



# Species Status Advisory Committee Activity Plan 2023-2026

Prepared by the Species Status Advisory Committee

## Message from the Chairperson

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As Chairperson of the Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC), I am pleased to provide the activity plan for April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2026. This plan meets the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for a category three entity. The strategic directions of Government related to the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA) 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 between 2023 and 2026. As Chairperson, I attest that the SSAC is accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific objectives contained herein.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Christine Campbell  
Chairperson, SSAC

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# 1. Overview

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The SSAC was established in 2003 under the authority of section 6 of the **Endangered Species Act** (the Act) that provides for an Advisory Committee to review the status of species at risk, and to advise the Minister of FFA (the Minister) on matters related to their designation and re-designation. 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 re-appointment. The committee meets at least once every calendar year. Members may participate in meetings via telephone or other telecommunication device.

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 FFA.

The SSAC receives no revenue. Anticipated expenditures for year one of the three-year plan (fiscal 2023-2024) are anticipated to total approximately \$15,000, to be divided between three to four 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 the FFA.

The number of new reports and re-assessment reports that can be commissioned in 2023-2026 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.

The current SSAC is made up of the following members:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Expertise</b>	<b>Appointment Date</b>	<b>Expiry Date</b>	<b>Place of Residence</b>
Arsenault, Dr. André	Member	Lichens, Bryophytes, Forest Ecology	5/13/2021	5/13/2023 <sup>1</sup>	Corner Brook
Campbell, Dr. Christine	Chair	Aquatic Invertebrates	5/13/2021	5/13/2023 <sup>1</sup>	Corner Brook
Goudie, Jim	Member	Labrador and Indigenous Knowledge	5/13/2021	5/13/2024	Postville
Knight, Dr. Tom	Member	Freshwater Fish/ Terrestrial Mammals	5/13/2021	5/13/2023 <sup>1</sup>	Steady Brook
Langor, Dr. David	Member	Terrestrial Arthropods, Forest Ecology	8/5/2022	8/5/2024	Edmonton, Alberta
Marino, Dr. Paul	Member	Mosses, Terrestrial Invertebrates	5/13/2021	5/13/2023 <sup>1</sup>	Outer Cove
Meades, Susan	Member	Vascular Plants	5/13/2021	5/13/2024	Aweres Twp., Ontario
Whitaker, Dr. Darroch	Member	Birds	5/13/2021	5/13/2024	Rocky Harbour
Vacant <sup>2</sup>	Member	Plants/Molluscs			

<sup>1</sup> Members are continuing to serve until reappointed or replaced as per the Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> This position is advertised through the Public Service Commission.

For more information on the SSAC, please contact us at the below:

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Web: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/publications/wildlife/#ssac>

## **2. Mandate**

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

## **3. Line of Business**

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

Advises the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on the designation and re-designation of species under the Act.

## **4. Primary Clients**

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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.

## **5. Vision**

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

## **6. Issue**

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This section of the plan outlines the key priorities of the SSAC for the period April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2026. As the focus of the SSAC will remain the same for the planning period, the SSAC will report on the same objective and indicators in each of the three years. Progress towards achieving three-year objectives and associated indicators will be reported on in annual reports.

## **Issue: Species Status Assessments and Recommendations**

The role of the SSAC is to develop a list of priority wildlife species of conservation concern requiring detailed status assessments, to commission status reports for assessments on these species, and to 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 to review status designations every 10 years for previously assessed species and to review national species assessments for provincial applicability, where needed.

**Objective:** By March 31, 2024, 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.

### **Indicators:**

- Reviewed list of candidates for species status assessment.
- Updated priority lists with additional species of concern based on new information and removal of species deemed to no longer be of concern.
- Commissioned field work for species data gathering and/or written and reviewed species status reports.
- Conducted criteria-based status assessments where final status reports have been received and have been deemed acceptable for assessment.
- Reviewed new national status recommendations to determine if there is a need to examine the provincial status of those species.
- Provided recommendations to the responsible Minister.

## **7. 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>