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Species Status Advisory Committee Activity Plan April 2026-March 2029

Prepared by the Species Status Advisory Committee

Message from the Chairperson

As Interim Chairperson of the Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC), I am pleased to provide the three-year activity plan for April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2029. This plan meets the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for category three government entities. The strategic directions of the Provincial Government related to the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands (FAL) and the responsibilities of the SSAC under the **Endangered Species Act** and the **Species Status Advisory Committee Regulations** have been considered in the preparation of this plan.

This plan provides an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the SSAC and objectives to be accomplished each year. As Interim Chairperson, I attest that the SSAC is accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific objective contained herein.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "André Arsenault". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. André Arsenault
Interim Chairperson, SSAC

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1. Overview

The SSAC was established in 2003 under the authority of section 6 of the **Endangered Species Act** (the **Act**). The SSAC was established to review the status of species at risk, to advise the Minister of FAL (the Minister) on matters related to their designation and re-designation and is governed by the **Species Status Advisory Committee Regulations** (the Regulations). The SSAC bases its decisions on the best available scientific data and on traditional and local ecological knowledge about a species. The SSAC is also responsible for commissioning and reviewing species status reports, developing templates for status reports to facilitate assessment, and maintaining priority lists of species requiring status review. Furthermore, the SSAC is responsible for reviewing status designations every 10 years for previously assessed species.

The SSAC consists of up to nine members appointed by the Minister. Members serve for a period of two or three years and are eligible for reappointment. The SSAC meets at least once every calendar year. Members may participate in meetings via telephone or other telecommunication devices.

The Regulations outline the minimum qualifications for individuals appointed to the SSAC including:

- Post-graduate degree from a recognized educational institution in a relevant biological science such as conservation biology, ecology, wildlife management or equivalent expertise in a relevant biological science acquired through a combination of education and experience and current knowledge of relevant biological science; or
- Extensive and current traditional ecological or local knowledge about species in the province and their habitat.

Individuals must also have:

- General knowledge about the species of the province;
- Detailed knowledge of a taxonomic group such as birds, mammals, vascular plants, invertebrates; or
- Detailed knowledge of the species of a specific geographic region.

Committee members serve as volunteers; however, as per subsection 6(5) of the **Act**, travel and related costs are provided for within the budget of FAL.

Currently, the SSAC consists of the following members:

Name	Title	Expertise	Appointment Date	Expiry Date	Place of Residence
Arsenault, Dr. André	Chair, Interim	Lichens, Bryophytes, Forest Ecology	2026-02-19	2028-02-19	Corner Brook
Goudie, Jim	Member	Labrador and Indigenous Knowledge	2024-07-26	2027-07-26	Postville
Langor, Dr. David	Member	Terrestrial Arthropods, Forest Ecology	2024-08-06	2026-08-06	Edmonton, Alberta
Marino, Dr. Paul	Member	Mosses, Terrestrial Invertebrates	2026-02-19	2028-02-19	Outer Cove
Meades, Susan	Member	Vascular Plants	2024-07-26	2027-07-26	Aweres Twp., Ontario
Peers, Dr. Michael	Member	Terrestrial Mammals; Climate Change; Population Ecology	2025-03-28	2027-03-28	St. John's
Whitaker, Dr. Darroch	Member	Birds	2024-07-24	2027-07-24	Rocky Harbour
Vacant ¹	Member				
Vacant ¹	Member				

¹ Position being advertised through the Public Service Commission.

The SSAC receives no revenue. Anticipated expenditures for year one of the three-year plan (fiscal 2026-2027) are anticipated to total approximately \$15,000, to be divided between three to five priority projects. These expenditures are required to support priority species assessments in Newfoundland and Labrador, through a combination of field data collection and report writing. Expenditures over the two subsequent years are expected to remain constant or increase slightly. All requests for budgetary spending will be submitted to FAL.

The number of new reports and re-assessment reports that can be commissioned in 2026-2029 will ultimately depend upon availability of funds, data and author availability, the quality of draft reports received and the capacity of the SSAC to review and assess reports. The SSAC continues to seek to identify ways to optimize funds available for assessments and to coordinate multi-species field data collections where possible.

For more information on the SSAC, or to request this plan in an alternate format, please contact us at the following:

SSAC Secretariat
Wildlife Division
Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands
P.O. Box 2007
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Corner Brook, NL A2H 7S1
Phone: 709-637-2025
Email: jessicahumber@gov.nl.ca
Web: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fal/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/>

2. Mandate

The mandate of the SSAC is derived from Section 6 of the **Endangered Species Act**, (Annex A), which provides for an advisory committee to review and recommend to the Minister species designations and re-designations.

3. Vision

The vision of the SSAC is the perpetuation of viable wild populations of all native species in Newfoundland and Labrador.

4. Line of Business

The SSAC undertakes the following line of business: advises the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on the designation and re-designation of species under the Act.

5. Primary Clients

The SSAC identifies its primary clients as:

- All native species of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador via the responsible Minister;
- The public, including Indigenous peoples of the province; and
- Industry and other land users.

6. Issue

This section of the plan outlines the key priorities of the SSAC for the period April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2029. As the focus of the SSAC will remain the same for the entire planning period, the SSAC will report on the same objective in each of the three years. Progress towards achieving the objective will be reported on in annual reports.

Issue: Species Status Assessments and Recommendations

The role of the SSAC is to: develop and maintain a list of priority wildlife species of conservation concern requiring detailed status assessments; commission status reports for assessments on these species; conduct criteria-based status assessments, and recommend to the responsible Minister, status designations for assessed species based on the best available scientific, traditional and local ecological knowledge. This role will remain consistent throughout the three-year planning period. Under the **Act**, species can be assessed and recommendations can be forwarded to the Minister under the following five categories: Vulnerable, Threatened, Endangered, Extirpated or Extinct. The SSAC may also assess a species as 'not at risk' or 'data deficient' and in these instances must notify the agency responsible for the species' management. Furthermore, the SSAC is responsible for reviewing status designations every 10 years for previously assessed species and for reviewing national species assessments for provincial applicability, where needed.

Objective: By March 31 of each year, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have maintained a priority list of species for status assessment and have initiated status assessments and/or status reviews for species of conservation concern.

Annex A: Mandate under the Endangered Species Act

6. (1) A species status advisory committee is established to review and recommend to the minister designations and re-designations of species.

(2) The SSAC shall base its decisions on the best scientific knowledge available to it and on traditional ecological and local ecological knowledge about a species.

11. (1) The SSAC shall

(a) develop and submit to the Minister, criteria for the designation of a species under Sections 7 and 9;

(b) develop criteria for species status reports which facilitate a review of the status of a species;

(c) commission and receive status reports;

(d) make recommendations to the Minister about designating species and the protection of critical and recovery habitat;

(e) refer concerns about the status of species to COSEWIC where the species is of national importance;

(f) maintain a list of species for future review of their status;

(g) conduct periodic reviews of the status of designated species, at least once every 10 years after the designation;

(h) submit a report to the minister on the activities of the committee in the preceding calendar year, before April 15 of each year; and

(i) perform other duties that may be prescribed in the regulations made under subsection 44(1).

11. (2) the SSAC shall make the following documents available to the public:

(a) species status reports;

(b) criteria for designation of a species; and

(c) annual reports submitted under paragraph 11(1)(h) within 30 days after the report is released to the minister.

12. (1) the SSAC shall consult with groups or individuals that have traditional and local ecological knowledge about a species and its habitat.

(2) Traditional ecological and local ecological knowledge shall be considered by the SSAC in evaluating the status of a species.

Source: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/e10-1.htm>