∆אל מעאיירטל Cree Nation Government Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

Whapmagoostui ·Á∧Ld°⊃Δ

Chisasibi Cらどん

Wemindji ·∆́Г° ̀┌̀

Eastmain ∆¹¬°

Waskaganish ·Þ"∆bo-°

Nemaska

Waswanipi

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Ouje-Bougoumou ▷기>d⅃

Mistissini 「いっしょ

Washaw Sibi ·ዻ፟፟

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PRESS RELEASE

CREE NATION GOVERNMENT DENOUNCES UNAUTHORIZED HUNTING OF ENDANGERED BOREAL CARIBOU AND CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Nemaska, Eeyou Istchee (February 27, 2025) – The Cree Nation Government (CNG) was recently informed and denounces unauthorized caribou hunting in the Eeyou Istchee territory, specifically in the **Nichicun and Lac Catalogne areas**. Indeed, reports were received indicating that members of the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach have recently engaged in caribou hunting in the Nichicun area, and further caribou hunting is being planned currently by Innu hunters from Matimekosh Lac-John around these same areas.

These caribou hunts are taking place within the habitat of the endangered forest-dwelling caribou from the Caniapiscau and Témiscamie herds, putting their survival at even greater risk.

The Cree Nation has long demonstrated leadership in caribou conservation, voluntarily abstaining from harvesting these vulnerable populations to support their recovery. Unauthorized hunting directly undermines these efforts and threatens the survival of these at-risk herds.

The Cree Nation Government, together with the Cree Nation of Chisasibi and the Cree Nation of Mistissini, strongly condemns these unauthorized caribou hunts, which pose a serious threat to the survival of the already vulnerable forest-dwelling caribou herds. Additionally, we have been informed that the other Innu Nations do not support the hunt currently being carried out by members of the Innu community of Matimekosh Lac-John.

The Nichicun and Lac Catalogne areas falls within the Cree Traditional territory of Mistissini, Cree Area of Interest as recognized under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (NEQA). While the Naskapi beneficiaries have the right to harvest caribou within the designated caribou zone, the Lake Nichicun and Lake Catalogne areas are clearly outside of this zone. Additionally, although some Innu individuals may have ties to the Naskapi, their JBNQA beneficiary status does not grant them caribou harvesting rights in these areas. As such, these hunts by Naskapi and Innu hunters are unauthorized and deeply concerning.

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"I acknowledge the cultural importance of caribou hunting to the Innu, and I understand the challenges they face. However, we cannot allow these unauthorized hunts to jeopardize years of conservation efforts that other communities and nations, including ours, have made. For many years, the Cree Nation have invested much effort to protect these vulnerable herds, and the sacrifices made by our communities are now at risk. These hunts threaten the caribou's survival and undermine the trust and cooperation that we have all worked to build. I call for an immediate end to these activities and urge all to respect the collective efforts being made to protect these caribou herds." – Chief Michael Petawabano, Cree Nation of Mistissini

The Cree Nation is deeply concerned by the recent unauthorized caribou hunting activities, especially given the longstanding relationships fostered through our shared commitment to caribou conservation, particularly during the *Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Round Table* discussions. These efforts, along with the *Traditional Mutual Understanding on the Harvest of Caribou in Cree Traditional Territory of Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee*, led to the establishment of an authorization process between nations, that is now being ignored. Due to the declining health of the Leaf River Herd, the *Traditional Mutual Understanding* was not renewed this year.

The Cree Nation has not authorized any caribou hunting within its territory this year in the interest of conservation and requests the cooperation of all communities and hunters in respecting these efforts. These unauthorized hunts not only undermine our conservation efforts but also jeopardize the trust and cooperation that exist between our nations.

Urgent Call for Immediate Action

The Cree Nation Government urges all hunters and communities to respect conservation measures and immediately cease all hunting activities in the Nichicun and Lac Catalogne areas.

To protect these endangered herds, we call on Quebec Wildlife Protection to:

- Immediately intervene to stop unauthorized hunting in the Nichicun and Lac Catalogne areas.
- Conduct aerial patrols to investigate and monitor the situation.
- Coordinate with Eeyou Istchee Land Keepers and Wildlife Protection Assistants, who are ready to assist as needed.

Safeguarding boreal caribou is a shared responsibility that requires urgent and coordinated action from all nations. The Cree Nation Government expects immediate intervention to prevent further harm on these vulnerable herds.

Gouvernement de la Nation Crie

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