

**Species Status Advisory Committee
Activity Plan
April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2011**

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 objectives to be accomplished between 2008 and 2011. As co-chair of the SSAC, I attest that the SSAC is accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific objectives contained herein.



Nathalie Djan-Chékar
Co-Chair, SSAC
May 29th, 2008

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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 twice a year. 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. Annual funding is anticipated to be approximately \$20, 000 from the budget of the 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 (please refer to Appendix A for sections of the act relevant to the mandate of the Species Status Advisory Committee in their entirety).

The Committee's duties include:

- developing, and submitting to the minister, criteria for the designation of a species
- 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
- 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 matters related to the designation of species and the protection of critical and recovery habitat.
Accountability	The Committee will provide accurate and timely information to the responsible minister using best available knowledge and science.
Responsibility	The Committee will work to ensure that the interests of wild species are protected.
Integrity	The Committee will diligently evaluate the information available to ensure accurate assessments of the status of species

5. Primary Clients

The Species Status Advisory Committee identifies its primary clients as:

- all native species of Newfoundland and Labrador
- the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador via the responsible Minister
- the public

6. Vision

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

7. Mission Statement

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area for the committee over two planning cycles (2007-2008 and 2008-2011). 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. The mission statement reflects the intent of the Province's *Endangered Species Act* to have the SSAC "*review and recommend to the minister designations and re-designations of species.*"

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 and reassessed as necessary
- Recommendations are provided to the responsible minister
- Guidelines for consistent production and review of status reports are annually reviewed (and revised if necessary)
- Evaluation of criteria for the assessment of species status is annually reviewed (and revised if necessary)
- Guidelines for the evaluation of status reports are implemented

8. Objectives

The following objectives identify the priorities of the SSAC for fiscal years 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11. The objectives include performance measures and indicators to facilitate the evaluation of the committee's success.

Objective 1: The Species Status Advisory Committee will have processed 2 to 5 species status reports annually, depending on availability of resources and expertise.

Measure: Processed reports

Indicators:

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

Objective 2: 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:

- Existing priority lists are revised as necessary.
- Existing priority lists are published in the annual report and made public.

Measure 2: New assessment lists are developed, as required.

Indicators:

- An assessment list is prepared to identify taxa for species status assessments.
- The assessment list is published in the annual report and made public.

Objective 3: The Species Status Advisory Committee will have reviewed report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria and revised them as required.

Measure: Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed and revised

Indicators:

- Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed.
- Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are revised as required.
- Any revisions to the report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are published in the annual report and made public.

10. Appendix A: Legislation relevant to Mandate

(Source: *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.