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# SSAC

Species Status Advisory Committee

Activity Report 2008-2009

**Annual Activity Report  
Species Status Advisory Committee  
2008-09**

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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. Such a report is also required of the SSAC under the *Endangered Species Act*, 2001. This report presents an overview of the SSAC and goals accomplished in 2008-09. 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 2008-09, I am pleased to report that the committee successfully achieved all objectives set forth in its activity plan for 2008-09. 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 30, 2009

## Overview of the Committee

### a. Key Statistics

Five new reports were commissioned: one report was assessed and four reports had not reached completion by the end of the 2008-09 fiscal year. Recommendations based on these five reports will be submitted to Government in the upcoming fiscal year. Twelve recommendations were made to the Minister in 2008-09 based on status report assessments commissioned in 2007-08.

### 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 2008-09, the committee had eight members:

Dr. Christine Campbell (Chair) - Aquatic invertebrates  
Mr. Roger Gallant – Traditional ecological knowledge, fish  
Dr. Luise Hermanutz - Plant ecology, conservation biology  
Dr. Thomas Knight – Freshwater fish, small mammals  
Mr. John E. Maunder - General natural history, plants, invertebrates  
Dr. William Montevecchi - Birds  
Ms. Shelley Pardy-Moores - Terrestrial invertebrates  
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 in the person of:

Ms. Shelley Garland, Ecosystem Management Ecologist  
Biodiversity and Endangered Species 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 \$13,092.43 of an allocated \$20,000 was spent on SSAC related activities in 2008-09. A breakdown: \$9050.00 on reports, \$790.35 on catering and room rental, and \$3252.08 on travel (air fare, 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, Status reports and fact sheets for listed species can be found on the Wildlife Division's website at:

[http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac\\_mainpage.htm](http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac_mainpage.htm)

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 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.

## Highlights and Accomplishments

The committee started the year with seven members. Ms. Nathalie Djan-Chekar (co-chair) declined re-appointment in September 2008. Dr. Tom Knight and Mr. Roger Gallant were appointed for two-year terms, effective September 1, 2008. Dr. Christine Campbell was confirmed as Committee Chair.

The SSAC selected potential candidates and made recommendations to the Minister, in March 2009, for one additional member with expertise in mosses.

The committee met four times in 2008-09: April 28, 2008 via teleconference, October 1 and 2, 2008 in Corner Brook, February 26 and 27, 2009 in St. John's, and March 26, 2009 via teleconference.

The committee met all its goals and objectives for the 2008-2009 year.

## Activities

The activities of the Species Status Advisory Committee are guided by the *Endangered Species Act* and the *Species Status Advisory Committee Regulations*; this is not only reflected in the committee's line of business but also in the goals, measures and indicators established in their initial Activity Plan. Appendix A presents the appropriate portions of the legislation that have been used to establish the committee's goals, measures and indicators. 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.

a. Progress on strategic directions

Given the committee's current mandate, the SSAC provides support for but does not contribute directly to the Department's strategic directions.

b. Objectives, Measures and Indicators for the next fiscal year

**Objective 1:** By 2009, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have processed 2 to 5 species status reports.

**Measure:** Processed reports

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
Number of reports commissioned and reviewed	1. Vreeland's Striped Coralroot ( <i>Corallorhiza striata</i> var. <i>vreelandii</i> ); author Mr. Michael Bryzinsky 2. Yellow bellied Sapsucker ( <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i> ); author Mr. Michael Burzynski 3. Bobolink ( <i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i> ); author Ms. Kathrin Munro 4. Bank Swallow ( <i>Riparia riparia</i> ); author Ms. Kathrin Munro 5. Arctic Hare ( <i>Lepus arcticus</i> ); author Mr. Brian Hearn 6. Lindley's aster ( <i>Symphyotrichum ciliolatum</i> ), report commissioned in 2006-07, reviewed, however assessment deferred to a later date in order to incorporate new information.
Number of species assessed	1. Bodin's milkvetch ( <i>Astragalus bodinii</i> ) 2. Oval-leaved creeping spearwort ( <i>Ranunculus flammula</i> var. <i>ovalis</i> ) 3. Rock dwelling sedge ( <i>Carex petricosa</i> var. <i>misandroides</i> ) 4. Shaved sedge ( <i>Carex tonsa</i> var. <i>tonsa</i> ) 5. Cutleaf Fleabane ( <i>Erigeron compositus</i> ) 6. Sharpleaf aster ( <i>Oclemena acuminata</i> ) 7. Alaska rein orchid ( <i>Platanthera foetida</i> ) 8. Water pygmyweed ( <i>Tillaea aquatica</i> ) 9. Tradescant's aster ( <i>Symphyotrichum tradescantii</i> ) 10. Gmelin's watercrowfoot ( <i>Ranunculus gmelinii</i> ) 11. Feathery False Solomon's Seal ( <i>Maianthemum racemosum</i> subsp. <i>racemosum</i> ) 12. Graceful felt lichen ( <i>Erioderma mollissimum</i> )
Recommendations provided to the responsible Minister	12 recommendations were forwarded to the minister based on the 12 species assessed. The reports of the 5 species commissioned in 2008-09 took a considerable amount of time to review, and were completed too late for submission in that year.

**Objective 2:** By 2009, 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

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
Existing priority lists are revised as necessary	Completed for 2008-09
Existing priority lists are published in the Annual Report and made public.	Completed for 2008-09. See SSAC Annual Report <a href="http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac_mainpage.htm">http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac_mainpage.htm</a>

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

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
A list is prepared to identify taxa for species status assessments.	Completed for 2008-09.
Assessment list is published in the annual report and made public	Completed in 2008-09. See SSAC Annual Report <a href="http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac_mainpage.htm">http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac_mainpage.htm</a>

**Objective 3:** By 2009, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have reviewed report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria and revised them as required.

**Measure 1:** Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed and revised.

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed	SSAC reviews these on an annual basis.
Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are revised as required.	Completed in 2008-09.
Any revisions to the report preparation guidelines are published in the annual report and made public.	See SSAC Annual Report for report preparation template. <a href="http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac_mainpage.htm">http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildatrisk/ssac_mainpage.htm</a>



## **Opportunities and Challenges Ahead**

With the addition of a new member with expertise in mosses next year the SSAC will have additional taxa specialists. This should ensure an even greater coverage of species and knowledge bases within the Province. It is anticipated that finding authors to prepare status reports will continue to be a significant challenge. 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 also considers that it needs timely feedback to its recommendations. This should normally occur, as Government is required under the *Endangered Species Act* to make a public decision within 90 days of the recommendations. A response to several recommendations from the previous year remains outstanding.

## **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 preceeding 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.