-calving survival, but the last three years have been the lowest three-week calf survival rates measured. Understanding calf survival over the entire year is another way managers can estimate what will happen to herd size over the next few years.


Peter Mather

INDICATOR *Reproduction and Growth*

Calving

Why do we measure this?
Calves are baby caribou. From birth to 1 year of age they are most vulnerable to predators, environmental factors, and illness. It is important to know how many calves are born each spring because they represent the future of the herd. Knowing the number of calves and their chance of survival helps us know what might happen to herd size in the next years.

How do we measure this? Female caribou with satellite GPS collars are located from an airplane in June. The researchers then classify them as barren (neither pregnant nor with a calf), pregnant, or having given birth to a calf. They can tell that female caribou are pregnant if they have hard antlers or bulging udders. Recent mothers will have a calf next to them or right behind them, "at their heel".

How often do we measure this? The birth rates of calves have been tracked yearly during late May and early June since the 1980s.

Peter Mather

What did we learn?

PARTURITION RATES 2025:

4 years or older females: 93% (5-year average is 85%)

3-year-old females only: 70% (5-year average is 54%)

All female caribou: 88% (5-year average is 78%)

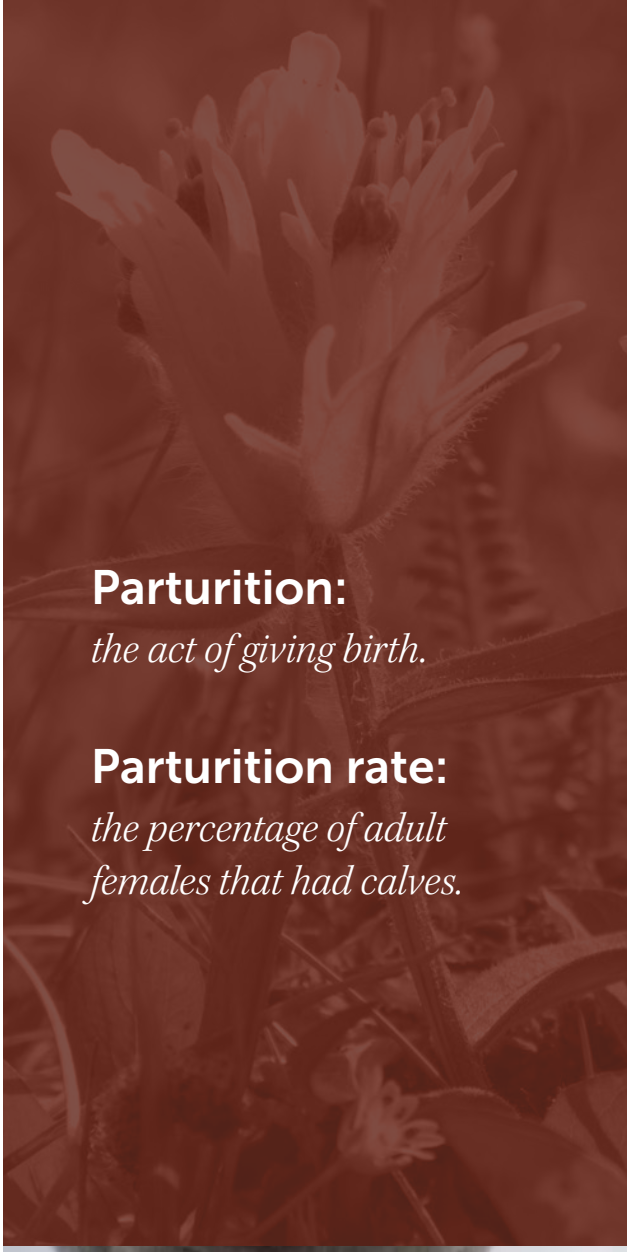
CALVES FOR EVERY 100 FEMALE CARIBOU:

Late June cow/calf ratio 2025: 55 calves per 100 female caribou (cows) (5-year average is 60 per 100 female caribou)

On average, biologists see about 82 calves born to every 100 adult female caribou. This year, 93 calves were born per 100 cows, which is above average. However, three weeks later, the cow to calf ratio and early calf survival were below average, suggesting many calves died in the weeks after birth.

What does this tell us about the herd? Yearly fluctuation in calving numbers is normal. But if birth rates and calf survival rates remain low for several years in a row, population growth for the herd is unlikely.

Adult caribou of all ages had higher than average birth rates this year for the herd. The higher birth rates observed in 2025 may be because many females in summer 2024 did not have, or lost, their calves. This means they do not need energy for lactation, allowing them to be in good enough condition to get pregnant in the fall. Researchers believe that trends in birth rates for young females (3-year-olds) are related to environmental conditions including changes in nutrition (the quality of caribou forage, such as willow or lichen). Reports from on-the-land indicate that overall in recent years, females have been in poorer condition during the fall period than in the past.



Parturition:
the act of giving birth.

Parturition rate:
the percentage of adult females that had calves.

YGJTSCS

Peak of Calving and Extent of Calving Grounds

Why do we measure this?
The date of peak calving helps us understand if changes in climate are affecting the herd and how they might be responding to those changes.

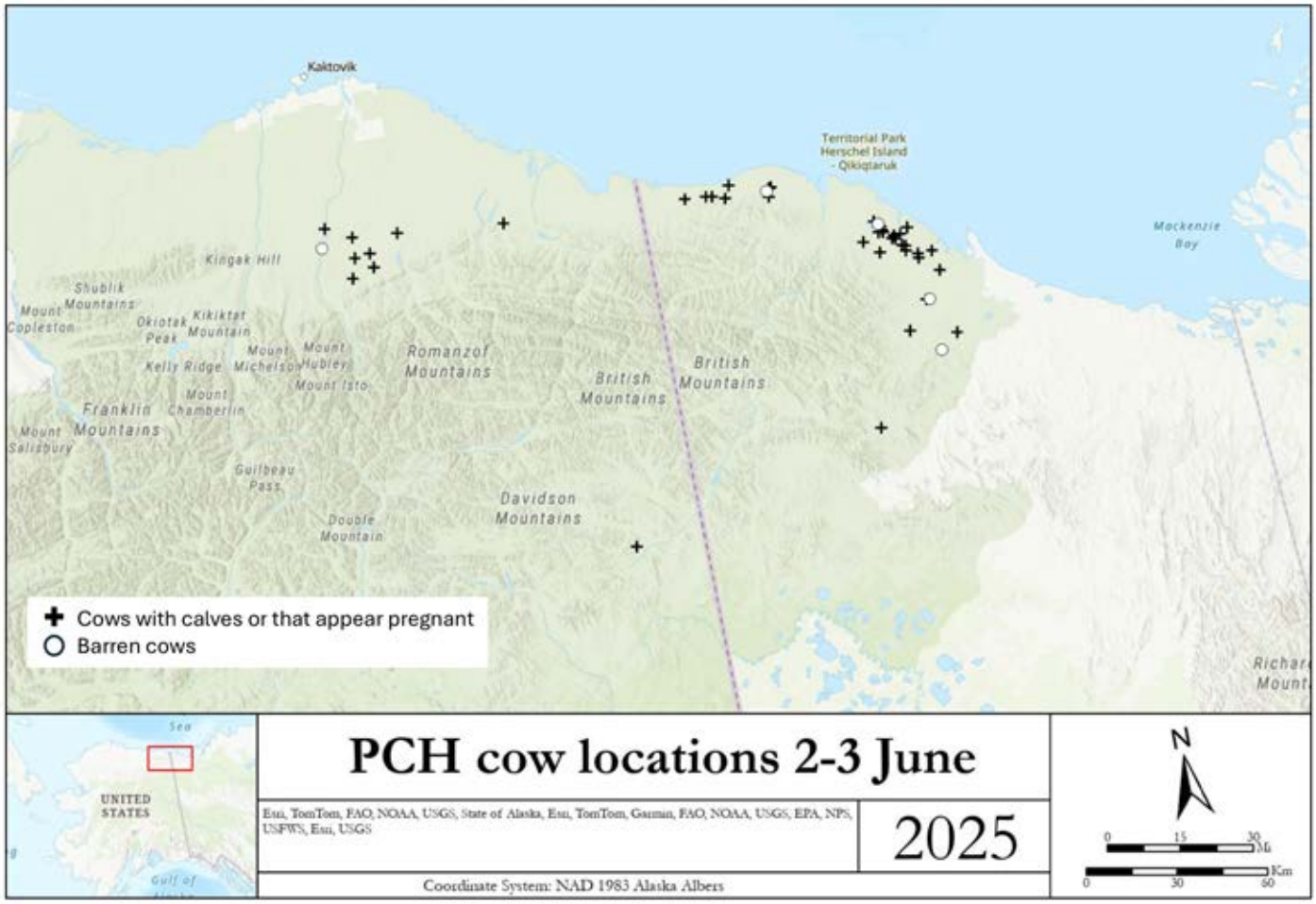
Peak of calving:

The estimated date when more than half of the collared adult female caribou have given birth each spring.

How often do we measure this? The peak calving dates have been tracked yearly during late May and early June since 1999.

How do we measure this? Female caribou with satellite GPS collars are located from an airplane. Researchers record how many of the collared caribou have given birth and they estimate the birth dates of the calves. When more than half of the female caribou are observed with a calf, this is the peak of calving.

What did we learn? In 2025, researchers did surveys of female caribou and calves on June 2nd and 3rd, but by this time less than half had a calf at heel, meaning that the peak of calving occurred later than June 3rd. We could not estimate the peak of calving for Porcupine Caribou or determine the main calving areas. In early June, the female caribou had moved toward the coast and were located from the Babbage River in the Yukon west to the Jago River in Alaska.



What does this tell us about the herd? Porcupine Caribou generally give birth all at once, with most female caribou calving within days of each other. This is a way to reduce the risk of predation on any single calf. The similar birth date means that the female caribou were also bred at a similar time and can be an indication of how the rut went the previous fall. If the calving period is extended, it could mean that the rut was disrupted. This is important because calves born late in the season may be more likely to die from predators or too small to survive the migration south for the winter. The long-term average date of peak calving for the Porcupine Caribou herd is June 2nd.

FIGURE 4 | LOCATIONS OF FEMALE PORCUPINE CARIBOU JUNE 2 & 3, 2025

This map shows locations of cows with and without calves in early June. The extent of the calving grounds and core calving area could not be determined this year.

Short yearling calf weights

A "short yearling"

is a nine-month-old caribou calf.

Why do we measure this? The weight of calves at nine months old is an indication of their health and reflects many other factors. These include the condition of the mother caribou the previous summer as well as during the winter before she gives birth, the quality of summer vegetation, and environmental conditions in the calf's first fall and winter.

How do we measure this? During March, researchers capture caribou, weigh the nine-month-old female calves, and fit them with collars for ongoing monitoring.

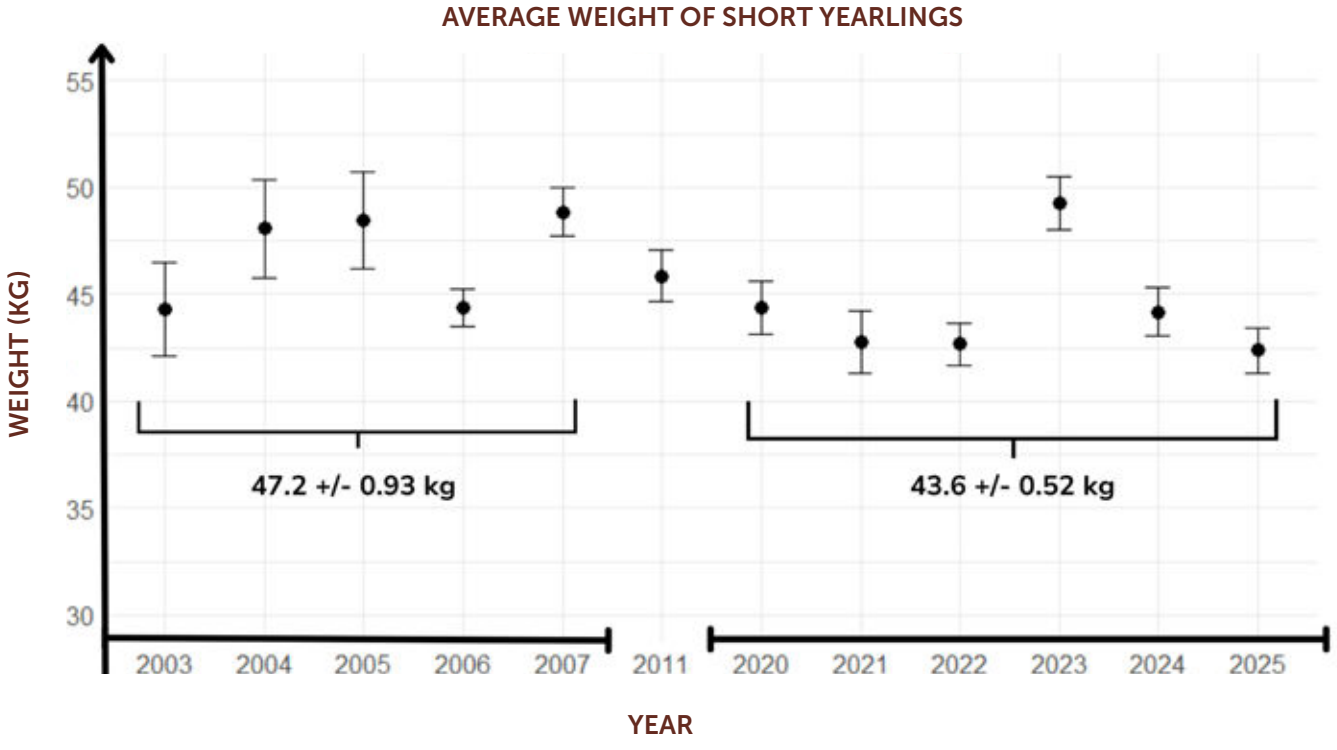
How often do we measure this? Researchers will weigh short yearlings in the spring when they are putting collars on caribou. These measures began in the early 2000s and have been collected each year since 2020.

What did we learn? Calf weights have been lower since 2020 compared to previous measurements. The average weight in the mid-2000s was around 47 kilograms. Since 2020, the average weight is around 44 kilograms. In 2025, the calves we measured averaged 42 kilograms, which is the lowest weight recorded for short yearlings.

What does this tell us about the herd? The survival of caribou calves is directly influenced by their weight. Reduced body condition may affect the age when caribou first have their calves. Lower weights measured over time may indicate decreases in juvenile caribou survival.

FIGURE 5 | SHORT YEARLING (NINE-MONTH-OLD) FEMALE CALF WEIGHTS

The figure shows the annual weights of 9-month-old caribou calves in the early 2000s and since 2020.



INDICATOR *Caribou Body Condition*

Peter Mather

Body Condition

Why do we measure this? Learning about caribou body condition helps us understand the overall health of animals in the Porcupine Caribou herd. Hunters submit samples and record and rate the body condition of the caribou they harvest. This helps us track the fatness of harvested caribou and what it means for herd health.

How do we measure this? Each year, hunters are asked to take samples from some of the caribou they harvest in the fall and measure the depth of backfat on the animals. Hunters can also rate the condition of caribou at that time of year relative to their long-term observations. Observations from hunters and other people on the land are also collected and incorporated into monitoring efforts.

How often do we measure this? Since 2001, a formal program has existed for hunters to submit samples and record the body condition of the caribou they harvest. Each year, hunters provide reports about the condition of caribou they have seen or harvested.

What did we learn? Caribou harvest samples were limited during the fall of 2024 through the late winter 2025. Backfat was measured on 15 samples. This year, hunters indicated the caribou were in generally good condition.

What does this tell us about the herd? In the fall and winter of 2024-2025, Porcupine Caribou were available to hunters around Old Crow in early November. Caribou were generally not available to hunters in NWT. Few samples were collected, but hunters assessed the caribou from fair to good for the time of year of harvest.

INDICATOR Habitat

Jessi Pascal

Wildland Fires

Why do we measure this?
Wildfires affect the habitat of caribou. After a forest fire, lichen can take anywhere from around 40 to over 100 years to recover. Caribou tend to avoid large, burned areas, especially during winter. We track wildfires to see how each year's fires affect the condition of the Porcupine Caribou herd's range.

How do we measure this? We measure the total area burned and the number of wildfires each year. Wildfire data have been tracked across the herd's range since the 1960s, although mapping of fires has improved considerably over the past decade. As of 2024, the total area burned by fires in the herd's range since 1965 is about 45,000 square kilometers, or about 18% of the Porcupine Caribou herd's total annual range.

How often do we measure this? Every year, wildfire numbers and the extent of fires are compiled by fire management teams using data compiled from satellites and field teams.

What did we learn? In 2024, wildfires burned an area of about 120 square kilometers (km^2), which is well below the 5-year average of 845 km^2. There were 10 wildfires in the herd's Yukon range in 2024, 5 fires in Alaska and none in the NWT. None of the fires in 2024 were considered large. The 15 fires that burned in 2024 are well below the 5-year average of 28, and slightly above the long-term average of 13 fires. Wildfire map data for 2025 are not yet available, but lower snowpack and rapid spring melt in 2025 contributed to early fire activity in the southern portions of the Porcupine Caribou herd's range. After that, wet weather resulted in generally fewer smaller fires.

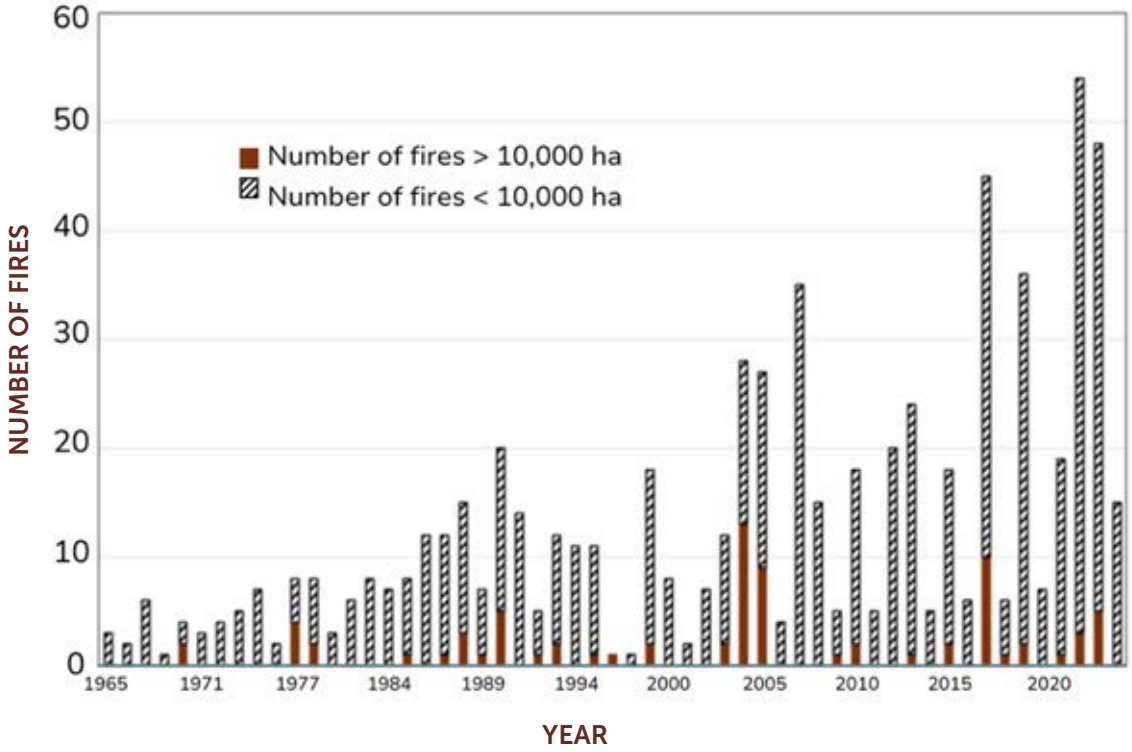


FIGURE 6 |

TOTAL NUMBER OF FIRES AND NUMBER OF LARGE WILDFIRES (GREATER THAN 1,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS) IN PORCUPINE CARIBOU HERD RANGE, BY YEAR

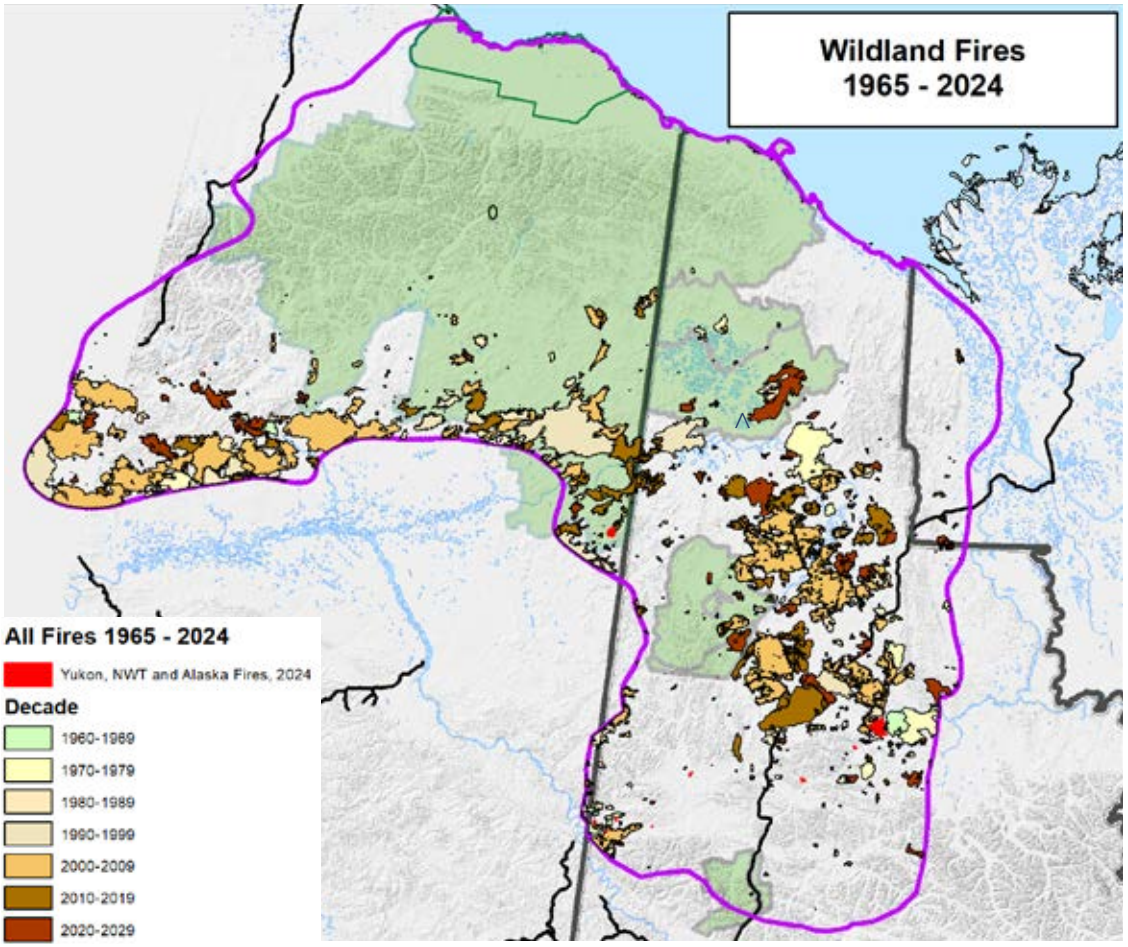


FIGURE 7 |

1965-2024 MAP OF WILDLAND FIRES

Habitat

Peter Mather

Insect harassment

Why do we measure this?
Harassment by mosquitos and parasitic flies has direct negative impacts on barren-ground caribou. The parasitic flies are called oestrid flies, commonly known as warble and bot flies. Harassment by blood-sucking mosquitoes and oestrid flies impacts the health and behaviour of caribou. It causes blood loss and spreads disease, and causes the caribou to scratch, flee, and seek relief. This takes a lot of their energy and prevents them from spending as much time eating.

How do we measure this? We use models to predict the levels of insect harassment. These models were made from on-the-ground observations and include things like wind speed, temperature, rain and how many days it's been since the snow melted.

How often do we measure this? Every year, the model is calculated from the annual environmental data (wind speed, temperature, precipitation) and we have been able to look back and collect information on insect harassment since 1950.

What did we learn? In 2025, mosquito and oestrid fly harassment was the highest of the 76 years of predictions (1950-2025). The number of days with high mosquito harassment in 2025 was 64 days (the previous record was 57 days). The number of days with high oestrid fly harassment in 2025 was 36 days, above the previous high of 35 days. Oestrid fly harassment has gotten earlier and worse in the 2020s due to the very hot summers.

What does this tell us about the herd? Insect harassment negatively affects the herd's ability to eat, changing how many nutrients and how much energy caribou can gather during the critical but short growing season along the Beaufort Sea. Climate changes such as earlier snow melt, more precipitation, and higher temperatures will affect the timing and number of insects on the caribou's range.

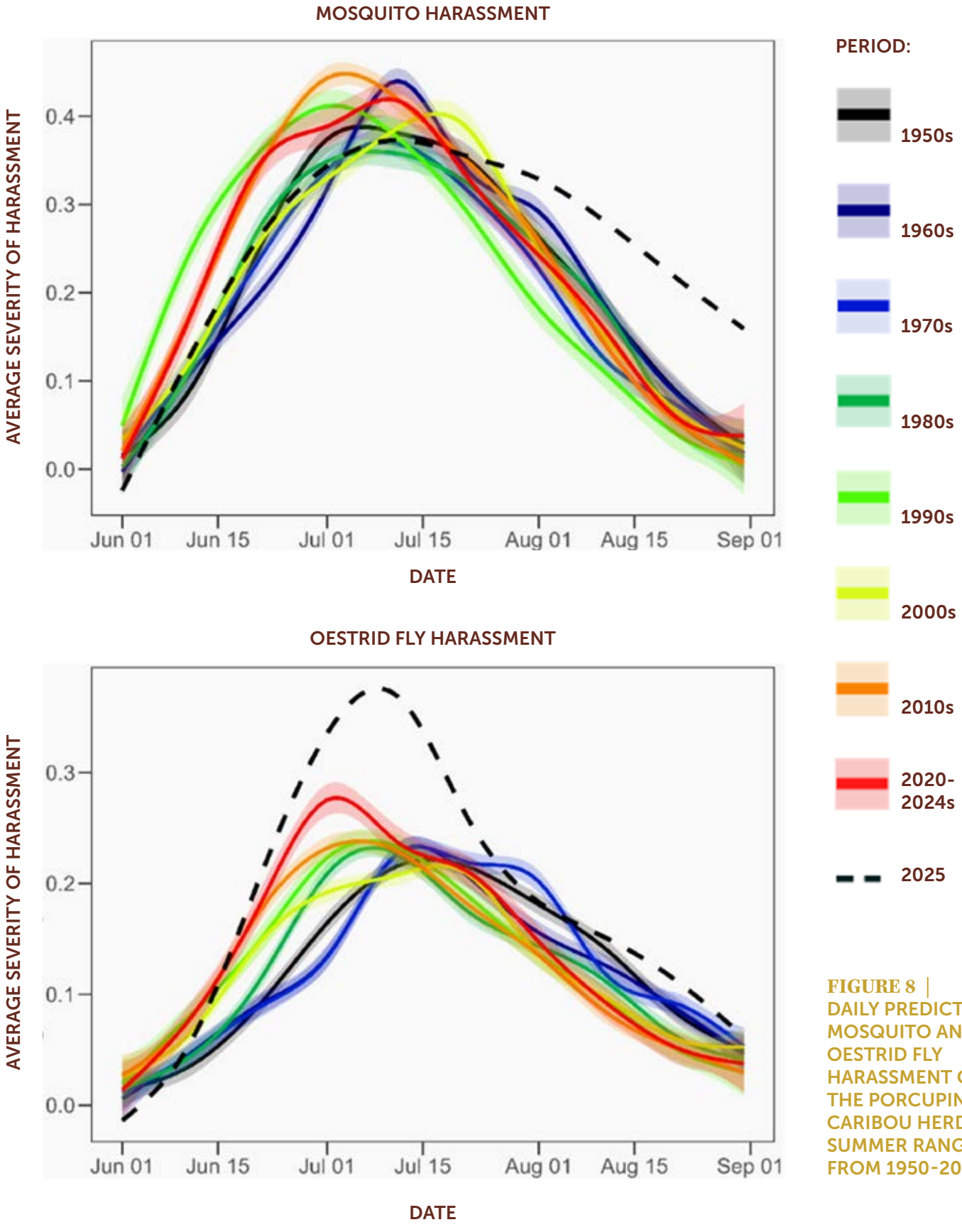


FIGURE 8 | DAILY PREDICTED MOSQUITO AND OESTRID FLY HARASSMENT ON THE PORCUPINE CARIBOU HERD SUMMER RANGE FROM 1950-2025


Pat Gibeau

Lichen Monitoring

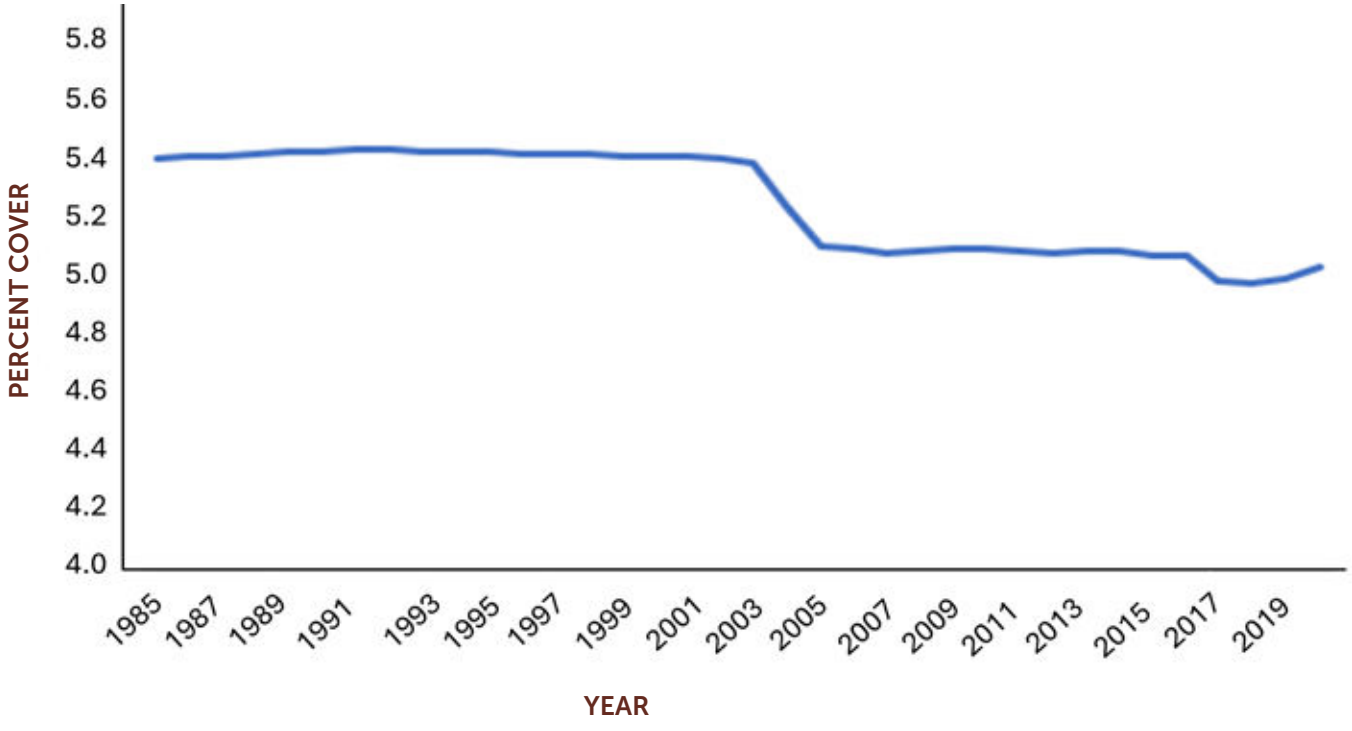
Why do we measure this? Lichens are the primary food for caribou in winter. Climate changes to vegetation and wildfires may affect the availability and growth of lichen across the Porcupine Caribou herd's range.

How do we measure this? Researchers map lichen cover and total biomass (amount of lichen) across the landscape using satellite imagery. Mapping lichen allows us to track changes in the amount of lichen, as well as its distribution and availability to caribou in parts of their range.

How often do we measure this? Because the satellite imagery used starts in 1985, data is available describing changes in lichen since that time. Lichen mapping happens every 5 years. The next scheduled mapping of lichen imagery is in 2026. Once images are available, mapping and analyses will be done.

What does this tell us about the herd? Research has shown small decreases to the lichen cover and biomass across the herd's core range, and larger declines across the Yukon and Alaska more generally. Declines within the herd's core range have mostly been associated with a few significant fire years. As the frequency and severity of wildfires is expected to increase with climate change, we will continue to monitor lichen cover and mass as an indicator of the state of the caribou range.

FIGURE 9 | CHANGES IN LIGHT MACROLICHEN COVER ACROSS THE PORCUPINE CARIBOU CORE RANGE FROM 1985 TO 2020



Linear disturbance and human development

Why do we measure this? Large patches of intact habitat are critical to caribou herds. Human activities in caribou habitat, particularly development activities, can impact the way caribou use their habitat and their seasonal movements at critical times, such as calving. Increased access to the herd's range can add to hunting pressures. Linear developments like cut lines and roads can help predators access caribou. Development also increases stress levels for caribou.

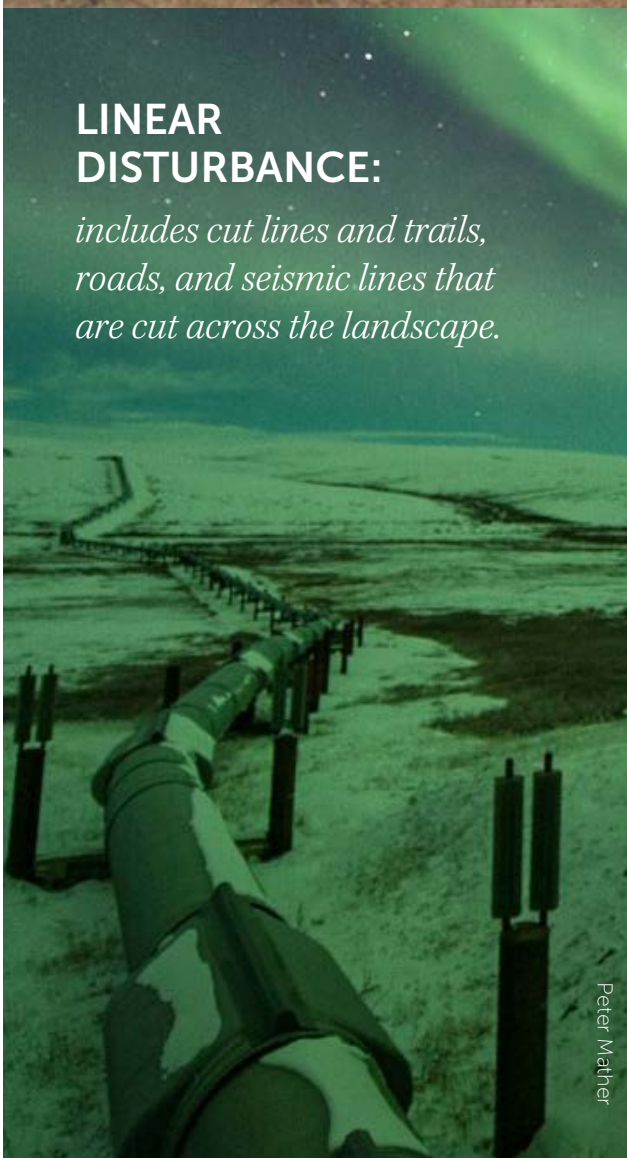
How do we measure this? Disturbance and development data is collected in NWT, Yukon and Alaska. Historical disturbance has been tracked through cumulative effects studies. Land use planners have evaluated historical disturbances and vegetation recovery.

What did we learn? The new United States federal government which took power in January 2025 is re-opening the Coastal Plains Oil and Gas Leasing program in the 1002 area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is a calving and post-calving area for the Porcupine Caribou herd. They have gone back to a 2020 Environmental Impact Statement for upcoming lease sales, which removes restrictions and terms meant to be protective of caribou.

There have been no major human development footprint changes across the Porcupine herd's range in recent years. Most prior development occurred before the 1980s. Three-dimensional-seismic work in the winter range cut around 2,000 km of seismic line in 2013-14. The Old Crow winter road (from Eagle Plains) has had controlled openings to vehicles over the past decade. An application to do oil and gas work near Eagle Plains has also been received in the Yukon and is in a consultation process at this time.

What does this tell us about the herd? Up to now, intact habitat and limited development in the herd's range have contributed to the herd's relative resilience. Increases in development across the range, and specifically development of Coastal Plains oil and gas leases in Alaska will result in major new disturbances and footprint in a critical portion of the herd's annual range. Models evaluating the current proposed development show that it may cause significant declines to the herd and make it far more challenging for the herd to increase from low population sizes.

Peter Mather



Peter Mather

Habitat

Snow Condition

Why do we measure this? We study snow depth and hardness because when snow is deep or hardened by wind, caribou use more energy digging through it to ground lichens and moving around their habitat to find suitable conditions. Using a lot of energy can affect the caribou's body condition and reproductive capability. Climate changes impact snow depth, distribution, and condition, and monitoring these snow conditions is part of understanding climate change effects.

How do we measure this? The depth of the snow and its condition is measured at several permanent locations throughout the herd's range. Samples are taken to measure the density of the snow or snow/water equivalent. We are working on new measures of snow conditions using satellites to help us understand more about how snow affects the habitat selected by the caribou and to better understand snow conditions across the herd's range.

How often do we measure this? Snow condition measures have been taken from 17 locations in the Yukon since the 1970s. Snow is measured annually in most cases. No comparable monitoring stations are available in Alaska so anecdotal reports are provided when caribou winter there.

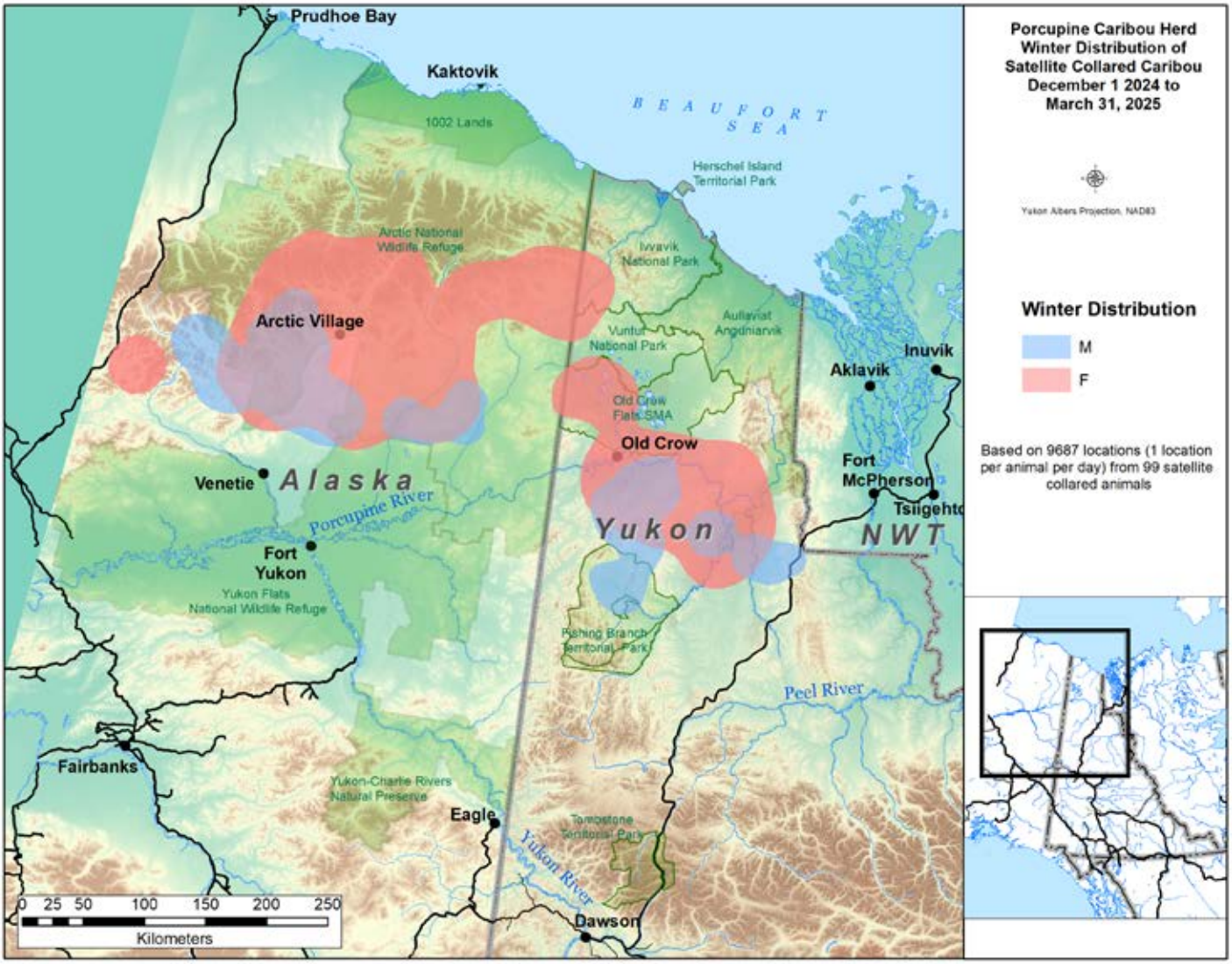


FIGURE 10 | WINTER DISTRIBUTION OF MALE AND FEMALE CARIBOU IN 2024-25

What did we learn? All stations recorded snow depths below the 5-year average, except the mountains of Vuntut National Park. Ogilvie and Old Crow were slightly above the long-term average snow depth. Snow density in all regions was near average. Eagle and Old Crow regions appear to have an increasing trend in snow depth, and snow density appears to be increasing the most in the Ogilvie region. By late March and early April, snow in Alaska was deep but low in density to the west of Arctic Village, becoming shallower and harder from windy conditions east of Arctic Village.

The Porcupine Caribou herd was split between Alaska and Yukon winter ranges in 2024-25. Caribou were scattered across Alaska from the Dalton Highway to the border, with groups north and south of Arctic Village. In the Yukon, caribou were mostly south and east of Old Crow to the Whitefish Wetlands, with small groups in Fishing Branch, Old Crow flats and the mountains near the Firth River. Meadows and rivers generally had the deepest snow. Ridges had some wind-blown or hard-packed snow.

The Porcupine Caribou herd is in a decline.

What's next?

The Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee (PCTC) reviewed recent indicators, the photocensus results, and observations from hunters and biologists to provide their technical opinion on the current status of the herd. Their findings indicate that the herd is in a decline. In January 2026, results from the July 2025 photocensus supported what other indicators and the population model have been showing: the herd has declined from 2017.

Lower survival among all groups and low birth rates for young cows have contributed to the decline. It is currently unclear when the decline will end.

The PCTC recommends careful monitoring of the herd status indicators and continuation of the current collaborative program. The PCTC also recommends individuals or hunters aid in monitoring by reporting any observations of herd health to support monitoring programs with real-time data. Collaborative research and monitoring are mutually beneficial to the partners and herd.

Peter Mather

Pat Gibeau

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Porcupine Caribou Management Board

pcmb.ca