



Industrial developments threatening Canada's woodland caribou

Global Forest Watch Canada publishes new study confirming Environment Canada's "secret" concerns regarding threatened species in Alberta's oil sands region

EDMONTON, January 10, 2012 – Global Forest Watch Canada today released a study containing evidence of the extent to which industrial developments are threatening woodland caribou (boreal population) in Canada's jurisdictions, including within Alberta's oil sands region.

The study used the Government of Canada's (Environment Canada) own just-released satellite-based data and builds on Environment Canada's science assessment methodology by analyzing industrial disturbances within individual jurisdictions and within Alberta's oil sands region.

The release of this study follows the December 22, 2011 story by Post Media News' newly-released "secret" presentation prepared last spring by Environment Canada that highlighted numerous warnings about the industry's growing footprint on land, air, water and the climate (*"Secret" Environment Canada presentation warns of oilsands' impact on habitat* by Mike DeSouza).

Executive Director of Global Forest Watch Canada, Peter Lee, said, "Our study found that Environment Canada should indeed be concerned about the oil sands industry's growing footprint. Canada urgently needs to work on the issue of environmentally responsible energy production and urgently needs a respectable energy strategy in order to secure and maintain the social license to develop, operate and market our energy to the world. This must include energy developments that are sensitive to and respect the survival needs of threatened species, such as woodland caribou. Our work is a contribution that will hopefully encourage this to happen."

The study found that two provinces in particular – British Columbia and Alberta – have extraordinarily high levels of industrial disturbances within woodland caribou (boreal population) herd ranges, with only 26.6% and 44.3%, respectively, remaining undisturbed. These two provinces have far less than the 80% level of undisturbed (industrial and fire) habitat for caribou ranges as generally determined by the Government of Canada's recent science assessment to result in caribou herds likely to be self-sustaining (i.e., 60% undisturbed results in caribou herds as likely to be self-sustaining as not to be self-sustaining). The vast majority of the disturbances in the herd ranges of these two provinces were caused by the oil and gas industry.

Lee continued, "Using Government of Canada recently-released data, our study shows that within Alberta's oil sands region, the eight woodland caribou herds have experienced almost 5 times the amount of industrial disturbances as in the average in all woodland caribou (boreal population) herds across Canada (63.8% for the herds in the oil sands area versus 13.6% for all herds across Canada). This raises the issue of the enormous extent to which these oil sands developments already are a significant threat to the survival of woodland caribou in that area."

This study is part of a series of studies by the non-government organization to address the geographic distribution and key environmental impacts of Canada's energy sectors. The objective of the Global Forest Watch Canada environmental impact series is to foster knowledge and discussion on ecologically sound energy options for Canada's future in the face of climate change. The ten major energy sectors that GFWC will address include: hydropower, wind, uranium/nuclear, bitumen, oil and gas, coal, coalbed methane, biofuels, geothermal, and solar.

Lee concluded: "Overall, Canada is the fifth largest energy producer in the world — third in gas and hydropower, seventh in oil production, and No. 1 in uranium. And with Canada containing the 3rd largest crude oil (bitumen) reserve in the world and substantial deposits of unconventional gas, Canada needs an enhanced depth and quality of leadership that industry, government and civil society together need to provide. As Canada gears up to rapidly expand its oil sands capacity and its capacity in other energy sectors, there is much progress needed in order to become a credible world leader in responsible and sustainable energy development and a singularly-focused energy superpower."

Download the Global Forest Watch Canada study at: www.globalforestwatch.ca

Download Environment Canada's "secret" presentation at:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/76259666/Oilsands-Pollution>

Download Post Media News report by Mike De Souza at:

<http://www.canada.com/technology/Secret+Environment+Canada+presentation+warns+oilsand+s+impact+habitat/5894992/story.html>

Download Environment Canada's Woodland caribou (boreal population) recovery strategy at:

http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2253

Download Environment Canada's woodland caribou (boreal population) science assessment

at: http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2248

Download Environment Canada's geospatial data on satellite-based mapping of disturbances

at: [http://www.data.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=5175A6F0-](http://www.data.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=5175A6F0-1&xsl=datacataloguerecord&metaxsl=datacataloguerecord&formid=F34DCB32-4845-4E88-B125-5AC03C6E4A7F,%20F34DCB32-4845-4E88-B125-5AC03C6E4A7F)

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Contact:

Peter Lee

Global Forest Watch Canada

Tel: 780 422 5989

Email: peter@globalforestwatch.ca