

ORDER – Wildlife Habitat Area
6-333

Northern Caribou – Skeena-Stikine, Morice TSAs

This order is given under the authority of sections 9 (2) and 10 (1) of the *Government Actions Regulation* (B.C. Reg. 582/04).

The Deputy Minister of Environment orders that:

1. the wildlife habitat area (WHA) shown in the map in the attached Schedule A (6-822) and boundaries contained in the GIS file *twha_bc* are established;
2. the WHA is established for northern caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*);
3. the general wildlife measures (GWMs) outlined in Schedule 1 are established for the WHA in the attached Schedule A and boundaries contained in the GIS file *twha_bc*;
4. for woodlot licences, GWM five (5) only applies;
5. where there is a discrepancy between the WHA boundaries as shown in the attached Schedule A and the GIS file *twha_bc*, the boundaries as detailed in the GIS file will take precedent. The centre point of the line on the map denoting the WHA is what establishes the boundary;
6. pursuant to section 7(3) of the *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation* (FPPR) the person(s) required to prepare a forest stewardship plan are hereby exempted from the obligation to prepare results or strategies in relation to the objective set out in section 7(1) of the FPPR for Telkwa caribou; and
7. where LRMP designated management zones exist for: Special Management Zone 1 and 2 areas, Ecosystem Networks of Core Ecosystems and Landscape Corridors, No Timber Harvest Zones, the Thautil Gosnell and Morice River High Biodiversity Emphasis Management Corridors and the Bulkley River No Timber Harvesting Area; their LRMP management direction will apply. These areas are exempted from WHA#6-333 governance.

Definitions

Words and expressions not defined in this order have the meaning given to them in the *Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)* and the regulations made there under, unless context indicates otherwise.

Schedule 1—General Wildlife Measures

(1)Telkwa Caribou No Harvest Zone.

Within the No Harvest Zone, primary forestry activities will not result in the loss of vegetative cover. Timber extraction is not permitted.

(2)Englemann Spruce Subalpine Fir (ESSF)

Within ESSF polygons primary forestry activities will result in:

- a. more than 60% of the area being more than 80 years old;
- b. less than 28% of the area being younger than 40 years old;
- c. large areas of inactivity over a rotation where forest harvesting is permitted.
- d. within block retention or wildlife tree patches designed to focus on key caribou features including, but not limited to, mature forest conditions, wetlands, meadows, lichen bearing stands , and poles and saplings for security cover and to reduce moose browse and forage. Retention areas will maintain areas with terrestrial lichens, in-stand pockets of arboreal lichen abundance and lichen propagation trees;
- e. establishment of non-roaded forested buffers around forested and non-forested wetland and meadow complexes greater than 5 ha in size;
- f. treed reserves between roads, cut blocks and easily accessible subalpine habitat to limit snow machine and ATV access and also provide for screening and security cover for caribou; and

Within ESSF plan road access to minimize the amount of accessible roads and trail to promote seclusion and human/predator avoidance. Any non main roads and in block roads must be deactivated as per the FPPR 82(1) to a sufficient state to prevent motorized vehicle access within one year following completion of timber harvesting.

(3)Sub Boreal Spruce mc (SBSmc)

Within SBS mc polygons, primary forestry activities will result in:

- a. more than 60% of the area being more than 80 years old;
- b. less than 28% of the area being younger than 40 years old;
- c. large areas of inactivity over a rotation where forest harvesting is permitted.
- d. within block retention or wildlife tree patches designed to focus on key caribou features including, but not limited to, mature forest conditions, wetlands, meadows, lichen bearing stands , and poles and saplings for security cover and to reduce moose browse and forage. Retention areas will maintain areas with terrestrial lichens, in-stand pockets of arboreal lichen abundance and lichen propagation trees;
- e. establishment of non-roaded forested buffers around forested and non-forested wetland and meadow complexes greater than 5 ha in size;

Within SBS mc plan road access to minimize the amount of accessible roads and trail to promote seclusion and human/predator avoidance. Any non main roads and in block roads must be deactivated as per the FPPR 82(1) to a sufficient state to prevent motorized vehicle access within one year following completion of timber harvesting.

(4) Sub Boreal Spruce dk (SBSdk)

Within the ESSF& SBS timber harvesting areas provide for:

- a. more than 45% of the area being more than 80 years old;
- b. less than 39% of the area being younger than 40 years old;
- c. large areas of inactivity over a rotation where forest harvesting is permitted.
- d. within block retention or wildlife tree patches designed to focus on key caribou features including, but not limited to, mature forest conditions, wetlands, meadows, lichen bearing stands, and poles and saplings for security cover and to reduce moose browse and forage. Retention areas will maintain areas with terrestrial lichens, in-stand pockets of arboreal lichen abundance and lichen propagation trees;
- e. establishment of non-roaded forested buffers around forested and non-forested wetland and meadow complexes greater than 5 ha in size;

Within SBS dk plan road access to minimize the amount of accessible roads and trail to promote seclusion and human/predator avoidance. Any non main roads and in block roads must be deactivated as per the FPPR 82(1) to a sufficient state to prevent motorized vehicle access within one year following completion of timber harvesting.

(5) Woodlots

Within Woodlot licences, primary forestry activities will result in:

- a. more than 30% stand retention of trees 80 years of age or older at all times; and
- b. small openings, 1 to 3 ha in size with a maximum opening size of 5 ha.

Appendix 1– General Information

The following information is intended to provide background information and support to the legal order establishing WHA 6-153. This appendix is not part of the legal order.

1. As per section 2(2) of the *Government Actions Regulation*, the order entitled “ORDER – Wildlife Habitat Area # 6-333” does not apply in respect of:
 - a. any of the following entered into before the order takes effect:
 - i. a cutting permit;
 - ii. a road permit;
 - iii. a timber sale licence that does not provide for cutting permits;
 - iv. a forestry licence to cut issued by a timber sales manager under section 47.6(3) of the *Forest Act*;
 - v. subject to subsection (3), a minor tenure.
 - b. a declared area;
 - c. areas described in section 196(1) of the FRPA; and
 - d. areas referred to in section 110 of the FPPR.

In these instances the requirement to comply with the order and the general wildlife measures does not apply.

2. Authority to consider an exemption from these general wildlife measures is provided in Section 92(1) of the *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation*. An exemption may be provided if the Minister’s delegate is satisfied that the intent of the general wildlife measure will be achieved or that compliance with the provision is not practicable, given the circumstances or conditions applicable to a particular area.
3. An exemption application should be submitted to the Minister’s delegate (Regional Manager–Ministry of Environment) with a rationale describing the nature of the problem and options to integrate caribou habitat conservation with proposed forestry practices. This submission will assist in timely consideration of the matter, and will inform the conditions, if any, of the exemption that may be granted prior to commencement of activities.

4. Salvage of dead timber (non-infectious) resulting from severe natural disturbance may be proposed as an exemption if the proposal is a net benefit to caribou as opposed to taking no action.
5. Specified mature and old forest retention rates are not applicable to the LRMP designated management zone outlined on this Order, page 1, heading number 6. Target mature and old forest retention rates are applicable to areas outside of these LRMP zones within WHA #6-333. Spatial areas of retention of mature and old forest should be planned and designed so they are equally distributed across ESSF&SBS management zones within the WHA.
6. For providing for large areas of inactivity over a rotation where forest development is permitted within ESSF and SBS management zones, planning and prescribing foresters should manage on a 120 year rotation or greater whereby a minimum of one third of the management zone operating area is maintained within large undisturbed contiguous management blocks for extended time periods (40 years or more). Where practicable time frames of inactivity should be extended beyond 40 years. Forestry roads within targeted areas of inactivity should be assessed and plans implemented to minimize vehicle road access within them.
7. Prescribing foresters should assess block design, road layout options and caribou habitat value in making their best determination whether to follow ESSF or SBS management direction for resource development activities occurring within the Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic zone.
8. Protect the integrity of forested and non-forested wetland and meadow complexes by establishing non-roaded forested buffers of 100 metres wide or larger as necessary to provide adequate screening to permit caribou movement with security cover adjacent to these complexes. Single tree removal or partial cutting practices are permissible within forested buffers outside of the wetland (W1) reserve zone.
9. Stand level Wildlife Tree Patches (WTP) or in-block retention percentages should follow higher level plan Biodiversity landscape unit targets or TSA LRMP WTP target percentages. Block sizes should approximate natural disturbance regimes.
10. Best practices of leaving high quality potential caribou foraging sites should be employed in planning layout and harvest design.
11. Further guidance on management practices for the Telkwa Mountains Caribou Herd can be obtained from the *Interim Harvesting Guidelines For The Telkwa Caribou Herd Recovery Program Area* dated 1999 and approved by the Telkwa Caribou Herd Recovery Program standing committee.
12. Woodlot licence holders should manage towards a 120 year rotation with a minimum of one third of the stand being maintained as 80 years of age or older. Single tree and group selection harvesting techniques are recommended. Where operationally feasible; woodlot tenure holders are encouraged to employ techniques or strategies related to increasing or retaining terrestrial and arboreal lichen and providing for wetland, meadow or roadside screening as best possible.