



ENVIRONICS  
RESEARCH



# Public opinion about caribou protection in Canada's North

World Wildlife Fund-Canada

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# Objectives and methodology

World Wildlife Fund-Canada was interested in understanding the views of Canadians in the provinces and territories about protection of barren-ground caribou, in Canada's North.

This study involved telephone interviews with Canadian adults (18+) between June 7 and July 8, 2019 as part of Environics' *North of 60 and Remote Community Monitor*, which includes the three territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut) as well as small samples in Nunavik (Northern Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (Labrador). For clarity, this is referred to as "the territories" throughout the report.

Quotas were set by Indigenous identity within region (in the territories) to ensure the final sample is representative of the respective populations, according to the most recent Census data.

- The margin of sampling error for a sample of 1,000 is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level.
- In this report, results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses.
- For certain questions, the findings are compared with a 2016 WWF-Canada survey of 153 residents of the territories.

# Summary

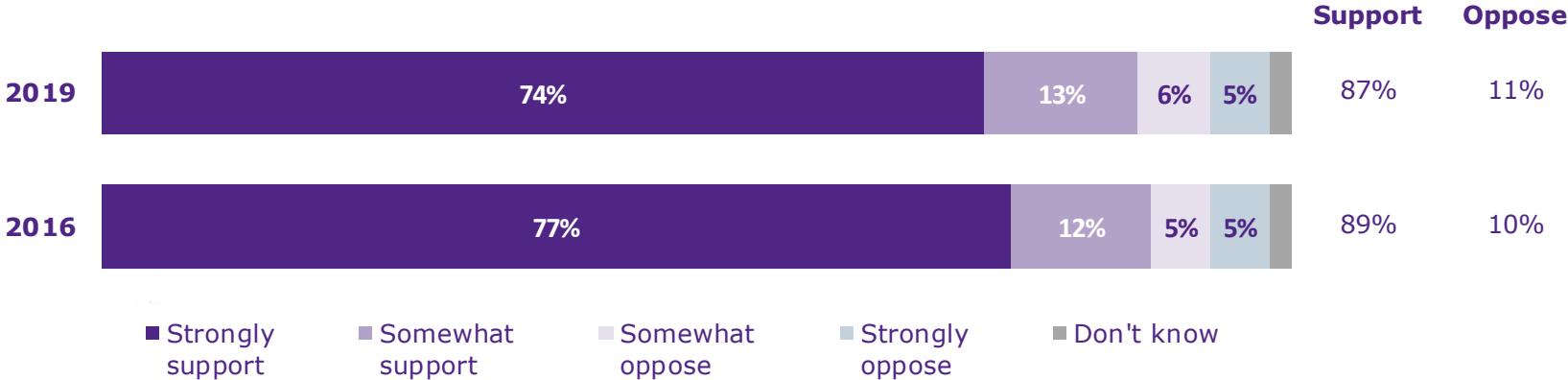
## Caribou

A strong majority of residents of the territories continue to support making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas (87%, essentially unchanged from 2016). Supporters say it would protect a declining caribou population as well as a source of food and way of life for Inuit. The small group of opponents generally express economic arguments, including the need for jobs and that industrial development can coexist with the caribou.

- This degree of support is consistent with the view that the most effective way to protect barren-ground caribou is to protect its habitat, and more so than better management of the caribou harvest or increasing research and monitoring.
- Half of residents believe their territorial government is not doing enough to protect barren-ground caribou, while just a third believe the government is doing enough.

**Caribou**

# Support for making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas

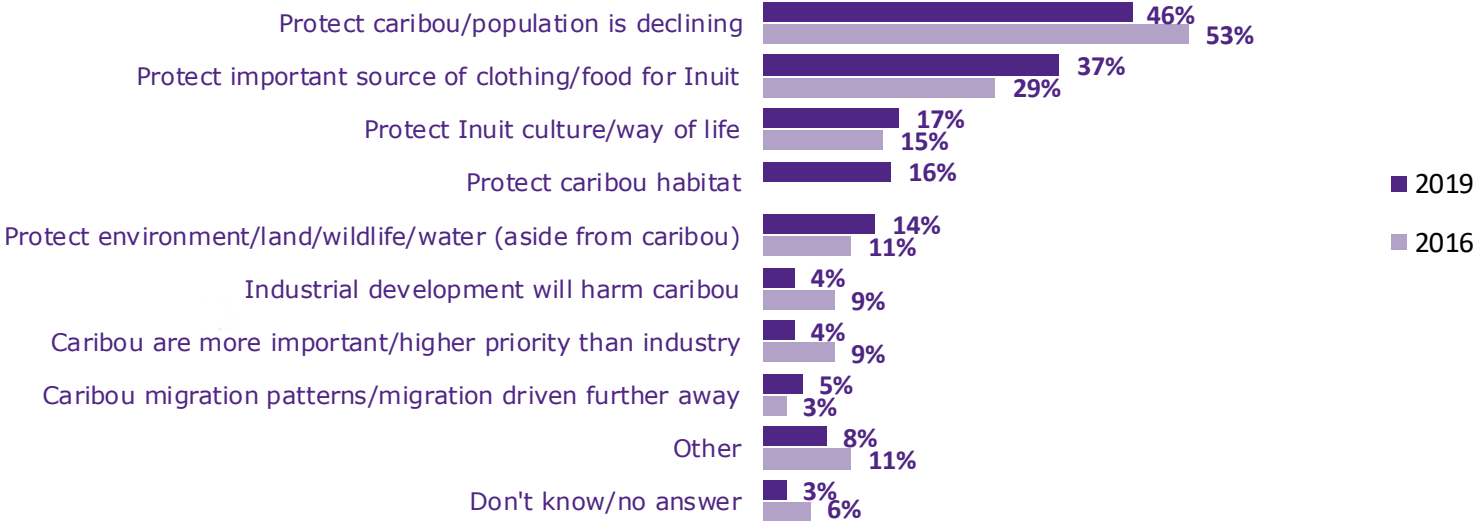


**As in 2016, most residents of the Territories (87%) support making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas** that do not allow industrial development, including three-quarters (74%) who strongly support it.

Strong support is higher among women (78%) than men (69x%), but otherwise does not vary substantially by region or other population segments.

Q7. The next few questions are about barren-ground caribou, which migrate each year to calving grounds where they give birth to and raise their calves. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose making caribou calving grounds in the North fully protected areas that do not allow industrial development like oil and gas or mining projects?

# Reasons for support for making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas



Consistent with 2016, **those who support making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas continue to give two main reasons: to protect a declining caribou population (46%) or to protect a source of food and a way of life for Inuit (54% combined)**. Concerns about protecting this source of food for Inuit and about industrial development affecting caribou migration patterns are more commonly raised by Inuit and residents of Nunavut.

Q8. Why do you support making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas? Base: Strongly or somewhat supporting making caribou calving grounds in the North fully protected areas (n=870)

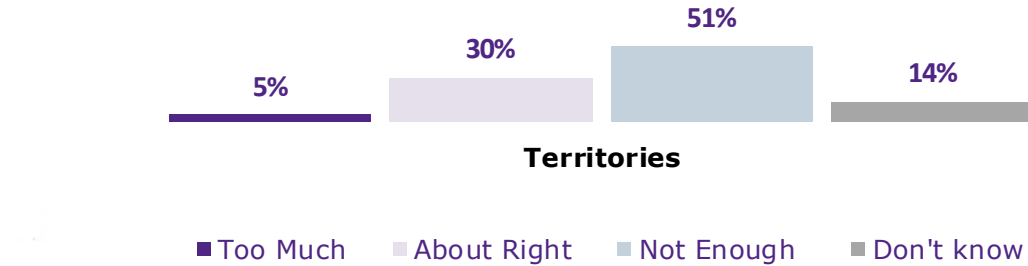
# Concerns with making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas



**The small group (11% of total sample) that opposes fully protected areas for caribou calving grounds give mainly economic reasons**, such as it would be better to allow industry to create jobs, or that caribou and industry can coexist. A few also raised concerns that this approach won't be effective (e.g., due to migration patterns) or will be too restrictive (e.g., for hunting, closing off large swaths of land).

Q9. What concerns do you have about making caribou calving grounds fully protected areas? Base: Strongly or somewhat oppose making caribou calving grounds in the North fully protected areas (n=107). Note: base size in 2016 (n=14) was too small to report results).

# Perceptions of efforts by government to protect barren-ground caribou



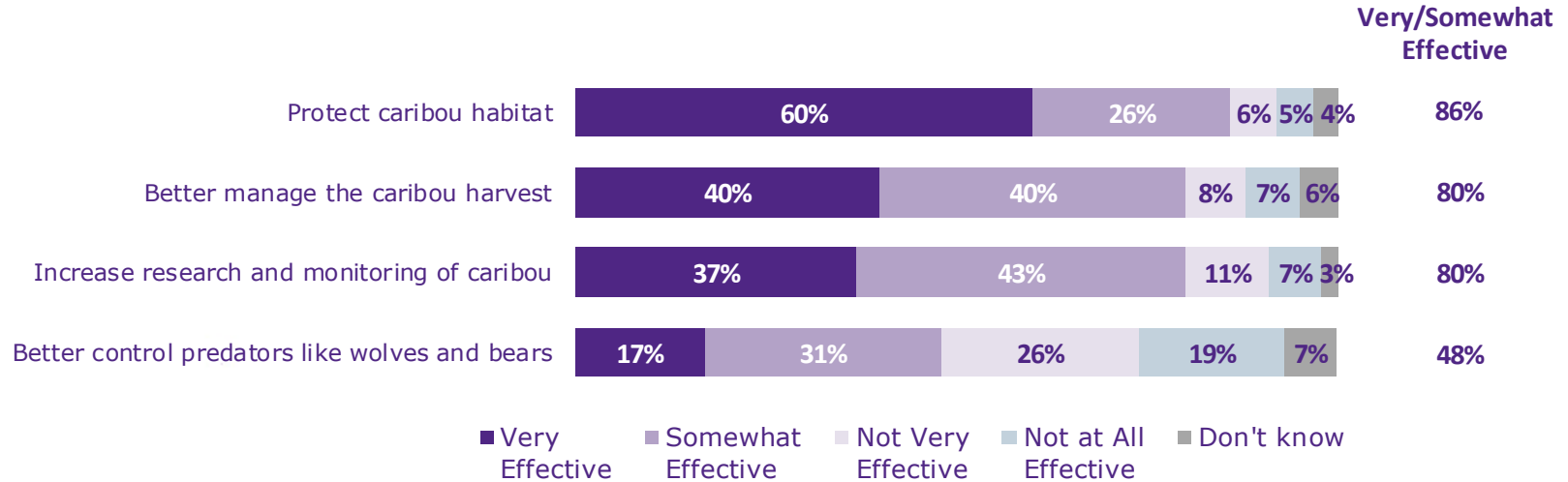
**Half (51%) of residents of the territories think their territorial government is not doing enough to protect the barren-ground caribou**, as compared to three in ten (30%) who believe it is doing the right amount.

Majorities in all regions except Yukon (45%) say their territorial government is not doing enough on this issue.

Q10. Do you think your territorial government is doing too much, not enough, or about the right amount, to protect barren-ground caribou?



# Effectiveness of approaches to protecting barren-ground caribou



**Residents of the territories are most convinced that an effective way to protect barren-ground caribou is to protect its habitat** (86% effective overall, 60% very effective). Fewer believe better management of the caribou harvest (40% very effective) and increasing research and monitoring (37%) will be as effective.

Residents are least convinced of the value of efforts to control predators (48% overall, 17% very effective). Notably however, Indigenous residents are more likely to believe this approach will be effective (58%) than are non-Indigenous residents (37%).

*Q11 Do you think each of the following steps is likely to be a very, somewhat, not very or not at all effective way for governments to protect barren-ground caribou?*