COSEWIC Annual Report

presented to

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change

and

The Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC)

from

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)

2018-2019

COSEWIC

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada



COSEPAC

Comité sur la situation des espèces en péril au Canada

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ITEM I - COSEWIC ACTIVITIES

1. Wildlife Species Assessment Meetings

Section 15 (1) of the *Species at Risk Act* states: "The functions of COSEWIC are to (a) assess the status of each wildlife species considered by COSEWIC to be at risk and, as part of the assessment, identify existing and potential threats to the species and

- (i) classify the species as extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened or of special concern,
- (ii) indicate that COSEWIC does not have sufficient information to classify the species, or
- (iii) indicate that the species is not currently at risk".

Under Canada's *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), the foremost function of COSEWIC is to "assess the status of each wildlife species considered by COSEWIC to be at risk and, as part of the assessment, identify existing and potential threats to the wildlife species".

COSEWIC held two Wildlife Species Assessment Meetings in this reporting year (September 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019) from November 25 to 30, 2018 and from April 28 to May 3, 2019. During this reporting period, COSEWIC assessed the status or reviewed the classification of 56 wildlife species.

The wildlife species assessment results for the 2018-2019 reporting period include the following:

Extinct: 0

Extirpated: 5

Endangered: 24

Threatened: 11

Special Concern: 12

Data Deficient: 2

Not at Risk: 2

Total: 56

Of the 56 wildlife species examined, COSEWIC reviewed the classification of 25 that had been previously assessed. The review of classification for 15 of those wildlife species resulted in a confirmation of the same risk status as the previous assessment (see Table 1a).

Table 1a. Confirmation of status for wildlife species previously assessed:

ENDANGERED	THREATENED	SPECIAL CONCERN
Brook Spike-primrose	Wood Turtle	Fin Whale (Atlantic population)
Nooksack Dace		,
Rapids Clubtail		Pale Yellow Dune Moth
Paddlefish Vancouver Island Marmot Pygmy Short- horned Lizard		Polar Bear
		Pygmy Snaketail
		Sowerby's Beaked Whale
	Brook Spike-primrose Nooksack Dace Rapids Clubtail	Brook Spike-primrose Wood Turtle Nooksack Dace Rapids Clubtail

Data Deficient and Not at Risk:

In November 2018, COSEWIC assessed two wildlife species that were not assigned into a risk category and were newly assessed as Data Deficient: Chinook Salmon (Southern Mainland, Ocean, Summer population) and Chinook Salmon (Southern Mainland, Stream, Summer population). Additionally, two wildlife species were not assigned into a risk category and were assessed as Not at Risk: Chinook Salmon (South Thompson, Ocean, Summer population) was newly assessed as Not at Risk and Roughhead Grenadier was re-assessed as Not at Risk.

With the transmission of this report, COSEWIC provides assessments (see Table 1b) of 37 wildlife species newly classified as Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened, and of Special Concern to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to consider whether to recommend to the Governor in Council (GIC) that they be added to Schedule 1 of SARA.

Table 1b. Newly classified wildlife species for consideration of listing on Schedule 1 of SARA:

EXTIRPATED	ENDANGERED	THREATENED	SPECIAL CONCERN
	Carey's Small Limestone	Black Ash	American Bumble Bee
	Moss Chinook Salmon (East Vancouver Island, Stream,	Chinook Salmon (Lower Fraser, Ocean, Fall population)	Chinook Salmon (Lower Fraser, Stream, Spring population)
		Fraser, Ocean, Fall	Fraser, Stream, Spring

Information pertaining to the wildlife species assessed since the last annual report can be found on the SARA Public Registry website at the following address:

https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/sar/index/default e.cfm

For a copy of the assessment details for these wildlife species, including status assigned, reasons for designation (including uncertainties if applicable) and COSEWIC criteria with alphanumeric codes contact the COSEWIC Secretariat: ec.cosepaccosewic.ec@canada.ca.

Status reports containing information on COSEWIC's status assessments will be available on the SARA Public Registry at the following address:

https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/sar/assessment/status e.cfm

As of April 2019, COSEWIC's assessments include 799 wildlife species in various risk categories, including 356 Endangered, 189 Threatened, 232 Special Concern, and 22 Extirpated (i.e. no longer found in the wild in Canada). In addition, 18 wildlife species have been assessed as Extinct.

As of April 2019, 59 wildlife species have been designated as Data Deficient and 199 have been assessed and assigned Not at Risk status.

2. Important Notes Regarding Status Assessments

Section 27 of SARA states that the Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the Minister, by order amend the List in accordance with subsections (1.1) and (1.2) by adding a wildlife species, by reclassifying a listed wildlife species or by removing a listed wildlife species, and the Minister may, by order, amend the List in a similar fashion in accordance with subsection (3).

During the period covered in this report COSEWIC did not inform the Minister about any details related to status assessments.

3. Other Wildlife Species Assessment Activities

Emergency Assessments

Section 29 of SARA provides for the listing of a wildlife species based on an imminent threat to the survival of the wildlife species under an emergency basis. Section 30 (1) of SARA states that COSEWIC is to prepare a status report on the wildlife species and, within one year after the making of the order, COSEWIC must, in a report in writing to the Minister, (a) confirm the classification of the wildlife species; (b) recommend to the Minister that the species be reclassified; or (c) recommend to the Minister that the wildlife species be removed from the List.

No emergency assessments were conducted during the 2018-2019 reporting period.

4. Wildlife Species Assessments returned by the Governor in Council (GIC) to COSEWIC for further information or consideration

Section 27 (1.1) (c) of SARA provides for the Governor in Council to, on the recommendation of the Minister, refer an assessment of the status of a wildlife species back to COSEWIC for further information or consideration.

No wildlife species assessments were returned by the GIC during the 2018-2019 reporting period.

5. Wildlife Species Selected for Status Report Preparation

Section 15.1 (b) of SARA states that one of the functions of COSEWIC is to "determine when species are to be assessed, with priority given to those more likely to become extinct".

Following COSEWIC's process for prioritizing new wildlife species for assessment, 21 wildlife species from COSEWIC's Species Specialist Subcommittees' candidate lists were chosen by the Committee for status report commissioning in 2019. The following is a list of those prioritized candidate wildlife species:

Taxonomic Group	Common Name / Population name	Scientific Name
1. Amphibians & Reptiles	Canadian Toad	Anaxyrus hemiophrys
2. Arthropods	Sable Island Cutworm Moth*	Agrotis arenarius
3. Arthropods	Sable Island Leaf Beetle*	Tricholochmaea sablensis
4. Arthropods	Sable Island Eucosma*	Eucosma sableana
5. Arthropods	Large-lipped Sand Beetle*	Omphpron labiatum
6. Arthropods	Sable Island Borer*	Papaipema sp.
7. Arthropods	White-marked Tussock Moth, sablensis subspecies*	Orygia leucostigma sablensis
8. Arthropods	A darkling beetle*	Ephalus latimanus
9. Arthropods	Hoary Edge	Achalarus lyciades
10. Arthropods	Valley Grasshopper**	Oedaleonotus enigma
11. Arthropods	White-winged Grasshopper**	Dissosteira spurcata
12. Birds	Gray-cheeked Thrush minimus subspecies	Catharus minimus minimus
13. Marine Fishes	Atlantic Mackerel	Scomber scombrus
14. Marine Fishes	Greenland Shark	Somniosus microcephalus
15. Molluscs	Bronze Pinecone	Strobilops aeneus
16. Molluscs	Globose Dome	Ventridens ligera
17. Molluscs	Pyramid Dome	Ventridens intertextus
18. Vascular Plants	Cleland's Evening Primrose	Oenothera clelandii
19. Vascular Plants	Forked Bluecurls	Trichostema dichotomum
20. Vascular Plants	Rough-leaved Aster	Eurybia radulina
21. Vascular Plants	Short-fruited Rush	Juncus brachycarpus

^{*} Part of the Sable Island arthropods bundle, which also includes the Sable Island Sweat Bee (*Lasioglossum sablensae*), which was assessed as Threatened in 2014.

^{**} Part of Okanagan grasshoppers bundle

6. COSEWIC Subcommittees

Section 18 (1) of SARA requires COSEWIC to establish subcommittees of specialists to assist in the preparation and review of status reports on wildlife species considered to be at risk, including subcommittees specializing in groups of wildlife species and a subcommittee specializing in Aboriginal traditional knowledge.

Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Subcommittee

COSEWIC's Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Subcommittee is responsible for ensuring that Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) is appropriately accounted for in COSEWIC's assessment process. The Subcommittee consists of members appointed by the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change. The Co-chairs of the ATK Subcommittee are members of COSEWIC and provide COSEWIC with their expertise on ATK.

The following is a summary of activities over this past year:

- ATK Source/Assessment Reports were prepared for group of bat species in Canada, group of shorebird species, Steelhead, Muskox, and Greenland Shark. Gathering reports are underway for Steelhead in the Scw'exmx Tribal Council and Secwepmc traditional territories in the Thompson River watershed area. Two additional reports are underway based on the 2019 Vancouver ATK Gathering Workshop to gather ATK on BC aquatic and terrestrial species from indigenous knowledge holders. The Subcommittee is looking at a gathering report for the Grizzly Bear in the Okanagan and Cascades region of British Columbia.
- An ATK integration manual was prepared for status report writers which gives guidance to them on how to integrate ATK in the species status reports and is undergoing review by COSEWIC.

COSEWIC extends its sincere gratitude to the members of the ATK Subcommittee for their ongoing commitment to ensuring COSEWIC assessments are informed by the best available information.

Species Specialist Subcommittees

COSEWIC's Species Specialists Subcommittees (SSCs) provide taxonomic expertise to the Committee. Each SSC is typically led by two Co-chairs and members who are recognized Canadian experts in the taxonomic group in question, able to demonstrate high standards of education, experience, and expertise and have 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 wildlife species. SSC members support the Co-chairs in developing candidate lists of wildlife species to be considered for assessment, commissioning status reports for priority wildlife species, reviewing reports for scientific accuracy and completeness, and proposing to COSEWIC a

status for each wildlife species. Currently, COSEWIC has 10 SSCs: Amphibians and Reptiles, Arthropods, Birds, Freshwater Fishes, Marine Fishes, Marine Mammals, Molluscs, Mosses and Lichens, Terrestrial Mammals, and Vascular Plants.

For more information please see:

http://cosewic.ca/index.php/en-ca/

SSC meetings take place annually in different locations in Canada or by teleconference held normally once a year. Observers are invited to attend and public information sessions may also take place.

Aside from their continued work to ensure that high quality status reports are brought to each COSEWIC Wildlife Species Assessment Meeting, SSCs also periodically undertake special projects aimed at assisting their work.

For example, the Freshwater Fishes Specialist Subcommittee initiated a cisco species flock analysis in the fall of 2014 to address the taxonomic challenges in this group of whitefishes. A Cisco Designatable Unit (DU) Special Report was drafted this past year and has been circulated for a jurisdictional review. The results of this Special DU report will be the basis for future cisco assessments as they relate to the pending Shortjaw Cisco, Upper Great Lakes Kiyi, and Blackfin Cisco status reports. This report is scheduled for presentation to COSEWIC in November 2019.

The Freshwater Fishes Specialist Subcommittee also initiated an assessment of threats to aquatic species in southwestern Ontario. The result of the threats assessment for this region is intended to assist writers when producing status reports for the assessment or reassessment of species by COSEWIC, recovery analyses, strategies, and action plans.

The Marine Fishes Specialist Subcommittee initiated designatable unit reports for Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye Salmon in Canada that have not previously been assessed.

The Vascular Plants Specialist Subcommittee undertook a special project to analyze and prioritize 71 vascular plants species using RAMAS software. Species for which the software analyses indicated their status would remain unchanged had Technical Summaries prepared. These results could be used to support the basis of Rapid Assessments (using various report types) to begin to address the backlog of overdue species reassessments.

COSEWIC is extremely grateful for the important work of the SSC members who provide their time and expertise on a volunteer basis.

7. COSEWIC Operations and Procedures

Section 19 of SARA states that COSEWIC "may make rules respecting the holding of meetings and the general conduct of its activities."

COSEWIC is guided in its activities by an Operations & Procedures (O & P) Manual that is reviewed annually by COSEWIC's O & P Subcommittee, who recommend any necessary changes to the Committee for their approval. During this reporting period, the COSEWIC O & P Manual was updated to reflect some minor changes in COSEWIC's procedures. The most notable changes are as follows:

- Changes made to Appendix B5 (Guidelines for Conflict of Interest) to clarify conflicts dealing with status designation from a financial and non-financial conflict of interest.
- COSEWIC approved a new document for conducing a review of classification, Rapid Review of Classification, within Appendix E6 (Procedures for Review of Classification).
- Renamed Appendix E7 to COSEWIC Guidelines on Manipulated Wildlife Species and clarified guidelines to assist COSEWIC in determining in what context manipulated components will be considered in wildlife species status assessment.
- COSEWIC approved the new Terrestrial Amphibians and Reptiles Faunal Province map in Appendix F5 (Guidelines for Recognizing Designatable Units; Figure 3).

8. Procedural Working Groups

Section 18 (1) of SARA also allows COSEWIC to establish subcommittees to advise it or to exercise or perform any of its functions.

Procedural working groups are essential to ensuring COSEWIC's operations and procedures are efficient, effective and followed clearly, thus maintaining the quality and consistency of COSEWIC status assessments and processes.

a) Press Release

This Working Group was active before and during each Wildlife Species Assessment Meeting on the production of each press release.

b) Species Prioritization

This working group was active during the 2019-2019 reporting period. An annual exercise was conducted to evaluate the candidate species rationales submitted by the SSCs and to recommend new candidate species to COSEWIC for assessment.

c) Species Bundling

The species bundling working group was not active during the 2018-2019 reporting period.

d) IUCN Criteria and Climate Change

The Freshwater Fishes Subcommittee has conducted a pilot project with students from the University of Toronto to assess the costs and benefits of using formalized Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments in status reports. The results will be presented at the November 2019 Species Assessment Meeting.

e) Data

A member of the data working group gave a presentation on sensitive species information to COSEWIC as well as the Nature Serve 2019 Annual General Meeting. This working group is still reviewing Appendix F8 (Updated Guidelines Concerning Sensitive Information) of the Operations and Procedures Manual. They are also developing tools for data sharing agreements with third parties to improve COSEWIC's data-sharing relationships with conservation partners and data owners.

f) Wild by Nature

A revised version of the Manipulated Population Guidelines, including a name change to Guidelines on Manipulated Wildlife Species, was approved at the November 2018 COSEWIC meeting. It clarifies some of the concepts and terminology relating to captivity, supplementation, and reintroductions of population components, as well as hybridization between wildlife species. No new interpretation of the term "wild by nature" was included in this revision.

g) Co-chair Evaluation Grid

An updated version of the Co-chair Evaluation Grid and the Non-government Science member Evaluation Grid were approved and used for the 2018 call for Co-chairs and Non-government Science members.

h) Supplementary Information for Status Report Writers

As of November 2018, the working group expanded and became the Status Report Redesign working group. In collaboration with status report users, this working group is looking into ways to improve status report design.

i) Conflict of Interest

Conflict of Interest working group was not active during the 2018-2019 reporting period.

j) COSEWIC Website

This working group was established to investigate options associated with having an external COSEWIC website. This new website is expected to go live before the end of 2019.

k) Wildlife Management Board Process

Work is ongoing to improve communication with Wildlife Management Boards.

I) Criteria

This working group offered workshops for use of status criteria to most subcommittees at their annual meetings.

9. COSEWIC Communications

Insofar as resources allow, COSEWIC and its Chairs over the years have made every effort to inform governments and the public about the work of the Committee.

During the current reporting period, COSEWIC released two press releases outlining the results of the Fall 2018 and the Spring 2019 Wildlife Species Assessment Meetings. The links to the COSEWIC press releases can be found on the following COSEWIC website:

http://cosewic.ca/index.php/en-ca/news-and-events

In September 2018, COSEWIC launched a Twitter account to inform Canadians about news on Canadian species at risk. The account can be found at https://twitter.com/cosewic and now has over 1,450 followers.

The Chair of COSEWIC attended the following meetings (in person or via phone) and/or gave presentations on the work of COSEWIC:

 Sue Milburn-Hopwood (Associate Deputy Minister, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and Dave Ingstrup (Director General, Wildlife Assessment and Information Directorate, CWS)

- Vernon Amos, Chair, Inuvialuit Game Council
- Species at Risk Advisory Committee defining "imminent threat"
- Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee, Ottawa presentation
- CWS Pacific Regional Headquarters presentation
- British Columbia Institute of Technology presentation
- Raincoast Education Society presentation
- COSEWIC ATK Pacific Coast workshop presentation
- Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre presentation

<u>In addition, the Chair of COSEWIC wrote the following correspondence regarding the</u> work of COSEWIC:

- Response to Vernon Amos (Chair, Inuvialuit Game Council) and Alan Kennedy (Chair, Fisheries Joint Management Committee) concerning request to delay assessment of Beluga Whale (Eastern Beaufort Sea population)
- Response to Vernon Amos (Chair, Inuvialuit Game Council) to address concerns about including of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge into the assessment report on Polar Bear
- Honourable Catherine McKenna regarding recommendations for new appointments to COSEWIC
- Canadian Wildlife Directors regarding support for COSEWIC jurisdictional appointments
- Response to Gordon Eason, Wildlife Biologist, regarding request to reassess Lake Superior Caribou
- Request to Carmel Lowe (Director General for Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Pacific Region) for data in support of southern Chinook assessments
- Request to Chloe Stuart (Canadian Wildlife Director Committee member for Ontario), for support of staff time to participate with COSEWIC

- Response to Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, regarding listing decision timelines
- Response to Kegan Pepper-Smith (Ecojustice) regarding timeline for re-assessment of status of Northern Spotted Owl
- Response to Alain Cassette (Director General, Féderation Québécoise des Chasseurs et Pêcheurs) regarding request to reassess status of Striped Bass
- Response to Sarah Wren (Director, Species at Risk Act Implementation, CWS)
 regarding enquiry about potential status change of Torngat Caribou
- Response to Steven Wilson (EcoLogic Research) regarding his submission of an unsolicited status report on Marbled Murrelet

In addition, the Chair of COSEWIC participated in the following media interviews regarding the work of COSEWIC:

- CP Atlantic Bureau status of whales
- CBC Yukon radio live Chinook status
- BBC World Service live Chinook status
- Terrace Standard Newspaper Chinook status
- CP (Bob Weber) Chinook status
- CFAX 1070 Vancouver Island results of October 2018 assessment
- The Peak (Simon Fraser University newspaper)
- Georgia Straight appointment of Chair
- SFU News steelhead
- Salmon Arm Observer interior sockeye salmon

ITEM II - COSEWIC MEMBERSHIP

Section 16 of SARA states that (1) COSEWIC is to be composed of members appointed by the Minister after consultation with the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council and with any experts and expert bodies, such as the Royal Society of Canada, that the Minister considers to have relevant expertise. (2) Each member must have expertise drawn from a discipline such as conservation biology, population dynamics, taxonomy, systematics or genetics or from community knowledge or aboriginal traditional knowledge of the conservation of wildlife species. (3) The members are to be appointed to hold office for renewable terms of not more than four years.

1. Membership Changes

For a current list of members on COSEWIC, please see the COSEWIC website.

http://cosewic.ca/index.php/en-ca/about-us/cosewic-members

Members from the Federal, Provincial or Territorial jurisdictions are recommended to the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change by the jurisdiction.

The Co-chairs of the ATK Subcommittee are elected by the ATK Subcommittee members and recommended to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change for appointment to COSEWIC. The Co-chairs and all ATK Subcommittee members are nominated by National Aboriginal Organizations with the exception of two of its members who can be nominated by the ATK Subcommittee. Subcommittee members are appointed by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

This past year a new Co-chair of the ATK Subcommittee has been elected by the ATK Subcommittee and formally appointed by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to COSEWIC.

Species Specialist Subcommittee Co-chairs and Non-government Science Members are recommended to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change by COSEWIC following an in-depth review process.

A call for four Species Specialist Subcommittee Co-chairs and one Non-government Science Member was posted on the COSEWIC website between January 16 and February 13, 2019. Selection Committees composed of both COSEWIC members and Species Specialist Subcommittee members then evaluated the applications following procedures set out in COSEWIC's Operations & Procedures Manual. The Chairs of each Selection Committee prepared reports summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the applicants, which were discussed at the Spring 2019 Wildlife Species Assessment meeting. Candidates were ranked by COSEWIC members and their names and CVs were provided to the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change in May 2019 for consideration of appointment. Members of CESCC were copied on this correspondence.

ITEM III - WILDLIFE SPECIES ASSESSMENTS

In accordance with Section 25(1) of SARA when COSEWIC completes an assessment of the status of a wildlife species, it must provide the Minister and the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council with a copy of the assessment and the reasons for it. A copy of the assessment must also be included on the public registry.

Information pertaining to the wildlife species assessed since the last annual report can be found on the SARA Public Registry website at the following address:

https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/sar/index/default_e.cfm

The status reports will be available in English and French on the Public Registry at the following address:

https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/sar/assessment/status_e.cfm

ITEM IV – WILDIFE SPECIES ASSESSED BY COSEWIC SINCE ITS INCEPTION

In accordance with Section 25(2) of SARA, COSEWIC must annually prepare a complete list of every wildlife species it has assessed since the coming into force of that section and a copy of that list must be included in the public registry.

The Canadian Species at Risk publication is available on the 'Species at Risk Public Registry.

https://wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/search/advSearchResults_e.cfm?stype=doc&lng=e&advkeywords=&docid=33&startdate=&enddate=&#ot33

It includes all wildlife species assessed by COSEWIC since its inception up to and including October 2018.