Canadian Journal of Zoology 24 August 2023

# Dear Dr. Brigham,

On behalf of my co-authors, I am pleased to resubmit manuscript *cjz-2023-0032*, now titled *Assessing the Health-Fitness Dynamics of Endangered Mountain Caribou and the Influence of Maternal Penning* for your consideration as a publication in the Canadian Journal of Zoology.

In response to helpful comments on the manuscript from two reviewers and yourself, we have made a number of substantive changes that we believe increase the clarity, rigour, and inclusivity of the manuscript. The major revisions included:

1. Reworking the introduction to better justify why the study was done, what inference it can provide more generally for wildlife health, and more clearly stating what we were testing.
2. We have included four new authors. While this is not typical mid-revision, we believe it was justified and warranted. Two of the authors are First Nations (Naomi Owens-Beek and Bruce Muir) and each represent one of the two First Nations leading the project. Originally the Nations had suggested we proceed without them because the work was “western” focused and capacity was limited at that time. However, we are pleased to report that there was capacity for a thorough review from each Nation and a member from each Nation are represented as co-authors. Both individuals have been heavily involved in the project from the start and we are very pleased and thankful for their involvement as authors. Similarly, two wildlife veterinarians (Drs. Owen Slater and Bryan MacBeth) have been part of the project since its inception. During the revision we realized we would need to weigh more heavily on them than previously expected and we likely made a lapse of judgement by not including them given their contributions to date.
3. We replaced Tables 1 and 2 with a single table that essentially provides the results for the whole Klinse-Za study including statistical assessment of the difference between penned and free-ranging animals.
4. To make figures more readable and simpler, we increased text size on all figures, removed Figure 3, and removed panel B from Figure 4.
5. Addressed minor typological comments throughout

We believe the manuscript has improved because of the revision. Thank you for considering our work and we look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Sincerely,

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Clayton T. Lamb, PhD

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