

Species at Risk Act Policy Principles

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The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) is intended to prevent the extinction or extirpation of wildlife species, provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered or threatened as a result of human activity, and manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened. Reflecting these purposes, Environment and Climate Change Canada is developing a suite of SARA policies to support its implementation of the Act and its provisions. The suite of policies is being shaped by the following guiding principles:

PRINCIPLE 1 – Effectiveness: The policies are designed to help ensure that the Act's objectives are achieved.

PRINCIPLE 2 – Transparency: The policies help to provide transparency on key aspects of SARA implementation in order to reinforce credibility and predictability and to engender public trust.

PRINCIPLE 3 – Respect the complementary roles of jurisdictions: Recognizing that responsibility for the conservation of wildlife in Canada is shared among the governments and Wildlife Management Boards in this country and that species conservation initiatives will be met through complementary legislation, regulations, policies, and programs introduced and implemented by federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal governments, the policies strive to encourage coordination and cooperation among jurisdictions involved with species at risk, and greater national coherence and consistency in policies and procedures.

PRINCIPLE 4 – Foster on the ground stewardship: The policies recognize the essential role that all Canadians have to play in the conservation of wildlife in this country, and will encourage individual Canadians, communities, organizations (including aboriginal communities and organizations), corporate entities and other stakeholders to carry out conservation activities.

PRINCIPLE 5 – Act in collaboration: The policies will support and enable the work of those best placed to act. Opportunities for engagement and collaboration with responsible jurisdictions and interested parties will be proactively pursued.

PRINCIPLE 6 – Evidence-based approaches: The policies emphasize sound approaches that are supported by credible scientific and technical data, aboriginal traditional knowledge and community knowledge and use of precaution where evidence is incomplete.

PRINCIPLE 7 – Take a precautionary approach: The policies will take a precautionary approach - if there are threats of serious or irreversible damage to a wildlife species, cost-effective measures to prevent the reduction or loss of the species should not be postponed for a lack of full scientific certainty.

PRINCIPLE 8 – Embrace adaptability: The policy processes will be reviewed and performance will be measured to determine whether the policies are achieving their intended environmental outcomes. Public comments on the policies will be invited and welcomed when they are posted and as experience is gained with their implementation.