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## **Innu Nation threatening future of George River caribou**

Recent decisions by the Innu Nation could very well spell the end for the George River Caribou Herd, and strain relations with the Nunatsiavut Government for many years to come, says President Johannes Lampe.

“This past October, leaders of the Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Round Table (UPCART) signed what was heralded as a historic agreement to preserve and manage caribou in the Ungava Peninsula,” noted President Lampe. “Late last week we were informed that the Innu Nation was pulling out of the agreement and out of UPCART, and has decided to take matters into their own hands without any regard whatsoever for the future sustainability of the George River Caribou Herd or for the rights or concerns of Labrador Inuit and other Indigenous nations.”

The UPCART strategy called on both the governments of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador to allow for a limited Indigenous harvest this year of one per cent, which equates to roughly 90 animals, to be shared amongst the Labrador Inuit, Innu and the NunatuKavut Community Council. The Nunatsiavut Government is aware that the Innu have already harvested caribou this winter, with plans to hunt more in the coming weeks.

“The Innu have decided to harvest caribou before any decision was made to allow for a limited hunt. This shows a blatant betrayal and a lack of respect to other Indigenous peoples who have traditionally relied on the George River caribou for sustenance, and it sends a strong message that the Innu could care less whether or not the herd survives,” President Lampe said, adding that the Nunatsiavut Government will not stand idly by and allow the Innu Nation’s actions to go unchallenged.

“We will exercise all legal means available to us to protect our interests and the integrity of our Constitutionally-protected land claims agreement, and to work with whomever we have to in order to ensure the future viability of the George River caribou,” he said. “The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has to seriously enforce the current harvesting ban and prosecute offenders before it is too late to save this important resource.”

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