

COSEWIC
Rapid Review of Classification

on the

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus

in Canada

EXTIRPATED
2021

COSEWIC
Committee on the Status
of Endangered Wildlife
in Canada



COSEPAC
Comité sur la situation
des espèces en péril
au Canada

The Rapid Review of Classification process is used by COSEWIC for Wildlife Species that have not changed status since the previous COSEWIC assessment. Readily available information from the previous status report or status appraisal summary, recovery documents, recovery teams, jurisdictions, conservation data centres, and species experts was initially reviewed by the relevant Species Specialist Subcommittees before being reviewed by COSEWIC. The following is a summary of the relevant information.

COSEWIC Rapid Review of Classification are working documents used in assigning the status of wildlife species suspected of being at risk in Canada. This document may be cited as follows:

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Production note:

COSEWIC acknowledges Andrew G. Horn for writing the rapid review of classification on the Greater Prairie-Chicken, *Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*, in Canada, prepared under contract with Environment and Climate Change Canada. This rapid review of classification was overseen and edited by Marcel Gahbauer, Co-chair of the COSEWIC Birds Specialist Subcommittee.

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Également disponible en français sous le titre Examen rapide de la classification du COSEPAC sur le Tétraz des prairies (*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*) au Canada.

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COSEWIC Assessment Summary

Assessment Summary – November 2021

Common name

Greater Prairie-Chicken

Scientific name

Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus

Status

Extirpated

Reason for designation

This grassland bird formerly occurred in mixed and tallgrass prairie habitat in parts of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, but has not been observed in Canada since 1987. Although it persists in the Great Plains of the United States, it is rare and declining in the states bordering Canada, making immigration from there unlikely. Key threats to re-establishment of the species in Canada are loss and degradation of habitat from agricultural expansion and fire suppression, and hybridization with Sharp-tailed Grouse.

Occurrence

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario

Status history

Last reported in 1987. Designated Endangered in April 1978. Status re-examined and designated Extirpated in April 1990. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2000, November 2009, and December 2021.



COSEWIC
Rapid Review of Classification

PREFACE

Greater Prairie-Chicken expanded the northern limits of its range in the Prairie provinces after European settlement of the prairies and large-scale elimination of Plains Bison (*Bison bison bison*), after which its range retracted again (Johnson *et al.* 2020). The previous status report on Greater Prairie-Chicken indicated that the last sighting of this species in Canada was in 1987 (COSEWIC 2009), based on Houston (2002). Since then, there have been some unconfirmed reports, possibly of escaped birds (Taylor *et al.* 2003), but none that are considered to be reliable (eBird 2021; Gutsell pers. comm. 2020; Nicholson pers. comm. 2020; Poole pers. comm. 2021). However, in recent years there have been some observations in northern Minnesota, in one case as close as <2 km south of the Manitoba border (eBird 2021). A draft recovery strategy was initiated in 2017 but has not yet been completed. No formal threat assessment has been conducted for this species in Canada.

Status History:

Last reported in 1987. Designated Endangered in April 1978. Status re-examined and designated Extirpated in April 1990. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2000, November 2009, and December 2021.

Updated Map:

Not required, as there are no recent changes in distribution in Canada; see previous assessment (COSEWIC 2009).

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus

Greater Prairie-Chicken

Tétras des prairies

Range of occurrence in Canada (province/territory/ocean): Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario

Status and Reasons for Designation:

Status: Extirpated	Alpha-numeric codes: Not applicable
Reasons for designation: This grassland bird formerly occurred in mixed and tallgrass prairie habitat in parts of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, but has not been observed in Canada since 1987. Although it persists in the Great Plains of the United States, it is rare and declining in the states bordering Canada, making immigration from there unlikely. Key threats to re-establishment of the species in Canada are loss and degradation of habitat from agricultural expansion and fire suppression, and hybridization with Sharp-tailed Grouse.	

Applicability of Criteria

Criterion A (Decline in Total Number of Mature Individuals): Not applicable. No mature individuals detected in Canada since 1987.
Criterion B (Small Distribution Range and Decline or Fluctuation): Not applicable. No mature individuals detected in Canada since 1987.
Criterion C (Small and Declining Number of Mature Individuals): Not applicable. No mature individuals detected in Canada since 1987.
Criterion D (Very Small or Restricted Population): Not applicable. No mature individuals detected in Canada since 1987.
Criterion E (Quantitative Analysis): Not done. No mature individuals detected in Canada since 1987.

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WRITER OF RAPID REVIEW OF CLASSIFICATION

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COSEWIC HISTORY

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) was created in 1977 as a result of a recommendation at the Federal-Provincial Wildlife Conference held in 1976. It arose from the need for a single, official, scientifically sound, national listing of wildlife species at risk. In 1978, COSEWIC designated its first species and produced its first list of Canadian species at risk. Species designated at meetings of the full committee are added to the list. On June 5, 2003, the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) was proclaimed. SARA establishes COSEWIC as an advisory body ensuring that species will continue to be assessed under a rigorous and independent scientific process.

COSEWIC MANDATE

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) assesses the national status of wild species, subspecies, varieties, or other designatable units that are considered to be at risk in Canada. Designations are made on native species for the following taxonomic groups: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, arthropods, molluscs, vascular plants, mosses, and lichens.

COSEWIC MEMBERSHIP

COSEWIC comprises members from each provincial and territorial government wildlife agency, four federal entities (Canadian Wildlife Service, Parks Canada Agency, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Federal Biodiversity Information Partnership, chaired by the Canadian Museum of Nature), three non-government science members and the co-chairs of the species specialist subcommittees and the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge subcommittee. The Committee meets to consider status reports on candidate species.

DEFINITIONS (2021)

Wildlife Species	A species, subspecies, variety, or geographically or genetically distinct population of animal, plant or other organism, other than a bacterium or virus, that is wild by nature and is either native to Canada or has extended its range into Canada without human intervention and has been present in Canada for at least 50 years.
Extinct (X)	A wildlife species that no longer exists.
Extirpated (XT)	A wildlife species no longer existing in the wild in Canada, but occurring elsewhere.
Endangered (E)	A wildlife species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.
Threatened (T)	A wildlife species likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.
Special Concern (SC)*	A wildlife species that may become a threatened or an endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.
Not at Risk (NAR)**	A wildlife species that has been evaluated and found to be not at risk of extinction given the current circumstances.
Data Deficient (DD)***	A category that applies when the available information is insufficient (a) to resolve a species' eligibility for assessment or (b) to permit an assessment of the species' risk of extinction.

* Formerly described as "Vulnerable" from 1990 to 1999, or "Rare" prior to 1990.

** Formerly described as "Not In Any Category", or "No Designation Required."

*** Formerly described as "Indeterminate" from 1994 to 1999 or "ISIBD" (insufficient scientific information on which to base a designation) prior to 1994. Definition of the (DD) category revised in 2006.



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