

Moose Transcripts

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Simmons/Psyllakis - antlerless moose hunt

By CBC Daybreak Kamloops

CBYK, 12-Jun-2020 06:42

Shelley Joyce: A cow **moose** is a female **moose**. The BC government is now allowing hunters to take more of them.

The expanded hunt for cow **moose** was announced last week as a roundabout way of protecting endangered mountain caribou. So the thinking is, if there are fewer **moose** to support predators, there will be fewer predators to attack the caribou.

Dan Simmons doesn't like it. For the past five years, he's been raising money to put up billboards calling for an end to the hunting of cow **moose**. We reached him at his home in Williams Lake.

Dan Simmons: Good morning. How are you today?

Joyce: I'm very well, thank you. Dan, why do you want to end the cow **moose** hunt in BC?

Simmons: Well, I want to, personally, because I've been watching over the years, the decline of our **moose** population like everybody else that I know. We just talked about it for years and decade. It's just our **moose** population is in a serious decline, no matter what the ministry is saying.

Their population has dropped tremendously, 50 to 80% in some places. They're saying now that they're actually recovering a little bit. I believe it's due a lot because of the Cow **Moose** Sign project awareness. People are starting to understand. There's a lot more respect going on. Management ain't doing the job, but yeah, just a decline in our population is the biggest reason.

Joyce: What kind of, like, how do you know? Where do you get your statistics that say that the population's so low?

Simmons: I get my statistics from being living here all my life, basically, and the people that I know. I spent my whole life in the Caribou-Chilcotin, as well as many other people my age. I'm a senior now and we've all seen the population at real high levels like 20 years ago. Now they've just totally declined.

We finally got a survey done this year in the east of Williams Lake. They say they're stable but they counted like 380 **moose** or something. You know, a winter range, which is very low numbers, in my view, and a lot of other people's minds as well.

Joyce: Let me ask you something. A cow **moose** is a female **moose**, right?

Simmons: A cow **moose** is a female, yes.

Joyce: You put a fair amount of time into this Cow **Moose** sign project over the past five years. What exactly is the project? What are you hoping to do with it?

Simmons: Right now, I'm hoping to have [inaudible] 100% closed in this province.

Joyce: Where do you put your signs? Let me ask you that.

Simmons: The signs started off with a half a dozen or so and we just put them in a gas station or in a business, places like that out in the forest, out on a tree or something like that.

Joyce: So is a sign like that enough to stop a hunter from shooting a cow **moose**?

Simmons: Well, I don't know. I think it keeps them aware that people are actually out there watching and hoping they don't see it happening. They're not happy about it. It's an educational campaign, awareness campaign to hopefully try to stop them, to change their mind on that decision.

Joyce: Now the province has gone the other way. They're increasing the number of cow **moose** that can be killed this season. They say that that is because they are trying to recover the mountain caribou population. The theory is that the **moose** numbers go down, prey animals like wolves will also go down, allowing the caribou numbers to grow. What do you think of that plan? Does that make sense?

Simmons: Absolutely not. It makes no sense to me. I think it's insane. I think, you know, as far as them, what they quoted in there as removing a few **moose** is what they called, that few **moose** is about 400 **moose** in one area -- that's throughout the province, but in one area in the region for the removing the few **moose** is 212 cow and calf **moose**, which they're quoting will starve, if they cull or kill these **moose**, it'll starve the wolves to save the caribou, which is totally not acceptable -- not even remotely close to anything that we believe as First Nations.

We've got We gotta Williams Lake Sporting Association involved and they're just, they don't get it. You'll ever starve out a wolf. A wolf will just continue to go wherever he can get something. My opinion, as far as there's the more **moose**, the less they are going to prey on caribou. If they take out these **moose** in this area, then what are the **moose**, the wolves going to eat? They're not going to starve. They're going to go eat caribou. It just doesn't make any sense.

Joyce: So let me ask you something. I know you've been putting up these signs hoping to deter hunters from shooting cow **moose**. What else are you doing to try to stop the cow **moose** hunt increase?

Simmons: Well, I talk, too. We've done a lot of work with First Nations in the last two years in your region, Thompson-Nicola, as well. They're signing MOUs, memorandums of understanding. They're working with me as well, with the Conservation Officer Service and trying to educate everybody in this province about the importance of the **moose**.

They're signing MOUs prohibiting the harvest of antler-less **moose** for the community members. Then our ministry opens up limited-entry tags. The First Nations in your region and throughout the province are quite upset regarding this. Outfitters of BC, Guide & Outfitters Association has sent in this letter condemning this. There's been a lot of support, like you say, against their decision.

Joyce: All right. Well, Dan, it's been good to catch up with you. Thanks for filling us in on this.

Simmons: Thank you kindly. Take care.

Joyce: That's Dan Simmons, behind the Cow **Moose** Sign project. We reached him in Williams Lake. The provincial government says lowering **moose** numbers in certain areas can help grow struggling mountain caribou populations. Jennifer Psyllakis is BC director of wildlife and habitat.

Jennifer Psyllakis: Harvesting cow-calf, we're working hard to recover caribou. We're monitoring this very closely. We're somewhat on the forefront of the research with respect to how successful it will be for caribou recovery. We are monitoring that very closely and learning, as we do, these actions to better understand what options we have as wildlife managers and species at risk specialists to inform future decisions.

Donaldson: Moose and caribou wildly mismanaged by former government

A letter by minister Doug Donaldson

LETTERS/OPINION 100 Mile Free Press

Jun. 11, 2020 8:30 a.m

I was both intrigued and puzzled to read the comments by MLAs Donna Barnett and John Rustad in a recent Liberal Caucus news release: “NDP confirms plan to cull moose calves and their mothers.” Barnett and Rustad criticize our government for a proposed small increase to limited-entry hunting authorizations.

I was intrigued that they chose this issue in the first place because their track record on wildlife management, while they were in government, was abysmal. And, I was puzzled, because under their watch, far more moose cows and calves were killed when they were in government. In fact, moose cow and calf harvest are down dramatically over the past decade – it was almost 600 animals in 2011, and last year just under 80 animals. A huge decrease by any measure.

Unlike the former government, properly managing wildlife is a key priority for this government. That’s why licensed hunting of cows and calves is concentrated only within the Mountain Caribou Recovery Areas in the Parsnip Valley and northwest of Revelstoke. Reducing moose abundance in these areas is expected to reduce predator populations, mainly wolves, and consequently reduce predation on threatened mountain caribou. In 2019, outside of caribou recovery areas there were only six moose cow/calf harvested province-wide. The plan for 2020/21 is similar. Approximately 80-90 per cent of all cow and calf moose harvested by licensed hunters come from caribou recovery areas. In 88 per cent of the province occupied by moose, cow and calf moose hunting is not allowed.

The irony in this is that MLA Barnett acknowledges that this has been going on for more than five years. Five years ago, MLA Barnett was a parliamentary secretary in the Liberal government and MLA Rustad was a cabinet minister. If either of them raised concerns about the cow/calf hunt at that time, they didn’t say it publicly. And if they didn’t raise concerns about it then, it’s awfully hypocritical of them to raise it now.

More to the point: why do we have to protect caribou by managing other species like moose and wolves? Once again, wildlife mismanagement by the former Liberal government. The southern mountain caribou was listed as a threatened wildlife species by the federal government in 2003. What did the former government do? At best, a patchwork approach that no one thought was working. It wasn't until the NDP formed government in 2017 that real action was taken to try and save this iconic species.

Through the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program, we committed \$47 million over five years to support caribou recovery, using a comprehensive, science-based approach. These initiatives include herd planning (a collaborative approach involving Indigenous Nations, industry, stakeholders and governments), habitat management, protection and restoration, maternity penning programs, a supplemental feeding program, animal relocations, predator management and other measures. Moose and caribou. Whatever the species, our government won't take advice from the former Liberal government on wildlife management.

Doug Donaldson

Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Peter Milobar SOUND OFF: Logic behind government's moose cull makes little sense

by MLA Peter Milobar

Jun 11, 2020

HOW WILL KILLING MOOSE CALVES AND MOTHERS save the endangered mountain caribou? This is a question on the minds of many British Columbians because and it's the latest misguided step in the NDP government's failed caribou recovery plan. Needless to say, the logic is a bit difficult to follow. The thinking behind declaring open season on baby moose and their mothers is as follows: our B.C. caribou populations are in worrying decline; wolves are one of the primary predators of our caribou; wolves also eat moose, so by killing more moose we will effectively reduce wolf populations and therefore save the caribou.

It doesn't take a conservationist to understand why this plan is a bit flawed. I am by no means a wolf expert, but I don't believe them to be very picky eaters. If a wolf can't find a moose, I am sure they would be more than happy to hunt more caribou if need be, meaning that this plan runs the risk of backfiring and endangering our caribou populations even further. It is also a matter of ethics and whether this feels like the right action or not. I fully support controlled game hunting in this province, but there are so

many other actions we could take to save caribou that are far more effective than killing moose calves and mothers.

But most importantly, this action is a contentious issue for so many British Columbians because it goes beyond just saving moose or even the caribou and highlights the growing regional divide in our province. Our rural communities are often ignored and kept away from the consultation table even on decisions that impact their regions. The caribou recovery plan has been a prime example of this.

Ever since they took office, the NDP have negotiated the caribou recovery plan behind closed doors, leaving northern MLAs and the public largely out of the consultation process. Even when the NDP finally opened public consultation and British Columbians expressed their deep concerns that the current caribou recovery plan would impact jobs and the economy in the North, the NDP steamed ahead with little consideration for what they were putting at risk.

Even when the BC Liberals introduced a petition of more than 12,000 signatures to the B.C. Legislature outlining their constituents' disappointment with how John Horgan and the NDP were handling the consultation process, no meaningful action taken. The public consultation process was so poorly carried out that the NDP's own appointed Community Liason resigned in protest.

This lack of transparency and community engagement is exactly why thousands of British Columbians have signed a petition to stop the NDP from allowing the culling of baby moose and their mothers.

If you would like to see this government listen to our communities and develop a plan that will effectively save our caribou, you can add your voice to the petition that I've linked to on my MLA Facebook page.

Let's tell the NDP to listen to our communities and save the caribou — without sacrificing baby moose.

Psyllakis - antlerless moose hunt

By CBC Daybreak North

CBYG, 10-Jun-2020 06:43

Carolina de Ryk: Yesterday, we told you about a provincial proposal to allow for more hunting of antlerless **moose**. It's part of the effort to increase the number of mountain caribou, but the idea is not sitting well with some conservationists.

Yesterday, I spoke to the head of the Cow **Moose** Sign Project. Dan Simmons has been working to end the antlerless **moose** hunt altogether. Here's from our conversation yesterday.

Dan Simmons: The work that we put in over the last five years or more has gained so much support and education and awareness to people and many stakeholders, First Nations. And we've had so much success with this program.

Then Doug Donaldson and our ministry come up with this idea to cull a bunch of cow and calf **moose**, specifically, to starve wolves to save mountain caribou herds. It is totally insane. It makes no sense and it's got a lot of people upset and mad.

De Ryk: That's Dan Simmons. Many others are speaking out as well against the provincial proposal to increase the antlerless **moose** hunt. Antlerless **moose** are both cow and calf **moose**.

To respond, I'm joined this morning by Jennifer Psyllakis, the director of wildlife and habitat for the province of BC.

You heard Dan Simmons suggest that this proposal is insane. What's your reaction?

Jennifer Psyllakis: Well, I think it's really important to emphasize first to [inaudible] that in over 90% of the province where **moose** occur, there is no licensed harvest or opportunity for antlerless **moose**. So that's either the cow or calf harvest. So in most areas of the province, this does not occur with the regulatory system that we have.

De Ryk: May I interrupt? So where in the province then are people... is this proposal going to affect cow and calf **moose**?

Psyllakis: So there is a proposal to modestly increase the number of authorizations in two very localized areas in BC -- one around the Parsnip River watershed, and the other is in the Revelstoke area.

De Ryk: In the Revelstoke area, of course, there are caribou populations that are threatened. We heard from listeners and from Dan Simmons who argue, though, that **moose** populations are also dropping and more harm will come from expanding the hunt to cow and calf **moose**, even if it is just in these small areas. Why do you think lowered **moose** numbers could help caribou numbers grow?

Psyllakis: Yeah, so maybe I'll just take a little bit of a step back and talk about the goals of wildlife management from a population perspective. We generally talk about either recovering a population, enhancing a population, sustaining a population, or reducing a population. And those are sort of the different targets that we may have.

And obviously in this situation we're making extraordinary efforts to try and recover the mountain caribou. It's an endangered species. It's at risk. The populations have been declining, and so we're looking at the whole system and interaction among predator and prey.

So in these particular areas, we have also been reducing wolf populations to provide opportunity for the caribou herds to recover. While we do that, we want to sustain the **moose** populations as well so that they don't also grow and therefore attract more wolves back into the area, or recolonize the area quickly because that will put us into a sort of a never-ending cycle of having to put more effort into reducing wolves in this instance.

De Ryk: Can you explain that further? Because it would seem to me if there's less **moose** than wolf, wolves would look to caribou in an increasing way as a food source.

Psyllakis: Yeah, and so it again in these specific areas, we are also at the same time reducing wolf populations.

De Ryk: So why is there a need then to reduce **moose** ? I'm not sure I understand the connection then. If you're reducing wolves, why do you need to expand the **moose** hunt in order to protect caribou?

Psyllakis: Yeah. And to be careful with the language -- we are not, at this point in time, reducing the **moose** in those areas, but rather just trying to sustain them at the same level. Predators respond quite quickly to the availability of prey, and if there are many **moose** within the overlapping area with caribou, it won't take much time at all for wolves to move back into the area, take advantage of the **moose** and the theory there by being more wolves, more predation risk, more caribou also being predated upon by wolves.

So what we're working on is also just a multi-pronged approach, multi-species approach, where we're intensively manipulating the wolf population using hunting as an opportunity to sustain the the **moose** populations. And this is all towards that specific goal of trying to recover the caribou herds.

De Ryk: What are the long-term consequences though? If there's a sense that all **moose**, whether male or female, juvenile or mature, is fair game?

Psyllakis: Yeah, and again, we really do have a strong regulatory system in the province. And I appreciate Mr Simmons' messages and the efforts that he's making to

raise awareness about the importance of **moose** populations in this recovery. And that's consistent with our efforts in most of the range of **moose** within BC.

De Ryk: When will the final decision on cow **moose** tags be made?

Psyllakis: We're within a few weeks of that final decision.

De Ryk: And what will you be taking into consideration?

Psyllakis: The considerations that are taken into account are the population goals and the objectives that we have for the management area, as well as the previous success rates of harvest that have occurred within those areas. Those are the two primary considerations.

De Ryk: What about the concerns that have been raised by Dan Simmons and others in regards to the **moose** population?

Psyllakis: Yeah, absolutely. We do listen closely to the interests of British Columbians and stakeholders. So that will be a consideration as well. The primary driver, though, are around our science-based objectives and the population targets that we have for caribou.

Psyllakis - cow moose hunt

By CBC Daybreak South

CBTK, 10-Jun-2020 06:46

Christopher Walker: Yesterday on our program we spoke to Dan Simmons with the Cow **Moose** Sign program. He is upset about the province's plan to increase the number of cow **moose** that can be hunted this year in BC.

The province says lowering **moose** numbers in certain areas can help grow struggling mountain caribou populations.

Jennifer Psyllakis is the director of wildlife and habitat for the province of BC. Here's some of her explanation for that.

Jennifer Psyllakis: Conveying important messages, and certainly with respect to areas where **moose** populations are declining or where we're making focused efforts to increase **moose** populations, those are good messages within these very localized areas where we're working hard to recovery caribou and reduce or stabilize **moose** populations.

Harvesting cow calves is part of that equation to achieve those specific objectives for caribou recovery. We're monitoring this very closely. We're gathering information. Some

of the work is very well documented in the literature across North America. But this particular management approach, we're somewhat on the forefront of the research with respect to how successful it will be for caribou recovery. So we are monitoring that very closely and learning as we do these actions to better understand what options we have as wildlife managers and species-at-risk specialists to inform future decisions.

Walker: Jennifer Pysllakis is with the province of BC. She was talking about plans to increase the number of cow **moose** that can be hunted this year.

Simmons - antler-less moose hunt

By CBC Daybreak North

CBYG, 09-Jun-2020 07:13

Carolina de Ryk: For the past five years, the Cow **Moose** Sign project has campaigned to stop the cow **moose** hunt in BC.

The project founder, Dan Simmons, has been raising money to put up signs calling for the end of the practice, but now the province has gone the other way -- increasing the number of cow **moose** that can be killed this season.

For more, I have Dan Simmons on the phone with me. Hi, Dan.

Dan Simmons: Good morning. How are you?

De Ryk: Good, thanks. What was your reaction when you found out that more antler-less **moose** will be hunted this year?

Simmons: Well, just to say politely, shocked, disappointed, disgusted. I mean, the work that we put in over the last five years or more is getting so much support and education and awareness to people and many stakeholders, First Nations and we've had so much success with this program.

Then Doug Donaldson and our ministry come up with this idea to cull a bunch of cow and calf **moose**, specifically, to starve wolves to save mountain caribou herds. It is totally insane. It makes no sense and it's got a lot of people upset and mad. We've started a petition. Once, I wrote a letter about two weeks ago and I got immediate response from the Liberal government MLA Donna Burnett. They're all in, we're all in, they said, and they're working with the Cow **Moose** Sign project to try to stop -- not try, we're going to defeat this and stop the hunting of antler-less **moose**, starting with entry tags. They should be decreasing.

De Ryk: Meanwhile, the province says that **moose** numbers are pretty healthy across the northern hemisphere and that it is a worthwhile tradeoff to remove some **moose** in

order to save the mountain caribou. Shouldn't the province be doing whatever it can to save the mountain caribou?

Simmons: Absolutely. All species are important, but we're not going to sacrifice. We don't agree with their decision to sacrifice **moose** for mountain caribou. They gotta have a better management plan on their predators. They know that there's too many predators and they got to do something different in that relationship.

We got too many people on board that are saying their science is not working. They're dealing with science for, they say, 25 years and in the meantime, our caribou herds, our **moose** population have all declined. There's got to be a time we feel where there's gonna be a little change, some common sense.

I don't know what. They've got to do a better management plan because we're losing many of our species, our **moose** and our caribou as well.

De Ryk: What do you think the long-term effect will be if there's more **moose** hunt this year of the antler-less **moose**, whether it's cow or juvenile **moose**?

Simmons: The long term? The cow **moose**, to me, the cow **moose** shouldn't be hunted at all, or the calf **moose**. They're the next year and the year after's generation for the population growth. If we continue to harvest them, we're going to have a continued decline in population.

I've talked to the Cattleman's Association, different people, they don't manage their cattle ranches like that. They try to protect their cows and calves. The future needs more **moose**. If we harvest antler-less **moose**, we're taking away from the population. It's clearly known throughout the province by everybody that lives in the areas, their region. Everybody understands that the **moose** population is declining. Why would we kill antler-less **moose**? There's two regions in the Prince George-Omineca area this year that they've got 81 cow-calf tags in 723 and another 24 calf-only tags in 716. There's 100 **moose** in them two little areas.

It just makes me very upset. First Nations are very upset. We've had MOUs signed over the last two years. We've had five communities from the Cariboo-Chilcotin sign MOUs trying to protect the antler-less **moose** from community members. They're doing a great job education. Then our ministry comes up with an idea like this and it's just insane. They've got to remove the limited entry tags for resident hunters, step up and get this thing rolling. Everybody in the long run, I believe, will benefit from this. Just give them a chance to replenish. Don't get rid of them. I mean, they're important species.

They've been around longer than most species in our province, and the most important food source for First Nations and residents and everything over the years [inaudible] --

De Ryk: We hope to hear from somebody with the ministry tomorrow on our program in response to these concerns. Dan Simmons, what question would you like answered by the BC government regarding this decision?

Simmons: I want them just to know that we're going to fight this to the end. We're going to try to stop this antler-less hunt. We're dedicated. I have a petition online right now for people to sign. It's Help Save BC's Baby **Moose** Population. We've already had 2,000 signatures on it in the last 24 hours. We've got another day.

I've got people working in Victoria right now for the Cow **Moose** Sign project. They've been assigned and we've got a day scheduled around June 22nd, 23rd or 24th in the BC Legislature just regarding this. We're going to try to put a stop to it. I'm very optimistic we can, with the support of the outfitters, the First Nations.

We've got so much support and support letters going in to them, they're going to have some things to answer. Their science clearly is not working and it's proven. It's time for, I say, common sense and figure out something more than harvesting antler-less **moose** to save caribou.

De Ryk: Dan, thank you very much for your time. We'll be following this story closely.

Simmons: Thank you very much. I hope I got the message out and I just want everybody to know that we're in this to win and antler-less **moose** are very important for everybody in this province. We know that and we have to get smarter and try to figure out how we can increase their numbers.

De Ryk: All right. Dan Simmons, behind the Cow **Moose** Sign project, thank you again for your time.

Simmons: Thank you. Have a good day.

De Ryk: You as well. As I mentioned, we have made a request to speak to someone from the province on our show tomorrow. Your thoughts? Do you agree with the province's reasoning? What do you think about the cow **moose** hunt in BC? You can let us know -- I should say, the antler-less **moose** hunt.

Simmons - cow moose hunt

By CBC Daybreak South

CBTK, 09-Jun-2020 06:45

Chris Walker: For the past five years, the Cow **Moose** Sign Project has campaigned to stop the cow **moose** hunting in BC.

Project founder, Dan Simmons, has been raising money to put up signs calling for the end of the practice. But now that province has gone the other way, increasing the number of cow **moose** that can be killed this season. Remind us why you wanted to end the cow **moose** hunt in BC. Start.

Simmons: To start with, our **moose** population has been declining for decades and that's the reason why we started it, to bring some awareness and education to the serious decline of our provincial-wide **moose** populations. Since then, it's got tremendous support from many stakeholders, First Nations, guide outfitters, associations, just all residents -- thousands of residents -- throughout the province. Yeah.

Walker: What's the problem with hunting cow **moose**?

Simmons: The problem as far as I'm concern there, they're the main backbone of our population. If you take out the cows and the calves, then we will have no population. We have to leave them alone. It's just the right thing to do. The only way we're going to get any kind of a population back is to leave them alone. Give them a chance to rebuild the populations and we may have a chance to recover.

Walker: Now the province is allowing four hundred cow or calf **moose** to be hunted this year. How does that compare to last year?

Simmons: It compared -- from my notes last year -- about 340 last year. They've increased a substantial number in Region 4 and in Region 7. There's two areas, one in Revelstoke area, Region 4, there's two little areas of 438 and 439. They've got 212 cow calf tags for these two little zones.

They're saying they want to do it to protect -- to call the **moose**, kill the **moose**, the cow and calf **moose**. To starve the wolves, to enhance the caribou population. It's totally insane. There's no reason at all to pick on the cow **moose** to save the caribou and they will never starve out the wolves, no matter what they do.

They've been -- there's science-led programs over the last two decades, have proven that this is not working. The caribou and the **moose** are both declining, seriously declining there. We're trying to find out who's the biologist in Region 4 and how many actual caribou are left in that. We're hearing numbers like maybe 20, 30, or 40 animals and, so, clearly, what they've been doing over the last decades, is not working.

I think it's time for common sense. We have so much support right now. First Nations and guide outfitters and hunters -- resident hunters -- just all kinds of people that are fairly knowledgeable about all of this, and they're not listening. There's more predators. The predators -- the wolves and a lot of the predators are getting out of control. They know that. They've got to do something about the predators and not pick on the cow **moose**, one of the most important species in our province.

They're calling for a call, which they say is a call, and it's just totally not acceptable. We've put in a petition -- I put in a petition with the work of the BC Liberal party, they got my last note, my last letter, and they've responded immediately and working to protect and stop this antler-less **moose** hunt. There's a petition online right now, help save BC's baby **moose** population.

There's been over 2,000 people in the last 24 hours sign on the petition. We're going to take this right to the end and try to stop this hunting of antler-less **moose** in the province 100% be everybody. I've got First Nations working so hard in our region; Chief Willie Sellars' First Nation communities, just in our region, five alone have signed MOUs to protect cow and the antler-less **moose** in our region and our government comes up with an idea to kill them.

We've got to have a better management plan. What they've been doing is not working and we've got tons of letters of support going in to them as we speak from First Nations communities, guide outfitters, Williams Lake Sportmen's Association, gun clubs, and all kinds of letters sent to them.

Walker: How optimistic are you that you can change the government's mind?

Simmons: Me and my wife have been working on this for over five years and we're having lots of success. There were times when I would say it's not working, but it's working. I'm very optimistic. Right now I'm mad, I am disappointed in the government and the ministry and what they're doing. They're not listening to me and all the people that have supported this project and they're going backwards on this plan. I'm very optimistic, I told Chief Willie Sellars yesterday at a meeting, we're going to defeat this. He said, 100% we have to stop the killing of antler-less **moose**.

Walker: It's good to talk to you again this morning. Thanks very much for joining us.

Simmons: Thank you, and just remind people there's a petition. It's online and if people could check it out, I'd really like to have as much support as possible. And just so you know, we've got a date booked around June 22-24 at the BC Legislature. One full day is booked for the Cow **Moose** Sign Project, you can probably see it on TV. We're going to win this battle so check it out and stay positive. This is for the future of **moose** in our province, for every stakeholder who is concerned. It's not against hunting or hunters, it's an awareness program that is working and we've got to get our government and ministry in the right direction.

Walker: Daybreak does have calls into the province for an interview and we will bring you their response as soon as we can. He mentioned a couple of times a Chief Willie Sellars who is the chief of the Williams Lake Indian Band. [xrz]

Zeeman - moose harvest

By CKNW Mike Smyth

CKNW, 08-Jun-2020 11:21

Mike Smyth: This is interesting about where this is going now because you have the Liberals now really pushing this issue around this **moose** hunt. So they're saying that the NDP are allowing baby **moose** to be hunted. They've got a petition going to stop it.

Now, you have to look carefully at the rationale of what the government is doing here. The government is saying they're trying to save the caribou. So what they're saying is that if you take out some **moose**, if you remove some of the **moose**, that is a species that the wolves will prey upon. That potentially reduces the wolf population and helps save the caribou. So, looking at the government's rationale on it -- they say to remove a few **moose**, a species that's population is secure, it assists in saving another species from extinction the caribou.

So there's connect the dots on this thing. Let's check in with Jesse Zeeman about this. Now he is director of Fish and Wildlife Restoration with the BC Wildlife Federation. Okay, what do you think of this issue? Give me your take on it.

Jesse Zeeman: There's two parallel issues. One is around **moose** and one is around caribou. The first issue is around caribou. And there's been a lot of discussion about caribou in BC. The southern-bound caribou are endangered, and the way the caribou story goes is that caribou do really poorly around predators. They live in habitats where typically they don't get a lot of interaction with predators. And so when we introduce people, we introduce things like logging [inaudible].

And with logging comes **moose** and a lot of loose. And with a lot of **moose** comes a lot of wolves. In southern BC, we also have increases in deer and elk population. With them comes cougars and as a result of having more predators on the landscape, caribou -- by accident almost -- end up getting killed by predators and their population declines.

So the solution to that is to manage **moose** and wolves so that you're managing the parts of the system that you can control to help caribou dig themselves out of this big population deficit. So that's kind of the caribou story in a nutshell. And so in the past what the government did is they just focused on reducing the **moose** population. Of course, that's very risky because you can have a number of wolves that are still on the landscape, and they end up eating caribou as a result.

The scientists, for years -- decades actually -- have recommended that if you're going to start to try to take care of caribou, you're going to have to, first of all, take care of caribou habitat, which we've done a poor job of in BC. And then under that you're going to have to manage these increasing **moose** populations and increasing wolf populations.

So that's kind of where we're at now in most of the caribou recovery areas. Smyth: Right. So this is for some people it may sound kind of counterintuitive. Or it's a difficult kind of connection to make. That if you harvest a bunch of what they call an antlerless **moose** is essentially a female **moose** or a **moose** calf, right?

Zeeman: Yeah, and so in wildlife ecology, just like in people, we know that females and young are what drive the population. So if you're managing wildlife or you're managing a population, then you have to manage females and young. That's how wildlife management works. It works with all animals.

Smyth: Right. So if you make an argument that if you take out some **moose** that will result in fewer wolves. That will result in fewer will wolf predation on the caribou. Why not just take out the wolves?

Zeeman: Well, you have to do both because there comes a point where you can't control the system. Like right now, you have these systems that are complicated, but they're not extremely complicated. So if we look at other places like Alberta where they have extremely high amounts of resource extraction, they can't keep up by managing wolves, so there's a balance that has to be found around keeping the **moose** population in check and not letting it go too big. Because there comes a point where you have so many **moose** on the landscape or so many different animals that you can't actually keep track of the wolf population.

So if you manage the **moose** population and try to keep it stabilized and you manage the wolf population, the caribou can probably dig themselves out and get ahead. If all you do is just manage one piece of the equation, something else is going to come and it's going to bite you in the long run. So you kind of have to have your finger on all the levers.

Smyth: Okay, Jesse, we just got a minute left here. You're a hunter. Your group represents BC hunters. Are you guys opposed to this this harvest of these **moose** calves and **moose** cows?

Zeeman: I think the challenge in all this is that **moose** in British Columbia are in really bad shape. In caribou-recovery zones where managing wolves, were seeing **moose** populations take off. And I think what hunters are so angry about is that **moose** in deep trouble in the rest of the province outside of these caribou-recovery zones.

Resident hunters, people in BC, used to be able to put 12,000 plus **moose** in their freezer every year. We're now down well below 5,000 -- so more than a 50% cut. And that's where the problem lies, and that's what nobody's talking about is, in BC, you know, we have government spent a whole bunch of money in 2016, putting a recovery report together to take care of **moose**, and nothing has happened since.

So you have hunters that are really upset because they're seeing this resource being wiped out and no one is doing anything for it. That, however, is somewhat separate from the caribou recovery issue because caribou are also endangered, and I guess the big picture issue in BC is that we're really doing a terrible job of taking care of fish and wildlife.

Milobar - moose harvest

By CKNW Mike Smyth

CKNW, 08-Jun-2020 11:07

Mike Smyth: I find this a very interesting story. The BC government has approved some **moose** harvesting numbers for this year that includes the harvesting of some mother and **moose** calves; so baby **moose**. Now, why is this being done? Well, if you look at the government's plan here, they are concerned about the mountain caribou, which is threatened species in British Columbia.

So here here is the logic on this. If you take out some of the **moose** that means there will be less **moose** to be preyed upon by wolves, which will mean less wolves that will be preying on the caribou. So let's follow the bouncing ball here. You reduce some of the **moose** to get rid of the wolves to save the caribou. Does this make sense?

Let's talk about this now with my guest, Peter Milobar, Liberal MLA, Liberal critic. I'm taking a look at the petition that you guys have started on this issue, on change.org, and it says save the baby **moose**, stop John Horgan's plan, and I'm looking at is it OK to kill a baby **moose**. John Horgan and the NDP think so, even though most numbers are under threat. The NDP government is declared open season on baby **moose** and their mothers.

OK, you've got to explain this to me, Peter. What is going on and why is this happening?

Peter Milobar: Well, your opening summed it up in terms of the government's rationale for it, and then certainly there are biologists who feel if you limit **moose** numbers you'll help caribou populations. There's others that prefer to look at predator management in terms of bears, cougars, wolves, those types of scenarios. So essentially what the government is done is they've opened up a limited entry hunt this year for an increased number, a number I don't think we've seen any modern time to go after mother **moose** and baby **moose**.

So any hunters I've talked to in my region, anyone that I know that hunts certainly have always maintained that if you see some mother or cub or baby, of any type, especially the ungulates, you should not be targeting them if you're out hunting because that's ultimately how you learn to keep herds healthy with numbers.

Smyth: Yeah, but when you take a look at the science of this it's all based on what's a sustainable population and in the areas where this hunt is being allowed the government is saying the **moose** population is doing well so that it can sustain this kind of harvest. So they've issued -- the government says they'll be 400 tags issued for what they call antlerless **moose** -- a **moose** cow, a **moose** mother, or a baby **moose**, I guess -- and that that will be allowed.

The BC Wildlife Association expects maybe a 25% hunter success rate there. So maybe 100 of these **moose** will be harvested, which they say is about 0.0007% of the **moose** population in BC.

Milobar: Yeah, and the bottom line is it comes down to whether this feels right or not. There's the biologist side of the advice to government, but the reality is, I think, this

really ties into why you're hearing people react the way they are, is the way John Horgan has handled the whole caribou file, and Minister Donaldson, has been nothing more than a shamble.

It's incredible when you think of where we were in terms of the land use planning and the negotiations that happened behind closed doors with no one knowing, they had to bring in Blair Lekstrom. That fell a part, that process all apart. Now we have this limited entry hunt brought in with no forewarning or discussion of any consequence, and, again, at the centre of it is the Premier and Minister Donaldson. This file has been bungled along for the last two and a half, three years, and I think this is just yet another flash point to that.

I know on social media there's all sorts of hunters that are posting pictures of campaigns to save the **moose**, in terms of antlerless **moose** and their calves, and they're advocating that people should -- if they get the limited entry hunt draw they should be tearing that card up to prevent this from happening.

Smyth: But you understand the -- the rationale of it is that if you can take some of these **moose** out and control their population numbers through this system that you'll have less **moose** to be preyed upon by the wolves so that will actually limit the wolf population as well and help these caribou. Doesn't that kind of -- like, the idea of someone killing a poor little baby **moose**, that's obviously a disturbing thought to a lot of people, but if there's a greater good, if this is going to help those caribou, isn't it a good thing at the end?

Milobar: Well, yeah, but, like you say, when you start looking at the numbers and then you get into the whole is this the right thing to be doing in terms of just the ethics of how you're trying to promote hunting and the overall rules and how people should be behaving in the bush, as by your own admission, the numbers are very low in that regard over a large territory --

Smyth: Right, so I mean, like --

Milobar: ...the provincial government -- so what they're saying is that 70 or 100 baby **moose** are somehow being taken out of the food chain will starve with the wolves to the point that they will no longer hunt caribou or **moose** and they'll just move on? Wolves aren't going to just starve and sit around and not look for something else to eat and quietly wither away.

So if they have a wolf problem they need to be dealing with that as well. There is a predation problem when it comes to caribou. Killing baby **moose** does not solve the predation problem on any scale whatsoever when you look at the volume of meat that a wolf pack needs to eat to survive. There's much bigger problems that they have for managing the caribou than killing baby **moose**.

Smyth: So you're questioning the science of this. These numbers are set scientifically by biologists and scientists in the government. So you're saying that they're wrong?

Milobar: I'm saying that there's conflicting biologists out there that will look at this. There's also the old saying; are you in for a penny or are you in for a pound? If you're saying that eradicating baby **moose** is the key to the caribou survival, then don't mess around at the edges of this. But that's exactly what the government's doing. They've made a total mess of this caribou file overall.

We're still not 100% sure what their overall game plan is and these upping of the limited entry hunts for the baby **moose** and the moms simply does not add up in terms of the overall survival piece to the caribou.

Smyth: OK, but I guess you're arguing that, what, they should be taking out more wolves instead? Because they're already doing that, right? There's already a wolf cull in the province, correct?

Milobar: There is and --

Smyth: So you're saying what they should take out more of them?

Milobar: Predators aren't easy to hunt at the best of times. They're predators for a reason. They know how to hide, they know how not to be seen, and that's how they survive, is being able to filter away and come back out when they have something to attack for food. And so there are definitely problems and issues that we have around the caribou numbers and the caribou herds. I think what we're seeing with the general public is an unwillingness to agree that the government should be upping and increasing the numbers year over year for these limited entry hunts to go after baby **moose** and their mothers.

If there's that huge of a **moose** problem in a province that sees year over year our **moose** populations continuing to decline –

Smyth: But not in these areas where they're allowing this hunt, though.

Milobar: Not in the areas where they're allowing the hunt, but the overall **moose** population we also have –

Smyth: Yeah, but the overall population is not relevant when you're talking about a limited entry hunt in a specific area of the province. What the government is saying is there's lots of **moose** where this hunting is being allowed in the BC Interior and they're doing it for a good reason, and that the **moose** population there can sustain it.

Milobar: The people on the ground, the hunters, the residents of these areas, their recollection and their understanding of what's going on in the woods in their own areas is much different than the government biologists because that is not what you hear in the coffee shops, that's not what you hear in the outfitting stores. **Moose** populations

are getting harder and harder -- more and more hunters, when they go out, are not able to find a **moose** to be able to harvest and so this simply does not add up and that's why you're seeing there's over 30 First Nations that are not in agreement with this. There's hunting associations that aren't in agreement with this move by government because it does not add up to what's actually happening on the ground in real time.

Moose cull - Rustad

By CKFU

CKFU, 08-Jun-2020 06:00

Laura Briggs: The provincial government has plans to increase hunt tags for cows and calves in two areas of the province, but some people want it cut back. According to a provincial government memo, **moose** and wildlife management is needed to reduce the predators and protect the caribou populations in Parsnips, just north of Prince George and the Revelstoke area.

Those against the idea are calling John Horgan and the NDP to shut down the plans to open up hunting season for **moose** calves and their mothers in the name of saving endangered caribou.

Nechako Lakes Liberal MLA John Rustad states, direct predator management is far more effective in protecting endangered caribou and **moose** than eliminating the prey. He also stated that after nearly a year of holding public consultations, the NDP are now quietly making decisions that will result in the killing of baby **moose** and their mothers.

ARMCHAIR MAYOR MEL ROTHENBURGER: NDP's plan to kill more moose cows and calves must be reversed

CFJC Sound Off

Jun 08, 2020

KAMLOOPS — THE UTTER INSANITY of B.C.'s wildlife management practices is no more evident than in the NDP government's plan to expand the hunting of cow and calf moose.

The logic is mind-blowing. It goes like this: caribou numbers have been declining due to loss of habitat and predation. In order to save the caribou from wolves, the plan is to shoot more antlerless moose.

In so doing, the government's rationale goes, wolves will kill fewer caribou because they won't be moving into areas where moose are around and attacking the caribou as collateral damage.

One might think the wolves would be more inclined to hunt caribou if moose aren't available but not according to the brain trusts who make such decisions for the government. Meanwhile, of course, this government is big on killing off more wolves, too.

Wildlife has long been mismanaged in this province but at least increasing the number of tags issued for species has usually been based on a perceived over-abundance of animals in a particular area, not on some cockamamie notion that killing more of one kind of prey will help another.

Moose in B.C., especially cow moose and their calves, need to be protected rather than targeted. Their numbers have been in decline due largely to loss of habitat, especially in recent wildfire years.

Despite NDP cabinet minister Doug Donaldson's insistence that issuing more Limited Entry Hunting licences for cow moose and their calves is all very scientific, opponents of the hunt say the strategy doesn't work.

The Guide Outfitters Association of B.C. and more than 30 First Nations are among those concerned about moose populations. And a Williams Lake man named Dan Simmons started the Cow Moose Sign Project five years ago that urges a total moratorium on hunting them so they can recover.

The government can still do the right thing by reversing the expansion of this moose hunt.

I'm Mel Rothenburger, the Armchair Mayor.

Mel Rothenburger is a former mayor of Kamloops and a retired newspaper editor. He is a regular contributor to CFJC Today, publishes the ArmchairMayor.ca opinion website, and is a director on the Thompson-Nicola Regional District board. He can be reached at mrothenburger@armchairmayor.ca.

BERNIER: government failing consultation on moose hunt

By Mike Bernier, MLA Peace River South

Dawson Creek Mirror

JUNE 5, 2020 08:51 AM

The provincial government is taking another step in caribou conservation without any real or meaningful local consultation.

This latest move wasn't announced, but instead it was leaked out. Maybe that's because it is, in a word, whacky. The government wants to save the mountain caribou by opening the hunt for baby moose and their mothers.

The idea behind this moose hunt is this. Wolves are the main predators of both caribou and of moose. If there are fewer moose, the wolves will die out. If the wolves die out, then the mountain caribou will be protected.

My colleagues in the Official Opposition have searched high and low for some kind of science that would be driving this decision. We've yet to find it. It seems more like an idea from Elmer Fudd, especially when you consider the province has been trying to PROTECT moose populations for years.

Instead of a science-based decision, the moose hunt seems to be based purely on a fear of criticisms of hunting wolves directly. Hunting moose doesn't come with the same kind of opposition that hunting wolves does. Make no mistake, the goal here is still reducing the number of wolves. It's just making a choice to starve them rather than shoot them. That doesn't seem like a very humane choice – and it's also less direct and effective.

It was also a decision made behind closed doors in Victoria, without any local consultation. People here in the Peace are still upset about the lack of meaningful consultation on protecting the mountain caribou all through last year. People wanted government to hear from them and get the benefit of local knowledge. The community had a clear recommendation that a direct cull of wolves would be the most effective, quickest, and most humane way to protect caribou stocks.

But from an office in far away Victoria, the government chose a different path. The people of the Peace share the same desire to protect these northern herds, the government ignores their advice. Instead they picked a path that has closed large swaths of the backcountry and puts our local economy and way of life at risk.

The government's caribou plan is failing the caribou, it's failing moose populations, and it's failing local communities.