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Avant-propos

Ce mémoire est construit sous la forme d'un article scientifique en anglais, avec une introduction et une conclusion générale en français. Je suis l'auteure principale de ce mémoire et j'ai réalisé l'analyse des données, l'interprétation des résultats et la rédaction. Steeve D. Côté et Susan Kutz ont contribué à la conception du projet, à la collecte des données, à l'interprétation des résultats, à la révision et à l'approbation finale. Cet article n'a pas encore été soumis pour publication.

1. Introduction

Il existe une hypothèse stipulant qu'un parasite affecte très peu son hôte, prévenant de la sorte son éradication (Grundmann et al. 1976). Cependant, le parasitisme est par définition associé à une diminution de la survie et/ou du succès reproducteur de l'hôte (Anderson and May 1978; May and Anderson 1978). Son rôle écologique peut donc être majeur.

1.1 Impact du parasitisme sur la dynamique des populations

De plus en plus d'études suggèrent que le parasitisme peut avoir un impact sur la dynamique des populations animales de par son effet sur les composantes biodémographiques individuelles (Gulland 1992; Hudson et al. 1998; Irvine 2006). En effet, les populations animales pourraient être régies par des effets indirects du parasitisme sur la survie, la condition corporelle et la fécondité. Par exemple, Bakker et al. (1997) ont trouvé que *Pomphorhynchus laevis*, un acanthocéphale parasite de *Gammarus pulex*, une espèce de macro-invertébrés, diminue la survie de son hôte en changeant sa coloration et son comportement, l'exposant ainsi davantage à la prédation. Irvine et al. (2006) ont montré que chez le cerf élaphe (*Cervus elaphus*), les adultes ayant un taux d'infection élevé par un nématode gastro-intestinal présentaient des indices de condition corporelle plus bas que les autres individus. Le parasitisme pourrait également être responsable des fluctuations cycliques des populations de lièvre variable (*Lepus timidus*) par son effet négatif sur la fécondité (Newey and Thirgood 2004). Il a été démontré qu'un traitement antihelminthique – c'est-à-dire qui détruit les parasites gastro-intestinaux – augmentait le taux de fécondité des femelles, sans toutefois affecter leur condition corporelle et leur survie hivernale (Newey and Thirgood 2004).

En plus de ses effets directs sur la dynamique des populations hôtes, le parasitisme chez les animaux sauvages peut également avoir des répercussions importantes sur les humains qui dépendent de la faune pour se nourrir. Les parasites peuvent affecter l'accessibilité, la qualité, la quantité et la salubrité de la viande et des autres produits d'origine animale en plus de rendre la viande moins appétissante. Par exemple, la viande présentant beaucoup de kystes de *Taenia* est souvent écartée par les chasseurs (Kutz et al. 2012). Les changements dans la biodiversité des parasites et/ou dans les processus pathologiques qui y sont associés

peuvent influencer la nutrition, les niveaux d'activité et la viabilité des activités culturelles des communautés, particulièrement pour les peuples autochtones du Nord. En effet, pour de nombreux habitants des régions éloignées, la faune est primordiale pour l'acquisition de nourriture par la chasse de subsistance et le maintien de nombreuses traditions culturelles, en plus de permettre la création d'activités économiques liées à la chasse sportive et au tourisme (Davidson et al. 2011). Or, dans ces communautés où les aliments provenant de la nature ne subissent pas de contrôle des organismes sanitaires, l'émergence de nouveaux pathogènes peut causer des préoccupations et des incertitudes quant à la qualité de la viande et résulter en une perte de confiance des peuples envers la nourriture traditionnelle, ce qui pourrait entraîner la disparition de traditions culturelles et une réduction de la santé globale de la communauté (Kutz et al. 2012).

1.2 Importance de décrire exhaustivement l'état de santé des populations animales

Le suivi de l'état de santé des populations animales est primordial pour la conservation et la gestion de la faune (Jean and Lamontagne 2004). L'état de santé d'une population peut avoir plusieurs composantes, notamment la condition corporelle des individus, la diversité génétique, la santé physiologique, les niveaux de contaminants et la diversité et l'abondance de pathogènes et de parasites (Kutz et al. 2013a). Pour comprendre l'écologie d'une espèce, il est important d'examiner les relations entre les différentes composantes de son état de santé et de suivre son évolution dans le temps à travers les populations et les régions géographiques. Pour ce faire, l'acquisition d'une base de données exhaustive décrivant l'état de santé actuel de l'espèce est nécessaire (Karesh and Cook 1995). Établir l'état de santé actuel d'une espèce dans plusieurs situations démographiques différentes et pour l'ensemble de son aire de répartition permet de définir ce qui est normal ainsi que la variabilité autour de cette valeur, permettant ainsi une détection rapide de futurs cas anormaux (Kutz et al. 2013a). L'émergence de nouvelles et la réémergence de vieilles maladies ainsi que la transmission de pathogènes et de parasites entre la faune, les animaux domestiques et les humains ont mis en évidence la nécessité d'un suivi efficace des maladies (Kuiken et al. 2005). Pour utiliser les parasites comme indicateur de l'état de santé des populations, il est particulièrement important de connaître leur biodiversité, leur

distribution et leur cycle vital (Hoberg et al. 2003; Hoberg et al. 2008). Chez les mammifères, les données sur les systèmes hôte-parasites proviennent pour la plupart d'études transversales, et bien que ce type d'étude apporte certaines contraintes, si l'échantillonnage est standardisé et réalisé à large échelle spatio-temporelle et avec une grande taille d'échantillon, l'étude peut être particulièrement efficace et représentative (Kutz et al. 2012; Kutz et al. 2013a). Les données provenant de ces études peuvent fournir des mesures fiables de la diversité des parasites et des interactions entre ceux-ci et divers facteurs biotiques et abiotiques, tels que la taille et la démographie des populations hôtes et les conditions environnementales. Ces études peuvent également aider à identifier les associations entre la diversité et l'abondance des parasites et l'état de santé général de l'hôte malgré qu'il soit difficile de déterminer de manière irréfutable les relations de cause à effet. En plus de permettre l'acquisition d'informations nouvelles, ces études peuvent également aider à générer de nouvelles hypothèses (Scott 1988; Davidson et al. 2011; Kutz et al. 2012; Kutz et al. 2013a).

1.3 Effets des changements climatiques sur le parasitisme

Les changements climatiques constituent une grande menace pour les écosystèmes arctiques parce qu'ils y opèrent à une vitesse plus grande que sur le reste du globe. En effet, durant les 150 dernières années, alors que la température annuelle moyenne à la surface du globe a augmenté de 0.4°C, cette augmentation a été deux à trois fois plus rapide dans l'Arctique que dans le reste du monde (Post et al. 2009; IPCC 2013). La niche écologique des parasites vivant dans les milieux nordiques est souvent restreinte par les conditions environnementales. Une augmentation de la température annuelle moyenne pourrait affecter les relations hôte-parasites, particulièrement chez les espèces de macroparasites qui ont un ou plusieurs stades de leur cycle vital libres dans l'environnement et dont le développement et la survie sont influencés par la température (Kutz et al. 2004; Kutz et al. 2005; Hoberg et al. 2008). Le taux de développement, le taux de transmission, la distribution spatiale et le nombre de générations annuelles du parasite ainsi que la susceptibilité à l'infection de l'hôte risquent d'être modifiés par l'augmentation appréhendée de la température (Harvell et al. 2002; Kutz et al. 2005; Kutz et al. 2009; Davidson et al. 2011). Kutz et al. (2005) ont développé un modèle empirique prédisant

l'impact des changements climatiques sur le développement d'un nématode parasite du bœuf musqué (*Ovibos moschatus*). À l'aide de ce modèle, les chercheurs ont trouvé que l'augmentation de la température a déjà modifié le taux de développement de ce parasite, passant d'un cycle vital d'une durée de deux ans à un cycle vital d'une durée d'un an. Witter (2010) a trouvé que depuis la fin des années 1950, les conditions environnementales sont de plus en plus favorables au développement et à l'activité des œstridés, des parasites connus pour affecter le comportement et augmenter les dépenses énergétiques du caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) (Folstad et al. 1991; Hagemoen and Reimers 2002; Colman et al. 2003; Witter et al. 2012).

1.4 Espèces à l'étude : le caribou et sept de ses principaux macroparasites

1.4.1 Caribou

Le caribou est très répandu et abondant dans les régions arctiques de l'Amérique du Nord et sa diversité génétique est structurée géographiquement en deux lignées principales : la lignée du Nord-Est de l'Amérique qui s'étend de Terre-Neuve au Manitoba, et la lignée Euro-Béringienne qui couvre le reste de la distribution circumpolaire (Yannic et al. 2014). Il est une espèce clé pour les populations de prédateurs (Dale et al. 1994; Mowat and Heard 2006; Musiani et al. 2007) en plus d'affecter la structure de la végétation (Olofsson et al. 2009; Champagne et al. 2012; Zamin and Grogan 2013). Le caribou est aussi, à travers la chasse de subsistance, la chasse sportive et le tourisme, une source de nourriture et de revenus primordiale pour les peuples autochtones nordiques en plus d'être un élément clé de plusieurs activités traditionnelles et de croyances spirituelles (Van Oostdam et al. 1999; Jean and Lamontagne 2004; Hummel and Ray 2008). Cependant, plusieurs troupeaux de caribous vivant dans les régions nordiques sont présentement en déclin, avec un taux de décroissance plus élevé que les fluctuations démographiques habituelles (Vors and Boyce 2009). Même si les populations de caribous ont connu de grandes variations démographiques dans le passé (Crête et al. 1996; Couturier et al. 2004), il n'est pas certain qu'elles pourront rebondir, c'est-à-dire revenir à des niveaux de taille de troupeau semblables à ceux précédant le déclin (Festa-Bianchet et al. 2011). Les causes de ce déclin sont méconnues bien que la dégradation de l'habitat, la chasse sportive, le développement

industriel et les changements climatiques pourraient être en partie responsables (Festa-Bianchet et al. 2011).

Un groupe de scientifiques, de représentants de la communauté et d'organismes de gestion du caribou portant le nom de *CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment Network* (CARMA, www.caff.is/carma) a été créé en 2001 pour mieux comprendre les impacts des changements climatiques sur le caribou migrateur (Russell et al. 2013). CARMA a développé des protocoles standardisés d'échantillonnage durant l'Année Polaire Internationale, ce qui a conduit à la collecte d'un ensemble de données sur la condition et la taille corporelle ainsi que sur plusieurs indicateurs de l'état de santé du caribou, notamment la diversité et l'abondance de parasites et ce, pour plusieurs troupeaux (Kutz et al. 2013a). Bien que trente-cinq espèces de parasites aient été rapportées chez le caribou grâce à ce vaste effort d'échantillonnage (Kutz et al. 2012), notre étude se concentre sur sept de ses principaux macroparasites dont l'échantillonnage a été fait sur plusieurs troupeaux et années (Kutz et al. 2013a).

1.4.2 Oestridés du dos (*Hypoderma tarandi*)

La famille des œstridés dont fait partie *Hypoderma tarandi* sont des arthropodes très abondants et étudiés chez les ongulés arctiques. Bien que le caribou soit le principal hôte d'*H. tarandi*, des larves ont déjà été rapportées chez le bœuf musqué (Gunn et al. 1991; Samuelsson et al. 2013), le cerf élaphe (Nilssen and Gjershaug 1988) et l'orignal (*Alces americanus*) (Lejeune Virapin, comm. pers.). L'adulte pond ses œufs sur les poils du dos et des pattes du caribou entre la mi-juillet et la mi-août (Anderson and Nilssen 1996). Après l'éclosion, les larves pénètrent sous la peau et s'y développent jusqu'au printemps suivant. En mai et juin, les larves quittent l'hôte par un trou de respiration créée dans sa peau, laissant une cicatrice bien visible. Elles se métamorphosent ensuite au sol d'où elles émergent en tant qu'adultes quelques semaines plus tard (Kutz et al. 2012). Les adultes sont capables de localiser leurs hôtes et de suivre leur trace sur de longues distances (Nilssen and Anderson 1995). Le harcèlement par les mouches adultes entraîne une réduction du temps d'alimentation et une augmentation des dépenses énergétiques du caribou, résultant en une diminution de sa condition corporelle (Downes et al. 1986; Hagemoen and Reimers 2002; Colman et al. 2003; Weladji et al. 2003) et pourrait être responsable du mouvement

vers les aires d'estivage après la mise bas chez le caribou migrateur (Folstad et al. 1991). L'abondance de larves est aussi associée à une réduction de la condition corporelle (Huot and Beaulieu 1985; Hughes et al. 2009; Ballesteros et al. 2012) et du succès reproducteur chez le caribou (Cuyler et al. 2012; Pachkowski et al. 2013).

1.4.3 Oestridés des fosses nasales (*Cephenemyia trompe*)

Ce parasite arthropode fait aussi partie de la famille des œstridés et est considéré comme spécifique à *Rangifer*. Les adultes injectent leurs larves L1 (premier stade larvaire) sur la lèvre supérieure du caribou durant l'été. Les larves migrent ensuite vers le palais et jusqu'aux voies respiratoires où elle mûrissent durant l'hiver. En mai et juin, le caribou expulse les larves L3 (dernier stade larvaire et stade infectieux) en toussant et ces dernières se métamorphosent au sol d'où elles émergent en tant qu'adultes quelques semaines plus tard (Kutz et al. 2012). Le harcèlement par les mouches adultes entraîne aussi une diminution de la condition corporelle chez le caribou (Downes et al. 1986; Hagemoen and Reimers 2002; Colman et al. 2003; Weladji et al. 2003), mais les relations entre l'abondance de larves et la condition corporelle et le succès reproducteur sont moins bien connues pour cet œstridé (Cuyler et al. 2012; Kutz et al. 2012).

1.4.4 Kystes du foie (*Taenia hydatigena*)

Les espèces du genre *Taenia* sont des helminthes cestodes relativement communs chez les ongulés, les canidés et les ursidés arctiques à de faibles intensités. Les adultes de *T. hydatigena* se retrouvent dans le petit intestin de l'hôte définitif, un carnivore, habituellement un loup (*Canis lupus*) ou un coyote (*Canis latrans*) et parfois un chien domestique (*Canis familiaris*) ou un renard roux (*Vulpes vulpes*) ou arctique (*Vulpes alopex*) (Fréchette 1986; Kapel and Nansen 1996; Lavikainen et al. 2011). Les œufs se retrouvent dans les fèces de l'hôte définitif et sont ingérés par l'hôte intermédiaire via la végétation infectée. Les larves migrent par la circulation sanguine du système digestif vers le foie, l'omentum ou ailleurs dans la cavité péritonéale où elles s'enkystent. L'hôte définitif s'infecte en mangeant les organes contaminés de l'hôte intermédiaire. Dans l'Arctique, le caribou, le bœuf musqué et l'orignal sont des hôtes intermédiaires connus (Kutz et al. 2012). En général, ce parasite ne semble pas causer de pathologie sévère chez ses hôtes, mais la migration des larves dans le foie peut causer des dommages aux tissus

(Sweatman and Plummer 1957). Des études transversales chez le caribou n'ont montré aucune relation significative entre le nombre de kystes du foie et la condition corporelle (Huot and Beaulieu 1985; Thomas 1994; Pollock et al. 2009).

1.4.5 Douves du foie (*Fascioloides magna*)

Dans l'Arctique, ce parasite helminthe se retrouve exclusivement chez le caribou et le bœuf musqué du Québec et du Labrador (Choquette et al. 1971; Lankester and Luttich 1988; Pollock et al. 2009). Ailleurs en Amérique du Nord, le cerf de Virginie (*Odocoileus virginianus*) et l'orignal sont aussi des hôtes définitifs. Les œufs sont sécrétés dans les fèces de l'hôte définitif et éclosent en larves dans la végétation humide où elles contaminent l'hôte intermédiaire, un escargot d'eau douce de la famille des Lymnaeidae (Pybus 2001). L'hôte définitif ingère accidentellement l'escargot contaminé et les larves se retrouvent dans son système digestif puis dans sa circulation sanguine pour finalement atteindre le foie. Les douves adultes s'y enkystent, généralement en paire, et peuvent y demeurer plusieurs années. Toutefois, chez l'orignal, les larves n'atteignent pas la maturité et la migration continue de douves immatures peut mener à la mort de l'hôte (Pybus 2001; Kutz et al. 2012). Même chez ses hôtes définitifs normaux, ce parasite peut causer des pathologies substantielles au foie (Pybus 2001). Malgré les dommages qu'il cause au foie, il n'y a pas d'évidence que *F. magna* a un effet négatif significatif sur la condition corporelle du caribou (Huot and Beaulieu 1985; Lankester and Luttich 1988; Pollock et al. 2009).

1.4.6 Kystes hydatiques (*Echinococcus granulosus*)

Le stade larvaire de ce parasite helminthe se retrouve sous forme de kyste hydatique dans les poumons du caribou, de l'orignal et du bœuf musqué à travers l'Amérique du Nord. Les vers adultes vivent dans le petit intestin de l'hôte définitif, un carnivore, principalement un loup et parfois un coyote ou un chien domestique, où ils causent peu de pathologie (Rausch 2003). Les œufs sont excrétés par les fèces du carnivore, contaminent la végétation et sont ingérés accidentellement par l'hôte intermédiaire. Le caribou, l'orignal, le cerf de Virginie, le wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*) et le cerf mulot (*Odocoileus hemionus*) sont des hôtes intermédiaires connus. Une fois dans le système digestif du cervidé, les larves migrent par la circulation sanguine jusqu'aux poumons où elles s'enkystent (Kutz et al. 2012). L'hôte

définitif s'infecte en mangeant les organes contaminés de l'hôte intermédiaire. Une étude transversale chez le caribou n'a pas détecté d'impact significatif de ce parasite sur la condition corporelle et la fécondité (Thomas 1994). Chez l'orignal cependant, une infection sévère aux kystes hydatiques pourrait prédisposer à la prédation par le loup (Joly and Messier 2004).

1.4.7 Vers des poumons (*Dictyocaulus eckerti*)

Les espèces du genre *Dictyocaulus* sont des helminthes nématodes pouvant atteindre plusieurs centimètres de long et retrouvés dans les bronches et bronchioles pulmonaires sous forme adulte. Les œufs ou les larves L1 sont excrétés dans la végétation par les fèces où elles mûrissent. Le cycle vital est direct, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'y a pas d'hôte intermédiaire. L'hôte, souvent un caribou, un bœuf musqué ou un orignal, s'infecte en ingérant les larves L3 qui contaminent la végétation. Ce parasite est connu pour causer des dommages pulmonaires significatifs chez le caribou (Rahko et al. 1992). Des évidences anecdotiques suggèrent qu'il pourrait aussi affecter la survie des jeunes chez le bœuf musqué et le caribou (Kutz et al. 2012).

1.4.8 Kystes des muscles (*Taenia krabbei*)

Le cycle vital et les hôtes intermédiaires et définitifs de ce parasite helminthe sont sensiblement les mêmes que pour *Taenia hydatigena* décrit plus haut. Les seules différences sont que les larves migrent par la circulation sanguine du système digestif vers les muscles squelettiques et cardiaque où elles s'enkystent au lieu de migrer vers le foie, et que l'ours noir (*Ursus americanus*), l'ours brun (*Ursus arctos*) et l'ours blanc (*Ursus maritimus*) peuvent aussi être des hôtes définitifs (Kutz et al. 2012). Par défaut, tous les kystes présents dans les muscles de caribou ont précédemment été décrits comme étant *T. krabbei*, mais Catalano et al. (2014) ont récemment souligné un potentiel d'erreur d'identification dans les études précédentes parce que *T. krabbei* et *T. arctos* sont morphologiquement très similaires, particulièrement sous leur forme immature (Haukisalmi et al. 2011). Il est donc important de noter que des espèces cryptiques sont présentes dans la faune arctique (Haukisalmi et al. 2011; Lavikainen et al. 2011; Raundrup et al. 2012; Catalano et al. 2014). Cependant, comme les kystes musculaires reportés dans ce mémoire

sont très probablement *T. krabbei*, ils seront référés comme tel même s'ils n'ont pas été identifiés moléculairement (Susan Kutz, communication personnelle).

1.5 Objectifs de l'étude

Cette étude, qui fait partie d'un large effort d'échantillonnage réalisé chez plusieurs troupeaux de la région circumpolaire pendant plusieurs années, permet de dresser un portrait global actuel et passé des macroparasites du caribou et établit une référence sur laquelle les recherches futures de surveillance pourront se baser pour évaluer l'évolution du parasitisme, particulièrement à l'aube des changements climatiques. Le premier objectif de l'étude est de déterminer quelles combinaisons de facteurs tels que le sexe, la classe d'âge, la taille du troupeau et la saison expliquent le mieux la prévalence et l'intensité de ces parasites chez le caribou migrateur. Le deuxième objectif de l'étude est de comparer douze troupeaux de l'Amérique du Nord et du Groenland afin de vérifier si la prévalence et l'intensité de ces parasites varient selon les troupeaux. Ce mémoire est présenté sous la forme d'un article scientifique rédigé en anglais adressant ces deux objectifs.

2. Variation in the intensity and prevalence of the macroparasites of migratory caribou: a quasi-circumpolar study

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Résumé

Les études comparatives réalisées selon un large éventail spatio-temporel sont fort utiles pour améliorer notre compréhension de l'état de santé des populations d'animaux sauvages. Ici, nous avons voulu étudier le parasitisme chez le caribou migrateur (*Rangifer tarandus*) en Amérique du Nord et au Groenland. Un total de 1507 caribous a été échantillonné à travers douze troupeaux pour une partie ou l'ensemble de sept de leurs principaux macroparasites entre 1978 et 2010, avec un effort d'échantillonnage accru en 2007-2010. Nous avons tenté de déterminer quelles combinaisons de facteurs tels que le sexe, la classe d'âge, la taille du troupeau et la saison expliquaient le mieux la prévalence et l'intensité de ces parasites. L'intensité de *Hypoderma tarandi* augmentait avec l'âge chez les mâles alors que le contraire a été observé chez les femelles. La prévalence de *Fascioloides magna*, *Taenia hydatigena* et *Cephenemyia trompe* était plus élevée chez les adultes que chez les jeunes de moins d'un an. La prévalence et l'intensité de *F. magna* et la prévalence de *T. hydatigena* étaient plus élevées à forte taille de troupeau qu'à plus faible taille de troupeau. Les deux troupeaux du Groenland avaient les prévalences de *T. hydatigena* et de *T. krabbei* les plus faibles alors qu'*Echinococcus granulosus* y était absent. Les troupeaux du Groenland différaient aussi des autres car ils avaient une plus grande intensité de *H. tarandi* et une plus grande prévalence de *C. trompe* que les autres troupeaux. Les deux troupeaux du Québec et du Labrador étaient les seuls au sein desquels on retrouvait *F. magna* et le troupeau de la Rivière-George avait une plus grande prévalence de ce parasite que le troupeau de la Rivière-aux-Feuilles. Cette recherche fournit la première étude comparative de ces helminthes et arthropodes parasites du caribou à large échelle spatiale et géographique.

Abstract

Comparative studies across time and geographical regions are useful to improve our understanding of the health of wildlife populations. Our goal was to study parasitism in migratory caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) of North America and Greenland. A total of 1507 caribou were sampled across twelve herds to assess some or all of seven of their main macroparasites between 1978 and 2010 with the greatest sampling effort in 2007-2010. We sought to determine which combinations of factors such as sex, age class, herd size, and season best explained the prevalence and intensity of those parasites. Intensity of *Hypoderma tarandi* increased with age for males while the opposite was observed in females. Prevalence of *Fascioloides magna*, *Taenia hydatigena*, and *Cephenemyia trompe* was higher in adults than in calves. Prevalence and intensity of *F. magna* and prevalence of *T. hydatigena* were higher at high herd size than at lower herd size. Greenland herds had the lowest prevalence of *T. hydatigena* and *Taenia krabbei*, while *Echinococcus granulosus* was absent. Greenland herds also differed from other herds because they had a higher intensity of *H. tarandi* and a higher prevalence of *C. trompe* than the other herds. The two herds from Quebec and Labrador were the only ones with *F. magna*, and the Rivière-George herd had a higher prevalence of this parasite than the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herd. Our research provides the first comparative survey of these helminth and arthropod parasites of caribou across a broad spatial-temporal range.

2.1 Introduction

Determining parasite biodiversity as well as the abundance and variability of parasites within animal populations across the species range is crucial for the early detection of changes in health status (Scott 1988; Hoberg et al. 2003; Hoberg et al. 2008). Many studies have shown that parasitism is a key factor influencing the fitness of many organisms due to its effects on individual life-history components (Anderson and May 1978; May and Anderson 1978; Gulland 1992; Hudson et al. 1998; Irvine et al. 2006). Individuals within host populations often show a strong variation in the prevalence – the percent of infected individuals in the host population – and in the intensity of infection – the mean number of parasites per infected host. This variability is typical for macroparasites and is a function of a number of things, including the level of exposure and the ability to mount efficient immune defence mechanisms (Hudson et al. 2002; Christie et al. 2007).

Various factors can influence parasitism. For example, inter-individual variability within the host population can influence the prevalence and intensity of parasites. Sex of the host can impact the degree of infection, with males often being more infected than females (Hamilton and Zuk 1982; Zuk 1990; Poulin 1996), with some exceptions (McCurdy et al. 1998; Morales-Montor et al. 2004). Physiological, morphological, and behavioral differences between females and males could operate to create a sexual bias in infection levels. For instance, steroid hormones, particularly testosterone, could depress the immune system and thus play a major role in sex differences (Zuk 1990; Folstad and Karter 1992). The prevalence of long-lived parasites generally increase with age, starting when an animal is first susceptible to infection (Hudson and Dobson 1995). Many mechanisms could be responsible for age-dependent parasitism levels such as mortality induced by parasite infection, acquired immunity, and changes in exposure to infection with age (Hudson and Dobson 1995; Wilson et al. 2001). Transmission rate is also thought to increase with density of the host (Arneberg et al. 1998) and host group size (Patterson and Ruckstuhl 2013) because the probability that the infectious stage of the parasite (e.g. eggs or larvae) encounters a host then increases (Côté and Poulin 1995).

Seasonality can also affect the activity and the rate of transmission of parasites. This is particularly true for parasites that have life cycle stages that are free in the environment and

whose development and/or survival are sensitive to climatic conditions (Harvell et al. 2002; Kutz et al. 2009; Hoar et al. 2012). Because the rate of transmission of parasites is affected by climate, host-parasite systems could be greatly impacted by climate change (Kutz et al. 2005). In the Arctic, the effects of climate change are already evident, with global mean surface temperature having increased two to three times more than for the rest of the planet in the past 150 years (Post et al. 2009; IPCC 2013). Predictions of a warmer and wetter Arctic are expected to alter host-parasite interactions by increasing transmission rates and transmission periods, by shifting temporal patterns of parasite life history and by expanding spatial range of some parasites by decreasing environmental constraints (Kutz et al. 2004; Kutz et al. 2005; Brooks and Hoberg 2007; Hoar et al. 2012). However, for some parasites the impacts of a warming arctic climate are not as clear, with extremes in heat negatively impacting transmission (Hoar et al. 2012; Kutz et al. 2013b; Molnár et al. 2013). Thus, arctic ecosystems can provide considerable insight to understand and predict the responses of host-parasite systems to warming on a global scale (Kutz et al. 2009; Davidson et al. 2011).

Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) are widespread and abundant across the circumpolar Arctic (Festa-Bianchet et al. 2011). This is a keystone species supporting predator populations (Dale et al. 1994; Mowat and Heard 2006; Musiani et al. 2007), as well as affecting vegetation structure (Olofsson et al. 2009; Champagne et al. 2012; Zamin and Grogan 2013). Caribou are also central to the culture, spirituality, and diet of northern aboriginal peoples (Hummel and Ray 2008; Festa-Bianchet et al. 2011). Many caribou herds of the Arctic are now declining (Vors and Boyce 2009) and may not recover to herd sizes prior to the declines (Festa-Bianchet et al. 2011). The causes of the declines are unknown although habitat degradation, harvesting, industrial development and climate change could be singly or cumulatively responsible (Festa-Bianchet et al. 2011). Infectious diseases and parasites may also be a contributing driver for caribou herd fluctuations but empirical data supporting this assertion remain scarce (Albon et al. 2002). Here, we report variations in prevalence and intensity of infection of the main macroparasites of migratory caribou across several Arctic regions and years that will allow comparisons among herds and serve as baseline data against which to assess caribou vulnerability to parasitism and responses to environmental change. The objectives of this study were: i) to determine which

combinations of factors such as sex, age class, herd size, and season best explained the prevalence and intensity of seven of the main macroparasites of caribou and ii) to compare the prevalence and intensity of these macroparasites among twelve herds distributed across North America and Greenland.

2.2 Methods

A total of 1507 caribou (Table 1) were sampled across twelve herds from Alaska to Greenland (Figure 1) between 1978 and 2010 with the greatest sampling effort in 2007-2010. Sampling was done intensively in the Rivière-George and Rivière-aux-Feuilles herds since 1978 while it was done sporadically in 1994 in the Beverly/Ahiak and Cape Bathurst herds, in 1997 and 1998 in the Bluenose East herd, and in 2000 in the Beverly/Ahiak herd. In addition, most herds were sampled intensively during the International Polar Year initiative (2007-2010), when the CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment Network (CARMA; www.caff.is/carma) (Russell et al. 2013) coordinated widespread sampling of migratory caribou and reindeer herds across the Arctic. Standardized sampling protocols were applied to establish baseline data on the diversity and abundance of pathogens and parasites (Kutz et al. 2013a). The following sampling periods were defined considering the ecology of caribou and the studied parasites: winter (December to mid-February), late winter/early spring (mid-February to April), spring migration/calving grounds (May to July), late summer (August and September), and fall migration (October and November) (Sharma et al. 2009). For *H. tarandi* and *C. trompe* (see below), we used only data collected in late winter because it is the only period of the year when larvae are clearly visible by gross examination (Nilssen and Haugerud 1994). For all other parasites, prevalence and intensity were established for all seasons when data were collected. Because different techniques to assess age were used for different herds, we used age classes as attributed in the field instead of exact age. Age criteria were as follows: calves (less than 12 months), yearlings (between 12 and 23 months) and adults (24 months and older). We used data collected from aerial surveys to divide herd sizes in five classes that could be compared across herds and accounted for both herd size and trend: low and increasing, high and increasing, around the peak, high and decreasing, and low and decreasing (Pachkowski et al. 2013).

2.2.1 Studied species

We studied seven of the main macroparasites of caribou: warble larvae (*Hypoderma tarandi*), nose bot larvae (*Cephenemyia trompe*), liver cysts (*Taenia hydatigena*), giant liver flukes (*Fascioloides magna*), hydatid cysts (*Echinococcus granulosus*), lungworms (*Dictyocaulus eckerti*), and muscle cysts (*Taenia krabbei*) (Table 2). The lungworms reported here have not been molecularly identified, but are likely *D. eckerti* based on the literature (Höglund et al. 2003; Kutz et al. 2012). By default, all cysts in caribou muscles have previously been described as *T. krabbei*, but Catalano et al. (2014) have recently underlined the potential for misidentification in previous studies because *T. krabbei* and *Taenia arctos* are morphologically very similar, especially in their immature form (Haukisalmi et al. 2011). *Taenia arctos* has been reported in muskoxen in Greenland and in other species in North America (Haukisalmi et al. 2011; Lavikainen et al. 2011; Raundrup et al. 2012; Catalano et al. 2014). The muscle cysts reported here have not been molecularly identified, but are likely *T. krabbei* (S. Kutz, unpubl. data). Data were collected only by scientists and trained personnel to limit biases associated with harvest by hunting. For *Echinococcus granulosus*, total count of cysts was done on the whole surface of the lungs. For *Hypoderma tarandi*, total count of larvae was done on the underside of the skin of the top and the sides of the back. For *Cephenemyia trompe*, total count of nose bot larvae was done in the whole pharynx once the head was removed. For *Dictyocaulus eckerti*, total count of worms was done in the lungs after dissecting them along the bronchi and major bronchioles. For *Fascioloides magna* and *Taenia hydatigena*, total count of flukes and cysts was done in the liver after cutting it into 1 cm slices. For *Taenia krabbei*, total count of cysts was done in both the heart and the gastrocnemius muscle after making transverse cuts through them (Kutz et al. 2013a). *Fascioloides magna* is known to occur only in the Québec and Labrador herds (Choquette et al. 1971; Parker 1981; Huot and Beaulieu 1985) and therefore has not been actively sought during sampling of other herds. However, as sampling included manipulations of the liver to determine the prevalence and intensity of *T. hydatigena*, if an individual not from Quebec or Labrador was infected with *F. magna*, it would have been detected (B. Elkin, personal communication) given the size of this parasite (Pybus 2001).

2.2.2 Statistical analyses

We divided analyses in three parts: i) the calculation of the overall prevalence and intensity, ii) the assessment of the factors explaining the prevalence and intensity of the studied parasites, and iii) comparisons among herds. We used R software version 2.15.3 (R Development Core Team 2013) for all analyses and the level of statistical significance was set at $\alpha < 0.05$. We first calculated the overall prevalence and intensity for each parasite (means \pm SE) with all the data combined. Then, we used generalized linear mixed models (GLMM) to model the effects of different factors on the prevalence and intensity of parasites. We used models with a binomial distribution for the prevalence and with a Poisson distribution for the intensity because intensity of parasites has an aggregated distribution and the Poisson distribution takes into account this nonparametric distribution. Hence, means used to assess the effects of different factors on the intensity of infection are averaged intensities adjusted for this distribution. We used sex, age class, herd size, and season as fixed effects and herd and year as random effects. Except for the intensity of *H. tarandi* and the prevalence of *F. magna*, we could not include interactions in our models because there was a quasi-complete separation of data points, indicating that an independent variable predicted a dependent variable almost perfectly in certain cases. We hence included interactions between sex and age class only in the models assessing the intensity of *H. tarandi* and the prevalence of *F. magna*. The package lme4 was used to estimate the parameters with the Laplace approximation (Bates et al. 2012). The package lsmeans was used to calculate the least-squared means and to make pairwise comparisons among the different groups of factors (e.g. among the three age classes) (Lenth 2013). P-values obtained with these *a posteriori* pairwise comparisons were adjusted using the Tukey method (Westfall and Young 1993). Finally, we compared herds in terms of prevalence and intensity of the studied parasites. Since there were gaps in the data, we used the results from the second part of the analyses to focus on certain groups of data. After determining which factor or combination of factors had a significant effect on the prevalence and the intensity of the studied parasites (e.g. we found an effect of sex on the prevalence), we focused the analyses on the data with sufficient sample size (e.g. we used only adults from the different studied herds to avoid a potential bias associated with age; Table 3). For all analyses, we used only groups of factors for which $n \geq 10$. Unequal sample

sizes were due to different sampling effort among herds, seasons, and years. Herds that had a prevalence of 0% or 100% were excluded from herd comparisons because pairwise comparisons could not be calculated when they were included. For the giant liver flukes, we had sufficient data only from the Rivière-George herd to test for the effects of sex, age class, season, and herd size on the prevalence and intensity of flukes. However, the overall prevalence and intensity were calculated with combined data from both the Rivière-aux-Feuilles and the Rivière-George herds. We also compared the overall prevalence and intensity of giant liver flukes between these two herds. There were not enough data to conduct statistical analyses on the effects of sex, age class, season, and herd size on the intensity of nose bots, hydatid cysts, lungworms, and muscle cysts, as well as to conduct herd comparisons.

Figure 1: Annual range of the twelve studied caribou herds (*Rangifer tarandus*) in North America and Greenland. Sources: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 annual ranges provided by CARMA (Don Russel, pers. comm.); 9, 10 annual ranges based on telemetry locations (100% Minimum Convex Polygon); 8, 11, 12 annual ranges adapted from Hugo Ahlenius, UNEP/GRID-Arendal.

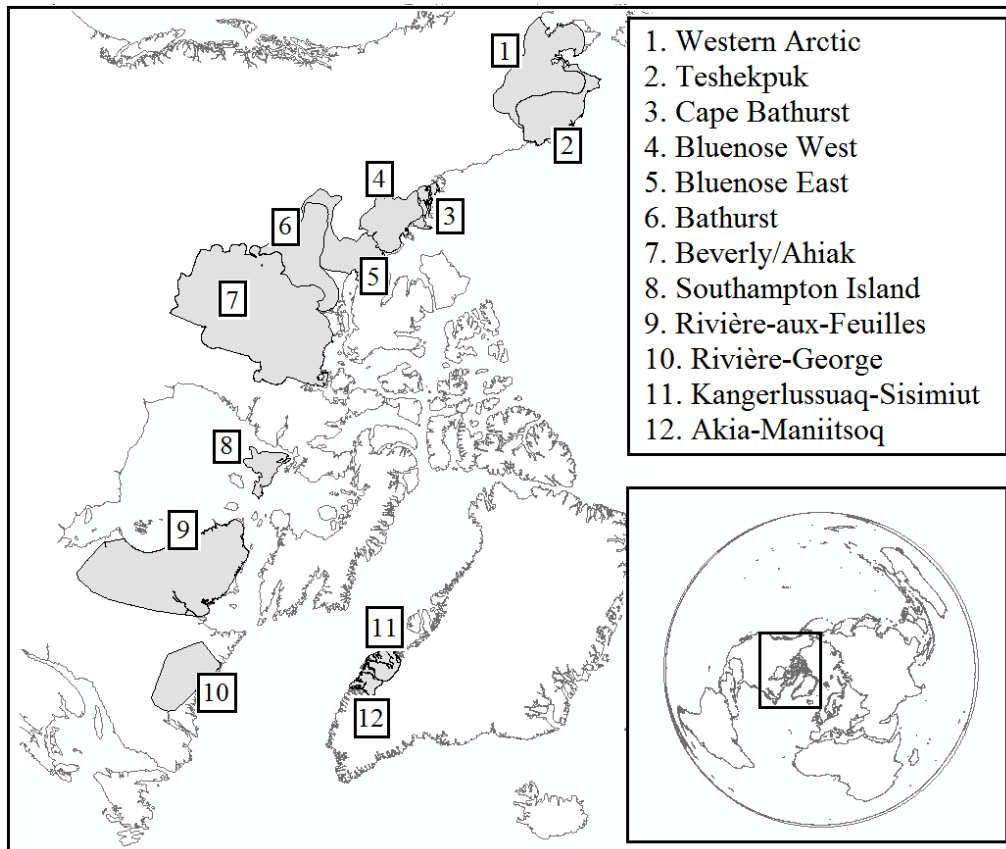


Table 1: Sample sizes for sex (1=females, 2=males), age class (1=calves, 2=yearlings, 3=adults), herd size (1=low and increasing, 2=high and increasing, 3=around the peak, 4=high and decreasing, 5=low and decreasing), and season (1=winter, 2=late winter/early spring, 3=spring migration/calving grounds, 4=late summer, 5=fall migration) to assess which factors affect the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – and the intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of seven of the main macroparasites of caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*). Data are from 2 or more herds for each parasite, except for *Fascioloides magna* that come only from the Rivière-George herd. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected for this category of sex, age class, herd size or season.

		Total	Sex		Age class			Herd size					Season				
			1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Hypoderma tarandi</i>	Prevalence	650	528	122	63	72	515	156	176	25	225	68	-	650	-	-	-
	Intensity	632	516	116	63	71	498	153	173	25	218	63	-	632	-	-	-
<i>Cephenemyia trompe</i>	Prevalence	335	281	54	24	11	300	-	77	25	166	67	-	335	-	-	-
<i>Taenia hydatigena</i>	Prevalence	958	790	168	132	21	805	16	122	108	364	348	-	358	184	145	271
	Intensity	171	141	30	-	-	171	-	11	22	77	61	-	80	39	34	18
<i>Fascioloides magna</i>	Prevalence	542	467	75	85	19	438	11	289	20	27	195	13	151	142	60	176
	Intensity	189	189	-	-	-	189	-	16	20	24	129	-	38	65	25	61
<i>Echinococcus granulosus</i>	Prevalence	1197	969	228	166	37	994	20	364	108	344	361	11	471	214	177	324
<i>Dictyocaulus eckerti</i>	Prevalence	374	288	86	29	13	332	-	104	-	145	125	-	232	-	115	27
<i>Taenia krabbei</i>	Prevalence	1181	927	254	163	59	959	-	294	108	425	354	11	477	198	181	314

Table 2: Description and life cycle of the seven main macroparasites of caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) used in our study (Davis and Anderson 1971; Fréchette 1986; Kutz et al. 2012).

Name	Classification	Length in <i>Rangifer</i> (cm)	Intermediate host(s)	Position in the intermediate host(s)	Definitive host(s)	Position in the definitive host(s)	Immature form (present in <i>Rangifer</i>)
<i>Hypoderma tarandi</i>	Order : Diptera Family: Oestridae	1–3	-	-	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Sub-dermal	-
<i>Cephenemyia trompe</i>	Order : Diptera Family: Oestridae	1–3	-	-	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Pharyngeal pockets and nasal sinuses	-
<i>Taenia hydatigena</i>	Phylum : Plathelminths	0.1–5	<i>Alces americanus</i> , <i>Cervus canadensis</i> , <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> , <i>Ovis canadensis</i> , <i>Odocoileus hemionus</i> , <i>Rangifer tarandus</i> , <i>Ovibos moschatus</i>	Liver, mesentery, surface of abdominal viscera	<i>Canis latrans</i> , <i>Canis lupus</i> , <i>Lynx rufus</i> , and other carnivores	Small intestine	Cysticercus
<i>Fascioloides magna</i>	Phylum : Plathelminths	1–8	Fresh water snails	Whole body	<i>Alces americanus</i> , <i>Cervus canadensis</i> , <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> , <i>Odocoileus hemionus</i> , <i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Liver	-
<i>Echinococcus granulosus</i>	Phylum : Plathelminths	1–8	<i>Alces americanus</i> , <i>Cervus canadensis</i> , <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> , <i>Odocoileus hemionus</i> , <i>Rangifer tarandus</i> , <i>Ovibos moschatus</i>	Lungs, liver	<i>Canis latrans</i> , <i>Canis lupus</i>	Small intestine	Hydatid cysts
<i>Dictyocaulus eckerti</i>	Phylum : Nematoda	1–12	-	-	<i>Alces americanus</i> , <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> , <i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Lungs	-
<i>Taenia krabbei</i>	Phylum : Plathelminths	0.1–1	<i>Alces americanus</i> , <i>Odocoileus hemionus</i> , <i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Muscle, heart	<i>Canis latrans</i> , <i>Canis lupus</i> , <i>Lynx rufus</i> , <i>Vulpes alopecurus</i> , and other carnivores	Small intestine	Cysticercus

Table 3: Sample sizes used to compare twelve caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) herds in terms of prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – and intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – for seven of their main macroparasites. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected for this herd.

		Akia- Maniitsoq	Bathurst	Beverly/ Ahiak	Bluenose East	Bluenose West	Cape Bathurst	Kangerlussuaq- Sisimiut	Rivière-aux- Feuilles	Rivière- George	Southampton Island	Teshekpuk	Western Arctic
<i>Hypoderma tarandi</i>	Prevalence	47	68	115	26	-	16	50	-	255	64	-	-
	Intensity	41	50	87	22	-	-	40	-	168	16	-	-
<i>Cephenemyia trompe</i>	Prevalence	41	57	113	26	-	15	40	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Taenia hydatigena</i>	Prevalence	40	-	88	-	-	15	-	98	26	-	14	16
	Intensity	-	50	36	-	-	-	-	37	21	-	11	-
<i>Fascioloides magna</i>	Prevalence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	20	-	-	-
	Intensity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	20	-	-	-
<i>Echinococcus granulosus</i>	Prevalence	47	148	97	53	17	16	50	220	514	-	14	20
<i>Dictyocaulus eckerti</i>	Prevalence	45	30	72	26	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Taenia krabbei</i>	Prevalence	41	149	120	53	20	16	50	220	422	64	14	20

2.3 Results

2.3.1 *Hypoderma tarandi*

The overall prevalence was $97\pm 1\%$ (95% C.I.: 96-98; see Appendix 2 for the overall prevalence and intensity of each parasites separated by herd, sex and age class), with no significant difference according to sex, age class, herd size (Table 4A) and herd (Table 4B). Akia-Maniitsoq, Cape Bathurst and Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut herds had a prevalence of 100%. The overall intensity was 103 ± 5 warble larvae (95% C.I.: 93-112), with a minimum of 1, a median of 61 and a maximum of 1008 warble larvae. Intensity increased with age in males, but the opposite occurred in females (Figure 2; Tables 5A, 6A). The intensity of warble larvae in adult females differed among herds, specifically the Greenland Akia-Maniitsoq and Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut herds that had atypically high counts (Figure 3A; Tables 5B, 6B).



2.3.2 *Cephenemyia trompe*

The overall prevalence was $22\pm 2\%$ (95% C.I.: 18-27). Calves ($2\pm 2\%$) had a lower prevalence of nose bot larvae than adults ($10\pm 10\%$) ($z=-2.74$, $p=0.02$; Tables 7A, 8A). The prevalence of nose bots larvae significantly differed among herds in adults, Akia-Maniitsoq and Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut herds had particularly high counts (Figure 3B; Tables 7B, 8B). Bluenose East and Cape Bathurst herds had 0% prevalence.

2.3.3 *Taenia hydatigena*

The overall prevalence was $19\pm 1\%$ (95% C.I.: 17-22). Calves ($5\pm 4\%$) had a lower prevalence of liver cysts than adults ($18\pm 9\%$) ($z=-2.90$, $p=0.01$; Tables 9A, 10A). Prevalence was higher when the herd size was high and decreasing ($7\pm 5\%$) than when it was low and decreasing ($2\pm 2\%$) ($z=2.74$, $p=0.048$; Tables 9A, 10B). When herd size was high and decreasing, the prevalence of liver cysts differed among herds in adults, Teshekpuk herd had a particularly high prevalence (Figure 3C; Tables 9B, 10C). Cape Bathurst herd had 0% prevalence. For the intensity, there were data only available from adults. The overall intensity was 2.3 ± 0.1 liver cysts (95% C.I.: 2.0-2.5), with a minimum of 1, a median of 2 and a maximum of 11 liver cysts. There was no significant difference

according to sex, herd size, and season (Tables 11A, 12A). Teshekpuk herd (1.1 ± 0.3) had fewer liver cysts than Bathurst (2.7 ± 0.2 ; $z=2.98$, $p=0.02$) and Beverly/Ahiak (2.6 ± 0.3 ; $z=2.81$, $p=0.04$) herds (Tables 11B, 12B).

2.3.4 *Fascioloides magna*

The overall prevalence was $48 \pm 2\%$ (95% C.I.: 45-52, $n=777$; data from Rivière-George and Rivière-aux-Feuilles herds, see Methods). Calves had a lower prevalence ($19 \pm 9\%$) than yearlings ($70 \pm 20\%$) ($z=-3.16$, $p=0.005$) and adults ($83 \pm 7\%$) ($z=-6.56$, $p<0.001$; Tables 13A, 14A). Prevalence was higher during the herd peak and afterwards than at other times (Figure 4A; Tables 13A, 14B). Prevalence was lower during fall migration than during the rest of the year (Figure 4B; Tables 13A, 14C). During spring migration and when the herd size was near the peak, adults from the Rivière-George herd ($95 \pm 5\%$; $n=20$) had a higher prevalence of giant liver flukes than adults from the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herd ($40 \pm 10\%$; $n=25$) ($z=3.03$, $p=0.002$; Tables 13B). For the intensity, there were data only available for adult females. The overall mean intensity was 12.6 ± 0.9 giant liver flukes (95% C.I.: 10.9-14.3, $n=242$), with a minimum of 1, a median of 7 and a maximum of 80 giant liver flukes. Intensity was lower when the herd size was increasing than during the peak and afterwards (Figure 4C; Tables 15A, 16A). Intensity was higher during spring migration than during the rest of the year (Figure 4D; Tables 15A, 16B). During spring migration and when the herd size was near the peak, there was no significant difference in intensity between herds (Table 15B).

2.3.5 *Echinococcus granulosus*

The overall prevalence was $4.8 \pm 0.6\%$ (95% C.I.: 3.6-6.0) with no significant difference according to sex, age, herd size, and season (Table 17A, 18A). Bathurst herd ($3 \pm 1\%$) had a lower prevalence than Bluenose West herd ($20 \pm 10\%$) (Tables 17B, 18B). Akia-Maniitsoq, Bluenose East, Cape Bathurst and Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut herds had 0% prevalence.

2.3.6 *Dictyocaulus eckerti*

The overall prevalence was $2.7 \pm 0.8\%$ (95% C.I.: 1.0-4.3). Prevalence was lower in late winter ($0.5 \pm 0.5\%$) than in late summer ($15 \pm 9\%$) ($z=-2.94$, $p=0.009$; Tables 19A, 20).

During late winter, there was no significant difference according to herd (Table 19B). Beverly/Ahiak and Bathurst herds had 0% prevalence.

2.3.7 *Taenia krabbei*

The overall prevalence was $6.0 \pm 0.7\%$ (95% C.I.: 4.7-7.4) with no significant difference according to sex, age, herd size, and season (Table 21A). The prevalence of muscle cysts was highest in the Western Arctic herd but did not differ significantly in the other herds (Figure 3D; Tables 21B, 22). Akia-Maniitsoq herd had 0% prevalence.

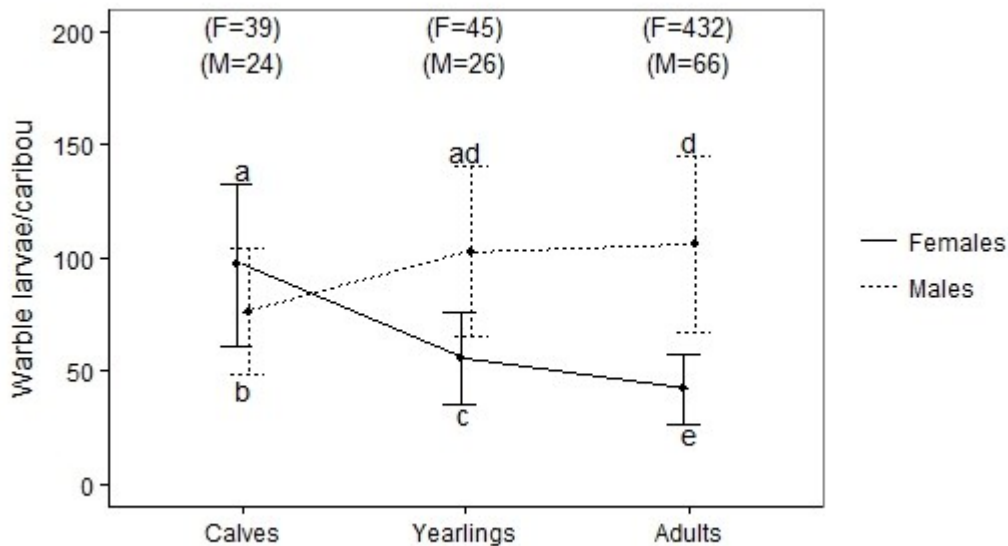


Figure 2. Intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of warble larvae (*Hypoderma tarandi*) according to age class in male (M) and female (F) migratory caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April). Different letters denote different means within sex and age classes (Table 6A). Error bars represent mean \pm SE. Sample sizes are shown in parentheses.

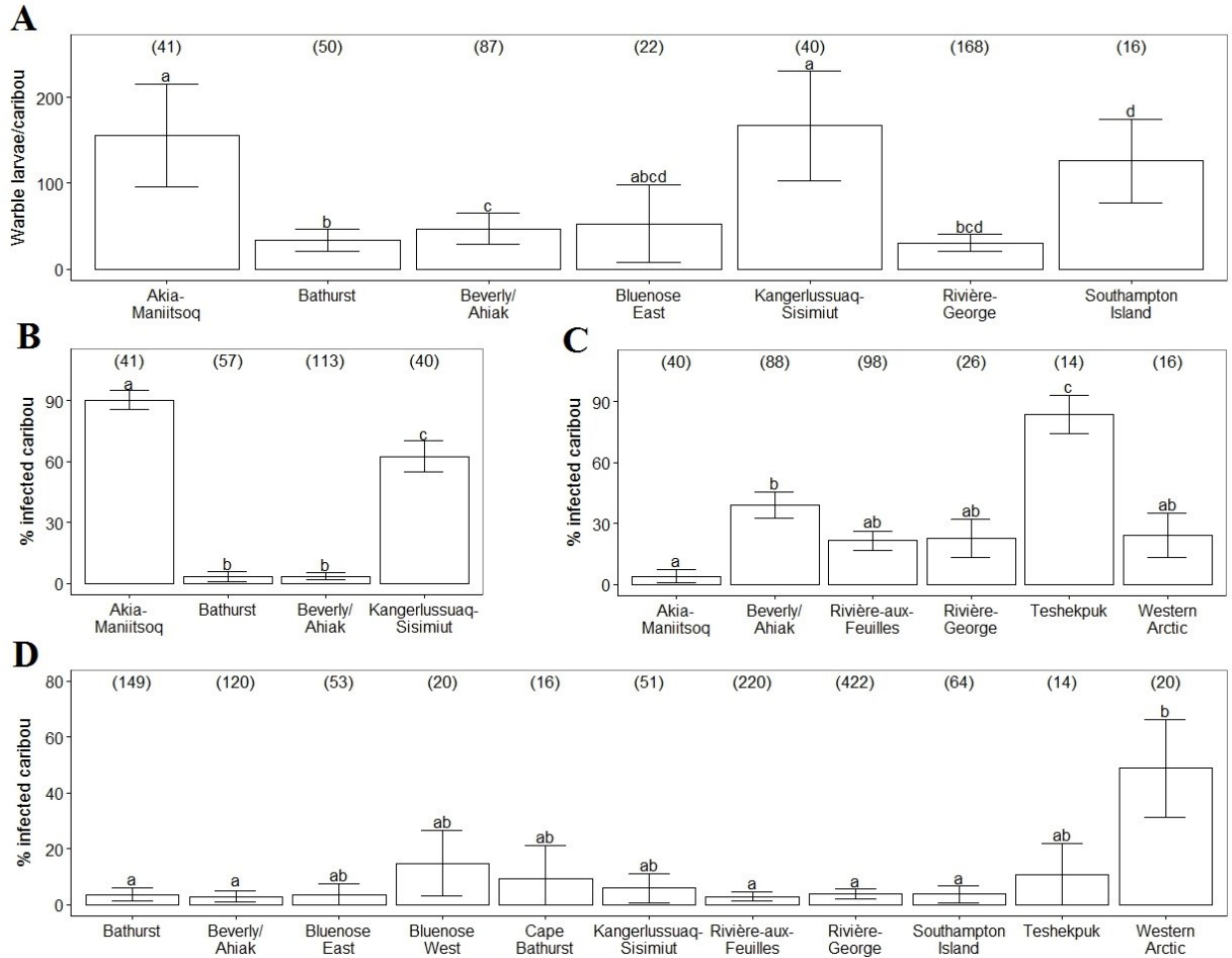


Figure 3. **A)** Intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of warble larvae (*Hypoderma tarandi*) in adult females during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April); **B)** Prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of nose bot larvae (*Cephenemyia trompe*) in adults during the late winter/early spring season; **C)** Prevalence of liver cysts (*Taenia hydatigena*) in adults when the herd size was high and decreasing; and **D)** Prevalence of muscle cysts (*Taenia krabbei*) in different herds of migratory caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*). Different letters denote different means (Tables 6B, 8B, 10B, 22). Error bars represent mean \pm SE. Sample sizes are shown in parentheses.

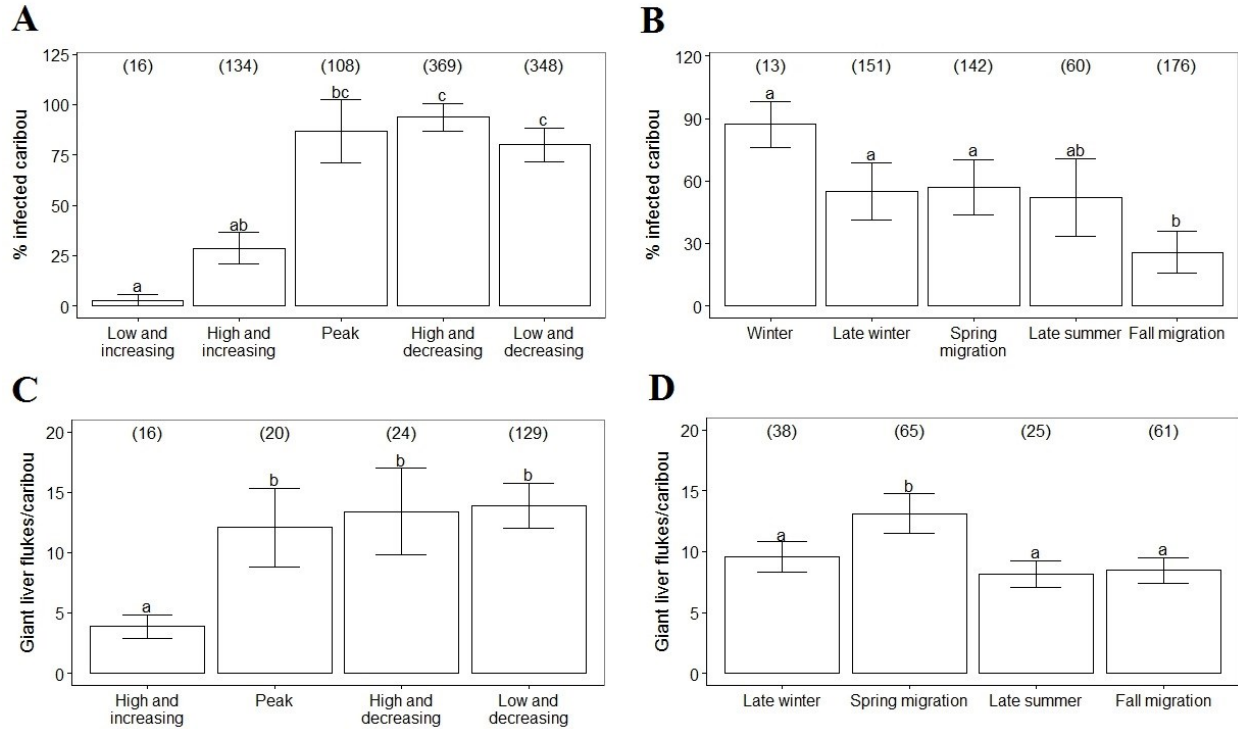


Figure 4. Prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of giant liver flukes (*Fascioloides magna*) according to **A)** herd size and **B)** season; mean intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of giant liver flukes according to **C)** herd size and **D)** season in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) from the Rivière-George herd. The five seasons were defined considering the ecology of caribou and their parasites: winter (December to mid-February), late winter/early spring (mid-February to April), spring migration/calving grounds (May to July), late summer (August and September), and fall migration (October and November). Herd size was divided into five phases that accounted for both herd size and trend: low and increasing, high and increasing, around the peak, high and decreasing, and low and decreasing. For intensity, data were collected only from adult females and there was no data when the herd size was low and increasing. Different letters denote different means (Tables 14B, 14C, 16A, 16B). Error bars represent mean \pm SE. Sample sizes are shown in parentheses.

2.4 Discussion

This is the first study presenting the prevalence and intensity of infestation of seven of the main macroparasites of migratory caribou among twelve herds across North America and Greenland. This study was part of one of the most spatially and temporally intensive sampling effort for parasites of caribou across the circumpolar region. Our study is based on data that allowed us to test for individual traits (sex class and age), population characteristics (herd and herd size) and seasonal variability across a very large spatial scale. Our results revealed that sex, age, herd size, and season could partly explain the prevalence and intensity of some macroparasites of caribou and that caribou herds greatly differed in terms of parasitism.

2.4.1 Factors influencing prevalence and intensity

2.4.1.1 Sex

We found an effect of the sex of the host in interaction with age class on the intensity of *H. tarandi* larvae; intensity increased with age class for males while the opposite occurred in females. These results are consistent with observations from other studies showing that calves and juveniles generally had greater *H. tarandi* larvae infection than adults, and males had a higher intensity than females (Helle 1980; Folstad et al. 1989; Thomas and Kiliaan 1990; Fauchald et al. 2007). Differences in the ability to mount an effective immune response to warble larvae could explain this phenomenon (Helle 1980). Indeed, in addition to the initial behavioral avoidance reactions to the presence of adult flies, caribou mount biochemical and inflammatory responses to *H. tarandi* larvae when the first larval stages begin their sub-dermal migration. This migration occurs in autumn and is a vulnerable period in *H. tarandi*'s life history (Helle 1980). Thus, the higher intensity of *H. tarandi* larvae in female calves that we observed could be explained by the lower and delayed response in the production of antibodies against the migrating larvae in calves because they have not yet acquired immunity against warble infection (Åsbakk et al. 2005). In males, it has been suggested that during the rut that coincides with the migration of the first instar of *H. tarandi* larvae, high levels of testosterone and corticosteroids impede the immune response of adult males and depress the advantageous effect of acquired immunity (Folstad et al. 1989). This may increase survival of first instar larvae during their migration and

possibly explain the high intensity of *H. tarandi* larvae in adult males (Folstad et al. 1989). Similarly and more generally, three meta-analyses reported higher mean prevalence and intensity of infection in males than in females for arthropods, helminths, and unicellular parasites in mammals (Poulin 1996; Schalk and Forbes 1997; Moore and Wilson 2002).

2.4.1.2 Age class

We found an effect of age on the prevalence of *F. magna*, *T. hydatigena*, and *C. trompe* with adults having a higher prevalence than calves. For *F. magna*, the increase of prevalence with age may reflect cumulative infection over time since the parasite can live for many years in the host's liver (Pybus 2001). Indeed, mature giant liver flukes are known to live at least 5 years in white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and may even live as long as their host (Foreyt et al. 1977; Lankester and Luttich 1988). The intensity of *F. magna* was similar in all age-classes which can be explained by various hypotheses such as intraspecific competition among giant liver flukes, higher mortality of heavily infected hosts or resistance to reinfection of already infected hosts. For *T. hydatigena*, the increase in prevalence with age was consistent with the results from Thomas (1994) and may as well reflect cumulative infection over time. In contrast, for *C. trompe*, larvae leave the host every spring, hence there is no cumulative infection (Nilssen and Haugerud 1994) and our results may reflect an increased susceptibility to infection with age (Hudson and Dobson 1995). Adult female flies of *C. trompe* eject small groups of first instar larvae on the upper lip of caribou hosts and larvae migrate to the pharyngeal region where they develop (Anderson and Nilssen 1990). Flies could select adult hosts because they are larger and hence have larger pharyngeal regions, which could facilitate development of multiple larvae. Alternatively, heavily infected calves and yearlings could be more likely to die than heavily infected adults.

Except for the higher intensity of *H. tarandi* larvae in female calves compared to adult females, there was no statistically significant decline in parasites intensity with age classes, suggesting that acquired immunity is weak for the parasites we studied. Acquired immunity, which develops in response to accumulated infection, is believed to explain the frequent higher intensities of macroparasites in young compared to adults in humans, domestic ruminants and laboratory animals (Anderson and Crombie 1984; Anderson and

May 1985; Lloyd and Soulsby 1987), but this phenomenon has not been clearly demonstrated in wildlife populations (Hudson and Dobson 1995; Wilson et al. 2001; Irvine et al. 2006) and in some studies, intensity actually increased with age (Addison et al. 1979; Behnke et al. 1999; Vicente et al. 2007). Alternatively, young hosts are smaller and hence have less surface area for parasites to infect and mature, and may thus maintain lower infestation intensity than adults.



2.4.1.3 Herd size

Herd size affected the prevalence and intensity of *F. magna* and the prevalence of *T. hydatigena*. Data on the prevalence and intensity of *F. magna* and *T. hydatigena* have been collected since 1978 in the Rivière-George and the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herds while data on the prevalence of *T. hydatigena* have been collected since 1994 in the Beverly/Ahiak, Cape Bathurst, and Bluenose East herds. Prevalence and intensity of *F. magna* were higher during the herd peak and afterwards than at other times, and prevalence of *T. hydatigena* was highest when the herd size was high and decreasing. These two parasites are environmentally transmitted (Table 2) and may be density dependent, thus prone to increased transmission at high host density and group size (Arneberg et al. 1998; Patterson and Ruckstuhl 2013). In large, dense groups, parasite life cycles can be accelerated because more hosts are available for colonization and reproduction (Côté and Poulin 1995). Besides an increase in the rate of contacts between hosts and infective stages, herd size may also affect host resistance to parasites if body condition and individual performance of hosts are reduced as a consequence of the herd size (Bonenfant et al. 2009). Good body condition may increase the ability of the host to inhibit parasitism (Coop and Kyriazakis 2001). A study conducted on caribou from the Rivière-George herd found that body condition was poorer when the herd size was nearing a peak and decreasing than when the herd size was low and increasing (Pachkowski et al. 2013). Thus, the highest prevalence and intensity of *F. magna* and *T. hydatigena* we found during the herd peak may be partly explained by the poor individual body condition at this time, but poor body condition could also be the result of a high parasite infection. However, because these two parasites have indirect transmission cycles and have to go through other hosts than caribou to complete their life cycle, their density dependence in regards to caribou could be mitigated if the other hosts essential for the completion of the life cycle are absent or at very low densities. Similar

observations of high prevalence and intensity during the decline phase of herd size could be explained by the retention of the parasites by these other hosts. For *F. magna*, aquatic snails of the family Lymnaeidae are intermediate hosts and various stages of the parasite have been demonstrated to overwinter in snails (Pybus 2001). Hence, since the intermediate host populations are not affected by caribou abundance and *F. magna* is long-lived, high intensity of shedding may be happening in the environment even with declining caribou herd size. However, a delay in egg shedding may not take more than a year and could hence explain only partly why we found high prevalence and intensity years after the peak of the caribou population. For *T. hydatigena*, carnivores act as definitive hosts (Kutz et al. 2012) and eggs are long-lived in favourable environments, hence there could also be an ongoing shedding in the environment even when the caribou herd size is declining, especially if there is a time-lag between the caribou herd size and the population size of its predators.

2.4.1.4 Season

Season affected the prevalence and intensity of *F. magna* and the prevalence of *D. eckerti*, but not in the same manner. Prevalence of *F. magna* was lowest in the fall migration and the intensity of *F. magna* was highest in the spring migration. In white-tailed deer, mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and elk (*Cervus elaphus*), *F. magna* has a prepatent period of approximately 6 months, which may explain why summer exposure to infective stages results in a peak of adult stages of the parasite in late winter and spring (Foreyt and Todd 1976; Foreyt 1996). The prevalence of *D. eckerti* was lower in late winter than in late summer, which is consistent with observed trends in muskoxen, caribou, and livestock where adult nematodes are short-lived and hypobiotic larvae may remain in the lungs overwinter to mature the following spring, but are not detectable on gross examination (Kutz et al. 2012). The ability for *D. eckerti* to overwinter in the Arctic environment is not known, but other species do not tend to persist in the environment under subzero temperatures (Ayalew et al. 1974).

2.4.2 Herd comparisons

Of the twelve studied herds, Greenland herds and both Quebec/Labrador herds were different from the rest of the herds in terms of prevalence and intensity of the studied parasites.

2.4.2.1 *Akia-Maniitsoq and Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut herds*

In Greenland, the prevalence of *T. hydatigena* and *T. krabbei* was low, while *E. granulosus* was absent. These three parasites require carnivore definitive hosts, and although Arctic fox (*Vulpes alopex*) are present, wolves (*Canis lupus*) are absent from the range of caribou in West Greenland and domestic dogs are uncommon, most likely preventing the establishment of *E. granulosus* (Rausch 2003). Arctic fox and polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) can be definitive hosts of *Taenia* species and could hence be responsible for maintaining these parasites in Greenland at low prevalence (Kutz et al. 2012). Caribou from Greenland had a much greater abundance of *H. tarandi* and *C. trompe*. The short migration (<200 km) of Greenland herds may be the principal factor explaining these high values (Cuyler et al. 2012). Longer migrations in North America could minimize reinfestation of *H. tarandi* and *C. trompe* by separating hosts from the areas where the larvae were dropped and adult flies eventually emerge (Thomas and Kiliaan 1990; Folstad et al. 1991).

2.4.2.2 *Rivière-aux-Feuilles and Rivière-George herds*

The two caribou herds from Quebec and Labrador are the only ones with *F. magna*, and the Rivière-George herd had a higher prevalence than the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herd while intensity was not significantly different. The historical biogeography of both herds may be responsible for this peculiar parasite fauna. *Fascioloides magna* tends to have a patchy distribution across North America because it is thought that it cannot persist in areas without suitable snail intermediate hosts, as well as final hosts such as deer, elk and, caribou (Wobeser et al. 1985; Pybus 2001). The limited spread of *F. magna* to caribou of northeastern Canada remains unclear but is presumed to have occurred when the southern limits of the caribou range reached the southeastern United States (Yannic et al. 2014), where white-tailed deer and the now-extinct elk also ranged (Lankester and Luttich 1988). The Rivière-George and Rivière-aux-Feuilles herds are the only migratory caribou herds originating from populations whose range overlapped that of white-tailed deer and elk during the last glaciation (Yannic et al. 2014). Interestingly, prevalence was greater in the Rivière-George herd compared to the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herd and this difference could perhaps be explained by their distinct calving grounds and summer ranges (Couturier et al. 2004; Taillon et al. 2012). For *F. magna*, development in snail intermediate hosts depends on environmental conditions. Hence, there could be a difference in the summer

environmental conditions between the summer ranges of the two herds that facilitate summer transmission of *F. magna* on the summer range of the Rivière-George herd but not on the summer range of the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herd. Further investigation on the differences in habitat, percent of wetlands, temperature, humidity, and vegetation type of these two summer ranges may reveal some insights into what may be driving the transmission of *F. magna*.

The main limitation of this study was the presence of missing data due to differences in sampling effort according to herds, seasons and years. To reduce potential bias, standardized protocols were used during the sampling effort of 2007-2011, limiting the variability in data collection and allowing us to make comparisons of data from different sampling periods. However, sampling before 2007 was very similar to the standardized protocols of CARMA because they were largely inspired by the protocols used before 2007. Even if there is a potential bias due to differences in the probability of detection, this bias is reduced by the great similarity between protocols (Kutz et al. 2013a).

2.5 Conclusion

A strength of this study is the use of a database that spans several years and different seasons, age classes, and herd sizes across a very large spatial scale. The long-term research on the Rivière-aux-Feuilles and Rivière-George herds, combined with extensive collaboration and coordinated and standardized sampling of caribou during the International Polar year (Kutz et al. 2013a), were essential for these data to be gathered. Our study provides a substantial baseline of the macroparasites of caribou across broad geographical regions and for many herds, and establishes the foundation on which we can begin to evaluate the dynamics of parasitism in caribou over time. Further research should focus on long-term monitoring of parasites in caribou to increase our comprehension of the impacts of climate change on their life cycles and life history parameters.

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Appendix 1

Table 4: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, age class, and herd size (A) best describe the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of warble larvae (*Hypoderma tarandi*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds (B) during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April). Only the best model is presented.

A

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	4.55	1.10	4.15	<0.001
Males	-1.00	0.56	-1.77	0.08
Yearlings	0.13	1.45	0.09	0.93
Adults	-1.05	1.10	-0.96	0.34
High and increasing	0.57	0.78	0.73	0.46
Peak	0.18	1.20	0.15	0.88
High and decreasing	0.17	0.68	0.24	0.81
Low and decreasing	-0.70	0.73	-0.95	0.34

B

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	2.77	0.52	5.38	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	0.85	0.78	1.09	0.28
Bluenose East	0.45	1.14	0.39	0.70
Rivière-George	0.95	0.66	1.44	0.15
Southampton Island	-0.30	0.69	-0.44	0.66

Table 5: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which addition or combination of factors such as sex, age class, and herd size (A) best describe the intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of warble larvae (*Hypoderma tarandi*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds in adult females (B) during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April). Only the best model is presented.

A

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	4.75	0.86	5.55	<0.001
Males	-0.24	0.02	-11.48	<0.001
Yearlings	-0.55	0.02	-26.38	<0.001
Adults	-0.83	0.01	-66.53	<0.001
High and increasing	0.23	0.90	0.25	0.80
Peak	0.35	0.98	0.36	0.72
High and decreasing	-0.28	0.92	-0.30	0.76
Low and decreasing	-1.19	0.95	-1.26	0.21
Males*Yearlings	0.85	0.03	27.26	<0.001
Males*Adults	1.17	0.03	46.10	<0.001

B

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	5.04	0.39	13.06	<0.001
Bathurst	-1.52	0.04	-39.96	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	-1.20	0.06	-21.62	<0.001
Bluenose East	-1.07	0.94	-1.14	0.25
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	0.07	0.05	1.45	0.15
Rivière-George	-1.62	0.51	-3.20	0.001
Southampton Island	-0.21	0.03	-7.80	<0.001

Table 6: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of warble larvae (*Hypoderma tarandi*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) between sexes in interaction with age classes (A) and among herds in adult females (B) during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April).

A

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Female calves	– Male calves	0.24	0.02	11.48	<0.001
Female calves	– Yearling females	0.55	0.02	26.38	<0.001
Female calves	– Yearling males	-0.06	0.02	-2.77	0.06
Female calves	– Adult females	0.83	0.01	66.53	<0.001
Female calves	– Adult males	-0.09	0.02	-5.13	<0.001
Male calves	– Yearling females	0.31	0.02	12.45	<0.001
Male calves	– Yearling males	-0.30	0.03	-11.77	<0.001
Male calves	– Adult females	0.59	0.02	31.17	<0.001
Male calves	– Adult males	-0.33	0.02	-14.57	<0.001
Yearling females	– Yearling males	-0.61	0.02	-26.85	<0.001
Yearling females	– Adult females	0.28	0.02	15.39	<0.001
Yearling females	– Adult males	-0.64	0.02	-31.24	<0.001
Yearling males	– Adult females	0.89	0.02	48.73	<0.001
Yearling males	– Adult males	0.03	0.02	-1.86	0.43
Adult females	– Adult males	-0.92	0.01	-63.98	<0.001

B

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Bathurst	1.52	0.04	39.96	<0.001
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Beverly/Ahiak	1.20	0.06	21.62	<0.001
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Bluenose East	1.07	0.94	1.14	0.92
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-0.07	0.05	-1.45	0.77
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Rivière-George	1.62	0.51	3.20	0.02
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Southampton Island	0.21	0.03	7.80	<0.001
Bathurst	– Beverly/Ahiak	-0.33	0.04	-8.18	<0.001
Bathurst	– Bluenose East	-0.45	0.94	-0.48	1.00
Bathurst	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-1.60	0.03	-51.06	<0.001
Bathurst	– Rivière-George	0.10	0.51	0.20	1.00
Bathurst	– Southampton Island	-1.32	0.04	-30.83	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	– Bluenose East	-0.12	0.94	-0.13	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-1.27	0.03	-43.41	<0.001

Beverly/Ahiak	–	Rivière-George	0.43	0.51	0.85	0.98
Beverly/Ahiak	–	Southampton Island	-0.99	0.06	-16.88	<0.001
Bluenose East	–	Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-1.15	0.94	-1.22	0.89
Bluenose East	–	Rivière-George	0.55	0.92	0.60	1.00
Bluenose East	–	Southampton Island	-0.87	0.94	-0.92	0.97
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	–	Rivière-George	1.70	0.51	3.35	0.01
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	–	Southampton Island	0.28	0.05	5.28	<0.001
Rivière-George	–	Southampton Island	-1.42	0.51	-2.79	0.08

Table 7: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, age class herd size, and season (A) best describe the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of nose bot larvae (*Cephenemyia trompe*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds in adults (B) during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April). Only the best model is presented.

A

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-4.52	2.57	-1.76	0.08
Males	-0.25	0.78	-0.32	0.75
Yearlings	3.28	1.41	2.32	0.02
Adults	1.76	0.64	2.74	0.01
Peak	3.75	3.37	1.11	0.27
High and decreasing	-0.81	3.18	-0.25	0.80
Low and decreasing	-0.72	4.16	-0.17	0.86

B

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	2.22	0.53	4.23	<0.001
Bathurst	-5.54	0.89	-6.21	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	-5.53	0.73	-7.55	<0.001
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-1.71	0.62	-2.77	0.01

Table 8: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of nose bot larvae (*Cephenemyia trompe*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) among age classes (A) and among herds in adults (B) during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April).

A

			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Calves	–	Yearlings	-3.28	1.41	-2.32	0.05
Calves	–	Adults	-1.76	0.64	-2.74	0.02
Yearlings	–	Adults	1.51	1.27	1.20	0.46

B

			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Akia-Maniitsoq	–	Bathurst	5.54	0.89	6.21	<0.001
Akia-Maniitsoq	–	Beverly/Ahiak	5.53	0.73	7.55	<0.001
Akia-Maniitsoq	–	Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	1.71	0.62	2.77	0.03
Bathurst	–	Beverly/Ahiak	-0.01	0.88	0.01	1.00
Bathurst	–	Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-3.82	0.79	-4.84	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	–	Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-3.82	0.60	-6.31	<0.001

Table 9: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, age class herd size, and season (A) best describe the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of liver cysts (*Taenia hydatigena*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds in adults and when the herd size was high and decreasing (B). Only the best model is presented.

A

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-1.89	0.99	-1.90	0.06
Males	-0.001	0.29	-0.003	1.00
Yearlings	-0.92	1.16	-0.79	0.43
Adults	1.47	0.51	2.90	0.004
High and increasing	-0.39	0.80	-0.49	0.63
Peak	-0.97	0.65	-1.49	0.14
High and decreasing	-0.58	0.64	-0.90	0.37
Low and decreasing	-2.04	0.82	-2.50	0.01
Spring migration	0.10	0.44	0.22	0.83
Late summer	-0.53	0.36	-1.47	0.14
Fall migration	-0.65	0.46	-1.40	0.16

B

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-3.15	0.77	-4.10	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	2.71	0.81	3.35	<0.001
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	1.85	0.79	2.34	0.02
Rivière-George	1.93	0.94	2.07	0.04
Teshekpuk	4.77	1.03	4.65	<0.001
Western Arctic	2.00	0.97	2.06	0.04

Table 10: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of liver cysts (*Taenia hydatigena*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) among age classes (A), herd sizes (B) and among herds in adults and when the herd size was high and decreasing (C).

A

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Calves	– Yearlings	0.92	1.16	0.79	0.71
Calves	– Adults	-1.47	0.51	-2.90	0.01
Yearlings	– Adults	-2.38	1.05	-2.27	0.06

B

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Low and increasing	– High and increasing	0.39	0.80	0.48	0.99
Low and increasing	– Peak	0.97	0.65	1.49	0.57
Low and increasing	– High and decreasing	0.58	0.64	0.90	0.90
Low and increasing	– Low and decreasing	2.04	0.82	2.50	0.09
High and increasing	– Peak	0.59	0.70	0.83	0.92
High and increasing	– High and decreasing	0.19	0.68	0.28	1.00
High and increasing	– Low and decreasing	1.65	0.66	2.48	0.09
Peak	– High and decreasing	-0.40	0.35	-1.14	0.79
Peak	– Low and decreasing	1.06	0.58	1.83	0.36
High and decreasing	– Low and decreasing	1.46	0.53	2.74	0.048

C

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Beverly/Ahiak	-2.71	0.81	-3.34	0.01
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	-1.85	0.79	-2.34	0.18
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Rivière-George	-1.93	0.94	-2.07	0.31
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Teshekpuk	-4.77	1.03	-4.65	<0.001
Akia-Maniitsoq	– Western Arctic	-2.00	0.97	-2.06	0.31
Beverly/Ahiak	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.85	0.37	2.28	0.20
Beverly/Ahiak	– Rivière-George	0.78	0.60	1.30	0.78
Beverly/Ahiak	– Teshekpuk	-2.07	0.71	-2.90	0.04
Beverly/Ahiak	– Western Arctic	0.70	0.63	1.11	0.88
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	– Rivière-George	-0.08	0.61	-0.13	1.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	– Teshekpuk	-2.92	0.73	-4.02	<0.001
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	– Western Arctic	-0.15	0.65	-0.23	1.00

Rivière-George	–	Tshekpuk	-2.84	0.87	-3.26	0.01
Rivière-George	–	Western Arctic	-0.07	0.80	-0.09	1.00
Tshekpuk	–	Western Arctic	2.77	0.91	3.05	0.03

Table 11: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, herd size, and season (A) best describe the intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of liver cysts (*Taenia hydatigena*) in adult caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds (B). Only the best model is presented.

A

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	0.86	0.24	3.57	<0.001
Males	-0.09	0.16	-0.57	0.57
Peak	-0.20	0.28	-0.71	0.48
High and decreasing	-0.06	0.24	-0.25	0.80
Low and decreasing	0.16	0.27	0.61	0.54
Spring migration	-0.09	0.17	-0.50	0.62
Late summer	-0.36	0.17	-2.08	0.04
Fall migration	-0.02	0.20	-0.09	0.93

B

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	0.99	0.09	11.41	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	-0.04	0.13	-0.27	0.79
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	-0.13	0.14	-0.95	0.34
Rivière-George	-0.32	0.18	-1.78	0.08
Teshekpuk	-0.90	0.30	-2.98	0.003

Table 12: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of liver cysts (*Taenia hydatigena*) in adult caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) among seasons (A) and to make comparisons among herds (B).

A		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Late winter	– Spring migration	0.09	0.17	0.50	0.96
Late winter	– Late summer	0.36	0.17	2.08	0.16
Late winter	– Fall migration	0.02	0.20	0.09	1.00
Spring migration	– Late summer	0.27	0.22	1.22	0.61
Spring migration	– Fall migration	-0.07	0.20	-0.34	0.99
Late summer	– Fall migration	-0.34	0.25	-1.37	0.52

B		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Bathurst	– Beverly/Ahiak	0.04	0.13	0.27	1.00
Bathurst	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.13	0.14	0.95	0.88
Bathurst	– Rivière-George	0.32	0.18	1.77	0.39
Bathurst	– Teshekpuk	0.90	0.30	2.98	0.02
Beverly/Ahiak	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.09	0.15	0.63	0.97
Beverly/Ahiak	– Rivière-George	0.28	0.19	1.49	0.57
Beverly/Ahiak	– Teshekpuk	0.86	0.31	2.81	0.04
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	– Rivière-George	0.19	0.19	0.98	0.86
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	– Teshekpuk	0.77	0.31	2.49	0.09
Rivière-George	– Teshekpuk	0.58	0.33	1.77	0.39

Table 13: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which addition or combination of factors such as sex, herd size, and season (A) best describe the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of giant liver flukes (*Fascioloides magna*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) of the Rivière-George herd and to make comparisons between this herd and the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herd in adults during the spring migration/calving grounds season (May to July) and when the herd size was around the peak (B). Only the best model is presented.

A				
	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-4.08	1.63	-2.50	0.01
Males	0.47	0.72	0.65	0.51
Yearlings	2.20	0.91	2.42	0.02
Adults	3.26	0.61	5.38	<0.001
High and increasing	2.72	1.30	2.10	0.04
Peak	5.49	1.82	3.02	0.003
High and decreasing	6.35	1.72	3.70	<0.001
Low and decreasing	4.99	1.34	3.71	<0.001
Late winter	-1.62	0.94	-1.71	0.09
Spring migration	-1.55	0.99	-1.58	0.12
Late summer	-1.81	0.91	-1.99	0.046
Fall migration	-2.86	0.96	-2.99	0.003
Males*Yearlings	0.12	1.31	0.09	0.93
Males*Adults	-0.64	0.89	-0.72	0.47

B				
	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-0.41	0.41	-0.99	0.32
Rivière-George	3.35	1.10	3.03	0.002

Table 14: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of giant liver flukes (*Fascioloides magna*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) of the Rivière-George herd among age classes (A); herd sizes (B); and seasons (C)

A

			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Calves	–	Yearlings	-2.26	0.71	-3.21	0.004
Calves	–	Adults	-2.94	0.49	-6.00	<0.001
Yearlings	–	Adults	-0.67	0.63	-1.07	0.53

B

			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Low and increasing	–	High and increasing	-2.72	1.30	-2.10	0.22
Low and increasing	–	Peak	-5.49	1.82	-3.02	0.02
Low and increasing	–	High and decreasing	-6.35	1.72	-3.70	0.002
Low and increasing	–	Low and decreasing	-4.99	1.35	-3.71	0.002
High and increasing	–	Peak	-2.77	1.39	-2.00	0.27
High and increasing	–	High and decreasing	-3.63	1.20	-3.02	0.02
High and increasing	–	Low and decreasing	-2.27	0.59	-3.86	0.001
Peak	–	High and decreasing	-0.86	1.78	-0.48	0.99
Peak	–	Low and decreasing	0.50	1.43	0.35	1.00
High and decreasing	–	Low and decreasing	1.36	1.22	1.12	0.80

C

			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Winter	–	Late winter	1.62	0.94	1.71	0.43
Winter	–	Spring migration	1.55	0.99	1.58	0.51
Winter	–	Late summer	1.81	0.91	1.99	0.27
Winter	–	Fall migration	2.87	0.96	2.99	0.02
Late winter	–	Spring migration	-0.07	0.39	-0.17	1.00
Late winter	–	Late summer	0.20	0.64	0.31	1.00
Late winter	–	Fall migration	1.25	0.38	3.26	0.01
Spring migration	–	Late summer	0.26	0.69	0.38	1.00
Spring migration	–	Fall migration	1.31	0.42	3.12	0.02
Late summer	–	Fall migration	1.05	0.66	1.59	0.50

Table 15: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, herd size, and season (A) best describe the intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of giant liver flukes (*Fascioloides magna*) in adult female caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) of the Rivière-George herd and to make comparisons between this herd and the Rivière-aux-Feuilles herd during spring migration/calving grounds season (May to July) and when the herd size was around the peak (B). Only the best model is presented.

A

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	1.35	0.24	5.52	<0.001
Peak	1.14	0.37	3.04	0.002
High and decreasing	1.24	0.37	3.37	<0.001
Low and decreasing	1.28	0.29	4.45	<0.001
Spring migration	0.31	0.10	3.22	0.001
Late summer	-0.16	0.08	-2.05	0.04
Fall migration	-0.12	0.08	-1.58	0.11

B

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	2.26	0.34	6.56	<0.001
Rivière-George	0.54	0.58	0.94	0.35

Table 16: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the intensity – the average number of parasites per infected host – of giant liver flukes (*Fascioloides magna*) in adult female caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) of the Rivière-George herd among herd sizes (A) and seasons (B).

A

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
High and increasing	– Peak	-1.14	0.37	-3.04	0.01
High and increasing	– High and decreasing	-1.24	0.37	-3.37	0.004
High and increasing	– Low and decreasing	-1.28	0.29	-4.45	<0.001
Peak	– High and decreasing	-0.10	0.38	-0.27	0.99
Peak	– Low and decreasing	-0.14	0.30	-0.47	0.97
High and decreasing	– Low and decreasing	-0.04	0.30	-0.12	1.00

B

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Late winter	– Spring migration	-0.31	0.10	-3.21	0.007
Late winter	– Late summer	0.16	0.08	2.05	0.17
Late winter	– Fall migration	0.12	0.08	1.58	0.39
Spring migration	– Late summer	0.48	0.10	4.98	<0.001
Spring migration	– Fall migration	0.44	0.06	7.26	<0.001
Late summer	– Fall migration	-0.04	0.08	-0.52	0.95

Table 17: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, herd size, and season (A) best describe the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of hydatid cysts (*Echinococcus granulosus*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds (B). Only the best model is presented.

A				
	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-3.56	1.54	-2.32	0.02
Males	0.42	0.41	1.03	0.30
Yearlings	0.79	1.22	0.65	0.52
Adults	1.49	0.66	2.25	0.02
High and increasing	-0.10	0.83	-0.12	0.91
Peak	-0.46	0.90	-0.51	0.61
High and decreasing	-0.64	0.86	-0.75	0.45
Low and decreasing	0.36	0.82	0.44	0.66
Late winter	-1.94	1.15	-1.69	0.09
Spring migration	0.02	1.13	0.02	0.99
Late summer	-1.00	1.16	-0.87	0.38
Fall migration	-0.37	1.12	-0.33	0.74

B				
	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-3.35	0.46	-7.37	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	-1.21	1.10	-1.10	0.27
Bluenose West	2.17	0.73	2.98	0.003
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.50	0.54	0.92	0.36
Rivière-George	0.64	0.49	1.31	0.19
Teshekpuk	1.56	0.89	1.76	0.08
Western Arctic	0.41	1.12	0.36	0.72

Table 18: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of hydatid cysts (*Echinococcus granulosus*) caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) among age classes (A) and among herds (B).

A			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Calves	–	Yearlings	-0.79	1.22	-0.65	0.79
Calves	–	Adults	-1.49	0.66	-2.25	0.06
Yearlings	–	Adults	-0.70	1.05	-0.67	0.78

B			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Bathurst	–	Beverly/Ahiak	1.21	1.10	1.10	0.93
Bathurst	–	Bluenose West	-2.17	0.73	-2.98	0.046
Bathurst	–	Rivière-aux-Feuilles	-0.50	0.54	-0.92	0.97
Bathurst	–	Rivière-George	-0.64	0.49	-1.31	0.85
Bathurst	–	Teshekpuk	-1.56	0.89	-1.76	0.58
Bathurst	–	Western Arctic	-0.41	1.12	-0.36	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	–	Bluenose West	-3.39	1.16	-2.93	0.05
Beverly/Ahiak	–	Rivière-aux-Feuilles	-1.71	1.05	-1.63	0.66
Beverly/Ahiak	–	Rivière-George	-1.85	1.02	-1.81	0.54
Beverly/Ahiak	–	Teshekpuk	-2.77	1.26	-2.20	0.30
Beverly/Ahiak	–	Western Arctic	-1.62	1.44	-1.13	0.92
Bluenose West	–	Rivière-aux-Feuilles	1.67	0.64	2.60	0.13
Bluenose West	–	Rivière-George	1.53	0.60	2.56	0.14
Bluenose West	–	Teshekpuk	0.61	0.95	0.64	1.00
Bluenose West	–	Western Arctic	1.77	1.17	1.50	0.74
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	–	Rivière-George	-0.14	0.35	-0.40	1.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	–	Teshekpuk	-1.06	0.82	-1.29	0.85
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	–	Western Arctic	0.09	1.07	0.09	1.00
Rivière-George	–	Teshekpuk	-0.92	0.78	-1.17	0.90
Rivière-George	–	Western Arctic	0.23	1.04	0.22	1.00
Teshekpuk	–	Western Arctic	1.15	1.28	0.90	0.97

Table 19: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, herd size, and season (A) best describe the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of lungworms (*Dictyocaulus eckerti*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds during the late winter/early spring season (mid-February to April) (B). Only the best model is presented.

A

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-3.42	1.15	-2.98	0.003
Males	1.30	0.76	1.70	0.09
Yearlings	-2.49	1.63	-1.53	0.13
Adults	-1.92	0.99	-1.93	0.05
High and decreasing	0.13	1.51	0.09	0.93
Low and decreasing	-3.27	1.71	-1.91	0.06
Late summer	3.55	1.21	2.94	0.003
Fall migration	1.19	1.49	0.80	0.43

B

	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-3.78	1.01	-3.74	<0.001
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-0.13	1.43	-0.09	0.93

Table 20: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of lungworms (*Dictyocaulus eckerti*) caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) among seasons.

			Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Late winter	–	Late summer	-3.55	1.21	-2.94	0.009
Late winter	–	Fall migration	-1.19	1.49	-0.80	0.71
Late summer	–	Fall migration	2.36	1.90	1.24	0.43

Table 21: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values for variables used in a generalized linear mixed model to assess which combination of factors such as sex, herd size, and season (A) best describe the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of muscle cysts (*Taenia krabbei*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and to make comparisons among herds (B). Only the best model is presented.

A				
	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-0.72	1.39	-0.52	0.61
Males	-0.06	0.35	-0.17	0.87
Yearlings	-0.56	0.75	-0.75	0.45
Adults	-0.15	0.43	-0.36	0.72
Peak	-2.19	1.34	-1.64	0.10
High and decreasing	-0.71	0.69	-1.04	0.30
Low and decreasing	-1.17	0.71	-1.66	0.10
Late winter	-1.91	1.33	-1.44	0.15
Spring migration	-0.69	1.36	-0.50	0.61
Late summer	-0.70	1.29	-0.54	0.59
Fall migration	-1.59	1.33	-1.20	0.23

B				
	Estimate	SE	z	p-value
(Intercept)	-3.28	0.65	-5.07	<0.001
Beverly/Ahiak	-0.22	0.89	-0.24	0.81
Bluenose East	0.008	1.25	0.007	1.00
Bluenose West	1.54	0.97	1.58	0.12
Cape Bathurst	1.00	1.54	0.65	0.52
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	0.52	1.00	0.52	0.60
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	-0.22	0.65	-0.34	0.73
Rivière-George	0.07	0.61	0.12	0.91
Southampton Island	0.04	0.77	0.06	0.96
Teshekpuk	1.16	1.24	0.93	0.35
Western Arctic	3.23	0.80	4.04	<0.001

Table 22: Parameter estimates, standard errors (SE), z-values, and p-values of pairwise comparisons of the prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of muscle cysts (*Taenia krabbei*) caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) among herds.

		Estimate	SE	z	p-value
Bathurst	– Beverly/Ahiak	0.22	0.89	0.24	1.00
Bathurst	– Bluenose East	-0.008	1.25	-0.007	1.00
Bathurst	– Bluenose West	-1.54	0.97	-1.58	0.89
Bathurst	– Cape Bathurst	-1.00	1.54	-0.64	1.00
Bathurst	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-0.52	1.00	-0.52	1.00
Bathurst	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.22	0.65	0.34	1.00
Bathurst	– Rivière-George	-0.07	0.61	-0.11	1.00
Bathurst	– Southampton Island	-0.04	0.77	-0.05	1.00
Bathurst	– Teshekpuk	-1.16	1.24	-0.93	1.00
Bathurst	– Western Arctic	-3.23	0.80	-4.04	0.003
Beverly/Ahiak	– Bluenose East	-0.23	1.29	-0.17	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Bluenose West	-1.75	1.11	-1.58	0.89
Beverly/Ahiak	– Cape Bathurst	-1.21	1.47	-0.82	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-0.73	1.07	-0.69	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.007	0.85	0.009	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Rivière-George	-0.29	0.79	-0.36	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Southampton Island	-0.26	1.03	-0.25	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Teshekpuk	-1.37	1.31	-1.05	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	– Western Arctic	-3.45	0.86	-4.02	0.003
Bluenose East	– Bluenose West	-1.53	1.42	-1.08	1.00
Bluenose East	– Cape Bathurst	-0.99	1.78	-0.56	1.00
Bluenose East	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	-0.51	1.42	-0.36	1.00
Bluenose East	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.23	1.21	0.19	1.00
Bluenose East	– Rivière-George	-0.06	1.16	-0.05	1.00
Bluenose East	– Southampton Island	-0.03	1.34	-0.02	1.00
Bluenose East	– Teshekpuk	-1.15	1.60	-0.72	1.00
Bluenose East	– Western Arctic	-3.23	1.27	-2.53	0.29
Bluenose West	– Cape Bathurst	0.54	1.68	0.32	1.00
Bluenose West	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	1.02	1.24	0.82	1.00
Bluenose West	– Rivière-aux-Feuilles	1.76	0.95	1.85	0.75
Bluenose West	– Rivière-George	1.47	0.91	1.60	0.88
Bluenose West	– Southampton Island	1.49	1.12	1.33	0.96
Bluenose West	– Teshekpuk	0.38	1.45	0.26	1.00
Bluenose West	– Western Arctic	-1.70	0.94	-1.80	0.78
Cape Bathurst	– Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	0.48	1.67	0.29	1.00

Cape Bathurst	–	Rivière-aux-Feuilles	1.22	1.52	0.80	1.00
Cape Bathurst	–	Rivière-George	0.93	1.48	0.63	1.00
Cape Bathurst	–	Southampton Island	0.95	1.62	0.59	1.00
Cape Bathurst	–	Teshekpuk	-0.16	1.83	-0.09	1.00
Cape Bathurst	–	Western Arctic	-2.24	1.55	-1.44	0.94
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	–	Rivière-aux-Feuilles	0.74	0.96	0.77	1.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	–	Rivière-George	0.45	0.92	0.49	1.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	–	Southampton Island	0.48	1.13	0.42	1.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	–	Teshekpuk	-0.64	1.27	-0.50	1.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	–	Western Arctic	-2.72	1.08	-2.51	0.30
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	–	Rivière-George	-0.29	0.52	-0.57	1.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	–	Southampton Island	-0.27	0.80	-0.33	1.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	–	Teshekpuk	-1.38	1.21	-1.14	0.99
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	–	Western Arctic	-3.46	0.77	-4.51	<0.001
Rivière-George	–	Southampton Island	0.03	0.77	0.04	1.00
Rivière-George	–	Teshekpuk	-1.09	1.19	-0.92	1.00
Rivière-George	–	Western Arctic	-3.16	0.71	-4.45	<0.001
Southampton Island	–	Teshekpuk	-1.11	1.36	-0.82	1.00
Southampton Island	–	Western Arctic	-3.19	0.97	-3.29	0.04
Teshekpuk	–	Western Arctic	-2.08	1.32	-1.58	0.89

Appendix 2

Table 23: Mean, standard deviation (SD) and median of the overall prevalence (A) – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – and intensity (B) – the average number of parasites per infected host – of warble larvae (*Hypoderma tarandi*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) separated by herd, sex and age class. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected.

A	Female				Male				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	47	1.00	0.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	6	1.00	0.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	41	1.00	0.00	1.00
Bathurst	60	0.95	0.22	1.00	8	0.88	0.35	1.00	5	1.00	0.00	1.00	5	1.00	0.00	1.00	58	0.93	0.26	1.00
Beverly/Ahiak	92	0.98	0.15	1.00	23	0.96	0.21	1.00	1	1.00	-	1.00	5	1.00	0.00	1.00	109	0.97	0.16	1.00
Bluenose East	23	0.96	0.21	1.00	3	1.00	0.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	0.96	0.20	1.00
Cape Bathurst	2	1.00	0.00	1.00	14	1.00	0.00	1.00	1	1.00	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	15	1.00	0.00	1.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	1.00	0.00	1.00	4	1.00	0.00	1.00	11	1.00	0.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	40	1.00	0.00	1.00
Rivière-George	223	0.97	0.16	1.00	32	1.00	0.00	1.00	37	0.97	0.16	1.00	35	1.00	0.00	1.00	183	0.97	0.16	1.00
Southampton Island	28	0.96	0.19	1.00	36	0.89	0.32	1.00	2	1.00	0.00	1.00	27	0.96	0.19	1.00	35	0.89	0.32	1.00
Teshekpuk	6	1.00	0.00	1.00	2	1.00	0.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1.00	0.00	1.00

B	Females				Males				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	47	165.21	126.21	128.00	-	-	-	-	6	318.50	160.14	290.00	-	-	-	-	41	142.78	105.22	97.00
Bathurst	56	42.82	38.17	28.00	7	119.00	56.90	108.00	5	115.20	57.21	112.00	5	89.40	62.88	60.00	53	41.66	37.77	26.00
Beverly/Ahiak	91	50.93	49.21	37.00	22	135.00	95.74	113.50	1	117.00	-	117.00	5	110.40	89.77	101.00	107	64.82	68.06	42.00
Bluenose East	22	53.05	41.02	40.50	3	174.67	6.43	172.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	67.64	55.70	56.00
Cape Bathurst	2	21.50	20.51	21.50	14	113.29	91.92	80.00	1	216.00	-	216.00	-	-	-	-	15	94.20	89.08	57.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	269.19	207.86	199.00	4	302.75	204.37	258.00	11	433.45	280.89	341.00	-	-	-	-	40	227.38	157.02	192.00
Rivière-George	218	56.34	76.24	40.00	32	122.75	121.81	96.00	37	99.68	145.20	75.00	35	71.34	50.07	56.00	178	56.32	72.91	36.50
Southampton Island	27	140.85	105.15	98.00	32	234.06	201.97	169.00	2	262.50	123.74	262.50	26	217.92	197.02	163.00	31	164.58	146.38	113.00
Teshekpuk	6	120.33	88.65	115.00	2	380.50	50.20	380.50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	185.38	143.10	178.00

Table 24: Mean, standard deviation (SD) and median of the overall prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of nose bot larvae (*Cephenemyia trompe*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) separated by herd, sex and age class. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected.

	Females				Males				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	47	0.87	0.34	1.00	-	-	-	-	6	0.67	0.52	1.00	-	-	-	-	41	0.90	0.30	1.00
Bathurst	59	0.03	0.18	0.00	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	57	0.04	0.19	0.00
Beverly/Ahiak	97	0.02	0.14	0.00	23	0.13	0.34	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	6	0.17	0.41	0.00	113	0.04	0.19	0.00
Bluenose East	23	0.00	0.00	0.00	3	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cape Bathurst	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	14	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	-	-	-	-	15	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	0.57	0.50	1.00	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	11	0.18	0.40	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.63	0.49	1.00
Teshekpuk	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 25: Mean, standard deviation (SD) and median of the overall prevalence (A) – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – and intensity (B) – the average number of parasites per infected host – of liver cysts (*Taenia hydatigena*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) separated by herd, sex and age class. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected.

A	Females				Males				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	45	0.04	0.21	0.00	-	-	-	-	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.05	0.22	0.00
Bathurst	100	0.41	0.49	0.00	49	0.24	0.43	0.00	14	0.14	0.36	0.00	9	0.11	0.33	0.00	126	0.40	0.49	0.00
Beverly/Ahiak	97	0.31	0.46	0.00	22	0.27	0.46	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	112	0.32	0.47	0.00
Bluenose East	45	0.07	0.25	0.00	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	3	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	50	0.06	0.24	0.00
Bluenose West	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	15	0.40	0.51	0.00	-	-	-	-	1	0.00	-	0.00	16	0.38	0.50	0.00
Cape Bathurst	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	14	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	-	-	-	-	15	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	0.02	0.15	0.00	4	0.25	0.50	0.00	11	0.09	0.30	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.03	0.16	0.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	208	0.21	0.41	0.00	18	0.00	0.00	0.00	49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	.	0.00	176	0.24	0.43	0.00
Rivière-George	224	0.10	0.30	0.00	24	0.04	0.20	0.00	48	0.04	0.20	0.00	-	-	-	-	200	0.11	0.31	0.00
Teshkpuuk	9	0.78	0.44	1.00	5	0.80	0.45	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	0.79	0.43	1.00
Western Arctic	11	0.09	0.30	0.00	9	0.33	0.50	0.00	-	-	-	-	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	16	0.25	0.45	0.00

B	Females				Males				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	2	1.00	0.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	2	1.00	0.00	1.00
Bathurst	39	2.72	2.29	2.00	11	2.55	1.75	2.00	50	2.68	2.17	2.00
Beverly/Ahiak	30	2.70	2.25	2.00	6	2.00	0.89	2.00	36	2.58	2.09	2.00
Bluenose East	3	1.67	0.58	2.00	-	-	-	-	3	1.67	0.58	2.00
Bluenose West	-	-	-	-	6	1.50	0.55	1.50	6	1.50	0.55	1.50
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	1	1.00	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	1	1.00	-	1.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	37	2.35	1.51	2.00	-	-	-	-	37	2.35	1.51	2.00
Rivière-George	21	1.95	1.32	1.00	-	-	-	-	21	1.95	1.32	1.00
Teshkpuuk	7	1.14	0.38	1.00	4	1.00	0.00	1.00	11	1.09	0.30	1.00
Western Arctic	1	2.00	-	2.00	3	1.33	0.58	1.00	4	1.50	0.58	1.50

Table 26: Mean, standard deviation (SD) and median of the overall prevalence (A) – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – and intensity (B) – the average number of parasites per infected host – of giant liver flukes (*Fascioloides magna*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) separated by herd, sex and age class. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected.

A	Females				Males				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	40	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bathurst	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	49	0.00	0.00	0.00	14	0.00	0.00	0.00	9	0.00	0.00	0.00	126	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beverly/Ahiak	99	0.00	0.00	0.00	35	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	127	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bluenose East	45	0.00	0.00	0.00	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	3	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bluenose West	1	0.00	-	0.00	18	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cape Bathurst	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	14	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	-	-	-	-	15	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	0.00	0.00	0.00	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	11	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Porcupine	-	-	-	-	11	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	214	0.26	0.44	0.00	21	0.00	0.00	0.00	49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	185	0.30	0.46	0.00
Rivière-George	467	0.64	0.48	1.00	75	0.29	0.46	0.00	85	0.13	0.34	0.00	19	0.32	0.48	0.00	438	0.69	0.46	1.00
Teshekpuk	10	0.00	0.00	0.00	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	0.00	0.00	0.00
Western Arctic	11	0.00	0.00	0.00	9	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	16	0.00	0.00	0.00

B	Females				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	53	6.81	7.39	4.00	53	6.81	7.39	4.00
Rivière-George	189	14.28	14.40	10.00	189	14.28	14.40	10.00

Table 27: Mean, standard deviation (SD) and median of the overall prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of hydatid cysts (*Echinococcus granulosus*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) separated by herd, sex and age class. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected.

	Females				Males				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	47	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	41	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bathurst	99	0.03	0.17	0.00	49	0.04	0.20	0.00	14	0.00	0.00	0.00	9	0.00	0.00	0.00	125	0.04	0.20	0.00
Beverly/Ahiak	79	0.01	0.11	0.00	18	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	3	0.00	0.00	0.00	93	0.01	0.10	0.00
Bluenose East	45	0.00	0.00	0.00	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	3	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bluenose West	1	0.00	-	0.00	16	0.25	0.45	0.00	-	-	-	-	1	0.00	-	0.00	16	0.25	0.45	0.00
Cape Bathurst	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	14	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	-	-	-	-	15	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	0.00	0.00	0.00	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	11	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	199	0.06	0.24	0.00	21	0.00	0.00	0.00	49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	170	0.07	0.26	0.00
Rivière-George	441	0.06	0.24	0.00	73	0.07	0.25	0.00	81	0.04	0.19	0.00	19	0.05	0.23	0.00	414	0.07	0.25	0.00
Teshkepuk	9	0.22	0.44	0.00	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	0.14	0.36	0.00
Western Arctic	11	0.09	0.30	0.00	9	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	16	0.06	0.25	0.00

Table 28: Mean, standard deviation (SD) and median of the overall prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of lungworms (*Dictyocaulus eckerti*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) separated by herd, sex and age class. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected.

	Females				Males				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	45	0.02	0.15	0.00	-	-	-	-	5	0.20	0.45	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bathurst	68	0.00	0.00	0.00	40	0.00	0.00	0.00	9	0.00	0.00	0.00	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	93	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beverly/Ahiak	64	0.00	0.00	0.00	8	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	69	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bluenose East	45	0.00	0.00	0.00	8	0.13	0.35	0.00	3	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	50	0.02	0.14	0.00
Bluenose West	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	15	0.13	0.35	0.00	-	-	-	-	1	0.00	-	0.00	16	0.13	0.34	0.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	0.00	0.00	0.00	4	0.25	0.50	0.00	11	0.09	0.30	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Teshkepuk	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	0.00	0.00	0.00
Western Arctic	11	0.27	0.47	0.00	9	0.22	0.44	0.00	-	-	-	-	4	0.25	0.50	0.00	16	0.25	0.45	0.00

Table 29: Mean, standard deviation (SD) and median of the overall prevalence – the percentage of infected individuals in the host population – of muscle cysts (*Taenia krabbei*) in caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) separated by herd, sex and age class. The symbol « - » means that no data were collected.

	Females				Males				Calves				Yearlings				Adults			
	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median	N	Mean	SD	Median
Akia-Maniitsoq	41	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bathurst	100	0.04	0.20	0.00	49	0.02	0.14	0.00	14	0.07	0.27	0.00	9	0.11	0.33	0.00	126	0.02	0.15	0.00
Beverly/Ahiak	97	0.05	0.22	0.00	23	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	6	0.00	0.00	0.00	113	0.04	0.21	0.00
Bluenose East	45	0.04	0.21	0.00	8	0.13	0.35	0.00	3	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	50	0.06	0.24	0.00
Bluenose West	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	18	0.11	0.32	0.00	-	-	-	-	1	0.00	-	0.00	19	0.11	0.32	0.00
Cape Bathurst	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	14	0.07	0.27	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	-	-	-	-	15	0.07	0.26	0.00
Kangerlussuaq-Sisimiut	47	0.04	0.20	0.00	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	11	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	40	0.05	0.22	0.00
Rivière-aux-Feuilles	193	0.02	0.14	0.00	18	0.00	0.00	0.00	49	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.00	-	0.00	161	0.02	0.16	0.00
Rivière-George	363	0.09	0.28	0.00	59	0.10	0.30	0.00	82	0.12	0.33	0.00	11	0.00	0.00	0.00	329	0.08	0.27	0.00
Southampton Island	28	0.04	0.19	0.00	36	0.06	0.23	0.00	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	27	0.04	0.19	0.00	35	0.06	0.24	0.00
Teshekpuk	9	0.11	0.33	0.00	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	0.07	0.27	0.00
Western Arctic	11	0.45	0.52	0.00	9	0.33	0.50	0.00	-	-	-	-	4	0.25	0.50	0.00	16	0.44	0.51	0.00

3. Conclusion

Ce mémoire a permis de faire une description exhaustive de la prévalence et de l'intensité de sept des principaux macroparasites du caribou migrateur pendant plusieurs années et pour une douzaine de troupeaux. Nous avons tenté de déterminer quelles combinaisons de facteurs tels que le sexe, la classe d'âge, la taille du troupeau et la saison expliquent le mieux la prévalence et l'intensité de ces parasites et nous avons comparé douze troupeaux de l'Amérique du Nord et du Groenland afin de vérifier si la prévalence et l'intensité de ces parasites variaient selon les troupeaux. Nos résultats montrent que le sexe, l'âge, la taille du troupeau et la saison peuvent en partie expliquer le parasitisme chez le caribou migrateur et que les troupeaux de caribou migrateur varient grandement en terme de parasitisme. À notre connaissance, cette recherche fournit la première étude comparative de ces helminthes et arthropodes parasites du caribou à large échelle spatiale et géographique.

Nous avons trouvé un effet du sexe de l'hôte en interaction avec son âge sur l'intensité d'infection de *Hypoderma tarandi* avec une augmentation de l'intensité avec l'âge chez les mâles alors que le contraire s'est produit chez les femelles. L'hypothèse d'acquisition d'immunité pourrait expliquer ce résultat chez les femelles, tandis que les hormones de stress et sexuelles durant le rut pourrait diminuer l'effet d'acquisition d'immunité chez les mâles (Folstad et al. 1989; Åsbakk et al. 2005). Nous avons aussi trouvé un effet de l'âge sur la prévalence de *Fascioloides magna*, *Taenia hydatigena* et *Cephenemyia trompe* avec une plus grande prévalence chez les adultes que chez les jeunes. Nos résultats semblent refléter un effet cumulatif de l'infection au cours du temps pour *F. magna* et *T. hydatigena* (Foreyt et al. 1977; Lankester and Luttich 1988; Hudson and Dobson 1995), mais des différences dans le comportement d'alimentation selon l'âge pourraient aussi être en cause. En effet, les jeunes étant plus petits que les adultes, ils ingèrent moins de nourriture et sont donc moins exposés aux stades infectieux de ces parasites parce que le risque qu'ils ingèrent de la végétation contaminée est plus faible. Pour *C. trompe*, puisque ce parasite quitte l'hôte chaque année, il n'y a pas d'effet cumulatif de l'infection (Nilssen and Haugerud 1994) et une augmentation de la susceptibilité à l'infection avec l'âge semble être la cause la plus probable, parce que les poches pharyngiennes plus petites des jeunes

pourraient limiter l'établissement des larves et seraient donc moins intéressantes pour les mouches adultes.

Nous avons aussi trouvé une plus grande prévalence et intensité de *F. magna* durant le pic de taille de troupeau et après, ainsi qu'une plus grande prévalence de *T. hydatigena* quand la taille de troupeau était élevée et en décroissance. Une augmentation des contacts entre stades infectieux et hôtes ainsi qu'une diminution de la condition corporelle entraînées par une augmentation de la taille du troupeau pourraient expliquer ces résultats (Arneberg et al. 1998; Coop and Kyriazakis 2001; Bonenfant et al. 2009; Pachkowski et al. 2013; Patterson and Ruckstuhl 2013). Cependant, il est surprenant de constater que pour *F. magna*, la prévalence et l'intensité sont demeurées élevées même après un retour de la taille du troupeau à des niveaux similaires à avant le pic de taille du troupeau. Pour comprendre ces résultats, il est bon de rappeler que seulement des données provenant du troupeau de la Rivière-George ont été utilisées pour ce parasite (voir section 2.2 Methods). Ainsi, la principale hypothèse expliquant ce maintien de fortes prévalence et intensité de *F. magna* dans le temps est que les hôtes intermédiaires de ce parasite, c'est-à-dire les escargots d'eau douce, agissent comme des réservoirs des stades infectieux de ce parasite. Cependant, ce mécanisme ne peut pas s'échelonner sur plusieurs années parce que les stades de *F. magna* retrouvés dans les escargots ont besoin de leurs hôtes définitifs pour compléter leur cycle vital (Susan Kutz, comm. pers.). Le fait que le troupeau de la Rivière-George ait connu une baisse très rapide de sa taille de troupeau durant les années de notre étude pourrait donc aussi jouer un rôle puisque la population d'escargots d'eau douce avait probablement encore de fortes prévalence et intensité de *F. magna* quand la taille du troupeau était revenue à des niveaux aussi bas qu'avant le pic de taille du troupeau. Les autres hôtes ongulés de ce parasite (Tableau 2) auraient aussi pu jouer un rôle dans le maintien des fortes prévalence et intensité de *F. magna* à travers le temps, mais comme il n'y a quasiment aucun chevauchement entre l'aire de répartition du caribou de la Rivière-George et l'aire de répartition des autres hôtes ongulés de *F. magna*, cette explication est peu probable.

Nous avons également trouvé un effet de la saison sur *F. magna* et *Dictyocaulus eckerti*. *F. magna* avait une plus petite prévalence durant l'automne et une plus grande intensité durant

le printemps, probablement à cause de sa longue période de prépatence (Foreyt and Todd 1976; Foreyt 1996). La prévalence de *D. eckerti* était plus élevée à la fin de l'été qu'à la fin de l'hiver, probablement parce que ce parasite passe l'hiver sous forme immature dans les poumons du caribou et mature l'été suivant (Susan Kutz, comm. pers.).

Des douze troupeaux étudiés, les deux troupeaux du Groenland et les deux troupeaux du Québec et du Labrador étaient différents du reste des troupeaux en termes de prévalence et d'intensité des parasites étudiés. Les caribous des troupeaux du Groenland présentaient la diversité de parasites la plus faible, puisque les prévalences de *T. hydatigena* et de *Taenia krabbei* étaient petites alors que *Echinococcus granulosus* était absent, probablement parce que les hôtes définitifs carnivores de ces parasites sont présents à très faible densité au Groenland (Rausch 2003; Kutz et al. 2012). La perte de certains parasites durant la colonisation du Groenland par le caribou pourrait aussi expliquer ces résultats (Steele et al. 2013). Ces troupeaux étaient aussi plus parasités par les larves d'œstridés comparativement aux autres troupeaux étudiés parce qu'ils avaient une prévalence de *H. tarandi* de 100%, une plus grande intensité d'infection de *H. tarandi* et une plus grande prévalence de *C. trompe*. La courte migration des troupeaux du Groenland comparativement aux autres troupeaux étudiés pourrait expliquer ces résultats (Thomas and Kiliaan 1990; Folstad et al. 1991; Cuyler et al. 2012). Des conditions climatiques plus clémentes sur leurs aires d'estivage comparativement aux aires d'estivage des autres troupeaux étudiés pourraient aussi expliquer nos résultats puisque les étés chauds et secs favorisent l'activité des mouches adultes d'œstridés (Mörschel 1999; Weladji et al. 2003). De plus, les deux troupeaux du Groenland sont très isolés géographiquement et génétiquement des autres troupeaux de caribou migrateur, il n'est donc pas étonnant qu'ils présentent une diversité de parasites différente des autres troupeaux étudiés. En effet, ces troupeaux présentent la diversité génétique la plus faible au monde (Yannic et al. 2014), et bien que le lien entre diversité génétique et parasitisme ne soit pas clair, il se peut que cela explique en partie nos résultats. Les deux troupeaux du Québec et du Labrador différaient des autres troupeaux étudiés parce qu'ils étaient les seuls à être parasités par *F. magna* qu'ils auraient acquis lorsque leur aire de répartition chevauchait l'aire de répartition du cerf de Virginie et du wapiti (Lankester and Luttich 1988; Pybus 2001). La plus grande prévalence de ce parasite chez les caribous du troupeau de la Rivière-George comparativement aux caribous du

troupeau de la Rivière-aux-Feuilles pourrait être expliquée par le fait que ces deux troupeaux ont des aires de mise bas et d'estivage distinctes et que la transmission de ce parasite est dépendante des conditions environnementales estivales (Couturier et al. 2004; Taillon et al. 2012).

3.1 Limites de l'étude

La principale limite de cette étude était la présence de données manquantes générée par des différences dans l'effort d'échantillonnage selon les troupeaux, les saisons et les années. L'idéal aurait été de récolter les données de façon synchronisée, pour chacune des saisons pertinentes biologiquement et avec un nombre similaire de mâles et de femelles par troupeau ainsi qu'un nombre similaire d'individus de chaque classe d'âge. De plus, une certaine variabilité dans la probabilité de détection des parasites provenant d'une variabilité potentielle parmi les personnes ayant récolté les données peut exister, mais il a été impossible de tenir compte de ce facteur dans les analyses statistiques. Pour limiter les biais potentiels, des protocoles standardisés ont été utilisés, limitant ainsi la variabilité dans la collecte des données et permettant de faire des comparaisons de données provenant de périodes d'échantillonnage différentes. De plus, cette étude n'a pas tenu compte des conditions environnementales, de la qualité de l'habitat, des prédateurs, des perturbations anthropiques, de la condition corporelle et du statut reproducteur des femelles, bien que tous ces facteurs puissent avoir une incidence sur la prévalence et l'intensité des parasites. Par exemple, il est connu que la température et la vitesse du vent affectent la présence d'œstridés et que les troupeaux dont l'aire d'estivage présente des conditions climatiques favorables au déplacement des œstridés pourraient donc avoir de plus fortes prévalences et intensités de ces parasites (Mörschel and Klein 1997). De la même manière, comme certains parasites présentés dans cette étude ont un cycle vital qui inclut un prédateur du caribou, les troupeaux dont l'aire de répartition comprend une densité élevée de prédateurs pourraient présenter de plus grandes prévalences et intensités de certains parasites que les troupeaux où il y a peu de prédateurs (Kutz et al. 2012). La condition corporelle peut aussi avoir un effet sur le taux de parasitisme, puisqu'un hôte présentant une bonne condition corporelle pourrait mieux résister à l'infestation (Coop and Kyriazakis 2001). Il aurait aussi été intéressant dans cette étude d'examiner si la prévalence ou l'intensité de certaines

espèces de parasites sont corrélées, par exemple à savoir si les caribous avec une forte prévalence d'un parasite présentent aussi une forte prévalence d'un autre parasite. Bien que cela n'ait pas été discuté dans l'étude, dans les cas où il était possible de le faire, des tests de corrélation ont été réalisés mais aucune corrélation significative n'a été trouvée.

3. 2 Perspectives

Malgré que certains considèrent le parasitisme comme un processus affectant peu la dynamique des populations animales, les parasites pourraient en fait être des composantes importantes des écosystèmes, fournissant des informations uniques sur leur état de santé actuel et historique (Davidson et al. 2011; Kutz et al. 2012). L'expansion nordique de l'aire de répartition de nombreux animaux domestiques et sauvages et de plusieurs vecteurs de pathogènes pourrait entraîner l'introduction de nouveaux parasites chez le caribou, particulièrement dans un contexte de changements climatiques (Kutz et al. 2004; Kutz et al. 2005; Hoberg et al. 2008). Il semble donc essentiel de mettre en place une base de données exhaustive de l'abondance actuelle des parasites du caribou dans l'optique de détecter l'émergence de nouveaux parasites (Kutz et al. 2012; Kutz et al. 2013a). Bien que la plupart des parasites étudiés ici ne semblent causer que peu d'effets néfastes au caribou (Huot and Beaulieu 1985; Lankester and Luttich 1988; Thomas 1994; Pollock et al. 2009), ils pourraient avoir un impact plus grand si les conditions environnementales faisaient en sorte que la condition corporelle des individus atteigne des niveaux très bas. Ainsi, plusieurs parasites qui ont longtemps été considérés comme ayant un effet bénin sur le fitness de leur hôte pourraient entraîner des pathologies et gagnent de plus en plus l'attention des écologistes comme une force régulatrice potentielle de la dynamique des populations hôtes, au même titre que la prédation et la compétition (Scott 1988; Gunn and Irvine 2003). De plus, il se peut que la combinaison des effets peu néfastes de plusieurs parasites entraîne un effet cumulatif important sur le niveau de santé global du caribou (Albon et al. 2002). Il est donc essentiel de continuer à documenter le parasitisme chez le caribou, qui est une espèce clé des régions nordiques, particulièrement à l'aube des changements climatiques, où les systèmes hôte-parasites risquent de subir des altérations significatives et permanentes.

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