SCF 155-1E

Species at Risk Act

Loi sur les espèces en péril

Species at Risk Act and Parks Canada

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) aims to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct, and to help species at risk recover. The Act, as well as complementary provincial and territorial legislation as provided for under the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, will protect all wildlife species at risk everywhere in Canada.

Under SARA, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is responsible for all species at risk in national protected heritage areas administered by Parks Canada (i.e. national parks, national marine conservation areas and national historic sites). SARA is another tool for Parks Canada to protect and manage these species and their habitats in addition to existing legislation, including the *Canada National Parks Act* and the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*.

There are 40 national parks in the Canadian national park system, covering an area of 244,566 km^2, with each park representing a natural area of Canadian significance. These lands are protected for the benefit, education and enjoyment of all Canadians, and are to be maintained unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Individuals of over half the species at risk in Canada are found, for at least part of their life cycle, in national parks. Parks Canada protects and manages these species at risk, along with all other species of plants and animals on its lands.

Under the *Canada National Parks Act*, the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity is the first priority in all aspects of park management. A park has ecological integrity if its ecosystems are characteristic of the natural region the park represents, and the park's biological communities, abiotic components, rates of change and supporting processes are intact and able to persist into the future.

Maintenance of the composition and abundance of native species is a key element in achieving ecological integrity, which makes protection of species at risk a priority in park management.

Parks Canada And Species At Risk

In order to protect and manage the large numbers of species at risk that are found within national parks and other national protected heritage areas, Parks Canada is:

- collecting detailed information on their distribution and conservation status;
- leading recovery teams and developing recovery strategies for species at risk that are found either exclusively or predominantly within national parks and other protected heritage areas (e.g. Banff Springs Snail, Seaside Centipede Lichen, Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake) and participating in recovery teams for other species at risk whose distributions overlap national parks;
- supporting priority actions identified in recovery strategies for species at risk;
- educating Canadians on species at risk and funding priority public education projects that lead to the recovery of species at risk.

Working In Partnership

The partnership approach is the very foundation of SARA. The Act is intended to build on and support the many efforts already under way across the country to protect wildlife species and help them recover. SARA is specifically designed

Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

to give stakeholders the first opportunity to protect critical habitat through voluntary conservation efforts, encouraged by incentives. Parks Canada has also embraced the partnership approach, and parks across the country work with federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, as well as with Aboriginal organizations, industry and the conservation sector towards the recovery and maintenance of healthy populations of species at risk. This approach is particularly critical since many species travel beyond park boundaries, and the stresses affecting species at risk come both from within and outside of national parks.

For more information:

http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/nature/eep-sar/species-especes_1_E.asp