

GN # 01	
Department	Environment
Organization	Government of Nunavut
Subject/Topic	Baseline Data – Caribou
References	Nunavut Nukkiqsautiit Corporation. Iqaluit Nukkiqsautiit Project Regulatory and Environmental Consultant (April 2025)
CONCERN(S)	
<p>Nunavut Nukkiqsautiit Corporation (NNC or the Proponent) states,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“EcoLogic will assess how the Project, particularly the access road and transmission line, may affect caribou movement patterns. Our experience on the Chidliak Project that camera networks are clearly the most efficient way of collecting comprehensive data on caribou (aerial survey is not permitted on Baffin Island and the collaring data set is decades old) ...” (NNC, 2025, p. 18)</p> <p>The Government of Nunavut (GN) wishes to confirm that aerial surveys are permitted on Baffin Island and that the GN conducted an aerial survey in March 2024 and 2025 (research report pending). If the Proponent wishes to conduct an aerial survey, they are responsible for all planning, including securing the necessary permits and obtaining support from the relevant Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs). The GN also notes that a limited collaring program is active in this area.</p> <p>NNC plans to deploy a network of wildlife cameras in 2025 and 2026 in the area surrounding the proposed primary reservoir and within a buffered zone around the road routing options. Additionally, the Proponent explains that they,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“...have not included a cost estimate to evaluate wildlife activity along the proposed road route to McKeand Lake. If project engineering has progressed to a stage where studies of these areas will add value from a risk-evaluation perspective, we can add that scope of work. Based on our prior experience in this area dating back to 2013, it is highly likely that high levels of caribou activity will be detected in these areas (higher than expected in the vicinity of the first phase of the Project). There are generational caribou movement trails on both sides of the McKeand Lake, some of which will be intersected by the proposed road or potentially affected by changes in lake levels. Adding a camera network in this area can be added into the 2025 workplan and cost estimate or can be added in 2026 once project engineering has advanced further.” (NNC, 2025, p. 25)</p>	

To help ensure adequate baseline data collection and study area coverage, the GN recommends deploying additional cameras along the proposed road route to the McKeand Lake area in 2025. The GN further recommends that each of these camera locations be included in ecosystem and wildlife habitat assessments, as described in Section 7.3.1.1 (NNC, 2025).

REQUEST(S)/RECOMMENDATION(S)

The GN recommends deploying additional cameras along the proposed road route to McKeand Lake area in 2025. Additionally, the GN recommends that ecosystem and wildlife habitat assessments at each camera location be conducted in this area.

The GN notes that this recommendation should not be considered an exhaustive list or indication of how the Proponent should conduct its environmental baseline studies. It is the Proponent's responsibility to ensure their baseline data monitoring program is robust and collects adequate information to support the evaluation and monitoring of project impacts.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT(S)

The GN is aware of NNC's request to obtain data from the GN and discussions between the Proponent and GN departmental staff are ongoing. The GN is open to meeting with the Proponent should they wish to discuss their current or future baseline studies.