

First ever worldwide census analysis of caribou/reindeer numbers reveals dramatic decline

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Caribou and reindeer numbers worldwide have plunged almost 60% in the last three decades. The dramatic revelation came out of the first ever comprehensive census analysis of this iconic species carried out by biologists at the University of Alberta.

The results have recently been published in the peer reviewed *Global Change Biology* Journal and co-author PhD student Liv Vors said global warming and industrial development are responsible for driving this dramatic decline in species numbers around the world.

Vors, who is studying under Dr Mark Boyce, Alberta Conservation Association Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Alberta, says the decline raises serious concerns not only for the [animals](#), but also for people living in northern latitudes who depend on the animals for their livelihood.

"In this research we tried to look beyond the science and focus also on the impact on the economies and culture of northern people," said Vors.

The dramatic changes caused by global warming that happen in the Arctic and which impact on the herds include; earlier spring green ups that now occur before migrating herds arrive north and which deprive mothers and calves of quality feeding; warmer summers that cause more intense insect activity harassing animals and affecting their feeding; the

impact of more freezing rain during winter on the lichens that animals feed on during the colder months.

In the boreal forest industrial development has largely driven the decline.

Source: University of Alberta ([news](#) : [web](#))

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