

COSEWIC
Status Appraisal Summary

on the

Grey Whale
Eschrichtius robustus

Atlantic population

in Canada

EXTIRPATED
2009

COSEWIC
Committee on the Status
of Endangered Wildlife
in Canada



COSEPAC
Comité sur la situation
des espèces en péril
au Canada

COSEWIC status appraisal summaries are working documents used in assigning the status of wildlife species suspected of being at risk in Canada. This document may be cited as follows:

COSEWIC. 2009. COSEWIC status appraisal summary on the Grey Whale *Eschrichtius robustus* (Atlantic population) in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa. viii pp. (www.sararegistry.gc.ca/status/status_e.cfm).

Production note:

This status appraisal summary constitutes a review of classification of the Grey Whale *Eschrichtius robustus* (Atlantic population) in Canada which was last assessed by COSEWIC in 2000. The 2000 COSEWIC Status Report on the Grey Whale *Eschrichtius robustus* in Canada is posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry at this link: http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=129

COSEWIC would like to acknowledge the COSEWIC Marine Mammals Specialist Subcommittee for writing the status appraisal summary on the Grey Whale *Eschrichtius robustus* (Atlantic population) in Canada. This status appraisal summary was overseen and edited by Randall Reeves, Co-chair of the Marine Mammals Specialist Subcommittee.

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Également disponible en français sous le titre Sommaire du statut de l'espèce du COSEPAC sur la baleine grise (*Eschrichtius robustus*) (population de l'Atlantique) au Canada.

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COSEWIC Assessment Summary

Assessment Summary – April 2009

Common name

Grey Whale - Atlantic population

Scientific name

Eschrichtius robustus

Status

Extirpated

Reason for designation

** A reason for designation is not specified when a review of classification is conducted by means of a status appraisal summary.*

Occurrence

Atlantic Ocean

Status history

Extirpated before the end of the 1800s. Designated Extirpated in April 1987. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2000 and November 2009.

Range:

Change in Extent of Occurrence (EO): yes no
Change in Area of Occupancy (AO) : yes no
Change in number of known or inferred current locations: yes no
Significant new survey information: yes no
 Explanation:

The range of the extirpated Atlantic Grey Whale has not changed. What is known about its distribution is based primarily on sub-fossil specimens and historical records from the 16th and 17th centuries. The Grey Whale was once present along the east coast of North America, in the Baltic and North Seas, around Iceland and in the English Channel. Grey whales likely occurred in Canadian coastal waters including the Scotian Shelf, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Grand Banks and possibly Hudson Bay. Canadian waters were likely a fairly small proportion of the species' total range in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Population Information:

Change in number of mature individuals: yes no
Change in total population trend: yes no
Change in severity of population fragmentation: yes no
Change in trend in area/or quality of habitat: yes no
Significant new survey information: yes no
 Explanation:

Explanation:

No new population information about the extirpated Atlantic Grey Whale has become available since the last assessment. The original size of the population(s) remains unknown.

Threats:

Change in nature and/or severity of threats: yes no

Explanation:

There has been no change in threats to the extirpated Atlantic Grey Whale since the last assessment.

Protection:

Change in effective protection: yes no

Explanation:

There has been no change in protection for the Extirpated Atlantic Grey Whale since the last assessment.

Rescue Effect:

Evidence of rescue effect: yes no

Explanation:

There is no immediate prospect of a rescue effect from the Pacific Grey Whale population, the range of which includes coastal waters of the NE Pacific Ocean and the eastern Beaufort Sea.

Quantitative Analysis:

Change in estimated probability of extirpation:

yes no

Details:

No quantitative analysis available.

Summary and Additional Considerations:**Consultations**

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Sources of information:

COSEWIC 2004. COSEWIC assessment and update status report on the grey whale
(Eastern North Pacific population) *Eschrichtius robustus* in Canada. Committee on
the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa. Vii + 31 pp
(www.sararegistry.gc.ca/status/status_e.cfm)

Reeves, R.R. and E. Mitchell (1987) COSEWIC Status report on the Grey Whale
Eschrichtius robustus in Canada (35 pp).

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Subcommittee. October, 2008.



COSEWIC HISTORY

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) was created in 1977 as a result of a recommendation at the Federal-Provincial Wildlife Conference held in 1976. It arose from the need for a single, official, scientifically sound, national listing of wildlife species at risk. In 1978, COSEWIC designated its first species and produced its first list of Canadian species at risk. Species designated at meetings of the full committee are added to the list. On June 5, 2003, the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) was proclaimed. SARA establishes COSEWIC as an advisory body ensuring that species will continue to be assessed under a rigorous and independent scientific process.

COSEWIC MANDATE

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) assesses the national status of wild species, subspecies, varieties, or other designatable units that are considered to be at risk in Canada. Designations are made on native species for the following taxonomic groups: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, arthropods, molluscs, vascular plants, mosses, and lichens.

COSEWIC MEMBERSHIP

COSEWIC comprises members from each provincial and territorial government wildlife agency, four federal entities (Canadian Wildlife Service, Parks Canada Agency, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Federal Biodiversity Information Partnership, chaired by the Canadian Museum of Nature), three non-government science members and the co-chairs of the species specialist subcommittees and the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge subcommittee. The Committee meets to consider status reports on candidate species.

DEFINITIONS (2010)

Wildlife Species	A species, subspecies, variety, or geographically or genetically distinct population of animal, plant or other organism, other than a bacterium or virus, that is wild by nature and is either native to Canada or has extended its range into Canada without human intervention and has been present in Canada for at least 50 years.
Extinct (X)	A wildlife species that no longer exists.
Extirpated (XT)	A wildlife species no longer existing in the wild in Canada, but occurring elsewhere.
Endangered (E)	A wildlife species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.
Threatened (T)	A wildlife species likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.
Special Concern (SC)*	A wildlife species that may become a threatened or an endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.
Not at Risk (NAR)**	A wildlife species that has been evaluated and found to be not at risk of extinction given the current circumstances.
Data Deficient (DD)***	A category that applies when the available information is insufficient (a) to resolve a species' eligibility for assessment or (b) to permit an assessment of the species' risk of extinction.

* Formerly described as "Vulnerable" from 1990 to 1999, or "Rare" prior to 1990.

** Formerly described as "Not In Any Category", or "No Designation Required."

*** Formerly described as "Indeterminate" from 1994 to 1999 or "ISIBD" (insufficient scientific information on which to base a designation) prior to 1994. Definition of the (DD) category revised in 2006.



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