

# **Managing wolves to benefit woodland caribou populations in northeast British Columbia: what we know and what we need**

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Predator-prey systems are complex and attempts to manage them to benefit woodland caribou populations have generated mixed results. Despite limited success, calls for wolf control continue because of the urgent need to reverse the decline of woodland caribou populations, and because there are so few management options available that have the potential to demonstrate immediate benefits. I present the results of a policy analysis that reviews the potential role of wolf control within the ecological, social and political context of northeast British Columbia (BC). The scale and scope of a wolf control program is ultimately limited by the economic and ethical support of the public, while the program's effectiveness is governed by the conditional dependencies among the major factors effecting woodland caribou declines. The policy analysis suggests that the contribution of wolf control programs to caribou conservation efforts in northeast BC will be limited, but that significant uncertainties in the causal pathways resulting in caribou population declines limit our ability to propose alternative management policies that have a high confidence of success.