



# SSAC Activity Report

## 2012-2013

Prepared by the Species Status Advisory Committee

**Annual Activity Report  
Species Status Advisory Committee  
2012-2013**

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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 strategic directions of Government.

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 fiscal 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 2012-2013. 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 2012-2013, I am pleased to report that the committee successfully achieved all objectives set forth in its activity plan for 2012-2013. 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  
July 4, 2013

## Overview of the Committee

### a. Key Statistics

One species recommended to the Minister in 2008 was listed under the *Endangered Species Act* in 2012-2013. Two new reports were commissioned and reviewed in 2012-2013, with submission to the Government to occur in 2013-2014. Two reports commissioned in 2011-2012 were finalized and submitted to the Government in 2012-2013. A report commissioned in 2010-2011 is undergoing revision with final review expected later in 2013.

### 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 2012-13, the committee had **six** 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

Committee members serve as volunteers. They normally meet in person once to 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 \$4745.04 of an allocated \$10,000 was spent on SSAC related activities in 2011-12. A breakdown: \$3000.00 on reports and \$1745.04 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 six members, thus not at full complement.

An additional member with suitable expertise in non-vascular plants, specifically lichens, is being sought. Candidates to fill the other two vacant positions have been identified by the Committee and nominations have been brought forward for consideration by Government.

The Committee met once in the 2012-2013 fiscal year: February 14 via conference call.

The committee met all its objectives for the 2012-2013 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"> <li>1. Mountain Bladder Fern (<i>Cystopteris montana</i>); author Michael Burzynski, commissioned in 2012-2013, reviewed and edited in 2012-2013, final review and assessment to be completed in 2013-2014.</li> <li>2. Northern Twayblade (<i>Listera borealis</i>); author Michael Burzynski, commissioned in 2012-2013, reviewed and edited in 2012-2013, final review and assessment to be completed in 2013-2014.</li> <li>3. Red Pine (<i>Pinus resinosa</i>) – author Bruce Roberts, commissioned in 2010-2011, edited in 2012-2013, final review and assessment expected 2013-2014.</li> <li>4. 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 author for status report.</li> </ol>
Number of species assessed	None. No status reports were completed for assessment in 2012-2013.

Recommendations provided to the responsible Minister	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Griscom's Arnica (<i>Arnica griscomii</i> subsp. <i>griscomii</i>) – recommended as Endangered October 2012.</li> <li>2. Woolly Arnica (<i>Arnica angustifolia</i> subsp. <i>tomentosa</i>) – recommended as Endangered October 2012.</li> </ol>
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**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.	The SSAC completed a review of the criteria used to develop priority lists during the SSAC conference call in February 2013. A substantial review of these criteria is planned for the Fall 2013 meeting.
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, no changes were made to priority species in 2012-2013.

**Measure 2:** Existing priority lists are re-evaluated

Indicators	Accomplishments
Existing priority lists are revised as necessary	Completed for 2012-2013. Taxonomic priority lists including those for lichen, vascular plants, mosses, birds, freshwater fish, and mammals were reviewed by members and it was determined that no changes were necessary.
Existing priority lists are published in the Annual Report and made public.	Priority lists will be included in future Annual Reports. Priority lists were not included in the 2012-2013 Annual Report because of an oversight by the SSAC Secretariat. Existing priority lists have been provided for posting to the SSAC website. <a href="http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html">http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html</a>

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

Indicators	Accomplishments
A list of candidates for species status assessment is developed annually using new priority lists.	The 2012-2013 assessment list developed by the SSAC includes Eastern Star Sedge ( <i>Carex radiata</i> ), Ascending Moonwort ( <i>Botrychium ascendens</i> ), Common Dodder ( <i>Cuscuta gronovii</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 2012-2013 Annual Report produced in accordance with section 11 (1) of the <i>Endangered Species Act</i> and provided on the SSAC website: <a href="http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html">http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html</a>

**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.	Completed in 2012-2013. No changes were made to IUCN or COSEWIC species status report guidelines or assessment criteria, thus no changes were made to SSAC guidelines or criteria.
SSAC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria are revised as required.	No revisions required in 2012-2013.
Any revisions to the SSAC species status report guidelines and assessment criteria are published in the annual report and made public.	The SSAC Annual Report for 2012-2013 contains up to date species status report guidelines and assessment criteria. <a href="http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html">http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html</a> No changes were made to either the report guidelines or the assessment criteria in 2012-2013.

### Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The potential addition next year of three new members to the SSAC, one with expertise in invertebrates, one with knowledge of Labrador, and one with knowledge of non-vascular plants/lichen, will ensure greater coverage of taxonomic groups and an increase in regional expertise. The committee has reviewed several potential candidates with the noted experience; all candidates could support the committee and provide a great deal of valuable information. An updated candidate list and supporting information will be provided to the Minister in 2013-2014.

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. The SSAC has been encouraged by the recent efforts being made by the Department of Environment and Conservation to support decision-making about species listings by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Lack of timely feedback has caused the SSAC to question their relevance; improvements in the timeliness of feedback on species status recommendations is one way to encourage members of 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.