



Arctic Hare — © Steve Sayles



Woolly Arnica — Michael Burzynski



Griseom's Arnica — Michael Burzynski

SSAC Activity Report

2011-2012

Prepared by the Species Status Advisory Committee

**Annual Activity Report
Species Status Advisory Committee
2011-2012**

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Message from the Chairperson

I am pleased to provide the Annual Activity Report for the Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC). The mandate of the SSAC is derived from section 6 of the *Endangered Species Act*, 2001, which provides for an Advisory Committee to review the status of species at risk, to recommend to the Minister, designations and re-designations of species and to advise the Minister on related designation matters. 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, in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, is required to provide annual performance reports based on activities in the preceding calendar year. Such a report is also required of the SSAC under the *Endangered Species Act*, 2001. This report presents an overview of the SSAC and our accomplished objectives in 2011-12. It is the intention of the SSAC to report on the same Objectives and Indicators in each year, thereby providing a reference for the following year. As Chair of the SSAC for the period 2011-12, I am pleased to report that the committee successfully achieved all objectives set forth in its activity plan for 2011-12. I also attest that the SSAC is accountable for the preparation of this report and for the results explained herein.



Dr. Christine Campbell
Chair, SSAC
June 28, 2012

Overview of the Committee

a. Key Statistics

Two new reports were commissioned and reviewed in 2011-2012, with submission to the Government to occur in 2012-2013. A report commissioned in 2008-2009 went through final review in 2011-2012. Ongoing fieldwork is being completed for a report commissioned in 2010-2011, with final review expected in 2012-2013. Also, a recommendation for a species assessed 'Data Deficient' was submitted to the Director of Wildlife during the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

b. Representation

This SSAC 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.

At the end of 2011-12, the committee had seven members:

- Dr. Christine Campbell (Chair) - Aquatic invertebrates
- Dr. Luise Hermanutz - Plant ecology, conservation biology
- Dr. Thomas Knight – Freshwater fish, small mammals
- Dr. Paul Marino – Mosses, terrestrial invertebrates
- Mr. John E. Maunder - General natural history, plants, invertebrates
- Dr. William Montevecchi - Birds
- Mr. Mac Pitcher – General natural history, lichens

Committee members serve as volunteers. They normally meet in person twice a year. Meetings may also be held via telephone or other telecommunication devices. The committee normally contracts the preparation of species status reports to private consultants.

The secretariat to the SSAC is provided by the Wildlife Division and managed by:

Endangered Species and Biodiversity Program, Wildlife Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
PO Box 2007, 117 Riverside Dr., Corner Brook, NL, A2H 7S1

c. Description of Revenues and Expenditures

A total of \$12,078.48 of an allocated \$15,000 was spent on SSAC related activities in 2011-12. A breakdown: \$4000.00 on reports, \$676.35 on catering, room rental and meeting supplies, and \$7402.13 on travel (airfare, hotels, meals).

Travel, accommodations and related costs, as well as contractual fees, are provided for within the account budget of the Wildlife Division, Department of Environment and Conservation.

d. Lines 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:

- developing, and submitting to the Minister, criteria for the designation of a species
- developing criteria for species status reports that 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), when 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

Copies of Annual Reports and Status Reports can be found on the Wildlife Division's website at:

<http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html>

e. 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.

f. Vision

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

g. Mission

By 2017, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have made recommendations to the responsible minister about the conservation status of high priority species based on species status assessments using the best available scientific, traditional and local ecological knowledge.

Highlights and Accomplishments

The committee currently consists of seven members.

Two additional members, with expertise in the area of insects or the Labrador region, are currently being sought.

The committee met twice in 2011-12: April 11-12, 2011 in Rocky Harbour and February 21-22, 2012 in St. John's.

The committee met all its objectives for the 2011-2012 year.

Activities

The activities of the Species Status Advisory Committee were guided by the *Endangered Species Act* and the *Species Status Advisory Committee Regulations*; this has not only been reflected in the committee's line of business but also in the objectives, measures and indicators established in their initial Activity Plan. Appendix A presents the appropriate portions of the legislation that were used to establish the committee's objectives, measures and indicators. The SSAC reported on the same Objectives and Indicators in each year, which provided a reference for the following year.

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

Measure: Processed species status reports

Indicators	Accomplishments
Number of reports commissioned and reviewed	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Arctic Hare (<i>Lepus arcticus</i>); author Dr. Brian Hearn, commissioned in 2008-2009, reviewed and edited in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, final review and assessment completed in 2011-2012.2. Red Pine (<i>Pinus resinosa</i>) – author Bruce Roberts, commissioned in 2010-2011, edited and additional fieldwork completed in 2011-2012, final review and assessment expected 2012-2013.3. Wrinkled Shield Lichen (<i>Pannaria lurida</i> ssp. <i>russellii</i>), field report commissioned in 2009-2010, field work completed by Emilie Kissler in 2010-2011, seeking status report author.4. Griscom's Arnica (<i>Arnica griscomii</i> subsp. <i>griscomii</i>) – author Michael Burzynski, commissioned in 2011-2012, review and assessment completed in 2011-2012, final edits to be completed in 2012-2013.5. Woolly Arnica (<i>Arnica angustifolia</i> subsp. <i>tomentosa</i>) – author Michael Burzynski, commissioned in 2011-2012, review and assessment completed in 2011-2012, final edits to be

	completed in 2012-2013.
Number of species assessed	1. Arctic Hare (<i>Lepus arcticus</i>) status assessed in 2011-2012. 2. Griscom's Arnica (<i>Arnica griscomii</i> subsp. <i>griscomii</i>) status assessed in 2011-2012. 3. Woolly Arnica (<i>Arnica angustifolia</i> subsp. <i>tomentosa</i>) status assessed in 2011-2012.
Recommendations provided to the responsible Minister	Recommendations for two species assessed in 2011-2012 will be forwarded to the Minister in 2012-2013. Final editing of the Griscom's Arnica and Woolly Arnica reports is required prior to submission to the Minister in Fall 2012.

Objective 2: The Species Status Advisory Committee will have re-evaluated the criteria for developing priority lists, re-evaluated existing priority lists, and developed new priority lists for future status assessments.

Measure 1: Criteria for developing priority lists are re-evaluated

Indicators	Accomplishments
Criteria for developing priority lists are reviewed.	During the SSAC meeting in February 2012, the committee determined that it had underestimated the amount of time needed for review of criteria for the development of priority lists, and so did not complete a full review. The committee completed a brief review and committed to a full review of the criteria in 2012-2013.
Formal records of criteria met for each priority species are developed and kept on file.	Records of criteria met for each priority species are included in the SSAC meeting minutes from 2011-2012.

Measure 2: Existing priority lists are re-evaluated

Indicators	Accomplishments
Existing priority lists are revised as necessary	Completed for 2011-2012. Taxonomic priority lists including those for lichen, vascular plants, mosses, birds, freshwater fish, and mammals were reviewed by members and revised as necessary.
Existing priority lists are published in the Annual Report and made public.	Priority lists will be included in future Annual Reports. Existing priority lists have been provided for posting to the SSAC website. http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html

Measure 3: New assessment lists are developed, as required.

Indicators	Accomplishments
A list of candidates for species status assessment is developed annually	The 2011-2012 assessment list developed by the SSAC includes Mountain Bladder Fern (<i>Cystopteris montana</i>), Eastern Star Sedge (<i>Carex radiata</i>), Ascending Moonwort (<i>Botrychium ascendens</i>), Common Dodder (<i>Cuscuta gronovii</i>), Northern Twayblade (<i>Listera</i>

using new priority lists.	<i>borealis</i>), Menzie's Rattlesnake Plantain (<i>Goodyera oblongifolia</i>), Hops (<i>Humulus lupulus</i> var. <i>lupuloides</i>), Mermaidweed (<i>Proserpinaca pectinata</i>), Matchstick Lichen (<i>Pilophorus fibula</i>), Wrinkled Shield Lichen (<i>Pannaria lurida</i> subsp. <i>russellii</i>), and Mummichog (<i>Fundulus heteroclitus</i>).
The assessment list is published in the annual report and made public.	The assessment list is included in the 2011-2012 Annual Report and provided on the SSAC website: http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html

Objective 3: The Species Status Advisory Committee will have reviewed the IUCN and COSEWIC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria and revised the SSAC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria as required.

Measure 1: SSAC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed and revised.

Indicators	Accomplishments
SSAC species status report guidelines are reviewed and revised as required to ensure they encompass any changes made to IUCN or COSEWIC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria.	The SSAC reviewed these in 2011-2012. The SSAC reviewed all guidelines and criteria used for assessments and compared them to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada procedures. The SSAC reviewed assessment criteria in comparison to IUCN policy.
SSAC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria are revised as required.	Completed in 2011-2012. The SSAC updated guidelines for the calculation of Area of Occupancy and Index of Area of Occupancy to be consistent with COSEWIC. The SSAC added a technical summary in 2011 to be consistent with COSEWIC species status report guidelines.
Any revisions to the SSAC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria are published in the annual report and made public.	See SSAC Annual Report for report preparation template. http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html The report template was updated to include a technical summary and new calculations for Area of Occupancy and Index of Area of Occupancy in 2011-2012.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The potential addition of two new members to the SSAC, one with expertise in invertebrates and one with knowledge of Labrador next year will ensure greater coverage of taxonomic groups and an increase in regional expertise. The committee has reviewed several potential candidates with either invertebrate expertise or knowledge of Labrador; all candidates could support the committee and provide a great deal of valuable information. A list of these candidates and supporting documentation has been provided to the Minister of Environment and Conservation for consideration of appointment to the committee.

Predetermining information needs and expertise that will be required is a challenge as species needing detailed assessments do not always fall into a specific taxon or geographic area. Given the current workload combined with the varying expertise required, the limit of nine members is insufficient to meet SSAC commitments and consideration should be given to increasing the size of the committee.

Finding authors to prepare status reports continues to be a significant challenge. The SSAC has decided to enlarge its assessment list in the hopes of attracting a wider array of experts to complete status reports. With the growing list of candidate species the SSAC, as a volunteer body, will also face challenges to the members to find adequate time to carry out report reviews and do the other tasks associated with membership. Timely feedback on species status recommendations will encourage the SSAC to continue to commit significant time and effort to their roles on the committee.

Financial Statement

Expenditures on the SSAC are included in the expenditures reported for the Wildlife Division. This committee does not require an audited financial statement.

Appendix A: Legislation relevant to the mandate and activities of the SSAC

(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).

(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.