

Alarm sounded over Innu caribou hunt

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Hunting of caribou belonging to the George River herd has been restricted. (CBC)

The Newfoundland and Labrador Liberals are sounding the alarm over the number of caribou being taken by Innu from Quebec.

The hunters are killing animals from the George River herd.

That herd has been declining fast — dropping 80 per cent in the last decade.

The province and Nunatsiavut government have reacted by reducing the hunt.

But Liberal MHA Randy Edmunds says Quebec Innu continue to kill large numbers of the animals.

"It's time now for the provincial government to act to work towards conserving this caribou herd," Edmunds said.

CBC News has learned that more than a dozen of the animals have been killed in the Cache River area of central Labrador. That area is closed to protect the endangered red wine caribou.

No comment

The Department of Justice refuses to comment, except to say its monitoring the situation.

So far there have been no charges involving this hunt.

But in the past the department has had trouble getting charges to stick.

Late last year the Crown dropped charges against Quebec hunters.

Sources say the hunters were caught red-handed killing endangered caribou — but a spokesperson

would only say there was no reasonable likelihood of a conviction.

Staying away

Christiane Lalo is a Innu chief in Quebec. She's one of eight hunters and their families from the St. Augustine Reserve who are in Labrador this week.

Lalo says they are staying away from closed areas.

They've been in Labrador for a week, but she says they aren't hunting every day.