

Thank you John,

I think your position is quite clear and has always remained consistent. And yes, we are in agreement on the causes of caribou endangerment. Respectfully, however, we are not in agreement that killing wolves is a necessary harm that we need to accept and endure because of the remote chance that it might benefit caribou. At best, that's a very precarious and questionable ends justifies the means argument.

Here are a few additional brief thoughts regarding some of your other points and questions.

- Ostensibly to protect caribou, the BC government has been engaging in wolf sterilization experiments and killing for more than a decade, although these programs have not resulted in any measurable benefits for caribou, (as stated in the BC Wolf Management Plan). Alberta's wolf cull, as reported in the Canadian Journal of Zoology in Nov, 2014, failed to achieve any improvement in Boreal Woodland Caribou adult female survival, or any improvement in calf survival, and as such had no effect on population dynamics.
- Since it takes hundreds of years for a biomass of tree lichen to be adequate to sustain mountain caribou populations, deforestation is a major factor in the decline of caribou numbers as well as their failure to recover. Habitat quality is the most important determinant of the dynamics of populations of large mammalian herbivores and omnivores. Predator control efforts are likely to succeed in increasing prey populations only if sufficient habitat of adequate quality exists to support the expanded populations— that is, only when prey populations are well below the environmental carrying capacity.
- You are willing to conduct an experiment that involves killing hundreds of wolves, and over the longer term necessary to re-establish habitat, likely thousands of wolves. Moreover, you want to kill wolves using methods that are inhumane (i.e. aerial gunning). And this is all to determine if a particular endangered caribou ecotype (not an endangered species) can be rescued from its likely fate of extinction.
- I think the question you should be asking is whether it is ecologically, ethically, or even economically defensible to kill large numbers of predators to save caribou. The answer on all counts is no: there are no reasonable ecological reasons to kill wolves, there are no valid economic reasons, and clearly there are no tenable ethical reasons.
- Finally, In making moral judgments, people tend to regard harm as more serious if it is deliberate rather than unintentional. Both recreational and institutional killing of wolves are rightly viewed as more serious acts than unintentional killing. Similarly, people may regard harm as less significant if done for a seemingly worthwhile purpose, which appears to be your position. This is a slippery slope, however, because principled justifications are often used to sanctify harmful and unethical practices by investing them with worthy purposes, which appears to be your rationale for killing wolves.

Regards,

Paul