

Text to Accompany Caribou Art

At the time of this post, the animals with the longest land migration in the world are moving south: the Porcupine herd of caribou is making its return from the northern coastal areas of Alaska and the Yukon, back to areas of western Alaska and central Yukon. This annual round- trip has a total length of approximately 2 400 km. That's roughly the equivalent of walking from Toronto, ON to Fredericton, NB and back!

It's a daunting distance, particularly when the northern destination is the mosquito-filled tundra of spring and summer. But during those seasons, that location has key advantages, such as abundant, nitrogen-rich vegetation. Plus, the cold means fewer predators. These features improve calves' chances of being born safe and well-fed. This is important when, just a few hours after being born, calves start walking with the rest of the herd.

When you think about what these animals accomplish in pursuit of refuge and indigenous plant life, a walk to the local market for seasonal fruits and veggies starts to sound pretty manageable.

The Porcupine herd, named after the Porcupine river near the herd's calving grounds, is part of the barren-ground subspecies of caribou.