


**Species Status Advisory Committee
Activity Plan
April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008**

April 10, 2007

Message from the Chairperson

I am pleased to provide the Activity Plan for the Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC). This plan was developed in consideration of the strategic directions of Government, as communicated by the Minister responsible for the Department of Environment and Conservation. Given the Committee's current mandate, the SSAC provides support for, but does not contribute directly to, the Department's strategic directions.

The SSAC is a category 3 government entity and as such is required to provide performance plans based on activities. This plan provides an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the SSAC and goals to be accomplished in 2007/08. This one-year plan is a transitional plan and will be followed by a three-year plan in accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act. As chair of the SSAC, I attest that the SSAC is accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific goals contained herein.



Christine Doucet
Chair, SSAC

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1. Overview

The *Endangered Species Act, 2001*, under Section 6, provides for an Advisory Committee to review the status of species at risk, and to advise the minister on matters related to their designation and re-designation. This Committee consists of up to nine (9) members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. Members serve for a period of two (2) or three (3) years; and are eligible for re-appointment. The committee meets at least once (1) annually. Members may participate in meetings via telephone or other telecommunication device.

Minimal qualifications for the appointment of individuals to SSAC include:

- 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;
- extensive and current traditional ecological or local knowledge about species in the province and their habitat;
- 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, travel, accommodations, and related costs are provided for within the current account budget of Wildlife Division, Department of Environment and Conservation. During the fiscal year 2006-07, SSAC was allocated \$20,000 from the budget of the Biodiversity and Endangered Species Program.

2. Mandate

The mandate of the Species Status Advisory Committee is derived from section 6 of the *Endangered Species Act, 2001*, which provides for an Advisory Committee to review and recommend to the Minister designations and re-designations of species.

3. Line of Business

The Species Status Advisory Committee undertakes the following line of business:

1. Advises government on the designation and re-designation of species under the Endangered Species Act.

The Committee's duties include (Please refer to Appendix A for the legislated mandate of the Species Status Advisory Committee in its entirety):

- developing and submitting to the minister, criteria for the designation of a species under sections 7 and 9,
- developing criteria for species status reports which facilitate a review of the status of the species,
- commissioning and receiving species status reports,
- making recommendations to the minister about designating species and protecting critical and recovery habitat,
- referring concerns about the status of species to COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), where the species is of national importance,
- maintaining a list of species for future review of their status,
- conducting periodic reviews of the status of designated species at least once every 10 years after the designation, and
- submitting a report to the minister on its activities in the preceding calendar year, before April 15 of each year.

4. Values

The following values explain the character of the Committee. The following action statements indicate how the Committee intends to ensure that its values are visible throughout its activities.

Values	Action Statements
Inclusion	The Committee will collect and consider both scientific and traditional knowledge for the purposes of advising the responsible minister on matter related to the designation of species.
Accountability	The Committee will provide accurate and timely information to the responsible minister.
Responsibility	The Committee will work to ensure that the interests of wild species are protected to the best extent possible.
Scientific Knowledge	The Committee will diligently evaluate the information provided to ensure accurate assessments of the status of species

5. Primary Clients

The Species Status Advisory Committee identifies its primary clients as those individuals, groups, or organizations who are the principal users and/or beneficiaries of the Committee's lines of business. As such, the Committee's primary clients are;

- the responsible Minister
- the people of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Newfoundland and Labrador's species at risk

6. Vision

The vision of the Species Status Advisory Committee is the perpetuation of healthy and sustainable populations of all native species in Newfoundland and Labrador.

7. Mission Statement

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area for the committee over the next two planning cycles. It represents the key longer-term results that the committee is working towards and includes the measures and indicators that will be used to judge the committee's success.

Mission: By 2011, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have made recommendations to the responsible minister about the conservation status of a targeted selection of high priority species representing diverse taxonomic groups.

Measure: Recommendations are made.

Indicators:

- Priority lists are developed
- Status reports on species are commissioned
- Species status is assessed
- Recommendations are provided to the responsible minister
- Guidelines for consistent production and review of status reports are annually reviewed (and revised if necessary)
- Evaluation criteria for the assessment of species status is annually reviewed (and revised if necessary)
- Guidelines for the evaluation of status reports are implemented

8. Goals

The goals represent the stage that the committee can expect to have reached at the end of the first planning cycle. The goals represent the primary focus of the committee for 2007/08 and include performance measures and indicators to facilitate the evaluation of the committee's success.

Goal 1: By 2008, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have processed at least 10 species status reports.

Measure: Processed reports

Indicators:

- Number of reports commissioned
- Number of species assessed
- Recommendations provided to the responsible minister

Goal 2: By 2008, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have evaluated existing priority lists and developed new priority lists for future status assessments.

Measure 1: Existing priority lists are evaluated

Indicators:

- If required, existing priority lists are revised
- If required, a report is prepared summarizing the evaluation results of existing priority lists

Measure 2: New priority lists are developed

- A report is prepared to identify taxa specific priority lists for further species status assessments

Goal 3: By 2008, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have reviewed assessment guidelines and evaluation criteria.

Measure: Guidelines are reviewed

Indicators:

- If required, a report is prepared summarizing the review of the guidelines for the production of species assessment reports
- If required, the guidelines for the production of species assessment reports is revised
- If required, a report is prepared summarizing the results of the Committee's review of existing evaluation criteria
- If required, existing evaluation criteria are revised and submitted to the responsible minister

10. Appendix A: Legislated Mandate

Mandate (Source: *Endangered Species Act*)

Advisory Committee

6. The Species Status Advisory Committee is continued for the purpose of advising the minister on matters in relation to the designation and re-designation of species at risk and for the better administration of this Act.

Powers of Committee

11. (1) The Advisory Committee may examine the status of any native species in the province.

Duties of Committee

11 (1). (a) The advisory Committee shall develop and submit to the minister, criteria for the designation of a species;

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

11 (2). The advisory Committee shall make status reports, criteria for designation of a species and annual reports available to the public.

12. The committee shall consult with groups or individuals that have traditional and local ecological knowledge about a species and its habitat and shall consider such knowledge when evaluating the status of species.