SPECIES AT RISK ACT

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Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION 1
   - 1.1 Background on SARA 1
   - 1.2 Implementation of SARA 2
   - 1.3 Nature Legacy for Canada 2
2. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIES AT RISK 4
   - 2.1 COSEWIC Assessments 4
     - 2.1.1 COSEWIC Sub-committees 5
   - 2.2 Wildlife species 6
3. LISTING OF SPECIES AT RISK 7
   - 3.1 Listing process 7
   - 3.2 Federal government response to COSEWIC assessments 9
   - 3.3 Public consultations 12
   - 3.4 Listing decisions 12
   - 3.5 SARA Schedule 1 current status 14
4. RECOVERY PLANNING FOR LISTED SPECIES 15
   - 4.1 Recovery planning activities in 2018 16
     - 4.1.1 Recovery strategies 16
     - 4.1.2 Action plans 17
     - 4.1.3 Identification of critical habitat 18
     - 4.1.4 Management plans 18
   - 4.2 Protection of Critical Habitat 19
   - 4.3 Imminent threat assessments 20
   - 4.4 Recovery activities 20
     - 4.4.1 Competent departments recovery activities 20
     - 4.4.2 Habitat Stewardship Program 21
     - 4.4.3 Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk 22
     - 4.4.4 Interdepartmental Recovery Fund 25
   - 4.5 Outreach and education 25
   - 4.6 Species at risk population trends 28
     - 4.6.1 Changes in wildlife species status indicator 28
5. PERMITS 29
6. ENFORCEMENT 32
7. MONITORING 35
8. CONSULTATION AND GOVERNANCE 37
   - 8.1 Engagement on SARA policies 37
   - 8.2 Species at Risk Advisory Committee 37
   - 8.3 Indigenous groups and SARA 38
   - 8.4 Bilateral administrative agreements 39
   - 8.5 The National General Status Working Group 39
   - 8.6 Species at Risk Public Registry 39
9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 40

1. INTRODUCTION

Every year the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada[1] (the Minister) is required to table in Parliament the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) annual report. This report summarizes key activities carried out in 2018 under SARA and fulfills the Minister's obligation to report annually on the administration of the Act.

Section 126 of the Act states the report must include a summary of the following:

(a) any assessments done by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada and the Minister's response to each of them

(b) the preparation and implementation of recovery strategies, action plans, and management plans

(c) all agreements made under sections 10 to 13

(d) all agreements entered into or renewed and permits issued or renewed under section 73 as well as all agreements and permits amended under section 75 or exempted under section 76

(e) enforcement and compliance actions taken, including the response to any requests for investigation

(f) regulations and emergency orders made under SARA

(g) any other matters that the Minister considers relevant

1.1 Background on SARA

SARA is a key tool for conserving and protecting Canada's biological diversity, and fulfills the Government of Canada's international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity. It also supports federal commitments under the 1996 Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk to prevent species in Canada from becoming extinct from human activity.

The purpose of the Act is:

- to prevent wildlife species from being extirpated or becoming extinct
- to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered or threatened as a result of human activity
- to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened

The Act establishes a process for conducting scientific assessments of the status of individual wildlife species and a mechanism for listing extirpated, endangered, threatened and special-concern species. SARA includes requirements for the protection, recovery and management of listed wildlife species, their critical habitats[2] and residences.[3]

The responsibility for conservation of species at risk is shared by federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada. The Act recognizes this joint responsibility and that all Canadians have a role to play in the protection of wildlife.

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1 Referred to as the Minister of the Environment in the *Species At Risk Act*.

2 "Critical habitat" is defined as the habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and is identified as the species critical habitat in the recovery strategy or in an action plan for the species (see section 4.2).

3 "Residence" means a dwelling place, such as a den, nest or other similar area or place, that is occupied or habitually occupied by one or more individuals during all or part of their life cycles, including breeding, rearing, staging, wintering, feeding or hibernating.

1.2 Implementation of SARA

The Minister is responsible for the overall administration of SARA, except insofar as the Act gives responsibility to another minister (i.e. another competent minister).

The Parks Canada Agency (PCA)[4], Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), often referred to as the "competent" departments, share responsibility for the implementation of SARA. The ministers responsible for these organizations are known as the "competent" ministers under SARA. The Minister of the Environment is the minister responsible for both ECCC and PCA.

Figure 1 identifies the role of each competent minister.

Figure 1. Competent ministers

1.3 Nature Legacy for Canada

The Nature Legacy for Canada Initiative, announced in Budget 2018, aims to protect Canada's biodiversity, ecosystems and natural landscapes through the protection of lands and waters, and species at risk. Under the Initiative's Canada Nature Fund, the government committed:

- up to $155 million over 5 years for conservation actions to protect and aid in the recovery of up to 200 terrestrial wildlife species under the *Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming Species at Risk Conservation in Canada*
- $55 million over 5 years for aquatic species through the *Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk*

Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming Species at Risk Conservation in Canada

In June 2018, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers responsible for conservation, wildlife, and biodiversity agreed to the implementation of the *Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming Species at Risk Conservation in Canada*[5]. This new approach will shift from a single-species approach to conservation to one that focuses on multiple species and ecosystems. Conservation efforts will be concentrated on priority places, species, sectors and threats across Canada. This will enable conservation partners to work together to achieve better outcomes for species at risk.

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[4] Parks Canada Agency is referred to as Parks Canada in this report.

[5] Quebec has not signed the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk and has its own Act on Threatened and Vulnerable Species. It actively collaborates with the federal government on the conservation of endangered species of common interest through the Canada-Quebec Agreement on Species at Risk. For example, Quebec does not participate in the development of Canada-wide policies and mechanisms for the conservation of species at risk, and as such, will not implement the proposed pan-Canadian approach. Quebec intends to work in complementarity with the federal government in setting priorities for the recovery of species in precarious situations, within already existing mechanisms.

The following priority places, species, sectors and threats for terrestrial species at risk were confirmed by the FPT Deputy Ministers responsible for conservation, wildlife and biodiversity in December 2018:

Priority Places

- Nova Scotia - South West Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick - St John River Valley
- Prince Edward Island - Forested landscape
- Quebec - St Lawrence Lowlands
- Manitoba - Mixed Grass Prairie
- Saskatchewan - South of Divide
- Alberta - South Saskatchewan River Watershed
- British Columbia - Dry Interior
- British Columbia - South West British Columbia
- Yukon - South Beringia

Priority Species

- Boreal Caribou
- Southern Mountain Caribou
- Peary Caribou
- Barren-Ground Caribou
- Greater Sage Grouse (Alberta and Saskatchewan)
- Wood Bison (Alberta, Yukon and Northwest Territories)

Priority Sectors

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Urban development

Priority Threats

- Invasive alien species
- Wildlife disease
- Illegal wildlife trade

Parks Canada places play a unique role in the Pan-Canadian approach, as entry points that can be leveraged to anchor and strengthen protection for species and biodiversity in the broader landscape. National parks are in or near many priority places, and Parks Canada has active conservation programs for a number of priority species, such as Greater Sage Grouse and Wood Bison.

Parks Canada has been using a site-based, multi-species approach to action planning to achieve broad conservation gains. As part of their work under Canada's Nature Legacy, Parks Canada allocated approximately $2M in 2018-2019 to projects that implemented more than 55 actions identified in SARA action plans.

An Indigenous Partnerships Initiative focuses on enabling Indigenous leadership in the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Approach and SARA. The Initiative provides support to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis to increase capacity to lead in the design and implementation of conservation measures for at-risk species and their habitat; negotiate and implement conservation agreements for the cooperative conservation of at-risk species; and support meaningful participation in the implementation of SARA.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is implementing the Nature Legacy Initiative through multi-species, place- and threat-based approaches to transform the way that aquatic species at risk are protected and recovered. DFO is undertaking this work and other key assessment, listing and recovery actions with the renewed capacity provided in the Nature Legacy Initiative. This initiative also provided DFO with additional resources to engage with partners from across the country.

Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk

The Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk (CNFASAR) aims to build relationships with Indigenous peoples, provinces and territories, industry, and other partners for aquatic Species at Risk. The program focuses on places and threats selected as pan-Canadian priorities for protecting aquatic species at risk. With this approach, the CNFASAR is funding 58 projects over 5 years, which target over 75 populations of species at risk in 7 priority freshwater places and over 50 populations of species at risk associated with 2 marine threats.

The seven freshwater places selected as priorities under CNFASAR are:

1. Fraser and Columbia Watersheds Priority Area (BC)
2. Rocky Mountains' Eastern Slopes Priority Area (AB)
3. Southern Prairies Priority Area (AB, SK, MB)
4. Lower Great Lakes Watershed Priority Area (ON)
5. St. Lawrence Lowlands Priority Area (QC)
6. Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Rivers Priority Area (NB, NS, PEI)
7. And the Bay of Fundy and Southern Uplands Watersheds Priority Area (NS, NB)

The two marine priority threats which remain a focus for relevant projects under CNFASAR are:

1. fishing interactions - includes entanglements and bycatch of aquatic species at risk (geographic scope: all Canadian oceans)
2. and physical and acoustic disturbance - includes vessel collisions & marine noise (geographic scope: all Canadian oceans)

2. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIES AT RISK

SARA defines the process for conducting assessments of the status of individual wildlife species. The Act separates the assessment process from the listing decisions, ensuring scientists provide independent assessments and that decisions affecting Canadians are made by elected officials who are accountable for those decisions.

2.1 COSEWIC Assessments

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is made up of wildlife experts from government, academia, Indigenous organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. It assesses the status of wildlife species in Canada that it considers to be at risk and identifies existing and potential threats to the species.

The federal government provides financial support to COSEWIC. ECCC provides COSEWIC with professional, technical, secretarial, clerical and other assistance via the COSEWIC Secretariat, which is housed within ECCC.

COSEWIC assesses the status of a wildlife species using the best available information on the biological status of a species, including scientific knowledge, community knowledge and Indigenous traditional knowledge. COSEWIC prioritizes species for assessment and, as one of its sources of information, uses the general status ranks that are outlined in the report called *Wild Species – The General Status of Species in Canada*. This report is required under section 128 of the Act and is published every five years by ECCC and the National General Status Working Group. COSEWIC provides assessments and supporting evidence annually to the Minister.

Figure 2 lists the wildlife species status categories and definitions used by COSEWIC.

Figure 2. Categories of wildlife species status used by COSEWIC

Extinct	Wildlife species no longer exists anywhere in the world.
Extirpated	Wildlife species no longer exists in the wild in Canada but exists elsewhere in the world.
Endangered	Wildlife species faces imminent extirpation or extinction.
Threatened	Wildlife species is likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.
Special concern	Wildlife species may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.
Not at risk	Wildlife species has no immediate risk or COSEWIC may not have sufficient information to classify the species.

Note: More information on risk categories and COSEWIC can be found on the COSEWIC website.

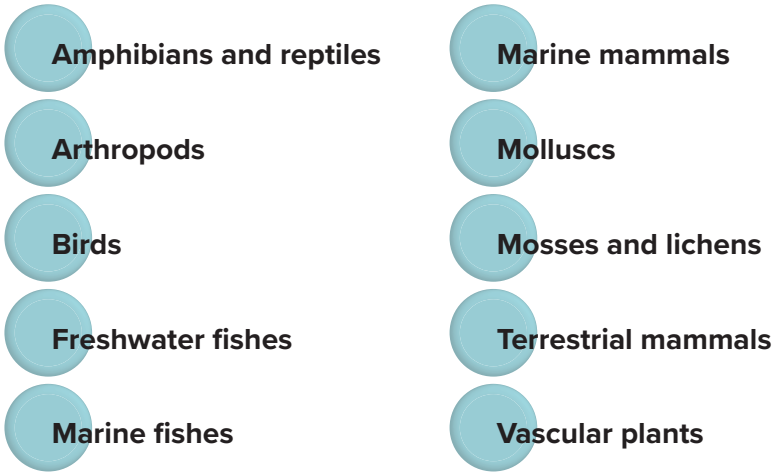
ECCC, PCA, and DFO provide scientific input into the assessment process through staff experts who are members of COSEWIC, as well as through the population surveys that they conduct on some species of interest to COSEWIC. They are also regularly involved in the peer review of COSEWIC status reports. The peer review involves government scientists, experts from academia, and other stakeholders.

2.1.1 COSEWIC Sub-committees

COSEWIC's Species Specialists Sub-committees (SSCs) provide species expertise to COSEWIC. Each SSC is led by two co-chairs and members are recognized Canadian experts in the taxonomic group in question with a demonstrated knowledge of wildlife conservation. Members are drawn from universities, provincial wildlife agencies, museums, Conservation Data Centres, and other sources of expertise on Canadian species. SSC members support the co-chairs in developing candidate lists of species to be considered for assessment, commissioning status reports for priority species, reviewing reports for scientific accuracy and completeness, and proposing to COSEWIC a status for each species. Currently, COSEWIC has 10 SSCs.

Figure 3 lists the COSEWIC Sub-committees.

Figure 3. COSEWIC Sub-committees



COSEWIC also established the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) Sub-committee. In 2018 this committee continued its efforts to produce:

- ATK Source Reports (which compile potential sources of ATK)
- ATK Assessment Reports (which summarize the relevant content of documented ATK sources)
- ATK Gathering Reports (which compile non-publicly available documented and non-documented ATK that is shared directly from Indigenous communities)

In 2018, the ATK Sub-committee also completed:

- a number of ATK reports for wildlife species such as Grizzly Bear, American Eel and Eulachon
- an ATK Framework Approach report to explore the methodology for ATK gathering for Lake Sturgeon

Ongoing work includes the prioritization and selection of wildlife species for which ATK reports will be completed as well as the review of COSEWIC status reports to ensure that available ATK is appropriately and accurately integrated.

2.2 Wildlife species

From 2002 to 2017, COSEWIC assessed and classified more than 900 wildlife species in 15 batches. Batch 16, consisting of 90 wildlife species, was assessed between November 2017 to April 2018. COSEWIC forwarded these assessments to the Minister of the Environment in October 2018, which included:

- one wildlife species examined and found to be data deficient
- eleven wildlife species assessed as not at risk (includes one species previously assessed as special concern, listed on Schedule 1 of SARA)
- two wildlife species assessed as extinct
- 76 wildlife species assessed as at risk, of which 27 were confirmed at the classification already attributed to them on Schedule 1 of SARA

On January 10, 2018, COSEWIC's Emergency Assessment Sub-committee conducted an emergency assessment of Steelhead Trout (Thompson River population and Chilcotin River population) and found both to be endangered. On February 13, 2018, COSEWIC informed the Minister of this assessment and made a recommendation that they be listed on Schedule 1 on an emergency basis. Full status reports are in progress and COSEWIC will be assessing both species at the Wildlife Species Assessment meeting in April 2020.

3. LISTING OF SPECIES AT RISK

The Act establishes Schedule 1 as the official List of Wildlife Species at Risk. Species are listed as extirpated, endangered, threatened or of special concern.

3.1 Listing process

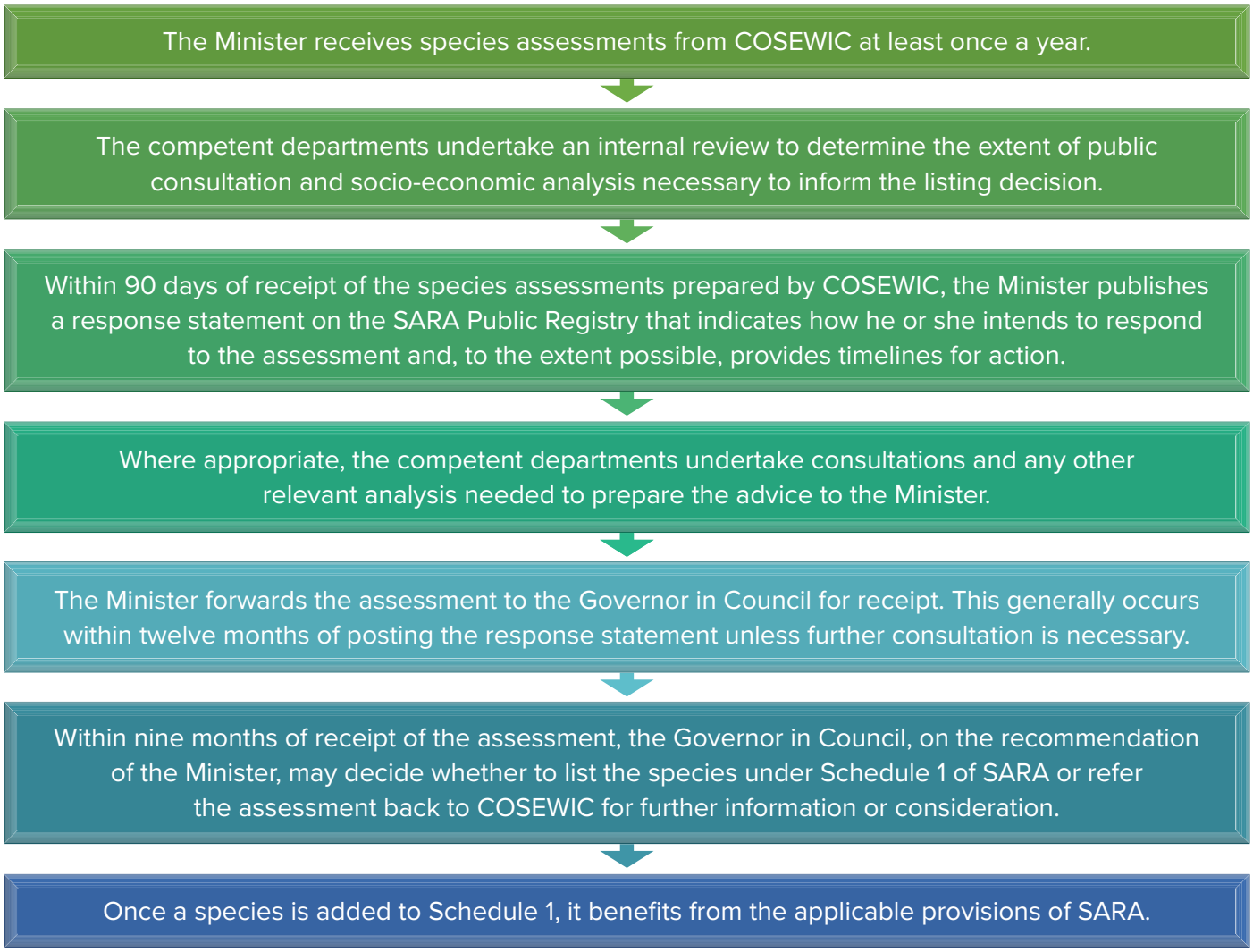
The listing process refers to the addition, the reclassification, or the removal of a species from Schedule 1. Once the Minister receives the COSEWIC assessment, the Minister has 90 days to post a response statement on the Species at Risk Public Registry indicating how they intend on responding to each assessment and, if possible, providing timelines for action.

During this 90-day period, the relevant competent minister carries out an internal review to determine the level of public consultation and socio-economic analysis necessary to inform the listing decision. Timelines for action and the scope of consultations included in the response statement are based on the results of this initial review.

All of the species that COSEWIC assessed as being at risk prior to October 1999, were included at proclamation on SARA's Schedule 2 (endangered and threatened) and Schedule 3 (special concern). COSEWIC reassesses these species using current criteria as part of the process to determine if they should be considered for the addition to Schedule 1. All Schedule 2 species have since been reassessed by COSEWIC. For Schedule 3, taxonomy for the four remaining species needs to be clarified before they can be reassessed by COSEWIC.

Figure 4 illustrates the listing process under SARA.

Figure 4. Species listing process under SARA



Note: More information, can be found on the SARA Public Registry.

Prior to undertaking public consultations and socio-economic analyses, DFO develops science advice in the form of a Recovery Potential Assessment (RPA) for aquatic species that have been assessed by COSEWIC as threatened, endangered or extirpated. The scientific information in a RPA includes, as an example, species status, threats and limiting factors to the survival and recovery of the species, recovery targets, and feasibility of recovery in given scenarios. The RPA informs the development of advice to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans regarding the listing of aquatic species under SARA and is used when analyzing the socio-economic impacts and during subsequent consultations. The RPA also provides advice needed to meet other requirements of the Act, including recovery planning and permitting decisions.

In 2018, DFO held three Recovery Potential Assessments peer-review meetings for: Redside Dace, Chilcotin River and Thompson River Steelhead Trout, and Warmouth.

3.2 Federal government response to COSEWIC assessments

On April 9, 2018, the Minister's response statements to the imminent threat assessments for the Steelhead Trout, Thompson River population and the Steelhead Trout, Chilcotin River population were published on the SAR Registry.

In October 2018, the Minister received COSEWIC's assessments for 76 out of the 90 assessed species in Batch 16. Of these assessments, 42 terrestrial and 34 aquatic wildlife were species at risk, which the Minister provided response statements for in January 2019.

Table 1 shows the species for which assessments and risk status were received from COSEWIC in October 2018. Species are grouped by the type of consultation the departments will undertake.

Table 1. List of species for which assessments and risk status were received from COSEWIC in October 2018

COSEWIC risk status	Taxon	English legal name	Scientific name
Normal consultation			
Endangered	Arthropods	False-foxglove Sun Moth	*Pyrrhia aurantiago*
Endangered	Molluscs	Striped Whitelip	*Webbhelix multilineata*
Endangered	Mosses	Acuteleaf Small Limestone Moss	*Seligeria acutifolia*
Endangered	Vascular Plants	Downy Yellow False Foxglove	*Aureolaria virginica*
Endangered	Vascular Plants	Quebec Rockcress	*Boechera quebecensis*
Threatened	Lichens	Smoker's Lung Lichen	*Lobaria retigera*
Threatened	Vascular Plants	Fern-leaved Yellow False Foxglove	*Aureolaria pedicularia*
Threatened	Vascular Plants	Smooth Yellow False Foxglove	*Aureolaria flava*
Special Concern	Arthropods	Red-tailed Leafhopper (Great Lakes Plains population)	*Aflexia rubranura*
Special Concern	Arthropods	Red-tailed Leafhopper (Prairie population)	*Aflexia rubranura*
Special Concern	Reptiles	Eastern Painted Turtle	*Chrysemys picta*
Special Concern	Reptiles	Midland Painted Turtle	*Chrysemys picta marginata*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Yukon Wild Buckwheat	*Eriogonum flavum* var. *aquilinum*
↑ From Threatened to Endangered	Amphibians	Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander (Appalachian population)	*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*
↑ From Threatened to Endangered	Birds	Red-headed Woodpecker	*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*
↓ From Endangered to Threatened	Mosses	Spoon-leaved Moss	*Bryoandersonia illecebra*
↓ From Endangered to Special Concern	Reptiles	Prairie Skink	*Plestiodon septentrionalis*
Extended consultation			
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Bowron-ES)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Cultus-L)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Harrison (U/S)-L)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Quesnel-S)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*

COSEWIC risk status	Taxon	English legal name	Scientific name
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Seton-L)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Takla-Trembleur-EStu)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Takla-Trembleur-Stuart-S)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Endangered	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Taseko-ES)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Endangered	Mammals (marine)	Grey Whale (Pacific Coast Feeding Group)	*Eschrichtius robustus*
Endangered	Mammals (marine)	Grey Whale (Western Pacific)	*Eschrichtius robustus*
Threatened	Fishes(Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (North-Barriere-ES)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Threatened	Fishes(Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Widgeon River Type)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Dezadeash Lake small-bodied)	*Coregonus lavaretus*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Dezadeash Lake large-bodied)	*Coregonus lavaretus*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Little Teslin Lake small-bodied)	*Coregonus lavaretus*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Little Teslin Lake large-bodied)	*Coregonus clupeaformis*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Opeongo Lake small-bodied)	*Coregonus clupeaformis*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Opeongo Lake large-bodied)	*Coregonus clupeaformis*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Squanga Lake small-bodied)	*Coregonus lavaretus*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	European Whitefish (Squanga Lake large-bodied)	*Coregonus clupeaformis*
Threatened	Fishes (Marine)	Lumpfish	*Cyclopterus lumpus*
Special Concern	Fishes (Anadromous)	Bering Cisco	*Cyclopterus lumpus*
Special Concern	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Francois-Fraser-s)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Special Concern	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Harrison(D/S)-L)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Special Concern	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Kamloops-ES)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Special Concern	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Lillooet-Harrison-L)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Special Concern	Fishes (Anadromous)	Sockeye Salmon (Nahatlatch-ES)	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
↑ From Special Concern to Endangered	Mammals	Caribou (Dolphin and Union population)	*Rangifer tarandus*
↓ From Threatened to Special Concern	Birds	Common Nighthawk	*Chordeiles minor*
↓ From Threatened to Special Concern	Birds	Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*
↓ From Special Concern to Not at Risk	Birds	Peregrine Falcon anatum/tundrius	*Falco peregrinus anatum/tundrius*

COSEWIC risk status	Taxon	English legal name	Scientific name
⬇ From Special Concern to Not at Risk	Mammals (marine)	Grey Whale (Northern Pacific Migratory population)	*Eschrichtius robustus*
Status confirmed – no consultation			
Endangered	Amphibians	Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander (Carolinian population)	*Desmognatus ochrophaeus*
Endangered	Birds	Coastal Vesper Sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus affinis*
Endangered	Birds	Streaked Horned Lark	*Eremophila alpestris strigata*
Endangered	Birds	Williamson's Sapsucker	*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*
Endangered	Fishes (Freshwater)	Redside Dace	*Clinostomus elongatus*
Endangered	Fishes (Marine)	Basking Shark (Pacific)	*Cetorhinus maximus*
Endangered	Mammals (Marine)	Harbour Seal Lacs des Loups Marins subspecies	*Phoca vitulina mellonae*
Endangered	Molluscs	Banff Springs Snail	*Physella johnsoni*
Endangered	Reptiles	Gray Ratsnake (Carolinian population)	*Pantherophis spiloides*
Endangered	Vascular Plants	Tall Bugbane	*Actaea elata*
Endangered	Vascular Plants	Tall Woody-heads	*Psilocarphus elatior*
Threatened	Arthropods	Verna's Flower Moth	*Schinia verna*
Threatened	Birds	Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*
Threatened	Birds	Northern Saw-whet Owl brooksi subspecies	*Aegolicus acadicus brooksi*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	Vancouver Lamprey	*Entosphenus macrostomus*
Threatened	Fishes (Freshwater)	Western Slivery Minnow	*Hybognathus argyritis*
Threatened	Mosses	Porsild's Bryum	*Haplodontium macrocarpum*
Threatened	Reptiles	Gray Ratsnake (Great Lakes/ St. Lawrence population)	*Pantherophis spiloides*
Special Concern	Birds	Peregrine Falcon *pealei* subspecies	*Falco peregrinus pealei*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Athabasca Thrift	*Armeria maritima* spp. *interior*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Blanket-leaved Willow	*Salix silicicola*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Floccose Tansy	*Tanacetum huronense* var. *floccosum*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Large-headed Woolly Yarrow	*Achillea millfolium* var. *psammophila*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Mackenzie Hairgrass	*Deschampsia mackenzieana*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Sand-dune Short-capsuled Willow	*Salix brachycarpa* var. *psammophila*
Special Concern	Vascular Plants	Turnor's Willow	*Salix turnorii*
No regulatory impact – no consultations (DFO)			
⬆ From Threatened to Endangered	Fishes (Freshwater)	Carmine Shiner	*Notropis percobromus*

3.3 Public consultations

Public consultations provide the Minister with a better understanding of the potential social and economic impacts of possible changes to Schedule 1, and of the potential consequences of adding or not adding a species to the list. Information collected during consultations is used to inform the Minister's recommendations to the Governor in Council on amending Schedule 1 of SARA.

In 2018, ECCC carried out consultations for 21 terrestrial species for which status assessments had been received from COSEWIC as part of Batch 15. The document titled Consultation on Amending the List of Species under the Species at Risk Act: Terrestrial Species – January 2018 was posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry.

In 2018, DFO consulted Canadians on the possible listing on Schedule 1 of six aquatic species. Consultations included those with other government departments, wildlife management boards, stakeholders, Indigenous groups and non-governmental organizations. Public consultations were also facilitated by inviting respondents to contribute to a web-based, species-specific survey hosted on the Species at Risk Public Registry.

3.4 Listing decisions

Governor in Council decisions on whether or not to amend Schedule 1 according to the COSEWIC assessments are published as orders amending Schedule 1 of SARA in the Canada Gazette, and include Regulatory Impact Analysis Statements. Decisions to not add a species at risk to Schedule 1 of SARA or to refer the matter back to COSEWIC are published in the Canada Gazette with an explanatory note.

In 2018, final listing decisions were made for 45 terrestrial species. There were two orders amending Schedule 1 of SARA published in the Canada Gazette in 2018. Of the 45 terrestrial species included in these orders: 21 species were newly added to Schedule 1; 11 were reclassifications; 1 was referred back to COSEWIC for reassessment; and 12 were the subject of changes to their recognized designatable units.

Additionally, two proposed orders on whether or not to amend Schedule 1 of SARA according to the COSEWIC assessments for 40 terrestrial species on Schedule 1 were published in the Canada Gazette, Part I for public comment. The comments received will inform final listing decisions for these species. In May 2018, 31 terrestrial species were proposed for addition to, reclassification, or removal from Schedule 1 of SARA. In December 2018, an additional nine terrestrial species were proposed for addition or reclassification to Schedule 1 of SARA. Final decisions for these 40 species are expected in 2019.

Table 2 shows the number of species at each stage of the listing process for Batches 1 to 16 at year-end 2018.

Table 2. Number of species at each stage of the listing process at year-end 2018 (Batches 1 to 16)

Batch and year of Minister's receipt	Total number of species assessed[a]	Assessed as at risk	Confirmation of current status	Added to Schedule 1	Uplisted (to a higher risk category)	Downlisted (to a lower risk category)	Not listed	Referred back	Listing decision pending
(Proclamation)	0	233	0	233	0	0	0	0	0
Batch 1 (2004)	115	95	4	75	0	0	8[b]	8[b]	0
Batch 2 (2004)	59	51 (+9)	0	47	0	0	13	1	0
Batch 3 (2005)	73	59	4	45	0	0	6	1	4
Batch 4 (2006)	68 (+5[c])	59	4	39	2	0	1	2	6
Emergency Assessment (2006)	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Batch 5 (2007)	64	53	8	30	2	3	0	0	9
Batch 6 (2008)	46	39	14	19	3	0	1	0	2
Batch 7 (2009)	48	46	17	19	3	1	0	0	6
Batch 8 (2010)	79	78	34	18	3	5	4	0	14
Batch 9 (2011)	92	81	31	16	5	6	1	3	19
Batch 10 (2012)	64	57	28	9	4	5	0	1	9
Emergency Assessment (2012)	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Batch 11 (2013)	73	67	32	13	3	2	0	0	18
Batch 12 (2014)	56	56	21	12	2	3	0	0	16
Batch 13 (2015)	56	54	23	2	1	0	0	0	11
Batch 14 (2016)	45	38	7	0	0	0	0	0	18
Batch 15 (2017)	73	56	17	0	0	0	0	1	39
Emergency Assessments (2018)	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Batch 16 (2018)	88	75	26	0	0	0	0	0	50

[a] The total includes species assessed for the first time, species being reassessed and previously assessed species that have been split into more than one designatable unit.

[b] The totals listed as "Uplisted" (to a higher risk category) and "Downlisted" (to a lower risk category) also account for species that were subsequently split into more than one designatable unit with a corresponding change in status and were therefore treated as reclassifications ("uplisted" or "downlisted"). In addition, removals from Schedule 1 are counted here as "downlisted".

[c] Includes four wildlife species that were not listed for further consideration from Batch 1 and reconsidered in Batch 2, and five additional wildlife species when one designatable unit received by COSEWIC was split into six for listing.

3.5 SARA Schedule 1 current status

When SARA was proclaimed in June 2003, Schedule 1 included 233 species. Starting in 2005, species have been added to the list every year, except in 2008, 2015 and 2016. As of December 31, 2018, Schedule 1 listed a total of 580 species.

- 25 extirpated species
- 269 endangered species
- 161 threatened species
- 164 species of special concern

Table 3 shows the numbers of species added to Schedule 1 each year by risk status as of December 2018.

Table 3. Numbers of species added (newly added or reclassified) to Schedule 1 each year by risk status as of December 2018

Year	Risk status				Total
	Extirpated	Endangered	Threatened	Special Concern	
June 2003 (proclamation)	17	107	67	42	233
2005	4	47	30	31	112
2006	0	18	14	12	44
2007	0	20	5	11	36
2008	0	0	0	0	0
2009	0	8	3	11	22
2010	0	11[a]	8	4	23[a]
2011	2	7	4	10	23
2012	0	11	2	5	18
2013	0	4	2	1	7
2014	0	3	0	0	3
2015	0	0	0	0	0
2016	0	0	0	0	0
2017	1	18	15	20	54
2018	1	15	11	17	44
Total	25	269	161	164	580[b]

[a] The Eastern Foxsnake was split into two populations. The new populations inherited the species' status on Schedule 1 of SARA before it was split, and both new populations were uplisted in 2010. For the purpose of this table, one of the new Eastern Foxsnake populations was treated as an addition to Schedule 1.

[b] Although the total number of listed species (580) is correct, the total listed as extirpated, endangered, threatened and special concern is slightly different because the values presented in this table do not reflect status changes (i.e., uplisting or downlisting of a species).

Success story: Using conservation genetics to help save trees

Point Pelee National Park is home to some of the rarest species of trees in Canada, including the Red Mulberry. By 2014, fewer than 20 non-hybridized Red Mulberry trees remained, hastening the race for park staff to locate, identify and save genetically pure specimens.

Parks Canada's work with Columbus State University in Georgia was key in these efforts. One of the outcomes from collaborative research was the development of a tool that uses genetic identification to confirm whether selected trees are genetically pure Red Mulberry. This tool allowed parks staff to identify four new adult trees.

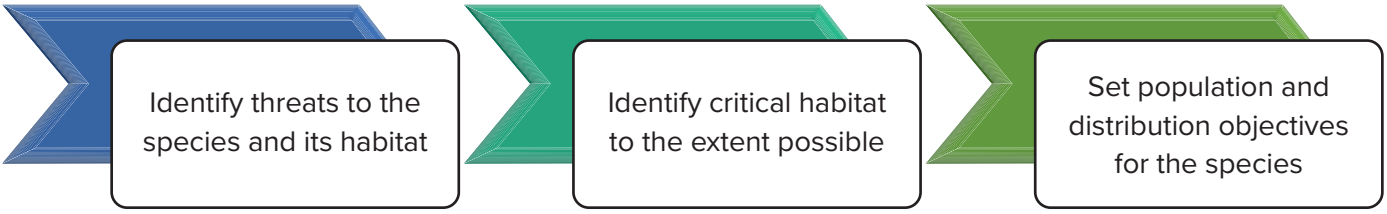
Another conservation task was the development of a process to propagate non-hybridized seedlings. Pure Red Mulberry tree flowers were protected from cross-pollination and then artificially pollinated by hand. The resulting seeds were collected, germinated and grown in a local greenhouse. Twenty-six of these pure Red Mulberry seedlings were planted in optimal habitat in the park. There are now over 150 one-year-old potential non-hybridized seedlings available for planting.

Parks Canada staff are continuing to learn about recovery, including which sites in the park are best for seedling survival and growth, and ways to protect the seedlings from browsing by hungry animals. Parks staff will continue to use science and research to adapt efforts and share lessons learned to support recovery of the Red Mulberry.

4. RECOVERY PLANNING FOR LISTED SPECIES

Once a species is listed on Schedule 1, there are obligations in the Act for recovery planning. Proposed recovery strategies, action plans and management plans are posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry for a 60-day public comment period. The competent ministers consider comments and make changes where appropriate. The final recovery strategy action plan or management plan, as applicable, is to be published on the public registry within 30 days after the expiry of the public comment period. Five years after a recovery strategy, action plan or management plan comes into effect, the competent minister must report on the progress made towards achieving the stated objectives.

Recovery strategies have the following steps:



Action plans outline the projects or activities required to meet the objectives outlined in the recovery strategy. This includes information on the species habitat, protection measures, and an evaluation of the socio-economic costs and benefits. Management plans identify conservation measures needed to prevent a species listed as special concern from becoming threatened or endangered, but do not identify critical habitat.

4.1 Recovery planning activities in 2018

Under SARA, the competent ministers must prepare recovery strategies and action plans for the species listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened and management plans for those listed as special concern.

4.1.1 Recovery strategies

In 2018, ECCC posted proposed recovery strategies for 8 species and final recovery strategies for 17 species. PCA posted a final recovery strategy for one species and DFO posted a proposed recovery strategy for one species, and final recovery strategies for five species.

Table 4 lists the recovery strategies that were posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry in 2018.

Table 4. Species for which recovery strategies were posted in 2018 by lead competent department

Competent department	Final recovery strategies: species	Proposed recovery strategies: species
Environment and Climate Change Canada	American Ginseng*	Batwing Vinyl Lichen
	Blanding's Turtle (Great Lakes/St. Lawrence population)*	Bent Spike-rush (Southern Mountain population)
	Blue-grey Taildropper Slug	Goldenseal
	Butler's Gartersnake	Phantom Orchid
	Eastern Whip-poor-will*	Skillet Clubtail
	Grey Fox	Western Painted Turtle (Pacific Coast population)
	Little Brown Myotis*	White Wood Aster
	Northern Bobwhite	Yellow-breasted Chat *virens* subspecies
	Northern Myotis*	
	Purple Twayblade	
	Slender Bush-clover	
	Small-flowered Lipocarpha	
	Spiny Softshell*	
	Spotted Turtle*	
	Tri-colored Bat*	
	White Wood Aster*	
	Wood Bison*	
Parks Canada	Northern Goshawk *laingi* subspecies	
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Harbour Seal Lacs des Loups Marins subspecies	Killer Whale (Northeast Pacific Offshore population)
	Killer Whale (Northeast Pacific Offshore population)*	
	Misty Lake Lentic Threespine Stickleback	
	Misty Lake Lotic Threespine Stickleback	
	Speckled Dace	

* Parks Canada is also a competent department for this species, as it occurs in its lands/waters.

4.1.2 Action plans

An action plan identifies the conservation measures required to address the threats to the species and meet the population and distribution objectives outlined in the recovery strategy. An action plan may include an identification of the species' critical habitat, to the extent possible, based on the best available information and consistent with the recovery strategy.

In 2018, ECCC posted a proposed multi-species action plan for two species and final action plans for 10 species, with 5 of those species included in a multi-species action plan. PCA posted 1 final multi-species action plan covering a total of 16 different extirpated, endangered and threatened (EET) SARA-listed species on PCA lands and waters and DFO posted proposed action plans for 21 species and final action plans for 15 species.

Table 5 lists the species for which action plans were posted in 2018.

Table 5. Species for which action plans were posted in 2018

Competent department	Final action plans	Proposed action plans
Environment and Climate Change Canada	Barrens Willow Eastern Mountain Avens Fernald's Braya* Long's Braya Woodland Caribou (Boreal population) Action Plan for Multiple Species of Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora in Canada: o Pink Coreopsis o Thread-leaved Sundew o Water Pennywort* o Goldencrest o Plymouth Gentian	Action Plan for the Boreal Felt Lichen (Atlantic population) and Vole Ears Lichen, in Canada: o Boreal Felt Lichen (Atlantic population)* o Vole Ears Lichen*
Parks Canada	Multi-species Action Plan - Gulf Islands National Park Reserve (16 species)	
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Atlantic Whitefish Carmine Shiner Eastern Sand Darter (Ontario populations) Hotwater Physa Kidneyshell Northern Madtom Northern Riffleshell Rayed Bean Rocky Mountain Sculpin (Eastslope populations) Round Hickorynut Round Pigtoe Salamander Mussel Snuffbox Western Brook Lamprey (Morrison Creek population) Western Silvery Minnow	Blue Whale (Atlantic population)* Eastern Sand Darter (Ontario populations) Kidneyshell Lake Chubsucker* Leatherback Sea Turtle (Atlantic population)* Mapleleaf (Great Lakes – Western St. Lawrence population) Misty Lake Lentic Threespine Stickleback Misty Lake Lotic Threespine Stickleback Northern Riffleshell Northern Wolffish Paxton Lake Benthic Threespine Sticleback Paxton Lake Limnetic Threespine Stickleback Pugnose Shiner* Rainbow Rainbow Smelt (Lake Utopia small-bodied population) Snuffbox Speckled Dace Spotted Wolffish

* Parks Canada is also a competent department for this species, as it occurs in its lands/waters.

Note: Individual species may be covered in more than one multi-species action plan.

4.1.3 Identification of critical habitat

SARA defines "critical habitat" as the habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and that is identified as the species' critical habitat in the recovery strategy or in an action plan. Competent ministers must identify critical habitat, to the extent possible based on the best available information.

In 2018, ECCC published final recovery strategies in which critical habitat was identified for 15 species, and proposed recovery strategies in which critical habitat was identified for 7 species.

PCA identified critical habitat in a final recovery strategy for 1 species (Northern Goshawk, laingi subspecies) and identified additional critical habitat for 1 species (Contorted-pod Evening Primrose) in the final multi-species action plan for Gulf Islands National Park Reserve of Canada.

DFO published 5 final recovery strategies and 2 final action plans in which critical habitat was identified for 9 species. In addition, DFO published 3 proposed recovery strategies, 1 proposed action plan, and 3 proposed (combined) recovery strategy/action plans in which critical habitat was identified for 15 species.

4.1.4 Management plans

Species of special concern are those that may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats. SARA requires competent ministers to prepare management plans for species of special concern. A management plan differs from a recovery strategy and an action plan, in that it identifies conservation measures needed to prevent a species of special concern from becoming threatened or endangered, but does not identify critical habitat. Where appropriate, these management plans may be prepared for multiple species on an ecosystem or landscape level.

Table 6 shows species for which management plans were posted in 2018.

Table 6. Species for which management plans were posted in 2018

Competent department	Final management plans: species	Proposed management plans: species
Environment and Climate Change Canada	Ancient Murrelet* Barren-ground Caribou (Dolphin and Union population)* Coastal Tailed Frog Dwaft Woolly-heads (Prairie population) Lyall's Mariposa Lily Short-eared Owl* Western Painted Turtle (Intermountain – Rocky Mountain population)	Crooked-stem Aster
Parks Canada	Nil	Nil
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Brook Floater Northern Brook Lamprey (Great Lakes – Upper St. Lawrence populations)* River Redhorse* Wavy-rayed Lampmussel	Mountain Sucker (Pacific populations) Rocky Mountain Sculpin (Westslope populations) Shorthead Sculpin Yelloweye Rockfish (Pacific Ocean Inside Waters population)** Yelloweye Rockfish (Pacific Ocean Outside Waters population)**

* Parks Canada is also a competent department for this species, as it occurs in its lands/waters.

** Parks Canada may also be be competent department for this species, pending confirmation of occurrence data.

4.2 Protection of Critical Habitat

In 2018, ECCC protected critical habitat for Swift Fox, Sprague's Pipit, and Chestnut-collared Longspur in Prairie National Wildlife Area – Unit 11.

In 2018, the Minister, acting in the capacity as the Minister responsible for the Parks Canada, made an order to protect the critical habitat of the Western Chorus Frog (Great Lakes/St. Lawrence – Canadian Shield population) on federal lands. The Minister also proposed an order to protect the critical habitat of the Woodland Caribou (Boreal population) on federally administered lands, pursuant to section 58 of SARA.

ECCC published two progress reports under section 63 of SARA that highlighted steps taken to protect critical habitat for Woodland Caribou (Boreal population).

PCA protected critical habitat for 11 species in seven national parks, national park reserves and other lands/waters under the Agency's administration.

- Chestnut-collared Longspur (Grasslands National Park of Canada)
- Contorted-pod Evening-primrose (Gulf Islands National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Dromedary Jumping Slug (Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Eastern Whip-poor-will (Georgian Bay Islands National Park of Canada)
- Edward's Beach Moth (Gulf Islands National Park Reserve of Canada & Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Killer Whale (Northeast Pacific northern resident population) (Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Killer Whale (Northeast Pacific southern resident population) (Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Red Knot (rufa subspecies) (Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Sand-verbena Moth (Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Seaside Centipede Lichen (Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada)
- Western Chorus Frog (Great Lakes/St. Lawrence - Canadian Shield population) (Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site and other lands associated with Thousand Islands National Park of Canada)

DFO published 14 orders to protect critical habitat for the following aquatic species at risk.

- Eastern Sand Darter (Quebec populations)
- Spring Cisco
- Lake Chubsucker
- Northern Bottlenose Whale (Scotian Shelf population)
- Atlantic Whitefish
- Carmine Shiner
- Misty Lake Lentic Threespine Stickleback
- Misty Lake Lotic Threespine Stickleback
- Speckled Dace
- Harbour Seal (Lac des Loups Marins subspecies)
- Killer Whale (Northeast Pacific Southern Resident population)
- Killer Whale (Northeast Pacific Northern Resident population)
- Coastrange Sculpin (Cultus population)
- Western Silvery Minnow

DFO also published a proposed order to protect critical habitat for the Atlantic Salmon, Inner Bay of Fundy population.

To further help protect aquatic species at risk, DFO encourages people who are considering a construction project to visit the Aquatic species at risk map website to facilitate locating these species and thus plan their project accordingly.

The provinces and territories are primarily responsible for the management of non-federal lands, natural resources and wildlife located on those lands. This includes the protection of the critical habitat of species at risk on non-federal lands (other than aquatic species) and implementation of protection measures through their own legislation and programs.

4.3 Imminent threat assessments

In 2018, ECCC undertook work to assess threats to the survival or recovery of species at risk in response to petitions received from various stakeholders. This work included consulting with implicated provincial and municipal governments, Indigenous groups, as well industry representatives, and academics, and analyzing the information received during this process. The outcomes of these assessments, once completed, will be used to guide the competent minister in forming an opinion as to whether or not a species faces an imminent threat to its survival or recovery.

In 2018, two species were found to be facing imminent threats.

- The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard and the Minister as the Minister responsible for Parks Canada determined the Southern Resident Killer Whale is facing imminent threats to its survival and recovery. The Imminent Threat Assessment, based on the best available information from the COSEWIC Assessment, the Recovery Strategy for Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales, the Action Plan for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whale, and the Review of the Effectiveness of Recovery Measures for Southern Resident Killer Whales, examined the biological condition of the population, as well as ongoing threats and mitigation measures. The Ministers found the Southern Resident Killer Whale is facing key threats, namely: the reductions in the availability or quality of prey, physical and acoustic disturbances, and environmental contaminants. These threats are considered imminent and intervention is required to allow for survival and eventual recovery.
- In 2018, the Minister determined that Southern Mountain Caribou are facing imminent threats to its recovery. The assessment noted unsustainable predation as the most immediate and significant issue to the population. It was found that predation levels, the result of habitat changes, have influenced the predator-prey relationship which in turn has lead to direct disturbance and displacement of caribou. The assessment highlighted specific concern in 10 of the 23 local population units.

4.4 Recovery activities

In supporting species at risk recovery, Government of Canada biologists across Canada led or supported dozens of activities, including research projects, education and awareness, habitat restoration or enhancement initiatives, monitoring, assessment, and more.

4.4.1 Competent departments recovery activities

In 2018, ECCC led and supported numerous activities targeting the recovery of species at risk. ECCC progressed in developing conservation agreements under section 11 as a tool for bringing partners together to commit to conservation measures for the benefit of species at risk. In 2018, 42 section 11 conservation agreements were signed with landowners in Ontario through the Species at Risk Partnership on Agricultural Lands program. ECCC also made progress in the negotiation of conservation agreements for Woodland Caribou (Boreal population), investing approximately $13 million in the conservation of Boreal and Southern Mountain Caribou in fiscal year 2018-2019, supported by the Canada Nature Fund. A final conservation agreement was signed with Quebec (cost-sharing arrangement for the implementation of the collaborative agreement for the protection and recovery of species at risk in Quebec applied to Boreal Caribou and its habitat), and two agreements-in-principle were

concluded with Saskatchewan and Northwest Territories, to advance conservation measures such as landscape-level planning, and habitat and population management, among others. Negotiations commenced on potential conservation agreements with three First Nations.

In 2018, PCA implemented recovery activities in and around protected heritage places, including research, restoration activities, and public outreach and education. PCA conducted several projects in partnership with non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private citizens and Indigenous communities. Conservation and restoration projects are recovering, restoring and enhancing ecosystems and species at risk across Canada, such as:

- seaside surveys for at-risk lichens were completed at Kejimkujik National Park, resulting in the identification of more than 300 at-risk lichen occurrences
- restoring the boreal forest in Terra Nova National Park
- reconnecting lakes and rivers in La Mauricie National Park
- enhancing the protection of Beluga Whale in Saguenay St. Lawrence Marine Park
- implementing the RARE program (Reptile and Amphibian Recovery and Education), in Thousand Islands National Park increasing herptile outreach capacity, awareness, and partnership building, through activities such as a turtle nest protection box lending program, and a new herptile education and awareness section in the visitor center

In 2018, DFO implemented recovery activities including: research, strategic regulatory sign placement, partnering with provincial wildlife conservation staff to share knowledge and build relationships in support of protecting species, environmental restoration opportunities, and targeted site visits.

DFO's Marine Mammal Response Program departmental personnel and external partner organizations carried out 287 responses nationally for species at risk including:

- freeing whales from fishing gear entanglements
- monitoring close approaches by vessels
- refloating live stranded animals
- reuniting stranded animals with their pods
- warming cold, stunned sea turtles
- monitoring sick animals
- performing necropsies on dead animals to determine cause of death
- investigating incidents of harassment

The information collected during these response activities helps DFO monitor and evaluate the threat level from these forms of harm and find ways to reduce entanglements and vessel collisions. Outreach activities help to educate the public on ways to help protect and avoid harming marine animals.

4.4.2 Habitat Stewardship Program

The Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) for Species at Risk was established in 2000 as part of the National Strategy for the Protection of Species at Risk. The overall goals of the HSP are to contribute to the recovery of endangered, threatened and other species at risk, and to prevent other species from becoming a conservation concern, by involving Canadians from all walks of life in conservation actions to benefit wildlife.

The most complete data available for the HSP at the end of 2018 is for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The HSP is co-managed by ECCC, DFO and PCA, and administered by ECCC on a regional basis. Regional implementation boards include representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments, and various stakeholders. These boards provide advice on priorities and project selection for their regions. Funding under the HSP is separated into two distinct streams.

1. HSP Species at Risk Stream
2. HSP Prevention Stream

The **HSP Species at Risk Stream** focuses on projects addressing the recovery of species at risk listed on Schedule 1 of SARA. Results are focused on:

- securing or protecting important habitat for the recovery of species at risk
- improving, through restoration/enhancement, or managing important habitat to meet the recovery needs of species at risk
- removing or mitigating threats to species at risk or their habitat caused by human activities
- engaging Canadians (landowners, resource users, volunteers) to participate directly in activities that support the recovery of species at risk so that project benefits are sustained over time

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, 137 new projects and 86 previously approved multi-year projects involving 176 unique funding recipients contributed to the recovery efforts of over 242 unique SARA-listed species across Canada. A total of $13 million in HSP SAR Stream funding was awarded to these projects, and an additional $32.2 million (cash and in-kind) was leveraged from partners, for a total investment of $45 million.

These contributions provided support to stewardship efforts across Canada that resulted in the protection of just over 3,160 ha of land, including 6 ha through legally binding means, such as acquisition or conservation easements and just over 3,100 ha of land through non-legally binding means such as conservation agreements. The program also supported the improvement or restoration of more than 115 ha of land and 5 km of shoreline. Funded projects directly affected 31 SARA-listed species, mostly through increased Indigenous awareness of species at risk and through the development of strategies, guidelines and practices or the completion of monitoring studies, surveys and inventories.

The **HSP Prevention Stream** focuses on projects addressing other species, beyond those listed on Schedule 1 of SARA, to prevent them from becoming a conservation concern. It targets the same results as the Species at Risk Stream.

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the HSP Prevention Stream funded 41 new projects and 29 previously approved multi-year projects, which support work to prevent species from becoming a conservation concern. A total of over $2.7 million in HSP Prevention Stream funding was awarded to these projects, and an additional $7.6 million (cash and in-kind) was leveraged from partners, for a total investment of over $10.3 million.

These contributions provided support to stewardship efforts across Canada that resulted in the securement and protection of more than 1,800 ha of land, including more than 640 ha through legally binding means, such as acquisition or conservation easements. Non-legally binding protection was put in place through the use of written conservation agreements with landowners, which accounts for more than 1,200 ha, including over 140 ha through renewed conservation agreements and over 1,000 ha through new conservation agreements. The program also supported the improvement or restoration of more than 2,600 ha of land and 18 km of shoreline.

Additional information on the program is available on the Habitat Stewardship Program for species at risk website and for DFO, on the Habitat Stewardship Program for Aquatic Species at Risk Program website.

4.4.3 Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk

The Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk (AFSAR), established in 2004, helps Indigenous organizations and communities across Canada build capacity to participate in the conservation and recovery of species at risk. The program also helps to protect and recover critical habitat or habitat important for species at risk on or near First Nations reserve land or on land and waters traditionally used by Indigenous peoples.

AFSAR is co-managed by ECCC, DFO, and PCA, with the support of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and the guidance of National Indigenous Organizations. AFSAR is administered by ECCC and DFO on a regional basis. Regional management teams include representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous representatives, and various stakeholders. These teams provide advice on priorities and project selection for their regions.

The most complete data available for AFSAR at the end of 2018 is for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Similar to HSP, funding under AFSAR is separated into two distinct streams.

1. AFSAR Species at Risk Stream
2. AFSAR Prevention Stream

The **AFSAR Species at Risk Stream** focuses on projects addressing the recovery of species at risk listed on Schedule 1 of SARA, targeting results in four main areas:

- strengthening capacity in Indigenous communities for SARA implementation
- mitigating threats to species at risk, be they individuals or populations
- protecting, improving or managing critical and important habitat of species at risk
- documenting and conserving Indigenous traditional knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge on species at risk and, where appropriate, helping ensure their use in the development of recovery objectives

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year the AFSAR SAR Stream:

- provided $3.2 million to 42 new projects and 25 previously approved multi-year projects
- leveraged additional funds that exceeded $2.5 million (cash and in kind)
- involved 53 Indigenous organizations and communities as recipients

Success story: Strengthening salmon governance through collaboration and research, an AFSAR accomplishment

Eastern Cape Breton Atlantic salmon is a culturally significant species to the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia, and has been assessed by COSEWIC as endangered.

The AFSAR program awarded the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) $92,894 to support the strengthening of salmon governance for the Eastern Cape Breton Atlantic salmon population. Activities were carried out near Mi'kmaq traditional harvesting areas in the Middle, Baddeck, and North Rivers, as well as several other key river systems which are thought to support a large proportion of the existing population.

Monitoring activities included the use of mark-recapture methods to determine smolt abundance in the Middle River, which will contribute to future at-sea mortality estimates – addressing an acknowledged data gap for this species. Electrofishing surveys in an additional five rivers determined the presence/absence of juveniles, which provided indication of spawning activity in those systems. Additionally, UINR conducted outreach and education activities - focusing on improving Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq awareness of the conservation and status of Atlantic salmon - within the context of Aboriginal Rights through a placemat design and condensed conservation harvest plan distributed as a mail-out postcard to Mi'kmaq households in Cape Breton.

Through these project activities, UINR has contributed critical data to support the conservation and recovery of Atlantic salmon in Eastern Cape Breton, while also promoting conservation objectives and species at risk awareness in communities through focused outreach and education.

Case study: Using Indigenous knowledge and science for the recovery of Species at Risk in NunatuKavut - Polar Bears and Bats

In 2017-2018, the NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) received $75,250 from the AFSAR Species at Risk Stream to document and use Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK), survey and monitor three species at risk, and increase knowledge and awareness in NunatuKavut communities in southern Labrador. The species targeted in this project were Polar Bears (*Ursus maritimus*), Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), and Northern Myotis (*Myotis septentrinalis*).

The Polar Bear, or *Nanuk* in Inuktitut, is one of Canada's most iconic species and is of cultural, spiritual and economic importance to the Inuit. It has been listed as Special Concern on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* since 2014. Several reported sightings of Polar Bears in and around NunatuKavut communities over the past number of years occurred and through this project NCC educated and trained community members on Polar Bear behaviour and how to react in their presence, as well as how to escort them from the community safely. These activities helped remove the fear stigma present in the community and prevented unnecessary defence kills that result from human-bear encounters when Polar Bears come within close proximity to communities. Furthermore, ITK was collected during interviews with 11 Elders or knowledge holders from four different communities and focused on understanding Polar Bears in NunatuKavut to promote its conservation in Labrador and recovery in Canada.

Polar Bear
Photo: Lewis Campbell

As part of the facility's program to monitor all species found on their property for conservation purposes, they were issued a SARA permit to allow them to capture, mark and release Blanding's Turtles to monitor their population. Some of the conditions on this permit are: the frequency of setting and checking traps; how to handle the turtles; how to record and log captures; and reporting requirements. The Wildlife Officer confirmed that the conditions of the permit were being met.

Little Brown Myotis and Northern Myotis have been listed as Endangered on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* since 2014. These bat species are declining primarily due to White-nose Syndrome (WNS), which is a disease caused by a white fungus that grows on infected bats' wings, nose, and ears. Bat mortality rates from WNS sometimes exceed 90% in infected hibernating sites. Populations in the project locations in Labrador are reported as healthy but there have been a few cases of WNS reported in Newfoundland. NCC, through this AFSAR-funded project, educated NunatuKavut Inuit on preventing the disease from spreading by human encroachment, reducing the number of bat mortalities, and preventing bats from inhabiting seasonal homes.

NCC held public information sessions where 500 copies of documents about bat biology, their habitat, and threats to their status were distributed. These documents were also distributed in classrooms where 30 students were shown examples of homemade bat boxes to construct for bat conservation. Small brochures were also shared about possible measures to be taken if bats are present in attics or spotted in general.

The **AFSAR Prevention Stream** focuses on projects addressing other species, beyond those listed on Schedule 1 of SARA, to prevent them from becoming a conservation concern. It targets the same results as the Species at Risk Stream.

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year: the AFSAR Prevention Stream provided over $1.5 million to 30 new and four previously approved multi-year projects to prevent species other than listed species at risk from becoming a conservation concern; the AFSAR Prevention Stream leveraged additional funds that exceeded $1.1 million (cash and in kind).

These projects involved 32 Indigenous organizations and communities as recipients. These contributions also supported the improvement or restoration of more than 305 ha of land.

Additional information on the program is available on the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk website and for DFO, on the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk website.

Case study: Northern Abalone Recovery Implementation Group (AbRIG)

Since 2005, representatives from DFO, Indigenous communities, academia, and other government agencies have formed the Abalone Recovery Implementation Group (AbRIG), a collaborative technical working group engaged in Northern Abalone (*Haliotis kamtschatkana*) recovery. AbRIG was founded to oversee specific activities for Abalone recovery, including developing and implementing communications campaigns, conducting research, and monitoring the status of the population.

Since the development of the Recovery Strategy for the Northern Abalone in Canada in 2007 and the Action Plan for the Northern Abalone in Canada in 2012, AbRIG has been focused on coordinating and implementing specific recovery actions identified in these recovery documents.

Many of the indigenous groups that participate in AbRIG receive funding from the Habitat Stewardship Program or the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk (AFSAR) to carry out recovery activities.

The Northern Abalone projects, carried out by AbRIG members, have helped to increase capacity within coastal communities, raise public awareness on the endangered status of the species, develop and deliver educational programs, and reduce the two main threats to the species, illegal harvest and low recruitment.

Moving forward, AbRIG will continue to meet biannually to engage on a wide variety of Northern Abalone recovery actions, share knowledge, expertise, and new research that is occurring throughout coastal British Columbia.

4.4.4 Interdepartmental Recovery Fund

Established in 2002, the Interdepartmental Recovery Fund (IRF), administered by ECCC, supports species at risk projects undertaken by federal government departments, agencies and Crown corporations (other than ECCC, DFO, and PCA). Funded projects predominantly occur on lands owned or administered by federal organizations and directly relate to the implementation of activities identified in recovery strategies or action plans, or surveys of species at risk.

Between its inception in 2002 and the end of March 2018, the IRF has invested over $23.2 million in more than 720 projects which supported recovery efforts annually, on average, for 50 unique species at risk. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the IRF supported 14 projects in five federal departments and one Crown corporation. Collectively, $670,000 in program funding and $688,569 in leveraged funds (cash and in-kind) from project leads and other partners, supported recovery efforts for 68 SARA-listed species. In 2017-2018, 72% of program funds supported recovery actions, and 28% supported surveys.

4.5 Outreach and education

In 2018, ECCC produced and delivered information in various forms to educate Canadians about the role they can play in protecting species at risk and their habitats. There was also a strong focus on engaging other government departments to provide training on SARA for employees who work directly with the Act.

ECCC continues to educate Canadians about species at risk through its long-standing partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Federation in delivering the Hinterland Who's Who wildlife education program, and by developing and publishing species profiles on the Species at Risk Public Registry.

PCA continues to promote species at risk protection and has developed a new Integrated Compliance and Law Enforcement Planning Process. The process will maintain its focus on proactive communication with visitors to highlight the connection between their actions and the effect they can have on the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitat.

Public engagement activities related to species at risk occur in national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas across the country. These activities include interpretative programs, field trips, social media campaigns, special events and volunteer activities, including participation in restoration and monitoring projects (i.e. citizen science).

In addition, PCA has a number of outreach programs that focus on reaching youth, families and new Canadians in urban areas in order to increase awareness, understanding and foster support for species at risk protection and recovery. In 2018, this included outreach programs at special events and festivals, and at several partner venues (e.g. zoos and aquariums) in large cities such as Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Halifax and Ottawa. Information about species at risk was also shared through the PCA website, social media, traditional media and organizations that reach out to the public with various programs, articles and websites.

DFO continued education and outreach activities (such as school visits, trade shows, workshops, industry, and community meetings) with partners to educate the public on the threats to aquatic species at risk and ways to help protect them. Examples include:

- Investment in the development of two Science Enterprise Centres (SECs) – the Gulf Fisheries Centre in Moncton, New Brunswick, and the Centre for Aquaculture and Environmental Research (CAER) in West Vancouver, British Columbia in support of collaborative and innovative scientific research areas, publicly accessible interactive and interpretative spaces, science activities and events for the community.
- In the Quebec region, fishery officers worked jointly with their partners at Parks Canada on a week-long outreach event to raise public awareness among boaters on approach distances and disturbance levels for marine mammals, and on the *Marine Mammal Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act* in general. Labelled "Beluga Blitz", the event took place in the St-Lawrence estuary, within and outside the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park, from July 27 to August 2, 2018. Officers from DFO and Parks Canada undertook joint patrols to provide information and educational material regarding Belugas, Right Whales and Blue Whales to recreational and commercial boaters and other members of the public. Information pamphlets, key chains and waterproof bags (for kayakers) were distributed as part of the event, and the feedback and information that was collected will inform the development of an action plan for marine mammals.
- Public outreach and school visit activities in Newfoundland and Labrador included life-sized textile replicas of Blue Whale tails, Beluga Whales, Leatherback Sea Turtles and Wolffish (Northern, Spotted and Striped) and White Sharks used to provide information about the species, the role of the department in protecting them, and the way individuals can help conserve species.
- A true-to-life fiberglass model of a Leatherback Sea Turtle was designed through collaboration between the Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW) and DFO as a tool for testing entanglement avoidance and mitigation options, and for public awareness and education purposes. It was built with moveable front flippers, buoyancy chambers, and handles to simulate how turtles move and how they would react to entanglement.
- DFO collaborated with other federal agencies, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, environmental non-government organizations, Indigenous groups, academia and other groups to organize and host annual World Oceans Day events around Newfoundland and Labrador in the month of June. In 2018, 16 events took place province-wide to raise public awareness and education of issues related to our oceans including Species at Risk and plastic pollution, highlighting the global better bag challenge. More information can be found on the Better Bag Challenge website.

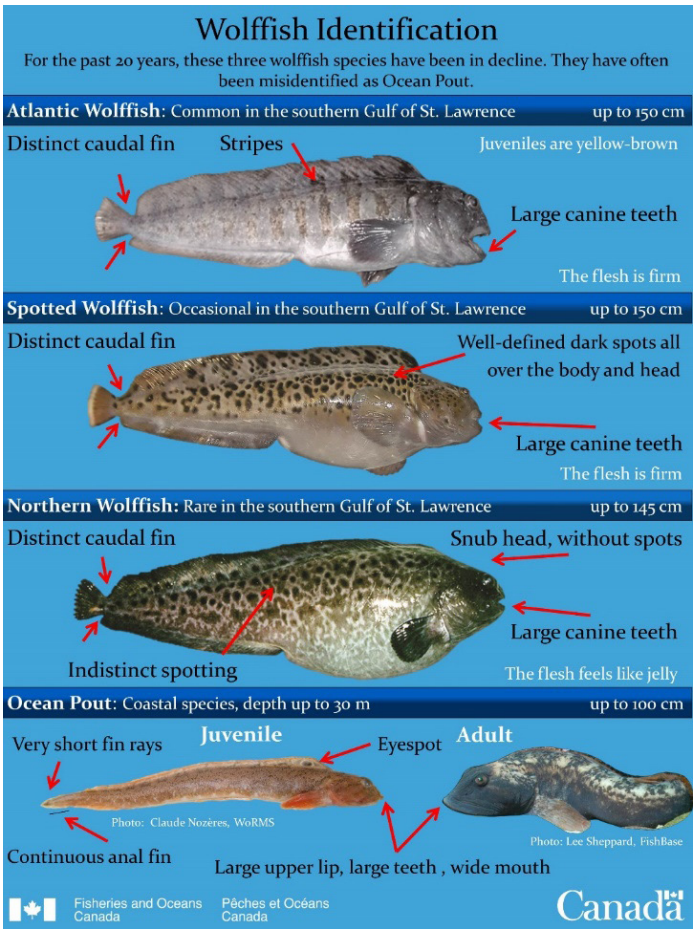
Success story: Work to restore the Westslope Cutthroat Trout – A "hands-on" education experience at Ripley's Aquarium

To help convey important conservation messages about invasive species and habitat and population restoration, Banff National Park developed an outreach program for delivery at Ripley's Aquarium in Toronto based on the work Parks Canada is doing to restore genetically pure Westslope Cutthroat Trout to its native habitat in the park.

The program is a simple tabletop activity kit that includes a Westslope Cutthroat Trout Fish replica, a fish identification game, and a fish-tagging activity. It uses a fun, hands-on approach that allows participants to replicate the work being done by Parks Canada biologists with similar tools (ID tags, taggers, and mock fin clippers) and resources (mock DNA results, photo ID challenge) to restore this threatened species. Program participants are able to experience and learn the science aspects of the recovery project, increasing their comprehension of what is being done, how Parks Canada is doing the work to support the recovery of the Westslope Cutthroat Trout species, and most importantly why we do this work.

Case study:
Wolffish Identification Poster

In the Gulf of St. Lawrence region, DFO conducted an educational campaign with the fishing industry to help the fishers with the identification of the three Wolffish species (Northern Wolffish and Spotted Wolffish, both listed as threatened; and Atlantic Wolffish listed as special concern). An identification poster was presented to harvesters in all fisheries advisory committee meetings in 2018 and copies were distributed electronically and in a printed version throughout the fishing community. The objective was to clarify the differences among these three species and other fish species that could cause confusion and to improve the collection of information captured in the SARA logbooks.



Case study:
Freshwater Mussel Workshop

DFO, in collaboration with the New Brunswick Museum, conducted a freshwater mussel 2-day workshop in Eel Ground for several Indigenous communities in New Brunswick. The workshop, which focused on the SARA-listed Brook Floater and Yellow Lampmussel, provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about the species and their important role in freshwater ecosystems.

Freshwater mussel workshop
Photo: DFO

4.6 Species at risk population trends

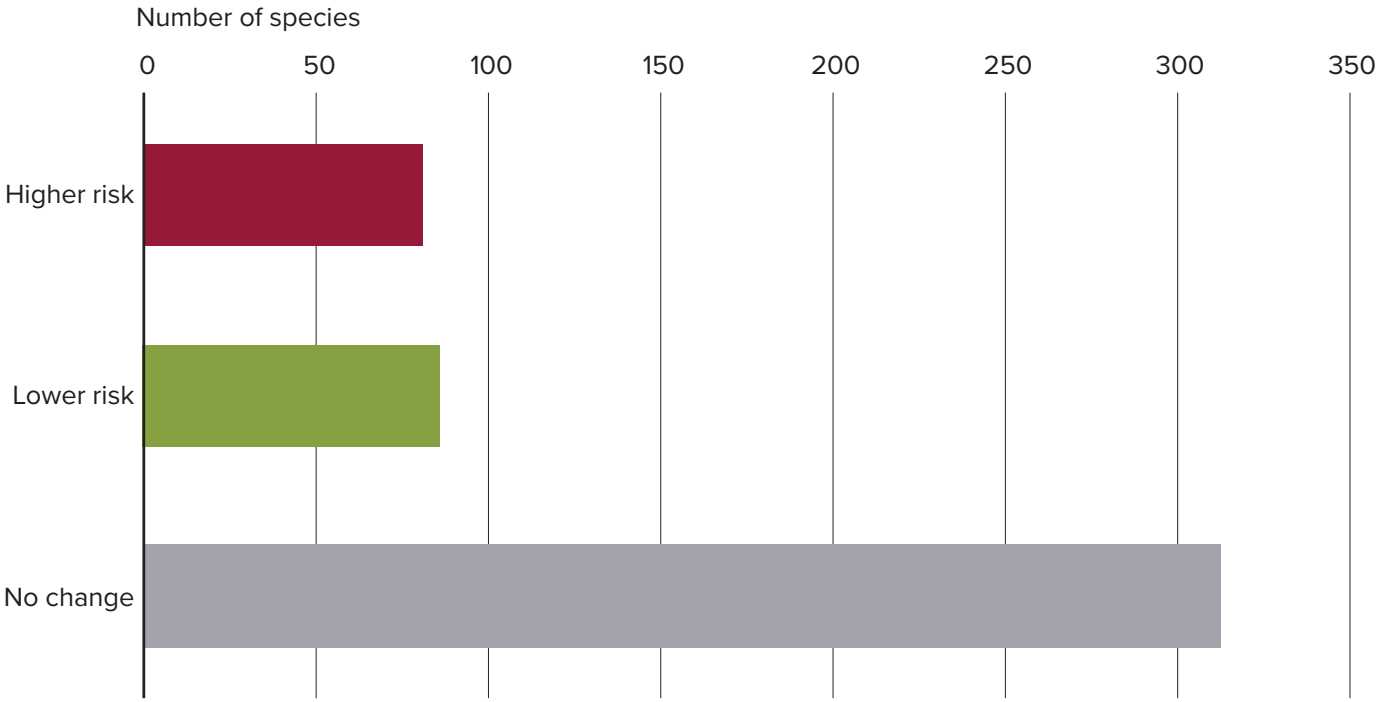
For many wildlife species at risk, population objectives are set out in a recovery strategy or management plan and are periodically reassessed. By looking at population trends and changes in the status category of at risk species, it can provide a preliminary assessment of whether recovery efforts are working, recognizing that recovery may take many years. The following summary is taken from the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators (CESI) program and current results are available on the Environmental indicators website.

4.6.1 Changes in wildlife species status indicator

Identifying wildlife species at risk is the first step towards protecting these species. Wildlife species previously designated as being at risk are reassessed, usually after 10 years, to determine if there is a change in status. The Changes in the status of wildlife species at risk indicator reports on changes in wildlife species designations for wildlife species assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

As of April 2018, of the 479 wildlife species that have been reassessed and for which sufficient data are available to determine if there has been a change in status: 312 (65%) show no change in status, 86 (18%) are in a lower risk category and 81 (17%) are in a higher risk category (Figure 5). Of the 15 wildlife species ranked as endangered (a wildlife species facing imminent extirpation or extinction) in the previous assessment that were recently reassessed (November 2017 and April 2018), the majority (12 wildlife species or 80%) remained in the endangered status category and the remaining 3 wildlife species changed to a lower risk category and were no longer categorized as endangered. In addition, 4 wildlife species that were from a lower-risk category in the previous assessment were designated endangered in the reassessment.

Figure 5. Changes in status of wildlife species at risk from Canada, April 2018



Note: In this analysis, wildlife species refers to a species, subspecies or a genetically or geographically distinct population. Wildlife species disappearance may refer to extinction or extirpation (an extirpated species no longer occurs in the wild in Canada).

Source: Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, April 2018

5. PERMITS

The competent minister may enter into an agreement or issue a permit under section 73 of SARA for the following activities:

- scientific research related to the conservation of a listed species, conducted by qualified persons
- activities that benefit a listed species or enhance its chance of survival in the wild
- activities that incidentally affect a listed species

Under section 74, the Act states that an agreement, permit, licence, order or other similar document authorizing a person or organization to engage in an activity affecting a species at risk authorized by the competent minister under another Act of Parliament can have the same effect as an agreement or permit under section 73 of SARA if certain conditions are met, such as meeting the purposes and pre-conditions. These permits are considered, "SARA-compliant". SARA compliant permits are issued under other federal Acts of Parliament, such as the *Fisheries Act*, the *Canada National Parks Act*, the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and the *Canada Wildlife Act* and can have the same effect as a SARA permit.

Table 7 shows the quantity of permits, agreements and licences issued or enabled under SARA in 2018.

Table 7. Permits, agreements and licences issued or enabled under SARA in 2018

Competent department	SARA permits and agreements (Under s.73 of the Act)	Licences and other documents that act as SARA permits (Enabled under s.74 of the Act)	Grand total
Environment and Climate Change Canada	53	360	413
Parks Canada	25	8	33
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	153	1,361	1,514
Total	**231**	**1,729**	**1,960**

ECCC, PCA and DFO jointly issued a total of 1,960 SARA permits and SARA compliant permits in 2018.

ECCC issued 53 SARA section 73 permits to allow for activities affecting over 30 species, including reptiles, amphibians, birds, vascular plants, arthropods, molluscs and mammals. Seven permits were issued for activities carried out in the area affected by an emergency protection order. Of the 53 permits issued:

- 11 were for scientific research related to the conservation of a species
- 4 were for activities benefiting a species or required to enhance its chance of survival in the wild
- 32 were for activities incidentally affecting a species
- 6 were for more than one of these three purposes

ECCC also issued 360 SARA compliant permits affecting, or with the potential to affect, threatened and endangered migratory bird species under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and the *Canada Wildlife Act*. Details regarding delivery of permits against ECCC service standards are available online.

PCA issued a total of 33 permits, some of which were SARA compliant permits issued under the *Canada National Parks Act*. Of the 33 permits issued:

- 15 permits, covering at least 11 listed species, were issued to academic and government researchers as well as PCA scientists, for conservation research affecting species at risk (e.g. inventory, population monitoring, habitat use and restoration, and conservation genetics)
- 2 permits were issued for an activity necessary or beneficial to two species
- 16 permits were issued for activities that may incidentally affect at least 12 listed species

PCA maintains an online research permitting system to enhance services to researchers, and to ensure that the agency is informed of research being conducted in the protected heritage places networks. The system incorporates a mandatory peer-review mechanism that ensures that SARA requirements are considered for every research activity.

DFO issued a total of 196 permits, licences and authorizations in 2018: 153 SARA permits, 30 fishing licences for experimental, scientific, and educational purposes under section 52 of the *Fishery (General) Regulations*, 2 authorizations under section 38 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, and 11 authorizations under paragraph 35(2)(b) of the *Fisheries Act* that are SARA compliant permits. Of the 196 permits, licences and authorizations described above:

- 62 were for scientific research related to the conservation of an aquatic species
- 30 were for other activities that benefit the species or enhance its chance of survival in the wild (e.g. monitoring surveys or marine mammal rescue)
- 104 were for activities that incidentally affected the listed species (e.g. accidental capture while undertaking research on other non-listed species or fish or mussel relocation during construction activities)

In addition, 1,318 commercial fishing licences were issued containing provisions permitting incidental bycatch of White Sharks and Loggerhead Sea Turtles.

DFO also held a peer-review meeting regarding science advice to support the Jeopardy Assessment Framework for Permitting under the *Species at Risk Act*. That peer-review meeting aimed at assessing components of a proposed framework that builds upon and complements the Department's existing approaches to assess allowable harm in order to assist the Department in making scientifically defensible decisions about the impacts of an activity to a listed aquatic species. The framework would support the development of future Recovery Potential Assessments.

Explanations for all SARA permits issued by ECCC, PCA and DFO are posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry.

Success story: Blanding's Turtle permit inspection

To confirm compliance with conditions on an ECCC issued SARA permit for Blanding's Turtle, a Wildlife Officer conducted a site inspection in July at a Chalk River research laboratory facility. The officer accompanied the facility's environmental specialist and two of their co-op students to conduct a routine check of the turtle traps.

As part of the facility's program to monitor all species found on their property for conservation purposes, they were issued a SARA permit to allow them to capture, mark and release Blanding's Turtles to monitor their population. Some of the conditions on this permit are: the frequency of setting and checking traps; how to handle the turtles; how to record and log captures; and reporting requirements. The Wildlife Officer confirmed that the conditions of the permit were being met.

Photo: Meghan Murrant, © CNL

Case study: Action taken under SARA Section 73 Permit

In 2018, DFO's Species at Risk Program in Pacific Region provided a SARA Sec. 73 permit to the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC) Kootenay Trout Hatchery for activities promoting the recovery of White Sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*, Upper Columbia River Population). These activities build on nearly two decades of work conducted by the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (UCWSRI), which has involved limiting sources of mortality, rebuilding abundance through hatchery supplementation, and investigating the causes of, and solutions to, recruitment failure.

Under their SARA permit, the FFSBC Learn 2 Fish program provides a three-part program that meets learning outcomes from the BC Education Grade 5 curriculum.

1. **FFSBC staff visit schools to deliver comprehensive in-class presentations to grade 5 classes.**
2. **Staff provide teachers with an educational package containing dynamic hands-on activities for students.**
3. **The school visits the Kootenay Trout Hatchery to learn about the conservation of White Sturgeon and its habitat, and to view live juvenile sturgeon at the public hatchery display.**

In addition to these activities, FFSBC participates in annual juvenile release program events, at which school groups and members of the public are offered the opportunity to listen to presentations on White Sturgeon and assist in the release of juvenile individuals under the supervision of hatchery staff.

Supporting the delivery of educational programs contributes to awareness of species as risk such as White Sturgeon, in order to inspire children to steward these species and their habitat and promote species recovery into the future.

6. ENFORCEMENT

ECCC, PCA and DFO work jointly and in partnership with Indigenous, provincial, territorial and international authorities to protect SARA-listed species and their critical habitat.

In 2018, ECCC focused on two enforcement priorities:

- Canadian species at high risk for conservation loss and at high risk for non-compliance, such as illegal hunting or trade
- Habitats or protected areas at high risk for conservation loss and at high risk for non-compliance, such as destroying nests or polluting land

ECCC is responsible for recovery planning for 334 species out of 531 species under SARA (491 of which are protected by the prohibitions). Prohibitions, emergency protection orders and permit conditions are enforced throughout Canada in the case of migratory birds, and for terrestrial species on federal lands with, a special focus in ECCC's 146 protected areas (National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries).

ECCC operated with 57 front line Wildlife Enforcement Officers and 15 intelligence staff to ensure compliance with SARA, as well as related conservation statutes: the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* (MBCA), the *Canada Wildlife Act*, the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act* (WAPPRIITA) and the provisions of the *Antarctic Environmental Protection Act concerning wildlife*.

ECCC enforcement officers patrol National Wildlife Areas, Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and other lands to ensure compliance with SARA. The protection of these habitats, which include critical habitat identified in SARA recovery strategies, is important given that these habitats are deemed necessary for the conservation, recovery and survival of species.

Enforcement coastal patrols and multi-agency blitz operations target areas with a high level of human wildlife interaction in order to prevent and deter illegal activities disrupting the habitat of these species, as well as to educate and engage the public. This approach has proved to be largely successful in helping to protect SARA listed species while collaborating with other government organizations and local communities.

Success story: Joint coastal patrol & Plover blitz

After successful operations in the past, Wildlife Officers from the Maritimes District in New Brunswick once again collaborated with Provincial Conservation Officers from the Department of Justice and Public Safety (DJPS) and organized a coastal blitz during peak Piping Plover nesting season. Over the course of three days from July 24 to 27, officers used the 733 Zodiac patrol vessel with its state-of-the-art Garmin navigation system and GPS, sonar, and radar systems to locate violators along the Gulf of St. Lawrence where the majority of the endangered piping plovers nest.

Once violators were identified, officers utilized the land-based mapping systems on board the vessel along with GPS coordinates to guide the two patrol units stationed on land to intercept violators as they attempted to leave the beach. Using this state of the art technology allowed officers to capture video evidence of violators in remote locations, inaccessible to land based officers as they would have to either drive on the beach themselves or walk roughly five to ten kilometres. Through this joint initiative, $2,392.50 in fines (9 tickets) and 10 warnings were issued.

The Maritimes District will continue working with their partners in the future through joint operations promoting an increased enforcement presence on their beaches.

NB Joint Coastal Patrol along the Acadian Peninsula utilizing both water and land-based patrols
Photos: © ECCC

Recognizing that illegal activity involving the destruction of listed plant or animal specimens impedes its conservation, ECCC has focused its compliance and promotion activities on preventing crimes that harm species. While this report speaks to actions taken under SARA, ECCC relies on other laws to protect species at risk before the prohibitions in SARA apply. This involves proactive activities under other legislation but focused on species of special concern, which are not subject to SARA prohibitions. For example, patrols to verify compliance and provide deterrence and crime prevention in protected areas (i.e. Long Point) and critical habitats (i.e. Roseate Tern) where several SARA species are found, and inspecting and clearing regulated goods at border ports for Canadian SARA protected species found in trade (i.e. wild American Ginseng, Polar Bear, Spotted Turtle). So while this report captures the enforcement activities proper to SARA, it is not necessarily indicative of all work undertaken to protect species at risk.

Refresher courses on the Polar Bear 3-pronged approach for tracking Polar Bear hides were offered in Goose Bay, Labrador on March 15, 2018, and another one in Nain, Labrador in June 2018. This helped northern communities in Labrador to continue supporting compliance in harvest and trade of Polar Bears. Communities in Labrador and Nunavut used the Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT) to tag the harvested hides, and collect samples for DNA and stable isotope analyses (SIA), which were sent to laboratories. The implementation of this approach involved partnership with territorial and provincial jurisdictions, engagement with local stakeholders and communities, and training of jurisdictional conservation officers and ECCC wildlife enforcement officers.

ECCC conducted 208 inspections under SARA in 2018. About 90% of the inspections concerned Canadian species at high risk for conservation loss or at high risk for non-compliance and 10% were related to habitats or protected areas at high risk for conservation loss or at high risk for non-compliance. Inspections focused on enforcing the emergency protection order which came into force in July 2016 for the protection of the Western Chorus Frog in Quebec (Great Lakes/St. Lawrence – Canadian Shield population). Inspections also focused on Blanding's Turtle, Bank Swallow, American Ginseng as well as Piping Plovers and their critical habitat in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and Ontario regions.

As a result of these inspections, 21 violations of SARA were recorded. Several warnings and tickets, totalling almost $2,400, were issued to address non-compliance due to potential nest destruction of Bank Swallow and Piping Plovers. Four new investigation files were opened in 2018. In 2018, there were no prosecutions and no court convictions by ECCC under SARA.

DFO's enforcement actions for aquatic species at risk are carried out by fishery officers who have been trained and designated as enforcement officers under SARA and who incorporate SARA enforcement activities alongside their duties under the *Fisheries Act* and other federal statutes and regulations.

In 2018, the Department's fishery officers dedicated over 20,000 hours to patrols, inspections, investigations, court cases, public relations and other duties related to enforcing the prohibitions of SARA. The Department recorded a total of 117 investigations and spent over 2,500 hours on investigative work related to aquatic species at risk. The Department recorded a total of 41 SARA violations involving aquatic species at risk that resulted in fines, seizures, charges and warnings.

Training sessions were organized across the country to teach fishery officers how to assist trained experts in a support capacity during large marine mammal disentanglement response. DFO's capacity to respond to marine mammal occurrences involving species at risk significantly increased in the Pacific region in 2018, as 38 fishery officers were trained in Disentanglement Level 1 (satellite tagging) and another 73 were trained in Cetacean Live Stranding.

In August 2018, fishery officers acted in a supporting capacity to our external partner, the Campobello Whale Rescue Team, to aid in the successful disentanglement of a North Atlantic Right Whale. Officers from three different detachments, the Conservation and Protection aerial surveillance program, Canadian Coast Guard, and external partners were all involved in the search for, and disentanglement of the whale.

From April to September 2018, DFO undertook extensive aerial and vessel surveillance for Right Whales searching for whales and patrolling fisheries closures specific to North Atlantic Right Whale mitigation strategies.

Case study: Canada's first conviction under SARA for destruction of critical habitat

In April 2018, two individuals in Ontario dredged shoreline adjacent to their properties, unknowingly destroying critical habitat for the Spotted Gar, a freshwater fish species listed as threatened under the *Species at Risk Act* since 2003. This fish has a very limited range in Canada, where it is only known to inhabit three coastal wetlands in Lake Erie within Long Point Bay, Point Pelee National Park, and Rondeau Bay. It primarily lives in quiet, clear pools, and backwaters of creeks, rivers, and lakes, and its critical habitat is legally protected from destruction.

Spotted Gar
Photo: Getty Images

Following an investigation by fishery officers, the homeowners pled guilty in November 2018, resulting in the first SARA conviction for destroying critical habitat for an aquatic species in Canada. The couple was fined $7,000, the majority of which was directed to the Environment Damages Fund where it was allocated specifically for recovery activities to benefit the Spotted Gar.

PCA's Law Enforcement Branch is responsible for enforcing all legislation related to the Agency's mandate, including SARA, on all lands and waters administered by the Agency. In 2018, there were 82 operational park wardens dedicated to law enforcement activities in PCA protected heritage areas. PCA's SARA-related enforcement activities included targeted patrols and investigations of reported violations of the SARA prohibitions. Park wardens recorded a total of 47 law enforcement incidents related to the protection of species at risk in protected heritage areas. These incidents led park wardens to issue 1 warning under SARA as well as to lay 3 charges and to issue 29 warnings under other legislation.

Success story: Response to concerns of Bank Swallow nest disturbance

Education of the public and municipalities is an important part in helping to protect our wildlife resources and creating individuals who are respectful and knowledgeable of the wildlife legislation. In the spring months, wildlife officers receive numerous calls from the public in regard to the safety of migratory birds and their nests.

In May, Wildlife Officers in the Saskatoon office received an email from an individual who was concerned after seeing heavy equipment working near some Bank Swallow nests and the potential destruction of the nests near Duck Lake, SK. The nests were located near the road allowance on private land. Bank Swallows are a migratory insectivorous bird listed under the *Migratory Bird Convention Act, 1994* as well as listed as a threatened species under SARA.

Bank Swallow Nests in Sand Pit near Duck Lake, SK May 23, 2018
Photo: © ECCC

A wildlife officer visited the site and assessed the situation. There had been work done around the Bank Swallow nests, but the nests had not been destroyed and the birds were still using them. The wildlife officer was able to speak to the landowner, where the Bank Swallows were nesting, as well as the Rural Municipality of Duck Lake, who was conducting the work with the construction equipment on the road allowance. The wildlife officer was able to explain that they cannot be harmed or disturbed. The landowner indicated that the birds had been there for a few years and would not be harmed. The Rural Municipality also stated that they would not be working in the area.

Success story: Bank Swallow project 2018

Numerous actions were taken in Quebec in 2018 to protect bank swallows.

Fifteen field inspections were conducted in sand pits presenting a high risk of disturbance. During these visits, security perimeters were delineated by posting signs around colonies where extraction operations could potentially cause the destruction or disturbance of nests. Wildlife officers met with the owners and operators of these sites to inform them about the regulatory prohibitions. They also gave them information pamphlets to raise their awareness of the need to protect this species and help them develop alternative work methods.

Posting a sign in an active sand pit
Photo: P. Gagnon @ ECCC

On June 5, two officers accompanied ECCC biologists to the Port of Quebec to assess the viability of an alternative nest site constructed by the Port Authority as part of a site development project. They agreed on recommendations that would be submitted to the Port Authority to ensure optimal nest occupancy and an acceptable level of nesting success at this new site.

ECCC collaborated with the Quebec Department of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change to establish procedures for the closure of a sand pit in the Trois-Rivières area that had reached the end of its useful life.

Follow-up of a court order was carried out with a company convicted of nest destruction offences committed in 2013. The officers confirmed the attainment of the objectives of the order.

Alternative nesting site at the Port of Quebec
Photo: P. Gagnon @ ECCC

Two complaints were handled in partnership with the wildlife protection division of the Quebec Department of Forests, Wildlife and Parks with respect to operations taking place near Bank Swallow colonies in remote regions. The provincial officers ensured compliance with the prohibition on conducting operations during the nesting season, in accordance with the approach applied by ECCC. The project ended in August 2018.

7. MONITORING

ECCC collects information on species at risk from its protected areas and through its migratory bird program. Federal funding programs administered by ECCC and, in some cases, co-managed by the department, DFO and PCA (including the Habitat Stewardship Program, the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk and the Interdepartmental Recovery Fund), also support monitoring activities. Information from these initiatives, along with information from partner organizations and researchers, allows the tracking of progress towards meeting recovery goals.

In 2018, ECCC continued to contribute data used to assess species at risk. For example, the following activities were undertaken in support of at risk migratory bird conservation in Quebec.

- employees participated in bird banding activities for Piping Plover in the Magdalen Islands
- employees and volunteers participated in ongoing Chimney Swift roost inventories at 45 sites
- activities to monitor the migration of Red Knot at the Mingan Archipelago research station
- undertook a search to locate Bank Swallow nesting sites in Southern Quebec

- confirmed the presence of Least Bittern in critical habitat areas and other potential habitat sites in the St-Lawrence Lowlands were surveyed
- automated acoustic recorders were used to detect the presence of Yellow Rails in habitat areas historically used by the species in Southwestern and Northwestern Quebec

DFO is actively involved in collecting information in support of aquatic species at risk recovery. For example, in 2018, DFO was involved in the planning, coordination and conduct of a large-scale, multi-region aerial monitoring program for North Atlantic Right Whales and other SARA listed species such as Blue Whale, Northern Bottlenose Whales, and Leatherback Sea Turtles in Atlantic Canada. The results of these activities were presented and peer-reviewed at the National Marine Mammal Peer Review Committee Meeting in Montreal. Other research activities led to the enhancement of acoustic capacity to improve acoustic detection of Killer Whales, Beluga, and Right Whales. Additionally, as a result of the first ever study of large whale movement using satellite tags, DFO tagged two Fin Whales and four Humpback Whales in Atlantic Canada. Any additional knowledge gained from monitoring activities will advance species recovery measures and hopefully lead to improvements to aquatic species at risk status over time.

In 2018, DFO hosted a Pre-COSEWIC peer-review meeting on Fin Whale to provide information on this species to COSEWIC. The Department also reviewed 26 COSEWIC status reports for aquatic wildlife species before they were finalized.

PCA protected heritage places monitor various ecosystem indicators and species at risk. In 2018, the progress of activities in PCA's final multi-species action plans was tracked in PCA's national ecological monitoring database system. The information obtained from monitoring activities and action plan targets is used to determine progress towards achieving both the population and distribution objectives and recovery measures, as outlined in the multi-species action plans.

In 2018, PCA continued to track the distribution of the species found within the lands and waters it administers. This information contributes to the COSEWIC status reports. PCA also reviewed 80 COSEWIC status reports in 2018 for both terrestrial and aquatic species that are found in the lands and waters it administers.

Success story:

Parks Warden collaboration efforts towards conservation of Caribou (Boreal Population) in Akami-Uapishkᵘ-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve

The newly established Akami-Uapishkᵘ-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve represents approximately 1/3 of the Mealy Mountain Caribou herd's home range; even though this woodland herd was protected in 2001, numbers are still declining. As one of the most accessible Caribou herds in Labrador, it is of great significance historically and culturally to communities in the region.

Following the recent establishment of a Park Warden detachment in Labrador, significant effort has gone into the creation of an inter-agency network, with a goal to better understand herd dynamics and the landscape, and to enable the timely exchange of intelligence around illegal harvesting. A formal information sharing agreement is now in place between Parks Canada, ECCC, and the provinces of Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec. Important relationships with Indigenous Guardians and Conservation Officers are also being developed and strengthened to support shared goals, understanding of concerns and community priorities, and to support recovery efforts, such as participation in the 2018 Herd Population Estimate. Three Indigenous Guardians and a Warden from Parks Canada worked collaboratively in the field, alongside specialists from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, to support this important work. With a vast, remote terrain and limited resources, co-operation is essential in ensuring the protection and recovery of the Mealy Mountain Woodland Caribou herd.

8. CONSULTATION AND GOVERNANCE

8.1 Engagement on SARA policies

ECCC published a suite of draft policies on SARA for public consultation, which ended on March 31, 2017. Following the public consultation period, engagement continued with groups such as the Species at Risk Advisory Committee (SARAC), First Nations Advisory Committee on Species at Risk (FNACSAR), various Indigenous groups and organizations, provinces and territories, and other interested parties. ECCC continues to consult with stakeholders on multiple policies, including:

- Policy on Critical Habitat Protection on Non-federal Lands
- Policy on Protecting Critical Habitat with Conservation Agreements under Section 11 of the *Species at Risk Act*
- Policy on Survival and Recovery
- *Species at Risk Act* Permitting Policy
- Policy Regarding the Identification of Anthropogenic Structures as Critical Habitat under the Federal *Species at Risk Act*
- Approach to the Identification of Critical Habitat under the *Species at Risk Act* when Habitat Loss and Degradation is not Believed to be a Significant Threat to the Survival or Recovery of the Species

8.2 Species at Risk Advisory Committee

The Species at Risk Advisory Committee (SARAC) is a multi-stakeholder advisory body established under section 9(1) of SARA. The Committee advises the Minister on the administration of the Act, but also engages with ECCC, DFO and PCA to offer advice. SARAC promotes and encourages the effective stewardship of Canada's biological diversity and provides advice on federal programs and activities related to species at risk, to achieve the purposes of SARA.

In 2016, the Minister appointed 28 members to the Committee from a balanced representation of non-governmental organizations from industry, business, academia, agriculture and environment, and also included Indigenous partners from the Assembly of First Nations, Métis National Council and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, in the absence of a current National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk.

SARAC met in Ottawa on May 30 and 31, 2018, to ensure alignment of their focus with federal partners on various current issues, including transformation to a multi-species, ecosystems-based approach to managing species at risk in Canada. Following that face-to-face meeting, SARAC and federal partners decided that the Committee had the opportunity to improve efficiencies and align their efforts with current federal priorities. Moving forward, the SARAC will be broken down into the following working groups (adjusted since their initial April 2016 priority working groups):

- Working group on places, species, sectors and threats
- Working group on the knowledge plan
- Working group on imminent threats
- Working group on survival and recovery policy
- Working group on conservation agreements
- Working group on Indigenous rights and species protection

During their May 2018 meeting, SARAC invited Dr. Tara Martin, Professor at the University of British Columbia to share her experience and research on prioritizing timely recovery action of endangered species that considers combining ecological data with socio-economic data to inform conservation decisions. Following this and other presentations from federal partners, SARAC held an open forum/plenary session with Parliamentary Secretary Jonathan Wilkinson (ECCC), offering the Committee the opportunity to exchange their perspectives with him on the recovery of species at risk in Canada, and discuss their respective experiences and views to date on the implementation of Act in the face of the transformation initiative (Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming SAR

Conservation in Canada). SARAC explored opportunities for working with partners that consider the shift to a multi-species, ecosystems-based approach, opportunities to re-engineer SAR programs focusing on a balance of fiscal planning and scoping; and how this Committee and the federal government can continue to find innovative solutions to recover species at risk. The Parliamentary Secretary stated his appreciation for the ideas and exchanges, and the need to continue a dialogue that offers progressive momentum and innovative approaches to recovery, noting the Act should not be the only tool used to improve species at risk outcomes, and that a cooperative approach between federal partners and committees will be a key component for progress.

Since May 2018, the SARAC working groups have each held multiple meetings, the results of which continue to be shared with the Department for consideration, sometimes through official recommendations and other times through continued progress at the working group level. The working group discussions offer additional perspectives to consider focus on incentive-based conservation agreements as effective stewardship tools; supporting policy/operational guidance for species survival and recovery, as well as imminent threat in an efficient, consistent, transparent and pan-departmental approach, consider opportunities to enhance existing platforms, data standards, and data sharing; explore ecosystem shifts in consideration of competition between ecological needs and economic feasibility; promote successful outcomes where action under SARA could impact Indigenous and treaty rights; and develop a plan to address all of the cross-cutting considerations, priorities and themes between different groups. The working groups continue to explore ways to improve the status of species at risk in Canada through improved SARA implementation.

In 2018, SARAC shared their recommendations via two letters to the Department, one to the Minister in May 2018, and another to the Parliamentary Secretary in September 2018, exploring among other things incentivizing the increased use of stewardship tools under sections 10 through 13 of SARA (e.g. conservation agreements), prioritizing spending on effective recovery measures with key partners in key places, including at the provincial/municipal level; accounting for the full value of protecting species at risk in Canada (e.g. socio-economic ad full-cost accounting); and improving access to species at risk data including traditional knowledge.

8.3 Indigenous groups and SARA

Provisions in SARA recognize that the role of Indigenous peoples in the conservation of wildlife is essential and that Indigenous peoples possess unique traditional knowledge concerning wildlife species. The National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR), composed of 6 representatives of Indigenous peoples of Canada, appointed by the Minister, was created under section 8.1 of SARA to advise the Minister on the administration of the Act and to provide advice and recommendations to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC).

Since the Council's re-establishment, they successfully engaged in a November 20-22, 2018 face-to-face meeting whereby, they began to develop a work plan to inform their priorities, and build on the recommendations provided by the previous Council in April 2016.

In 2018, NACOSAR progressed in initiating effective synergies with other SAR committees, including an invitation from SARAC encouraging collaboration, and confirmation from the COSEWIC's shared desire to re-establishing the engagement that existed historically with the Council. This collaboration with existing committees is expected to facilitate a clearer understanding of roles, and to strengthen efficiencies to achieve shared priorities and make impactful and strategic recommendations. Moving forward, NACOSAR has begun a detailed work plan to tackle the Council's immediate priority focuses; namely through exploring mechanisms that encourage Indigenous participation in recovery of species at risk (e.g. via development of a functional socio-economic analysis model that considers full cost accounting, inclusive of cultural, ceremonial value); promoting opportunities for engagement on the ground, and collaborating with other SAR-related bodies for improved outcomes for Indigenous peoples (e.g. COSEWIC Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge sub-committee to ensure dialogue on knowledge sharing and assessment process).

In 2017, ECCC co-developed with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) a new committee known as the First Nations Advisory Committee on Species at Risk (FNACSAR) under section 9 of the Act to engage First Nations in finding solutions to implementing the *Species at Risk Act* on federal reserve lands and other issues affecting First Nations peoples in Canada.

In 2018, FNACSAR met four times; January 24-25 in Ottawa, Ontario, March 21-22 in Dartmouth Nova Scotia, June 14-15 in Ottawa, and finally October 22-23 in Ottawa. In these meetings, FNACSAR considered departmental priorities as they aligned their work plan to address First Nations-specific SAR issues, considering how to take the national approach to a community-level. In their meetings over the course of the year, FNACSAR established three working groups to advance their goal of ensuring First Nations interests are addressed in their work plan, which considers priorities and concerns recognized and reflected by key SARA bodies. Those working groups are:

- Working group on socio-economic analysis
- Working group on caribou
- Working group on conservation agreements

FNACSAR also discussed the Committee's opportunity to capitalize on the Canada Nature Legacy, identifying ways in which FNACSAR can improve communications on First Nations' engagement, highlighting funding opportunities on the ground for First Nations communities, contributions to policy development that consider First Nation perspectives, and their roles in the transformation initiative that explores the multi-species, ecosystems based approach to SAR management in Canada.

In 2018, ECCC met with Indigenous organizations to discuss stewardship and expressed mutual interest in collaborating on species at risk conservation on federal reserve lands. Future collaboration could include focus on engagement capacity, strengthening the SARA consultation process, and further developing collaborative mechanisms for species at risk conservation on reserve lands.

8.4 Bilateral administrative agreements

The federal government has bilateral administrative agreements on species at risk with individual provinces and territories. The agreements set out shared objectives, as well as commitments for how governments will cooperate on species at risk initiatives. Agreements are in place with the governments of Quebec and Ontario. Agreements with the government of British Columbia and Saskatchewan are in the process of being renewed. Discussions are underway to renew a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the federal government and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board that covers the listing process for species at risk in Nunavut.

8.5 The National General Status Working Group

The National General Status Working Group (NGSWG) is composed of representatives from each province and territory, and the federal government. Members of the working group are responsible for completing the general status assessments of species in their jurisdictions, which the group then uses to produce the Wild Species – The General Status of Species in Canada reports required under section 128 of SARA. The working group is under a five-year schedule. In 2018 the working group issued several contracts which are ongoing. In the current schedule cycle the working group is assessing 46 taxonomic groups. ECCC is co-chair and coordinator of the NGSWG, and the other co-chair in 2018 was the Government of Northwest Territories.

8.6 Species at Risk Public Registry

The online Species at Risk Public Registry fulfills the requirement under SARA for the Minister to establish a public registry to facilitate access to SARA-related documents. The Registry is an important tool for engaging and informing Canadians on species at risk issues. In addition to providing access to documents and information related to SARA, it provides a forum for Canadians to submit comments on SARA-related documents being developed by the Government of Canada.

Section 123 of SARA identifies documents that must be published on the Registry, including:

- regulations and orders made under the Act
- agreements entered into under section 10 of the Act
- COSEWIC's criteria for the classification of wildlife species

- status reports on wildlife species that COSEWIC has prepared or has received with an application
- the List of Wildlife Species at Risk
- codes of practice, national standards or guidelines established under the Act
- agreements and reports filed under section 111 or subsection 113(2) of the Act, or notices that these have been filed in court and are available to the public
- all reports made under sections 126 and 128 of the Act

Other documents prepared in response to the requirements of SARA include recovery strategies, action plans, management plans and reports on the progress of recovery strategy implementation.

In 2018, 520 documents were published on the registry. These documents include SARA and COSEWIC annual reports, consultation documents, COSEWIC status reports and status appraisal summaries, ministerial response statements, permit explanations and recovery documents. In addition, Canada and Saskatchewan released a proposed agreement to undertake conservation measures towards achieving short, medium, and long-term population and habitat objectives for the Woodland Caribou (Boreal population) in Saskatchewan.

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To obtain further information or publications and to submit questions or comments concerning species at risk programs and activities, please contact any of the following departments:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Inquiries Centre
7th Floor, Fontaine Building
200 Sacré-Cœur Boulevard
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3
Telephone: 819-938-3860
Toll Free: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only)
Email: ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Communications Branch
3rd Floor, 200 Kent Street
Station 13228
Ottawa ON K1A OE6
Telephone: 613-993-0999
Fax: 613-990-1866
Email: info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Parks Canada
National Office
30 Victoria Street
Gatineau QC J8X 0B3
Telephone: 888-773-8888
TTY: 866-787-6221
Email: pc.information.pc@canada.ca

For more information on the Species at Risk Public Registry, and to submit questions or comments on the Public Registry, please contact:

SARA Public Registry Office
20th Floor, 351 St. Joseph Boulevard,
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3
Email: ec.registrelep-sararegistry.ec@canada.ca