

TITLE: ASSISTANT MOUNTAIN CARIBOU SHEPHERD

JOB OVERVIEW

Working as a team with the Lead Mountain Caribou Shepherd (“Lead Shepherd”) and supervised by the Pen Operations Manager or designated alternate (“Pen Manager”), Assistant Mountain Caribou Shepherds will provide essential care, monitoring, and protection for captive mountain caribou and their calves during the maternity penning period. They will ensure the health, well-being and security of the penned mountain caribou and their calves at all times.

This project requires the presence of shepherds 24 hours/day at the pen facility during the penning period, which typically runs from the end of March to the beginning of July. Monitoring of the pen facility and captive animals is required during daylight hours, however, increased vigilance will be necessary during calving or if predators are in the area.

Assistant shepherds will receive capacity building and training and be expected to take part in caribou husbandry, shepherding, surveillance, field monitoring and data collection, field data compilation, and predator aversion and hazing. Assistant shepherds may also be involved in education and outreach activities, such as lichen collection, live feed of video to internet sites, sharing of data or video on websites and working with regional school boards and the local community.

The Maternity Pen is in a remote location. For much of the work shift, Lead and Assistant Shepherds will be working without direct interaction with the Pen Manager. Lead and Assistant Shepherds are expected to work as an independent and resourceful team, cooperatively accomplishing duties and practicing good interpersonal communication/dispute resolution skills.

Annual employment is approximately 4-5 months, (roughly from March –July in a remote location), based on a day rate of an average of 8 hours/day during the work shift, with housing and cost of food provided when on site.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

Required:

- Report major pen or animal health issues as they arise and work as a coordinated team with Lead Shepherd to resolve them.
- Implement and fully understand established protocols. Attend training sessions. Provide recommendations on changes to protocols, and facilities based on experiences gained at the maternity pen.
- Assist with capture operations as required.
- Transport feed and equipment as required to and from pen site using own vehicle.
- Ensure the day-to-day welfare of penned mountain caribou and their calves, with particular attention to animal as well as worker health and safety. Work safely and report any safety issues immediately.
- Ensure that penned caribou are monitored and cared for, including staggering shifts with Lead Shepherd to maximize coverage. Manage work shifts to ensure an average of 8 hrs/day over the work shift.

- Provide basic animal husbandry, including provision of food and water. Record amount of food supplied and discarded each day. Ensure that feed and water troughs are clean. Maintain animal scale and associated cameras as requested.
- Capture and handle calves following established protocols and as directed.
- Conduct at least twice daily enumeration of captive animals. Ensure that disturbance and human interaction with caribou is minimized. Assess and document daily general health, body condition, weight and feeding in animal health records.
- Recommend based on training and protocols, when Veterinarian care may be required working as a coordinated team to initiate and assist Veterinarian response. Operate camera and video recording equipment to document animal health and transmit info to Veterinarian promptly.
- Document observations, daily activities and/or other actions related to animal health and safety in a digital daily activity log.
- Conduct patrols of the maternity pen facility and periphery to assess structural integrity, animal safety and evidence of predator presence. Test and record electric fence function and performance two times per day.
- Assist in programming, deploying and downloading data from remote sensing cameras to project computer as required.
- Take action to deter predators, and lethal action where necessary as outlined in protocols to ensure safety of penned caribou. Use good judgement and ensure adequate communication regarding actions taken.
- Perform maintenance and repair of the maternity pen and associated facilities and equipment. Inventory supplies and communicate deficiencies and/or needs.
- Ensure that radio telemetry/GPS collars are working on a daily basis.
- Implement during daylight hours, hand held radio communications ensuring that the pen can be contacted on the “Birch” (153.230) channel for non-sensitive communications and that sensitive communications (dealing with predators or animal health issues) exclusively use the NRO “Gold” channel (163.830) or as otherwise instructed.
- Promote good working relationships with internal and external partners and stakeholders. Facilitate approved visits to the pen (funders, scientists, and media) and strictly apply visitation guidelines.
- Conduct grocery shopping for shifts. Ensure housing facilities are kept tidy, clean and in good working order.
- Participate in as required, education and outreach activities, such as lichen collection, live feed of video to internet sites, sharing of data or video, and working with the school board on caribou based education programs and engage in community-based discussion meetings regarding the project.
- Perform other tasks and/or responsibilities as provided.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

- Proficient in the use of firearms and/or other forms of deterrents such as hazing, pepper spray, etc;
- Valid firearm Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) or is qualified to receive a PAL;
- Ability to identify animals by tracks, scat, or other indicators;

- Interest in animal husbandry, ability to observe patiently for long periods, and to record data regularly and accurately;
- Willingness to share experiences and participate in education and outreach activities as required;
- Willingness and ability to work outdoors in inclement weather at a remote location on a rotational shift basis;
- Valid B.C. driver's licence;
- Meet safety standards of Work Safe BC and hold a valid Level 1 First Aid certificate at a minimum;
- Operation of a variety of equipment, including boats, snowmobiles, and ORVs;
- Valid Canadian Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC);
- Ability to carry equipment and supplies in difficult terrain;
- Good physical condition;
- Basic operation of a personal computer (i.e. Word, Excel, etc). Data entry skills, proficient with email, Google drive and digital cameras;
- Willingness to report to the Pen Manager and work in a team environment with the Lead Shepherd.;
- Mechanically inclined and able to conduct basic equipment maintenance and repairs. Familiarity with basic carpentry tools and techniques; and
- Committed to follow established procedures and protocols.