



SSAC

**Species Status Advisory Committee
Activity Report 2009-2010**

**Annual Activity Report
Species Status Advisory Committee
2009-10**

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Message from the Chairperson.....	3
Overview of the Committee.....	4
a. Key Statistics	4
b. Representation.....	4
c. Description of Revenues and Expenditures	4
d. Lines of Business	5
e. Mandate.....	5
f. Vision.....	5
g. Mission.....	6
Highlights and Accomplishments	6
Activities.....	6
Objective 1:By 2009, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have processed at least 2 to 5 species status reports.	6
Measure: Processed reports	6
Objective 2:By 2009, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have re-evaluated existing priority lists and developed new priority lists for future status assessments.	7
Measure 1: Existing priority lists are evaluated	7
Measure 2: New priority lists are developed.....	7
Objective 3: By 2009, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have reviewed report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria and revised them as required.	8
Measure: Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed	8
Opportunities and Challenges Ahead	8
Financial Statement	9
Appendix A: Legislation relevant to the mandate and activities of the SSAC.....	10

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 2009-10. 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 2009-10, I am pleased to report that the committee successfully achieved all objectives set forth in its activity plan for 2009-10. 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 11, 2010

Overview of the Committee

a. Key Statistics

Two new reports were commissioned: one report is in review and the second will be completed during this fiscal year. An additional two reports commissioned in 2008-2009 were completed in 2009-2010 and are scheduled for final review in 2010-2011. Four assessments were completed based on reports commissioned 2007-2009. Recommendations based on these assessments will be submitted to the Government in the upcoming 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 2009-10, 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
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:

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 \$16,971.61 of an allocated \$20,000 was spent on SSAC related activities in 2009-10. A breakdown: \$13,000 on reports, \$337.84 on catering and room rental, and \$3633.77 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 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 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 eight members. Ms. Shelley Pardy Moores resigned in September 2009. Dr. Paul Marino was appointed for a two year term, effective September 1, 2009.

An additional member, with expertise in the area of insects or the Labrador region, is currently being sought.

The committee met three times in 2009-10: June 23, 2009 via teleconference, October 14 and 15, 2009 in Corner Brook and March 18, 2010 via teleconference.

The committee met all its objectives for the 2009-2010 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 objectives, 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.

Objective 1: By 2010, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have processed 2 to 5 species status reports depending on the availability of resources and expertise.

Measure: Processed reports

Indicators	Accomplishments
Number of reports commissioned and reviewed	1. Arctic Hare (<i>Lepus arcticus</i>); author Dr. Brian Hearn, final review expected 2010-2011. 2. Yellow bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>), author Mr. Michael Burzynski , final review expected 2010-2011. 3. Wrinkled Shield Lichen (<i>Pannaria lurida</i> ssp.

	<i>russellii</i>), report commissioned from Ms. Emilie Kissler, fieldwork in progress. 4. Gray-cheeked Thrush (<i>Catharus minimus</i>), report commissioned from Dr. Darroch Whitaker, review in progress.
Number of species assessed	1. Lindley's Aster (<i>Symphyotrichum ciliolatum</i>) 2. Bobolink (<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>) 3. Bank Swallow (<i>Riparia riparia</i>) 4. Vreeland's Striped Coralroot (<i>Corallorhiza striata</i> var. <i>vreelandii</i>)
Recommendations provided to the responsible Minister	Twelve species recommendations submitted to Government in 2008-2009, plus three species recommendations submitted in 2006-2007 are still undergoing internal government review. Recommendations for species assessed in 2009-2010 will be forwarded to the minister in 2010-2011. These recommendations will now be forwarded to the Minister of Environment and Conservation at the end of summer on a yearly basis to coincide with the submission of the COSEWIC Annual Report to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Committee.

Objective 2: By 2010, 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	Accomplishments
Existing priority lists are revised as necessary	Completed for 2009-10
Existing priority lists are published in the Annual Report and made public.	Completed for 2009-10. See SSAC Annual Report http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html

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

Indicators	Accomplishments
An assessment list is	Completed for 2009-10.

prepared to identify taxa for species status assessments.	
Assessment list is published in the annual report and made public.	Completed in 2009-10. See SSAC Annual Report http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/publications/wildlife/index.html#annual

Objective 3: By 2010, 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.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed	SSAC reviewed these this year.
Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are revised as required.	Completed in 2009-10. Reviewed all guidelines and criteria used for assessments and compared to COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) procedures. SSAC has decided to maintain the current guidelines and criteria and will revise based on the COSEWIC update in 2010-11.
Any revisions to the report preparation 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

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The addition of a new member with expertise in invertebrates and/or 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. Predetermining information needs and expertise that will be required is a challenge as species needing detailed assessments don't always fall into a specific taxa or geographic area. The legislated limit of 9 seats on the committee continues provide challenges when deliberating on potential members.

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 previous years 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 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.