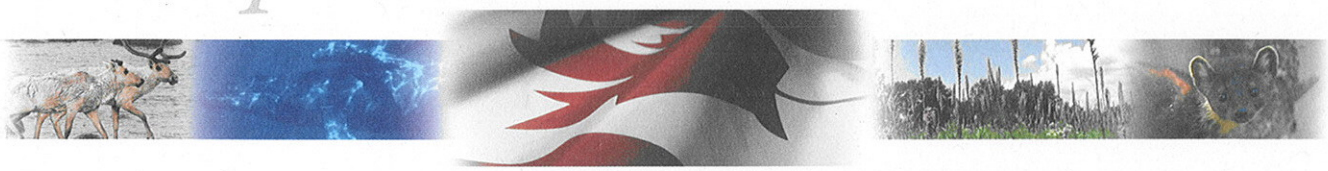
SCF155-3E

Species at Risk Act



Loi sur les espèces en péril

The Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk

There is a long history of cooperation on the conservation of species at risk among federal, provincial and territorial governments. Through joint designation of protected areas, implementation of international wildlife agreements and a collective commitment to conserving biodiversity, governments are working together to protect species and their habitats. The Canadian constitution provides both the federal and the provincial governments with various powers over the protection and recovery of wildlife species and their habitats.

In October 1996, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for wildlife supported the creation of the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, which lays out basic principles of species conservation as well as a number of commitments to protect species at risk. Under the Accord, the ministers recognize that intergovernmental cooperation is crucial to the conservation and protection of species at risk, that they must play a leadership role, and that complementary legislation and programs are essential to provide effective protection for species at risk and their habitats throughout the country. In September 1998, the ministers strengthened provisions of the Accord by placing greater emphasis and recognition on stewardship.

Six provinces – Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador – have specific legislation to protect species at risk. Several provinces have amended existing wildlife laws to deal explicitly with species at risk, while other provinces and territories are working on developing legislation.

The text of the Accord is available through Environment Canada's Web site **www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca**

The Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council Administers the Accord

Under the Accord, the ministers agreed to coordinate their activities through a Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC). The Council, established in 1998, is composed of the federal ministers of the Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, and Heritage, as well as the provincial and territorial ministers who are responsible for the conservation and management of wildlife species.

The role of the CESCC is to:

a) provide general direction on the activities of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), the preparation of recovery strategies and the preparation and implementation of actions plans; and

b) coordinate the activities of the various governments represented on the Council relating to the protection of species at risk.

The Council, which held its inaugural meeting in 1999, meets once a year. A major objective at these annual meetings is to review progress in implementing commitments under the Accord.

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