



News Release Communiqué

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**Government of Canada Announces
Woodland Caribou Captive Breeding Partnering Arrangement
between Parks Canada, BC Government and Calgary Zoo**
*Innovative project a cornerstone of Parks Canada's
Conservation Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou in Canada's National Parks*

Calgary, Alberta – November 25, 2011 –On behalf of the Honourable Peter Kent, Canada's Environment Minister and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, Michelle Rempel, Member of Parliament for Calgary Centre-North and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment announced today an important partnership between Parks Canada, the British Columbia Government and the Calgary Zoo to implement a woodland caribou captive breeding program supporting protection of this species at risk in the mountain national parks.

"The Government of Canada is committed to the recovery of species at risk," said Michelle Rempel. "The Conservation Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou is a critical first step to protecting this species. Captive rearing shows promise to reinforce and augment herds, helping to ensure that this iconic species remains on the landscape for future generations."

Twenty-five years ago, more than 800 caribou ranged in the mountain national parks. Today, fewer than 250 remain. Parks Canada is committed to ensuring the survival and recovery of woodland caribou to help maintain the ecological integrity in the mountain national parks. The captive breeding program, a key element of a *Conservation Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou in Canada's National Parks* developed by Parks Canada, will provide source animals to supplement critically small herds in Jasper, Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks and in the Province of British Columbia, as well as to reintroduce caribou to Banff National Park.

"The Government of Canada is proud to work with our conservation partners to encourage a healthy, sustainable population of Southern Mountain woodland caribou in their traditional home ranges," said Minister Kent. "By sharing expertise and pooling resources, we will work toward building a better future for woodland caribou."

"British Columbia is proud to participate in this important program by providing donor animals and access to our northern caribou and our regional staff expertise," said Steve Thomson, BC Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. "This will help promote the genetic diversity of the species and support our commitment to recover woodland caribou in both our provinces."

"Recovery of sensitive species such as woodland caribou is challenging, multifaceted work that involves many partners," said Frank Oberle, Minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. "We will provide appropriate administrative permits and consider what new perspectives can be gained for caribou conservation as we continue habitat retention, reclamation and predator management on our landscape."

"The Calgary Zoo has a long history of participating in recovery projects for species considered at risk in our own country and globally," said Dr. Clément Lanthier, President and CEO for the Calgary Zoo. "Our expertise in reintroduction science and captive breeding for release has been developed over several decades and we are very pleased to be part of this initiative for woodland caribou – such an iconic and important Canadian species."

The Parks Canada *Conservation Strategy for Southern Mountain Caribou in Canada's National Parks* will guide conservation actions in Banff, Jasper, Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks. Through the strategy, Parks Canada is exploring methods to reverse the decline of woodland caribou using a range of measures. These include seasonal trail and area closures and managing the density of alternate prey species for caribou predators. Current research and ongoing monitoring are contributing to the sound science used to identify important caribou habitat on national park lands and identify potential conservation actions.

Parks Canada is inviting comment from First Nations, stakeholders and interested members of the public to refine and improve this strategy until January 31, 2012. Members of the public are encouraged to review the Conservation Strategy at www.parkscanada.gc.ca/caribou.

Parks Canada works to ensure that Canada's historic and natural heritage is presented and protected for the enjoyment, education and appreciation of all Canadians, today and in the future. Through a network of 42 national parks, 167 national historic sites, and four national marine conservation areas, Parks Canada invites Canadians, and people from around the world, to experience Canada's treasured natural and historic places.

For additional information, please see the accompanying backgrounder at www.parkscanada.gc.ca under **Media Room**.

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Information:

Suzy Whitty
Media Relations
Jasper National Park
780-852-6109

www.twitter.com/parkscanada