

2010 EDITION

SPECIES AT RISK

in the Northwest Territories

A guide to species in the Northwest Territories currently listed, or considered for listing, under federal and territorial species at risk legislation.



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Also available in French under the title: *Espèces en péril aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest : un guide des espèces des TN-O incluses dans la liste légale sous la Loi sur les espèces en péril fédérale et autres espèces considérées, édition 2010*

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SPECIES AT RISK



Species at Risk in the Northwest Territories

Aboriginal groups, scientists and people with an interest in the natural world have noticed and documented the disappearance of certain plants and animals for some time.

Every jurisdiction in Canada has signed the national *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk* and in doing so, has agreed to work towards a national approach for protecting species at risk, with the goal of preventing species in Canada from becoming extinct as a consequence of human activity.

The responsibility for the conservation of wildlife in the Northwest Territories

is shared by the federal, territorial, and Th̓ch̓q̓ governments, and wildlife co-management boards. The federal government is responsible for migratory birds, aquatic species and terrestrial species found on federal lands. The territorial government has primary responsibility for other species.

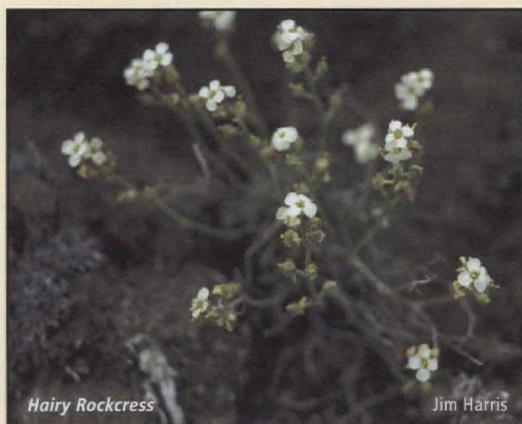
In 2003, the Government of Canada enacted the *Species at Risk Act* with the goal of protecting wildlife species and their habitats. The purposes of the *Species at Risk Act* are to prevent wildlife species from being Extirpated or becoming Extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are Extirpated, Endangered or Threatened as a result of human activity, and 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 national population status of individual species, and a mechanism for listing Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern species. The *Species at Risk Act* includes provisions for the protection of individuals of listed wildlife species, and for their critical habitats and residences.

In 2009, the Government of the Northwest Territories passed the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* which helps fulfill the Northwest Territories' commitment under the national Accord to provide effective legal protection. The *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* also sets out the

processes to assess, list, protect and recover species at risk specifically for the Northwest Territories. The *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* applies to any wild animal or plant species managed by the Government of the Northwest Territories. It applies everywhere in the Northwest Territories, on both public and private lands, including private lands owned under a land claims agreement.

The *Species at Risk Act* and the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* are designed to work in a complementary fashion with other legislation and cooperatively with Aboriginal people to protect species at risk and their habitats. For more information visit www.sararegistry.gc.ca OR www.enr.gov.nt.ca.



Hairy Rockcress

Jim Harris

ASSESSMENT AND LISTING



Short-eared Owl

Doug Dance

Assessment and Listing of Species at Risk in Canada

Assessment: The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is a national committee of experts that assesses the biological status of species and assigns each one to a category of risk based on the best available scientific, community and Aboriginal traditional knowledge. COSEWIC makes a recommendation on "risk level" to the federal government. The list of all the species recommended by COSEWIC for listing as a species at risk is the COSEWIC list.

Legal Listing: After receiving COSEWIC's assessment and consulting with the appropriate Minister(s) and wildlife management boards, the Minister makes a recommendation

to the Governor in Council and the decision is made on whether to add species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1) of the *Species at Risk Act* or to refer the matter back to COSEWIC for further information or consideration.

Assessment and Listing of Species at Risk in the Northwest Territories

Conference of Management

Authorities: Responsibility for the conservation and recovery of species at risk in the Northwest Territories is shared among wildlife co-management boards established under land claim agreements, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, the Tłıchǫ Government and the federal government. The Conference established under the *Species at Risk*

ASSESSMENT AND LISTING

(NWT) Act reflects this responsibility and provides direction, coordination and leadership with respect to the assessment, listing, conservation and recovery of species at risk while respecting the roles and responsibilities of Management Authorities under land claims agreements.

Assessment: The Species at Risk Committee (SARC) established under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* assesses the biological status of species that may be at risk in the Northwest Territories. It is similar to COSEWIC, although the SARC operates at the Territorial level. Assessments will be based on traditional, community and scientific knowledge of the species and may differ from the national level. SARC makes recommendations on the listing of species and on conservation measures and will not consider socio-economic effects in its assessment.

Legal Listing: The Conference of Management Authorities has to discuss SARC's recommendations for listing. Each Management Authority is responsible for carrying out consultations to reach a decision on listing a species under their management. The territorial Minister's consultations will include an opportunity for the public to provide

comments and consultations with any Aboriginal groups without a settled claim. Once all input is received, the Conference will meet to develop a consensus agreement on listing. If a consensus agreement is reached, the Minister adds the species to the Northwest Territories legal list of species at risk. If no consensus can be reached, the Minister would consider all the available information, including the results of any consultations done by the Management Authorities, and make a decision about listing the species.

This booklet describes the species legally listed under the *Species at Risk Act* and the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, and describes those species whose range includes the Northwest Territories that are under consideration for listing, as of March 2010. National assessments of species are completed every 6 months. As there is no preset federal listing schedule, it is important to regularly visit the federal *Species at Risk Act* Public Registry at www.sararegistry.gc.ca, or the COSEWIC website at www.cosewic.gc.ca for the most recent information. Species at risk assessed or listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* processes will be posted at www.enr.gov.nt.ca.

CATEGORIES

Categories of species at risk

Species at risk are listed in one of five categories:

- Extinct:** a wildlife species that no longer exists anywhere in the world
- Extirpated:** a wildlife species that no longer exists in the wild in Canada, but exists elsewhere
- Endangered:** a wildlife species that is facing imminent extirpation or extinction
- Threatened:** a wildlife species likely to become an endangered species if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction
- Special Concern:** a wildlife species that may become a threatened or endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to help you identify species at risk and their ranges in the Northwest Territories. This publication will be updated periodically to reflect changes to Schedule 1 of the federal *Species at Risk Act* and to COSEWIC's list of species at risk. For the most current list of species on Schedule 1, visit www.sararegistry.gc.ca. For the most current COSEWIC list, visit www.cosewic.gc.ca. For additional species specific information, visit www.enr.gov.nt.ca.

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

The information in this section describes the typical habitat of the species in the Northwest Territories.

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

Threats to a species can vary from region to region. The information in this section describes specific threats to the species in the Northwest Territories.

Photos, accompanied by text will help you identify the species in the field.



▨ National Parks
■ Eskimo Curlew

Range Map

The range map shows the distribution of each species in the Northwest Territories so that you can determine at a glance where they occur. Please note that the species range maps in this booklet are approximate and are not intended for legal use.

Did you know?

The information in this section highlights interesting facts about the species.

SCHEDULE 1

WOOD BISON

Bison bison athabasca

THREATENED

DESCRIPTION

Wood Bison are the largest land mammals in North America. They are dark brown, have a massive head, a distinct beard, a shoulder hump and curved horns.

Weight:

Males: 650 to 900 kg (1430 to 2000 lb);

Females: 500 to 550 kg (1100 to 1200 lb)

Height at shoulder: 1.5 to 2.0 m (4 to 6 ft)

Once on the verge of extinction due to over-hunting and disease, **Wood Bison** now occur in the Northwest Territories in three free-ranging herds. The Mackenzie and Nahanni populations are disease-free. The greater Wood Buffalo National Park population, which includes bison in the Slave River Lowlands, is infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis. Goals and direction for Wood Bison management in the Northwest Territories have been outlined in the *Draft Wood Bison Management Strategy for the NWT: 2009-2019*.



Gordon Court

Report Wood Bison sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Slave River Lowlands and Mackenzie: willow savannas with grasses and sedges
- Liard River drainage: meadows with horsetails

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Diseases including anthrax, bovine brucellosis, and tuberculosis
- Expanding agriculture and forestry and collisions with traffic
- Spring floods and falling through thin ice
- Limited genetic diversity in disease-free populations due to small number of animals initially introduced into those areas



National Parks Bison Control Area

- 1 Nahanni Population
- 2 Mackenzie Population
- 3 Slave River Lowlands Population
- 4 Wood Buffalo National Park Population

Did you know?

- A Bison Control Area was created to prevent the spread of diseases to the healthy Mackenzie and Nahanni populations. All bison in the control area are presumed to be disease carriers and are therefore removed.
- The Mackenzie population of 1600 bison is the largest free-ranging disease-free herd in the world. The Nahanni population is slowly increasing and has about 400 bison.
- The Slave River Lowlands population seems to be reversing a lengthy decline and has about 1000 bison on the east and west sides of the Slave River outside of Wood Buffalo National Park.

SCHEDULE 1

WOODLAND CARIBOU

Rangifer tarandus caribou

THREATENED - Boreal population
SPECIAL CONCERN - Northern Mountain population

DESCRIPTION

Boreal and Northern Mountain Caribou look the same. It is their habitat preferences and behaviour that separate these two populations. Woodland Caribou are larger, darker, have thicker and broader antlers, longer legs and a longer face than Barren-ground Caribou.

Weight: 110 to 210 kg
(240 to 460 lbs)

Height at shoulder: 1.0 to 1.2 m
(3.3 to 4.0 ft)

Woodland Caribou are divided into two types, Boreal Caribou and Northern Mountain Caribou. Boreal Caribou live in the forests east of the Mackenzie Mountains. They live in small groups and prefer to stay within the forest year round. Northern Mountain Caribou live in the Mackenzie Mountains in large groups, sometimes in the thousands, and have distinct migrations where they change elevation depending on the season. Recent research suggests that the Woodland Caribou population in the Northwest Territories is stable. A national recovery strategy for Boreal Caribou is being developed and will be ready in 2011. A national management plan for Northern Mountain Caribou



Boreal Caribou



Northern Mountain Caribou

Report Woodland Caribou sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

will also be ready in 2011. Goals and direction for the conservation of Boreal Caribou in the Northwest Territories have been outlined in the *Action Plan for Boreal Woodland Caribou Conservation in the Northwest Territories: 2010-2015*.

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Boreal Caribou: almost all forested areas east of the Mackenzie Mountains, provided they are in or are able to access areas away from human disturbance, industrial areas, and other human made features
- Northern Mountain Caribou: throughout the Mackenzie Mountains (upper subalpine areas in summer and lower subalpine forests with shallow snow cover in winter)

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Climate change if it affects the forest landscape over the next 20-40 years
- Boreal Caribou: habitat changes (especially landscape changes from oil and gas) that result in increased access by predators and hunters
- Northern Mountain Caribou: limited threats - there are some concerns about increased hunting pressure from access roads in the Yukon and increased mineral exploration activities



Did you know?

- There is limited harvesting of Woodland Caribou in the Northwest Territories. Aboriginal harvest is low and there is a limit of one animal per year for resident hunters. Non-residents can only hunt Woodland Caribou in the Mackenzie Mountains.
- Boreal Caribou are sometimes called the "grey ghosts of the forest" because they are secretive and difficult to find, and when disturbed they usually disappear quickly into the forest.

SCHEDULE 1

BOWHEAD WHALE

Balaena mysticetus

SPECIAL CONCERN - Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population

DESCRIPTION

The Bowhead Whale is a large baleen whale (whale with baleen plates for filtering food rather than teeth) with a stocky barrel-shaped body and a large head consisting of about 30 percent of its length. Its body is mostly black; white markings appear with age on the chin, fluke tips and tail. Their flippers are small and paddle-shaped and they do not have a dorsal fin. The upper jaw is bowed sharply upward with an average of 330 baleen plates on each side. Adult females are slightly larger than adult males.

Length:

Females: 16 to 18 m (53 to 59 ft);

Males: 14 to 17 m (46 to 56 ft)

Weight: 75 to 100 t (82 to 110 tons)

Bowhead Whales are still recovering from commercial whaling. The Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population of the Bowhead Whale spends the winter in the western and central Bering Sea where there is adequate open water and broken pack ice. In spring, the whales migrate north and east to their summer feeding grounds in the eastern Beaufort Sea. They feed mostly on dense aggregations of small invertebrates or "zooplankton" (mainly copepods, but also euphasiids, mysids, amphipods and isopods). Females give birth every three or four years to a single calf, usually during the spring migration. Bowhead Whales can live to be over 150 years of age.

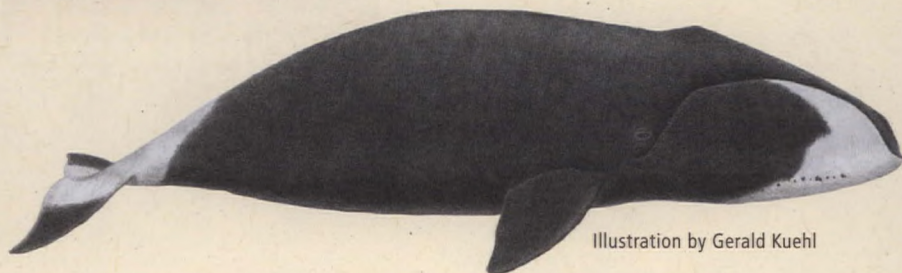


Illustration by Gerald Kuehl

Report Bowhead Whale sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca



Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Marine waters ranging from open water to thick, extensive pack ice

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Vessel traffic, underwater noise and possible hydrocarbon spills associated with offshore development (e.g. oil and gas) in the Beaufort Sea



- National Parks
- Bowhead Whale

Did you know?

- A weapon fragment found in a Bowhead Whale caught off the Alaskan coast in May 2007 dated back to 1879.
- Bowhead Whales are able to use their head and back to break ice over 20 cm (8 in) thick, in order to breathe.

SCHEDULE 1

GREY WHALE

Eschrichtius robustus

SPECIAL CONCERN - Eastern North Pacific population

DESCRIPTION

The Grey Whale is a medium to large-sized baleen whale with a streamlined body and narrow, tapered head. It has dark grey mottled skin, often covered with patches of barnacles and crustaceans. This whale does not have a dorsal fin but has a low hump and a series of seven to fifteen knuckles along the dorsal ridge. The Grey Whale is the only large whale whose upper jaw extends beyond the lower. Two to four grooves on the underside of the throat allow the whale to extend its throat so it can feed by scooping up bottom sediment and straining it through its baleen.

Length:

Females: 12 to 15 m (39 to 50 ft);

Males: 11 to 14 m (36 to 46 ft)

Weight: 22 to 38 t (24 to 42 tons)

Grey Whales are susceptible to human activities especially while they spend the winter on their calving grounds in Mexico where females give birth to a single calf. In spring most migrate north to their summer feeding grounds in northern Alaska, Russia and the southern Beaufort Sea where they feed mainly on shrimp-like animals (amphipod crustaceans). Calves are weaned in late summer. Grey Whales can live up to 70 years of age.

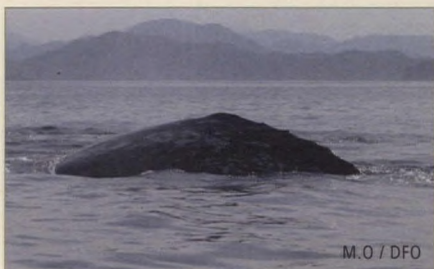


Illustration by A. Denbigh

Report Grey Whale sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca



Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Shallow (less than 60 m or 200 ft) water close to shore, over mud or sand bottoms

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss of habitat due to industrial development (e.g. oil and gas) and associated noise
- Reduced feeding due to ice cover on summer feeding grounds (may lessen with climate change)
- Collisions with ships



 National Parks
 Grey Whale



Baleen plates

Did you know?

- Because Grey Whales re-circulate nutrients from bottom sediments through the water column, they are an important species in arctic marine ecosystems.
- Grey Whales travel over 16 000 km (9,900 mi.) round trip, from the lagoons of Baja California and their feeding grounds in the Bering and Beaufort Seas.

SCHEDULE 1

ESKIMO CURLEW

Numenius borealis

ENDANGERED

DESCRIPTION

The Eskimo Curlew is a mottled brownish shorebird with long legs and a long, thin, slightly down-curving bill. It can be confused with its close relative, the Whimbrel, but is smaller (the size of a pigeon) and does not have the Whimbrel's distinct central head stripe.

Length: 35 cm (13.8 in)

Eskimo Curlew once nested abundantly in the barrens of the Northwest Territories. During fall migration, huge flocks flew to the east coast and then non-stop to Argentina. Spring migration was through Texas and the mid-western states, with some birds found in the Canadian Prairies. Eskimo Curlews were hunted to near extinction during the 19th century.



Report Eskimo Curlew sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist



Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Known breeding habitat consisted of upland tundra, treeless dwarf shrub and grass tundra, and grassy meadow habitat

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss and degradation of potential breeding habitat



 National Parks
 Eskimo Curlew

Did you know?

- The Eskimo Curlew has been near extinction for much of the last century. There have only been a few confirmed occurrences in the Northwest Territories in the last 20 years. There has been no evidence of nesting since 1866.
- Scientists have determined that recovery of this species is not feasible at this time.
- The Eskimo Curlew had only two known breeding locations, both in the Northwest Territories: at the base of Bathurst Peninsula in the Anderson River area, and in the region of Amundsen Gulf-Coronation Gulf-Coppermine River.

SCHEDULE 1

WHOOPING CRANE

Grus americana

ENDANGERED

DESCRIPTION

Measuring an impressive 1.5 metres (5 ft), Whooping Cranes are the tallest birds in North America. They have a white body with a red and black head and black-tipped wings.

Height: 1.5 m (5 ft)

Weight: 6.4 to 7.3 kg (14 to 16 lb)

Whooping Cranes winter in southern Texas and arrive on their breeding grounds in the Northwest Territories in April and May. They lay two eggs in a nest consisting of a pile of vegetation in shallow water. Usually only one of the chicks survives to fly south in September. Whooping Cranes eat small fish and animals, insects, roots, berries and grain. Whooping Cranes almost went extinct in the 1940s due to habitat loss in their prairie breeding grounds and overharvest by settlers.



Brian Johns

Report Whooping Crane sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist




Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Nest in shallow ponds that contain bulrush or sedge, and that are separated by narrow forested ridges in and around the north east corner of Wood Buffalo National Park.
- The first species at risk in the Northwest Territories with critical habitat (meaning the habitat needed for survival or recovery) identified under the federal Species at Risk Act in Wood Buffalo National Park

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation
- Disturbance on breeding grounds (aircraft flights and human foot traffic)
- Predators on breeding grounds (black bear, wolverine, gray wolf, red fox, mink, lynx, and common raven)
- Accidental shooting
- Collisions with power lines



-  National Parks
-  Whooping Crane Critical Habitat
-  Whooping Crane

Did you know?

- The Whooping Crane's large wings allow them to fly for up to 10 hours non-stop.
- From 21 cranes in the early 1940s, the more than 500 Whooping Cranes in North America today are descendants of only three family lines.

- The population that nests in and around Wood Buffalo National Park is the only natural wild breeding population in the world.

SCHEDULE 1

IVORY GULL

Pagophila eburnea

ENDANGERED

DESCRIPTION

The Ivory Gull is a medium-sized gull that can be identified by its pure white plumage and black legs.

Weight: 448 to 687 g (16 to 24 oz)

Length: 40 to 49 cm (16 to 19 in)

Ivory Gulls are found across northern Canada, Greenland and the western European Arctic. They arrive in the Arctic in late April and move to nesting colonies in June. Colony size ranges from 20 to 200 pairs and they lay one to three eggs. In September, birds begin to move to their wintering grounds in the northern seas, along the southern edge of the pack ice. Ivory Gulls have declined by about 80% in 20 years, and this decline may be attributed to illegal harvest in Greenland, high levels of certain contaminants in their foods, and degradation of ice-related feeding areas as a result of climate change.



Report Ivory Gull sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Pack ice or in areas of open water surrounded by ice (polynyas)
- Uncommon migrant in the Beaufort Sea and may winter in the offshore leads (fractures in the sea ice exposing open water) in some years

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Disturbance and pollution at marine feeding and resting areas
- Contaminants affecting the food they eat
- Degradation of marine feeding areas as a result of climate change
- Human disturbance at colonies
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators (foxes, ravens, other gulls) near colonies



- ▲ Ivory Gull Historic Colonies
- Ivory Gull Colonies
- ▨ National Parks

Did you know?

- In Canada, Ivory Gulls currently only nest in Nunavut on windswept plateaus, ice-choked islands, or on steep cliffs of mountains protruding from glaciers. They once nested on Prince Patrick Island in the Northwest Territories, but this site has been abandoned since its initial discovery in the 1800s.
- Large expanses of the western Arctic are apparently unsuitable for nesting Ivory Gulls because there is no ice-free ocean regularly available when the birds arrive to breed. Furthermore, the flat vegetated landscape of these islands supports predators of the Ivory Gull, such as foxes.

SCHEDULE 1

PEREGRINE FALCON

Falco peregrinus

THREATENED - *anatum* subspecies

DESCRIPTION

The Peregrine Falcon is a dark-coloured crow-sized bird with long pointed wings, black cheek patches and a dark "cap" on its head.

Length: 40 to 50 cm (16 to 20 in)

Two subspecies of **Peregrine Falcons**, *anatum* (boreal) and *tundrius* (tundra), occur in the Northwest Territories. The *anatum* subspecies breeds mainly in the forest and the *tundrius* subspecies mainly on the tundra. Peregrine Falcon populations suffered a serious decline in the 1970s due to the widespread use of DDT as a pesticide. Reduction in DDT use worldwide and active recovery efforts helped populations recover. In 2007, COSEWIC combined these subspecies into one sub-population complex, and recommended it be downlisted to a species of Special Concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.



Gordon Court

Report Peregrine Falcon sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Sheltered ledges or crevices in cliffs, near water and good foraging areas with a high abundance of small mammals and birds

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Human disturbance at nest sites from cabin building, recreational activities
- Increased development along the Mackenzie River, as well as resource exploration or development in other areas
- Other threats include poaching of eggs and nestlings for falconry, declining songbird or seabird prey populations due to climate change and changes in ocean productivity, and susceptibility to DDT and organochlorine pesticide contamination, which causes reproductive failure due to softening of eggs



- anatum* subspecies
- tundrius* subspecies
- National Parks

Did you know?

- The Northwest Territories *Wildlife Act* protects all raptor eggs, nests and individuals, making it illegal to hunt, possess or export Peregrine Falcons (or their parts) without a permit.
- Peregrines can reach speeds of more than 320 kph (200 mph) when diving for their prey.
- Successful recovery efforts over the last 30 years have helped the species recover.

SCHEDULE 1

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER

Contopus cooperi

THREATENED

DESCRIPTION

The Olive-sided Flycatcher is a deep olive-grey with a white breast and belly. The dark patches on either side of its white belly look like an unbuttoned vest. Its bill is short and stout, the top bill is dark and the bottom one is light with a black tip.

Length: 18 to 20 cm (7 to 9 in)

Weight: 32 to 37 g (1.1 to 1.3 oz)

The **Olive-sided Flycatcher** arrives in the Northwest Territories in late May and early June. Females incubate 3-4 eggs for about 15 days. The Olive-sided Flycatcher leaves the Northwest Territories from late July to early August and winters in South and Central America. It eats flying insects. Although reasons are unclear, many areas outside the north have reported significant declines in the numbers of Olive-sided Flycatchers.



Tim Zurowski

Report Olive-sided Flycatcher sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Within the boreal forest, near open areas containing tall trees or snags for perching
- Young forest after a forest fire or clearcut

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Threats to the species are uncertain and may be more applicable to their southern breeding range and wintering range
- Fire suppression as a forest management practice may be decreasing the availability of breeding habitat



- National Parks
- Olive-sided Flycatcher

Did you know?

- The Olive-sided Flycatcher perches on a tall tree or snag and waits for an insect to fly by before pursuing its prey.
- They have a loud song that sounds like "quick, *THREE BEERS*."

SCHEDULE 1

COMMON NIGHTHAWK

Chordeiles minor

THREATENED

DESCRIPTION

The Common Nighthawk is a medium-sized bird, with dark brown plumage mottled with black, white and buff. It has long, slender, pointed wings and a long slightly notched tail. The head is large and flat, with large eyes, a small bill, and a wide mouth. In flight, a white patch can be seen on the wings of the adults.

Weight: 65 to 98 g (2 to 3.5 oz)

Length: 21 to 25 cm (8 to 10 in)

Common Nighthawks arrive in the Northwest Territories to breed in mid-May to early June. They lay two eggs directly on the soil, sand, gravel or bare rock. Chicks remain in the nest area for about three weeks, during which time the male feeds both the nestlings and often the female. Fall migration to wintering areas in South America occurs from mid-August to mid-September. Many areas outside of the Northwest Territories have reported significant declines in the numbers of Common Nighthawks, for reasons that are unknown. Population trends for the Northwest Territories are not known.



Report Common Nighthawk sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Nests in a variety of habitats such as sand dunes and beaches, open forests, forest clearings (including recently logged or burned areas), rocky outcrops, peat bogs, marshes, lakeshores, river banks, gravel areas (roads, quarries and flat gravel-covered roofs), and airports

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Collisions with motor vehicles and aircraft
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators (cats, foxes, ravens, and gulls)
- Reductions in insect prey due to pesticide use on their southern breeding and wintering grounds



Did you know?

- Common Nighthawks can be recognized by their loud, nasal *peent* calls and erratic, almost bat-like, flight. They actively pursue flying insects at dusk and dawn, often feeding on insects attracted to lights and insects swarming over bodies of water.
- Females can be distinguished from males by their throat band, which is buff rather than white. Juveniles do not have a pale yellow-brown throat band.

SCHEDULE 1

CANADA WARBLER

Wilsonia canadensis

THREATENED

DESCRIPTION

The Canada Warbler is a small songbird identified by the male's "necklace" made of patterned black spots on its bright yellow breast. Other features such as bluish grey upperparts, yellow under parts, white eye ring, thin pointed bill and white feathers at the base of the tail distinguish this bird from similar species.

Height: 12 to 15 cm (4.7 to 5.9 in)

Weight: 9 to 13 g (0.3 to 0.5 oz)

Canada Warblers breed in the southwestern corner of the Northwest Territories (from Fort Simpson in the north to Fort Liard). They arrive in the Northwest Territories from late May to early June. The females lay four to five eggs and incubate them for 12 days. They leave the Northwest Territories from late July to early August for wintering grounds in South America. They eat flying insects and spiders captured in flight or collected on the ground. The Canada Warbler population has declined by 85% over the last 40 years in Canada but the reasons for decline remain unidentified. Loss of forest on the wintering grounds in South America may be contributing to the declines in Canada.



John Reaume

Report Canada Warbler sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Boreal forest, in areas of mixed deciduous-coniferous forest with a well developed shrub layer
- Moist mixed deciduous-coniferous boreal forest with a well developed shrub layer, often on steep slopes
- Mature forests with a well developed shrub layer

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss and degradation of breeding habitat
- Human activity and declining food sources in the boreal forest



Did you know?

- The Canada Warbler is one of the last warblers to arrive north in the spring, and one of the first to leave in the fall.
- This warbler received its name from its discovery in Canada, where the majority of its breeding range occurs.
- A group of warblers has many collective nouns, including a "bouquet", "confusion", "fall" and "wrench" of warblers.
- Brown-headed Cowbirds are known to lay their eggs in nests of Canada Warblers who then incubate and raise their young.

SCHEDULE 1

YELLOW RAIL

Coturnicops noveboracensis

SPECIAL CONCERN

DESCRIPTION

The Yellow Rail is a small bird with a short tail, short bill, and buffy plumage. The wide dark stripes on its back are crossed by white bars. The white wing patch, which is visible in flight, helps distinguish Yellow Rails from other similar marsh birds.

Weight: Males: 60 g (2 oz)

Length: 15 to 19 cm (6 to 7.5 in)

Yellow Rails breed in Canada and the northern United States and winter on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States. They likely arrive in the Northwest Territories in the latter part of May and nesting occurs in June and possibly July. Females lay seven to ten eggs in nests built on or just above the ground that are concealed with a canopy of dead vegetation in densely vegetated wetlands. Habitat loss, especially on their wintering grounds, has particularly negatively affected Yellow Rails.



Jacques Brisson

Report Yellow Rail sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Nests in marshes dominated by sedges and grasses, wet meadows, and shrubby wetlands
- Nesting areas have little or no standing water (generally 0-12 cm / 0-5 in) and the ground is saturated with water throughout the summer

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation
- Collisions with towers and other structures during migration
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators (foxes and ravens)



Did you know?

- Yellow Rails are rarely seen. They expertly hide in the dense marsh vegetation, aided by their camouflaged plumage.
- The unique call of the Yellow Rail is a rapid series of five monotonous and metallic ticks (or clicks) sounding like

two pebbles or coins tapped together: *tick-tick, tick-tick-tick*. The clicking can be heard up to a kilometre away.

- Yellow Rails mostly call throughout the darkest part of the night.

SCHEDULE 1

RUSTY BLACKBIRD

Euphagus carolinus

SPECIAL CONCERN

Rusty Blackbirds are medium-sized forest birds. Males are black with a faint greenish gloss on the body and violet gloss on the head and neck. Females are brownish-grey without gloss. The edge of their feathers is rust coloured in both males and females.

Length: 21 to 25 cm (8.2 to 9.8 in)

Weight: 64 g (0.15 lb)

Rusty Blackbirds live in the boreal forest of the Northwest Territories. There has been a 90% reduction in the population of Rusty Blackbirds in North America over the last 30 years. Declines in the Northwest Territories may be less severe than other areas due to the relative intactness of their habitat.



Samuel Denault

Report Rusty Blackbird sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Throughout the boreal forest, in wetland areas during spring, summer, and fall
- Typically congregate into flocks in the fall and migrate to the south and east-central United States
- Breeds near open water in treed wetlands (bogs, fens, swamps) often in loose colonies

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Only likely threats in the Northwest Territories are changes to wetlands or prey possibly due to wetlands drying and changes in water chemistry, as a result of climate change



- ▨ National Parks
- Rusty Blackbird

Did you know?

- Rusty Blackbirds rely almost exclusively on aquatic insects and larvae for food.
- This is one of the few birds requiring wooded wetlands both in the summer and winter.
- None of the species of blackbirds are protected by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, because they were considered a pest species when the act was written.

SCHEDULE 1

NORTHERN WOLFFISH

Anarhichas denticulatus

THREATENED

DESCRIPTION

The Northern Wolffish is a thick, heavy-set fish with a pointed snout, small eyes, small tail and no pelvic fins. It has prominent canine-like teeth in the front of the jaws. These fish are gray to dark chocolate in colour with a light violet sheen, often with numerous but indistinct dark bars or spots.

Length: 0.8 to 1.45 m (2.6 to 4.8 ft)

Weight: 13.5 to 20 kg (30 to 44 lb)

The **Northern Wolffish** is a large solitary fish that is slow-growing and long-lived. It inhabits cold, deep ocean waters and preys on jellyfish, sea urchins, crabs and starfish. This fish does not undertake long migrations and the size of its territory is very restricted. Northern Wolffish reach maturity at five years of age and can live to 14 years. Northern Wolffish have been reported in only two locations in the Northwest Territories: Prince Albert Sound on western Victoria Island and Mould Bay on Prince Patrick Island.



G. Taylor / DFO

Report Northern Wolffish sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Offshore waters over soft bottoms and boulders, at depths of 150-900 m (490-2950 ft) and in temperatures below 5°C (32°F)

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Predation by ringed seals



DFO



Did you know?

- Northern Wolffish use large rocks for shelter and to build their nests, where they spawn late in the year.
- The fearsome teeth of the Northern Wolffish ensure that it has few natural predators.
- In most areas this fish is not eaten by humans because of its watery and jelly-like flesh.

SCHEDULE 1

NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG

Lithobates pipiens

SPECIAL CONCERN - Prairie and Western Boreal population

DESCRIPTION

The Northern Leopard Frog is usually green, or sometimes brownish, with dark spots surrounded by distinct light borders, and an unmarked, milky-white underside. Newly hatched tadpoles are slender and black.

Adult snout-to-vent length:
5 to 11 cm (1.9 to 4.3 in)

Newly hatched tadpole length:
8 mm (0.3 in)

Northern Leopard Frogs are uncommon in the Northwest Territories, having only been found near the Slave, Taltson, and Tazin rivers. The only known overwintering or hibernation site is near Frog Rock on the Taltson River. Their call is a long drawn-out rattling snore, usually ending with several rapid short grunts. The number of Northern Leopard Frogs has declined in many parts of western Canada since 1980 and the cause remains unknown.



Kris Kendall

Report Northern Leopard Frog sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

AMPHIBIANS

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Breeds in lakes, ponds, marshes and flooded areas of streams
- Summer ranges include meadows and grasslands
- Over-winters in the unfrozen bottoms of rivers and lakes

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Hydro-electrical development could affect some over-wintering habitat
- Climate variability (drought, fluctuating winter temperatures and freezing rain)
- Diseases (ranaviruses and chytrid fungus)



Did you know?

- Northern Leopard Frogs may be more widely distributed than previously thought in the Northwest Territories. They may have been heard calling on the Horn Plateau and along the K-29 road near Fort Liard.

SCHEDULE 1

WESTERN TOAD

Anaxyrus boreas

SPECIAL CONCERN

DESCRIPTION

Western Toads are usually green or brown with reddish-brown warts and a light stripe down the middle of the back. Newly hatched tadpoles and toadlets are black.

Adult snout-to-vent length:
5-12 cm (1.9-4.7 in)

Newly hatched tadpole length:
1 cm (0.4 in)

Western Toads are found in the Dehcho region. They are nocturnal and difficult to find outside the spring breeding season when they congregate at ponds and begin calling (a quiet peeping like the sound of chicks). These toads have severely declined in the southern half of their range since the late 1970s, for reasons that are unknown.



Ben Olsen

Report Western Toad sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

AMPHIBIANS



Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Breed in shallow silty or sandy ponds, lake shores, and roadside ditches
- Summer ranges include shrubby-forested areas, wet shrublands, avalanche slopes, and meadows
- Over-winter by burrowing in snow deep enough (up to 1.3 m / 4.2 ft) to prevent freezing and moist enough to prevent their skin from drying

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Climate variability (drought, fluctuating winter temperatures, freezing rain, low snow cover)
- Diseases (ranaviruses and chytrid fungus)



 National Parks
 Western Toad



Western Toadlet

Did you know?

- Western Toads are one of the few amphibians that live in alpine areas.
- They can travel up to 7 km (4.3 mi) in less than a day, and prefer to walk or crawl rather than hop.
- Western Toads return to the same breeding sites year after year.

COSEWIC

PEARY CARIBOU

Rangifer tarandus pearyi

ENDANGERED

DESCRIPTION

Peary Caribou are the smallest of all caribou subspecies. In winter, they have a mostly white coat. Their summer coat is slate-grey with white legs and underparts. The velvet covering the antlers is grey, unlike the dark brown velvet of Barren-ground Caribou.

Length: 1.7 m (5.6 ft)

Males: Weight: 70 kg (150 lb)

Peary Caribou are found in small groups on the Arctic islands of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Their numbers have declined since the 1960s likely due to several years of unusually severe winter and spring weather.

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Summer range includes river valley slopes or other moist areas, and upland plains with abundant sedges, willows, grasses, and herbs



John Nagy

Report Peary Caribou sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

MAMMALS

- Winter range includes exposed areas like hilltops and raised beach ridges where the snow is thinner and it is easier to find food

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Severe winters and springs creating ice layers preventing Peary Caribou from reaching their food, sometimes causing starvation or inadequate fat reserves for females to reproduce
- Competition with muskoxen for food
- Hunting and predation may have contributed to population declines on Banks and Northwest Victoria Islands



Did you know?

- The Inuvialuit have taken a strong leadership role in protecting Peary Caribou. Due to community concerns in Sachs Harbour, a harvest quota on hunting Peary Caribou was implemented in 1990 and is now annually reviewed. In 1993,

the Olokhtomiuk Hunters and Trappers Committee initiated a zero harvest on Peary Caribou from Northwest Victoria Island to help ensure that only Dolphin-Union Caribou were harvested from southwest Victoria Island.

COSEWIC

DOLPHIN-UNION CARIBOU

Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus x pearyi

SPECIAL CONCERN

DESCRIPTION

Dolphin-Union Caribou look similar to Peary Caribou (mostly white coat in winter, slate-grey with white legs and underparts in summer), but are slightly darker and the velvet covering their antlers is grey.

Dolphin-Union Caribou were once thought to be Peary Caribou; however, genetic studies have now clearly shown that they are distinct. Dolphin-Union Caribou calve on Victoria Island in the summer and migrate to the mainland of Nunavut in the fall. Once believed to be extinct, they have started to recover to about a quarter of the historic population size.



Mathieu Dumond

Report Dolphin-Union Caribou sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Summer on Victoria Island, commonly using beach ridges and river valley slopes
- Winter in the Bathurst Inlet area of Nunavut, in windswept areas with shallow snow cover

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Hunting rate could lead to over-harvesting
- Overgrazing in areas used before migrating to Nunavut for the winter
- Changes to sea ice freeze-up and break-up due to climate change could threaten migration
- Increased ship traffic through Dolphin and Union strait for industrial activity may affect ice formation and caribou migration



Did you know?

- Once estimated at a population of around 100,000 animals, Dolphin-Union Caribou were almost extinct by 1924. Numbers are thought to have recovered to about 25 percent of their former abundance by 1997. A count in 2007 estimated the herd to be 20,000 to 30,000 caribou but statistical analyses are not finalized. Trend analyses suggest that the population of the Dolphin-Union Caribou is stable at best or slightly declining.

COSEWIC

GRIZZLY BEAR

Ursus arctos

SPECIAL CONCERN

DESCRIPTION

Grizzly Bears are larger than black bears and more heavily built. They can be recognized by their prominent shoulder hump, dish-shaped face and long claws. Colour varies from light gold to almost black, with pale bears being the most common on the barren-lands.

Weight:

Males: 150 to 250 kg (330 to 550 lb);

Females: 120 to 160 kg (260 to 350 lb)

Grizzly Bears in the Northwest Territories, and throughout their range in Canada, are sensitive to population declines because they do not reproduce until they are between six and eight years of age, they have small litters (one to three cubs), and there are three to five years between litters.



Gordon Court

Report Grizzly Bear sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Open or semi-forested areas, most commonly in alpine and subalpine terrain, on the tundra, and less commonly in the boreal forest

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Individual bears move great distances so they may be exposed to the negative effects of human developments or activities, even when they occur at a considerable distance from the core range
- Human activity such as campsites and industrial development in the Northwest Territories may lead to bear-human conflicts and human-caused mortalities



Did you know?

- Grizzly Bears can travel long distances and require large areas of habitat. One collared bear traveled 471 km (292 mi) in 23 days.
- Bears are very powerful animals. Learn to avoid conflicts with bears and always travel in groups.

COSEWIC POLAR BEAR

Ursus maritimus

SPECIAL CONCERN

DESCRIPTION

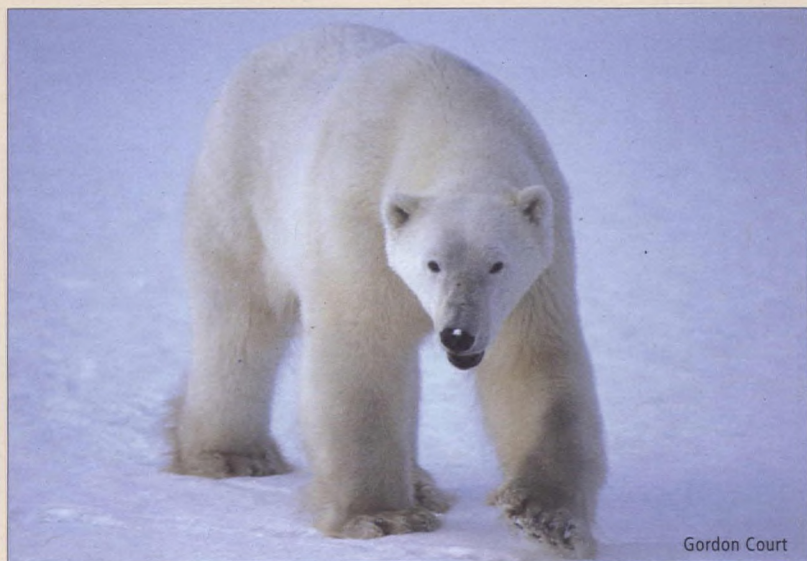
Translucent hairs (sunlight partially goes through them) make Polar Bear fur appear white or off-white. Polar Bears have no shoulder hump, and they have shorter claws and a longer neck than Grizzly Bears.

Weight:

Males: up to 800kg (1750 lb);

Females: less than 350 kg (770 lb)

The Northwest Territories shares three **Polar Bear** subpopulations with neighbouring jurisdictions: Southern Beaufort Sea, Northern Beaufort Sea, and Viscount Melville Sound. Recent scientific research suggests the Southern Beaufort Sea population is likely declining, while the Northern Beaufort is considered stable. The Viscount Melville population is being harvested with the management goal of population growth. Polar Bear population data is out-dated in that area and needs updating in collaboration with Nunavut.



Gordon Court

Report Polar Bear sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat closely linked to density and distribution of seals, and to the distribution of annual ice in the winter
- Generally hunt on annual sea ice along coastlines from early winter until sea ice break-up, but may range more than 200 km (125 mi) offshore
- Maternal denning sites generally located on land in snowdrifts near the coast but have been found on sea ice

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Overall reductions in the amount of summer sea ice available and the timing of break-up and freeze-up due to climate warming may change availability of seals
- Environmental contaminants (mainly organochlorines) and marine oil spills
- Exploration and development that disturb bears in maternity dens can result in premature abandonment and increased chances of mortality in cubs
- Over-hunting



- ▨ National Parks
- Polar Bear

Did you know?

- Polar Bear skin is black, which helps them retain heat from the sun.
- In the Northwest Territories, Polar Bear hunting is strictly managed through a quota system recommended by the wildlife co-management boards.

COSEWIC WOLVERINE

Gulo gulo

SPECIAL CONCERN - Western population

DESCRIPTION

The Wolverine resembles a small, stocky bear. Colour varies from brown to black, often with a pale facial mask and yellowish or tan stripes running along its sides from the shoulders and crossing at the tail.

Weight:

Males: 12 to 16 kg (26 to 35 lb);

Females: 7.5 to 11 kg (16 to 24 lb)

Wolverine population densities are low but stable in the Northwest Territories. They are sensitive to disturbances because they only breed every two years, have small litters, and kits can have high mortality rates.



Rob Gau

Report Wolverine sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca



Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Wide variety of habitats, from the boreal forest, to alpine tundra and barren-lands
- Can travel long distances and require large wilderness areas with adequate year-round food supplies

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Human development or activities, even if these disturbances are a considerable distance from the core range of a Wolverine
- Disturbances to denning areas
- Human-caused mortalities due to conflicts
- Habitat loss



 National Parks
 Wolverine

Did you know?

- Wolverine fur is frost and ice resistant, and therefore highly valued for parka trim.
- They have large paws that help them move easily on top of crusted snow.
- They have strong jaws that allow them to crush bones and frozen food.

COSEWIC RED KNOT

Calidris canutus rufa (*rufa* subspecies)
Calidris canutus islandica (*islandica* subspecies)

ENDANGERED - *rufa*
SPECIAL CONCERN - *islandica*

DESCRIPTION

The Red Knot is a medium-sized shorebird with a small head, straight black bill (tapering from thick base to thinner tip) and long tapered wings giving an elongated streamlined profile to the body. Red Knots in breeding plumage have a red face, breast and belly. *Islandica* Red Knots have more vivid breeding colours than *rufa*.

Length: 23 to 25 cm (9 to 10 in)

Weight: 135 g (5 oz)

There are at least two subspecies of **Red Knot** that are known to breed in the Northwest Territories. The *rufa* subspecies breeds on western Victoria Island, around Prince Albert Sound and winters in southern Chile and Argentina. The *islandica* subspecies breeds on the high arctic islands north of Banks Island and winters in northwest Europe. Both subspecies of knots lay three or four eggs in the last half of June and the chicks hatch in mid-July. Knot populations have dramatically declined since the 1980s due to a decrease in their food source on their migration route for *rufa* subspecies and their wintering grounds for *islandica* subspecies.



Report Red Knot sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Barren habitats in the Arctic such as windswept ridges, slopes, or plateaus
- Nests usually placed in a small patch of vegetation

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation (e.g. due to climate change)



Did you know?

- Nests are extremely hard to find because Red Knots are well camouflaged and do not leave the nest, even when approached.
- To prepare for migration to their breeding grounds, Red Knots increase the size of the parts of their body used for flying (heart and flight muscles) and decrease the size of the parts not used for flight (digestive system). Once they arrive on their breeding grounds, their reproductive organs increase in size and their heart and flight muscles decrease to normal size.
- There is another subspecies of Red Knot, called *roselaari*, that is considered to be Threatened by COSEWIC and that may also breed in the Northwest Territories. Work is underway to confirm whether *roselaari* occurs in the Northwest Territories.

COSEWIC

HORNED GREBE

Podiceps auritus

SPECIAL CONCERN - Western population

DESCRIPTION

The Horned Grebe is a small waterbird with a short, straight bill with a pale tip. Its breeding plumage includes a distinctive patch of bright buff feathers behind the eye ("horns") and extending back to the nape of the neck and contrasting sharply with its black head. The foreneck, flanks and upper breast are chestnut-red, while its back is black and belly white. This plumage is shared by both sexes.

Weight: 300 to 570 g (10.5 to 20 oz)

Length: 31 to 38 cm (12 to 14 in)

Horned Grebes arrive in the Northwest Territories in May. They lay five to seven eggs that hatch in mid-June and July. Adults leave the Northwest Territories by mid-August and young leave by early September and winter along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North America. They eat aquatic insects, small fish and crustaceans. Horned Grebe numbers have declined in their wintering areas but similar declines have not been observed in the Northwest Territories.



Anthony Levesque

Report Horned Grebe sightings to NWTChecklist@ec.gc.ca or www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/checklist

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Small ponds, marshes and wetlands, either natural or man-made
- Build floating nests in shallow water, among willows, cattails, or other plants for protection from predators and shelter from strong waves

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Increases in nest predators such as: American crow, common ravens, black-billed magpie and various gulls, mink and foxes
- Predation on chicks by northern pike and gulls
- Climate change may cause loss of wetlands due to drought or changes in water quality



Did you know?

- Once hatched, chicks are almost immediately able to swim and dive underwater, however, during the first few weeks they often ride on the backs of their parents and can even go underwater with them during dives.
- Horned Grebes are known for eating their own feathers and even feed feathers to young chicks to aid in digestion.
- Horned Grebes spend all of their life stages associated with water, so they are thought to be a good indicator of the health of a particular wetland ecosystem.

COSEWIC

SHORT-EARED OWL

Asio flammeus

SPECIAL CONCERN

DESCRIPTION

Short-eared Owls have small "ear tufts" and black bands that frame their yellow eyes. Females are slightly larger and darker than males and have heavier streaking.

Length: 34 to 42 cm (13.3 to 16.4 in)

The **Short-eared Owl** probably arrives in the Northwest Territories during April or May. They lay an average of seven eggs by mid-June and the owlets hatch in early July. Short-eared Owls probably leave the Northwest Territories by late October. It is uncertain where owls from the Northwest Territories winter. Short-eared Owls have suffered significant declines in western Canada since the 1960s, but recent information suggests current numbers may be stable.



Doug Dance

Report Short-eared Owl sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca



Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- In summer, nest on the ground in grasslands, tundra, bogs, marshes and other open (non-forested) areas
- Areas with abundant small mammals (will move around as small mammal populations fluctuate)

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Limited threats in the Northwest Territories
- Human disturbances during nesting, often results in the nest being deserted



 National Parks
 Short-eared Owl

Did you know?

- One of the best ways to identify a Short-eared Owl is to watch its distinct moth-like flight when hunting (deep wing-beats, occasional hovering, and cutting low over patches of grassland or marsh).
- Short-eared Owls are the only owls that build their own nests.
- They typically search for food at dawn and dusk.

COSEWIC

SHORTJAW CISCO

Coregonus zenithicus

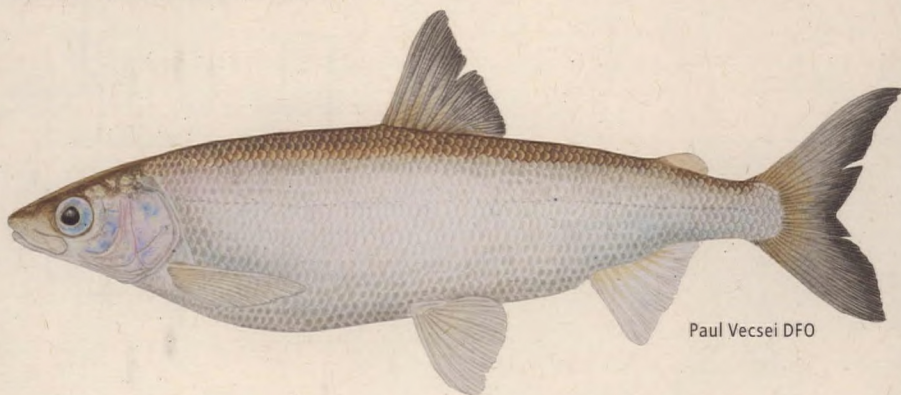
THREATENED

DESCRIPTION

The Shortjaw Cisco has a thin elliptical body that is covered with large, smooth scales. It is mainly silver in colour, with olive or tan colouring on the back and a white belly. Its small toothless mouth has a bottom jaw that is often shorter than, or even with, the upper jaw. The gill rakers (or comb-like structures on the inner surface of the bony arch supporting the gill) number between 32 and 46, which is typically less than other cisco species.

Length: 34 to 42 cm (13.3 to 16.4 in)

Shortjaw Cisco is a member of the same family as trout and salmon. While best known from the Great Lakes, Shortjaw Cisco has been reported in a few deeper lakes from Ontario to the Northwest Territories. Shortjaw Cisco eat shrimp, crustaceans and insects. In turn, they may be eaten by Lake Trout, Northern Pike and Burbot. Shortjaw Cisco spawning occurs in the fall, although there are reports of spring spawning also occurring in Lake Superior. Eggs are deposited on clay bottoms and are left to develop unattended. Lifespan is typically 10-13 years but individuals up to 20 years old have been found in Great Slave Lake.



Report Shortjaw Cisco sightings to WildlifeOBS@gov.nt.ca

Typical Habitat in the Northwest Territories

- Reported in Great Slave Lake and Tazin River. Unconfirmed reports from Great Bear Lake
- Inhabits deep waters, 55-180m (180-590 ft), with reports of movement into shallower waters during the spawning season
- Juveniles have been found in water as shallow as 10m (33 ft.)

Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Great Lakes stocks were drastically reduced by over-fishing and competition from introduced and invasive species
- Additional pressures for Shortjaw Cisco in the Northwest Territories may include habitat degradation, climate change, and hybridization with other ciscoes



- National Parks
 Actual Estimated
 Possible location requiring confirmation

Did you know?

- The Shortjaw Cisco, along with Lake Cisco (previously called Lake Herring), are believed to have ties back to the last ice age in North America, and may have been two of the key colonizing species into lakes created as the glaciers retreated.
- Cisco species identification can be difficult because they can have different shapes and colours even within the same population.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PLANT SPECIES

Drummond Bluebell (*Mertensia drummondii*)
Hairy Rockcress (*Braya pilosa*)
Nahanni Aster (*Symphotrichum nahanniense*)
Raup's Willow (*Salix raupii*)
Banks Island Alkali Grass (*Puccinellia banksiensis*)

GLOBAL CONSERVATION CONCERNS

The **Nahanni Aster** and **Hairy Rockcress** are Northwest Territories plants found nowhere else in the world. The **Raup's Willow**, **Banks Island Alkali Grass**, and **Drummond Bluebell** have very restricted distributions limited to the Northwest Territories and neighbouring areas. These four plants

are globally rare species that have not gone through either the COSEWIC or the federal *Species at Risk Act* listing processes but have gone through the Northwest Territories General Status Ranks process (for more information go to: www.enr.gov.nt.ca).



The Hairy Rockcress is only found on Cape Bathurst



The Nahanni Aster is only found in Nahanni National Park



Drummond Bluebell



Raup's Willow



Banks Island Alkali Grass

Report rare plant locations to sara@gov.nt.ca

RARE PLANTS

Typical Habitat

- Nahanni Aster: only found in four or five moist areas near hot springs in Nahanni National Park Reserve, often near moss mounds, loose tufa (a type of calcite rock) sand and gravel, or along the banks of streams or seeps
- Hairy Rockcress: first found in 1826 during an expedition in search of the Northwest Passage and recently reconfirmed on the Cape Bathurst Peninsula in 2004, and grows in sandy shore areas and eroding bluffs
- Raup's Willow: prefers gravel floodplains and treed bogs and has only been found in two locations in the Northwest Territories, three in the Yukon, three in British Columbia, and two in Alberta
- Banks Island Alkali Grass: found infrequently in frost-heaved, densely vegetated turf tundra near the shores of inland freshwater lakes in three locations in the Northwest Territories, four in Nunavut, and one in Alaska
- Drummond Bluebell: found in sandy and gravelly banks or ridges in six locations in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and in four sites in Alaska



National Parks

- Drummond's Bluebell
- Nahanni Aster
- Banks Island Alkali Grass

- Hairy Rockcress
- Raup's Willow

Did you know?

- Some areas of the Northwest Territories remained glacier-free during the last ice age, which may have allowed species, such as these five plant species, to survive. Knowledge on these species and areas is limited, and more rare plant surveys are needed.

APPENDIX

SPECIES AT RISK IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AT A GLANCE*

RANKING - The NWT General Status Ranking Program has collected information on species since 1999. The rank is a coarse evaluation of the biological status of a species about which are thought to be *Undetermined*, *Vagrant*, *Secure*, or *Sensitive*. Species ranked *May be at Risk* or *At Risk* require more attention or investigation. *May be at Risk* species are the highest priority for more detailed assessment by either the Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee (SARC) or by the national Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). This system is shared by all other jurisdictions in Canada, and assists setting conservation priorities territorially, nationally, and internationally.

ASSESSING - COSEWIC has been using the results of the General Status Ranking Program, along with other information, to prioritize which new species the committee will assess in detail. All species with a General Status Rank of *At Risk* in the NWT have a COSEWIC status of either *Endangered* or *Threatened*. To assess species at risk, COSEWIC evaluates the best available information relevant to assessing a species' risk of extinction or

extirpation, which it may obtain from any credible source of knowledge of the species and its habitat. The evaluation process is independent, open and transparent.

LISTING - Some species in the Northwest Territories are legally listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, the legislation for the protection of species at risk in Canada. At the time of printing, there were no species at risk assessed or listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* processes.



National Parks



Wek'èezhii

Co-Management Lands

MAMMALS

| | | NWT General Status Rank | COSEWIC Assessment | Federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i> list | NWT region where the species is found |
|--|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| | Bowhead Whale (Bering-Chukchi- Beaufort population) | Sensitive | Special Concern | Special Concern | Inuvialuit |
| | Dolphin-Union Caribou | Sensitive | Special Concern | No status | Inuvialuit |
| | Grey Whale (Eastern North Pacific population) | Vagrant | Special Concern | Special Concern | Inuvialuit |
| | Grizzly Bear (Northwestern population) | Sensitive | Special Concern | No status | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho; Sahtu; Gwich'in; Inuvialuit |
| | Mountain Goat | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | Dehcho; Sahtu |
| | Peary Caribou | At Risk | Endangered | No status | Inuvialuit |
| | Polar Bear | Sensitive | Special Concern | No status | Inuvialuit |
| | Wolverine (Western population) | Sensitive | Special Concern | No status | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho; Sahtu; Gwich'in; Inuvialuit |
| | Wood Bison | At Risk | Threatened | Threatened | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho |
| | Woodland Caribou (Boreal population) | Sensitive | Threatened | Threatened | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho; Sahtu; Inuvialuit Gwich'in |
| | Woodland Caribou (Northern Mountain population) | Secure | Special Concern | Special Concern | Dehcho; Sahtu; Gwich'in |
| | American White Pelican | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho |
| | Canada Warbler | At Risk | Threatened | Threatened | Dehcho |
| | Common Nighthawk | At Risk | Threatened | Threatened | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho; Sahtu |
| | Eskimo Curlew | At Risk | Endangered | Endangered | ? |
| | Gray-headed Chickadee (formerly Siberian Tit) | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | Inuvialuit; Gwich'in |
| | Harlequin Duck (Western population) | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | Dehcho; Sahtu; North Slave/Tlicho Gwich'in; Inuvialuit; |

BIRDS

| | | NWT General Status Rank | COSEWIC Assessment | Federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i> list | NWT region where the species is found |
|--------|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| BIRDS | Horned Grebe (Western population) | Secure | Special Concern | No status | Inuvialuit; South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/ Tlicho; Sahtu; Gwich'in |
| | Ivory Gull | At Risk | Endangered | Endangered | Inuvialuit |
| | Olive-sided Flycatcher | At Risk | Threatened | Threatened | South Slave; Dehcho; Sahtu; Gwich'in; Inuvialuit |
| | Peregrine Falcon anatum-tundrius complex** | Sensitive | Special Concern | No status | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho; Sahtu; Gwich'in; Inuvialuit |
| | Peregrine Falcon subspecies anatum** | Not Assessed | Threatened | Threatened | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho; Sahtu; Gwich'in; Inuvialuit |
| | Red Knot (islandica subspecies) | May be at Risk | Special Concern | No status | Inuvialuit |
| | Red Knot (rufa subspecies) | May be at Risk | Endangered | No status | Inuvialuit |
| | Rusty Blackbird | May be at Risk | Special Concern | Special Concern | Inuvialuit; South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/ Tlicho; Sahtu; Gwich'in |
| | Short-eared Owl | Sensitive | Special Concern | No status | South Slave; Dehcho; North Slave/Tlicho; Sahtu; Gwich'in; Inuvialuit |
| | Whooping Crane | At Risk | Endangered | Endangered | South Slave |
| | Yellow Rail | May be at Risk | Special Concern | Special Concern | South Slave; North Slave/Tlicho; Dehcho |
| FISHES | Bull Trout | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | North Slave/Tlicho; Dehcho; Sahtu |
| | Inconnu (Coney; only from the Upper Mackenzie R. and Great Slave Lake) | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | North Slave/Tlicho; South Slave; Dehcho |
| | Northern Wolffish | Undetermined | Threatened | Threatened | Inuvialuit (Marine fish) |
| | Shortjaw Cisco | At Risk | Threatened | No status | Great Slave Lake (North Slave/Tlicho; South Slave); Great Bear Lake (Sahtu) |

| | | NWT General Status Rank | COSEWIC Assessment | Federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i> list | NWT region where the species is found |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES | Canadian Toad | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | South Slave |
| | Northern Leopard Frog (Prairie and Western Boreal population) | Sensitive | Special Concern | Special Concern | South Slave |
| | Red-sided Garter Snake | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | South Slave |
| | Western Toad | May be at Risk | Special Concern | Special Concern | Dehcho |
| INSECTS | Elusive Clubtail (Dragonfly) | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | Dehcho |
| | Forcipate Emerald (Damselfly) | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | South Slave; Dehcho |
| | Treeline Emerald (Damselfly) | May be at Risk | N/A | No status | Inuvialuit |
| PLANTS | 121 species*** (5 with Global Conservation Concern) | May be at Risk | | | |

N/A = not assessed

* No species have been assessed or listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

** In 2007 COSEWIC assessed Peregrine Falcon *anatum* and *tundrius* subspecies as one sub-population complex, and recommended downlisting to a Special Concern on the federal *Species at Risk Act*.

*** A full list of At Risk, May be at Risk plant species can be found at http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/NWT_Species_Monitoring_Infobase.aspx

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Environment Canada

Canadian Wildlife Service

867-669-4765

sara.north@ec.gc.ca

Information on species at risk and the *Species at Risk Act*

www.sararegistry.gc.ca

Information on species at risk in the Prairie and Northern Region

www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/nature/endspecies/index.en.html

Information on species at risk maps

www.sararegistry.gc.ca/sar/index/map_e.cfm

Guidance document on species at risk and environmental assessment

Environmental Assessment Best Practice Guide for Wildlife at Risk in Canada

www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/publications/AbstractTemplate.cfm?lang=e&id=1059

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

204-983-0600

www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.ca

Parks Canada Agency

204-984-2416

www.pc.gc.ca

Species at Risk Funding Sources

www.sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/funding/default_e.cfm

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NWT Species at Risk

There are more than 25 species at risk in the Northwest Territories, including mammals, birds, fish, and amphibians. There are two plant species in the Northwest Territories found nowhere else in the world! Many potential dangers threaten the species at risk in the Northwest Territories and while humans are often the cause, we can also help. Our recovery and conservation efforts however are hindered by our lack of knowledge, specifically regarding where these species live and what threats they face. YOU can help by learning about the species in this guide and reporting your sightings. YOU can help protect the biodiversity of the Northwest Territories for generations to come.