



# Data Sources and Methods for the Habitat Secured for Species at Risk Indicator

December 2011

Cat.#: En4-144/28-2011E-PDF

ISBN: 978-1-100-19730-2

# 1 Introduction

The Habitat Secured for Species at Risk indicator is a part of the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators (CESI) program, which provides data and information to track Canada's performance on key environmental sustainability issues.

## 2 Description and rationale of the habitat secured for species at risk indicator

CESI reports the amount of Canadian habitat that has been secured through the Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) for Species at Risk for the benefit of species assessed to be "at risk" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as a measure of Canada's efforts to protect these species. While CESI reports only the number of hectares of habitat permanently protected through legally binding agreements, the HSP also supports other habitat protection measures through the direct actions of landowners, land managers, and conservation agencies. It is important to note that the HSP is not the only program that secures habitat for species at risk. There are a number of federal, provincial and non-governmental organizations and initiatives that secure such habitat.

The HSP is a co-operative funding program with an interdepartmental governance structure. The program is administered by Environment Canada and managed in cooperation with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Parks Canada Agency. Activities, including securement, that respond to regional priorities are coordinated by five regional implementation boards in each of the: Pacific and Yukon, Prairie and Northern, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic regions. The boards are composed of representatives of the lead departments, representatives of the provinces and territories, and relevant conservation and stakeholder interests. Projects are implemented at the local or regional level by a diverse range of people and organizations including Aboriginal organizations, landowners, resource users, nature trusts, provinces and territories, the natural resource sector, community-based wildlife societies, educational institutions, and conservation organizations. Priority is given to projects addressing species listed as endangered or threatened under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*.

While focused on habitat protection and conservation to support the survival and recovery of species at risk, the HSP recognizes other benefits of maintaining natural ecosystems. The program favours a landscape-based multi-species approach, recognizing that conservation activities benefit not only species at risk, but also create healthy ecosystems, promote biodiversity, and preserve Canada's natural heritage. The HSP also supports public awareness and capacity-building activities to educate Canadians about land and resource use practices that maintain or enhance habitat for species at risk, with the goal of developing self-sustaining community-based stewardship programs.<sup>1</sup>

Proposals for HSP funding are developed by interested groups in collaboration with program coordinators in each of the five Environment Canada administrative regions. Funding decisions are approved by the species at risk Assistant Deputy Minister Committee based on national and regional program priorities. The HSP aims to achieve a minimum 1:1 leveraging on all funds invested, with project recipients responsible for raising at least \$1 in financial or in-kind resources for every \$1 of HSP funding.

---

<sup>1</sup> Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk (2005) Annual Report 2004-2005: Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk. Retrieved on 12 May, 2011. Available from: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/Publications/default.asp?lang=En&xml=3F8BF9E4-9B49-46F8-B164-D1685562A6E7>

### 3 Data

Environment Canada uses the HSP tracking system to follow projects throughout their lifecycles, from the proposal stage through approvals and results. The number of hectares of habitat protected under the program is determined annually based on final reports submitted for each project. Program results are published in the HSP's annual reports. (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih/default.asp?lang=En&n=0C18DD9B-1>)

### 4 Method

The indicator is the sum of the species at risk habitat area (hectares) secured through legally binding protection measures with the financial assistance of the HSP. Under the HSP, habitat for species at risk is protected through a variety of activities. Examples of securement include land purchases, donations, and long-term agreements such as conservation easements. For each year, the cumulative habitat secured through legally binding protection measures is calculated by adding newly secured hectares to existing securements.

### 5 Caveats and limitations

- While the goal of the HSP is to support the conservation and recovery of species at risk, this indicator is simply a measure of the quantity of habitat secured, not a measure of the success of species conservation or recovery, or of the quality of habitat secured. For further information on the status of species at risk in Canada, see the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. (<http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/>)
- Although voluntary conservation agreements with landowners contribute to habitat conservation and protection under the HSP, this indicator measures only habitat that has been secured through legally binding mechanisms. This ensures that habitat included in the indicator is secured in the long term.
- Some areas secured under the HSP may, with time, be formally recognized by a reporting jurisdiction as a "protected area" under the IUCN definition as applied in Canada. These areas might include, for example, lands secured by purchase or donation. Further details are available in the Protected Areas Data Sources and Methods. (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=En&n=19682AE6>)

### 6 References and further reading

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (2011) Retrieved on 19 September, 2011. Available from: <http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/>

Environment Canada (2011) Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk. Retrieved on 12 May, 2011. Available from: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih/default.asp?lang=En>

Environment Canada (2011) Habitat Stewardship Program - Annual Reports. Retrieved on 12 May, 2011. Available from: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih/default.asp?lang=En&n=0C18DD9B-1>

Department of Justice Canada (2011) Species at Risk Act. Retrieved on 13 December, 2011. Available from: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/S-15.3/page-1.html>

Species at Risk Public Registry (2011). Retrieved on 13 December, 2011. Available from: [http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/default\\_e.cfm](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/default_e.cfm)