

Open Letter to Ministry of Natural Resources

My name is Nick Sevastian. I understand that there are more important issues that our Government has but I feel it is our responsibility as hunters to bring our opinion and observations regarding the way our institution MNR works in order to improve the work they do for the conservation of our country's environment, wildlife resources and the public at large.

While our hunting group recognizes the achievements of MNR as it relates the reintroduction of turkey populations in Ontario and turkey hunting seasons or introducing the spring bear hunt we would like to point out some of the decisions and actions of the MNR that in our opinion go against the MNR mission, hunters and the public interest. We also want to propose measures that MNR can take to increase moose population without hurting moose hunters and business that caters to moose hunters in Northern Ontario.

1. Forced introduction of woodland caribou.

While woodland caribou was designated as [threatened](#) in 2002 by the [Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada](#) with populations found farther north than the historic habitat, MNR decided to reintroduce woodland caribou in Northern Ontario. In essence this is a good thing, however, did MNR considered the following?

1.a **"The biggest risk to caribou is industrial development, which fragments their habitat and exposes them to greater predation"** according to **Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) and the David Suzuki Foundation.**

This suggests that with all the activities currently taking place in Northern Ontario, namely logging, development, road building, etc., the woodland caribou will have difficulty establishing in the areas the MNR wants to introduce it.

Another factor is the "Global warming" that brings warmer weather further North pushing the woodland caribou habitat North rather than South.

1.b While hunting in WMU 15B and 21A (if other hunters have knowledge of other areas, please bring it forward) we see announcements of the introduction of woodland caribou in these target areas. At the same time, considerable decline of moose population is observed in the above-mentioned WMUs due, among other factors, to an increased number of moose tags allocated when compared to allocations in other areas. The hunters that go in these areas don't even see a moose, let alone harvest one. Thus, we are asking ourselves: is decimating the moose population on purpose, instead of protecting it, going to really help woodland caribou establishment with climate change afoot? Considering, it is not the moose that drove woodland caribou North. Is this experiment worth the risk of destroying the moose population in these WMU's?

1.c Another consequence of this policy is the reduction of the number of hunters in Ontario. To explain, I will say that if you go year after year in the same area (15B, 21A and maybe others) where you can

get a tag because you have a small group of hunters that will not qualify to win a tag in other WMU's and you go home empty handed after you spent a lot of money lot of hunters will give up moose hunting. This seems to be a recurring trend as we will show further.

Suggestion:

1. Give it up, unless you bring truck loads of caribou and tie them down to trees they will not come down south. Rebuild the moose population instead in these WMU's.

2. MNR policies that do not seem to help increase the moose population..

"The moose (North America) or elk (Eurasia), *Alces alces* is a member of the **New World deer subfamily** and is the largest and heaviest **extant species** in the **Deer family**" similarly to deer, " The males are **polygamous** and will seek several females to breed with." Wikipedia.

The general assumption of hunters and the general public at large is that MNR will, not only try to preserve the moose population but also to take measures to increase it hence the policy of reducing the number of tags year after year and we bought it.

The fact that the moose population is not decreasing is shown in **Moose Population Objectives Guidelines** (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/moose-population-objective-guidelines>) "The first moose population objectives in Ontario were established in the early 1980s." and "The implementation of moose population objectives and the selective harvest system resulted in an increase in the moose population from ~ 80,000 in 1980 to ~ 109,000 in 2007." Data provided by MNR confirms this:

Through time, survey estimates indicate the moose population has primarily been within the desired ecological density (15 - 35 moose per 100 km²) for Northwest Region (NWR) CEZ B (Figure 2).

