

COSEWIC Wildlife Species Assessments (detailed version), May 2023*

Results are grouped by taxon and then by status category. The range of occurrence in Canada (by province, territory or ocean) and history of status designation are provided for each wildlife species.

Mammals

Eastern Red Bat

Lasiurus borealis

Endangered

Assessment Criteria A2be+3be+4be

Reason for Designation

This medium sized reddish-orange bat is found across most of Canada in the summer months and during its fall migration. This bat migrates annually, and this seasonal migration exposes individuals to numerous threats, of which the greatest is from mortality at wind energy facilities. Although there is considerable uncertainty regarding exact rates of decline for these bats across Canada, declines in carcass counts at wind energy facilities suggest declines far in excess of 50% over three generations. The planned increase in wind power capacity will increase this threat but mitigation is possible. Additional threats include habitat loss and degradation, habitat change and pesticide use, and widespread declines in prey insect abundance.

Range AB BC MB NB NL NWT NS ON PE QC SK YT

Status History

Designated Endangered in May 2023.

Hoary Bat

Lasiurus cinereus

Endangered

Assessment Criteria A2be+3be+4be; E

Reason for Designation

This large-bodied bat has light yellow-brown fur on its face and neck and white tipped hairs over most of its body. It is found across Canada in the summer months and during fall migration. Seasonal migration exposes individuals to a variety of threats including a high risk of mortality at wind energy facilities. Although there is considerable uncertainty regarding the exact rates of decline for these bats across Canada, declines in carcass counts at wind energy facilities suggest declines far in excess of 50% over three generations. The planned increase in wind power capacity will increase this threat but mitigation is possible. Population viability modeling estimates the probability of extinction is at least at the 20% threshold by 2050 (3 generations). Additional threats to this species include ongoing and widespread declines in insect abundance, loss of forested roosting and foraging habitat, and pollution.

Range AB BC MB NB NL NWT NS ON PE QC SK YT

Status History

Designated Endangered in May 2023.

Silver-haired Bat

Lasionycteris noctivagans

Endangered

Assessment Criteria A2be+3be+4be

Reason for Designation

This large-bodied bat has black to dark brown fur often with silver or grey tips and is found across Canada in the summer months and during fall migration. Some individuals overwinter in British Columbia and southern Ontario, however most migrate out of Canada annually. This seasonal migration exposes individuals to a variety of threats including risk of mortality at wind energy facilities. Although there is considerable uncertainty regarding the exact rates of decline for these bats across Canada, declines in carcass counts at wind energy facilities suggest declines far in excess of 50% over three generations. The planned increase in wind power capacity will increase

this threat but mitigation is possible. Other threats to this species include ongoing and widespread declines in insect abundance, loss of forested roosting and foraging habitat, and pollution.

Range AB BC MB NB NL NWT NS ON QC SK YT

Status History

Designated Endangered in May 2023.

Birds

Northern Bobwhite

Colinus virginianus

Endangered

Assessment Criteria B1ab(ii,iii,v)+2ab(ii,iii,v); C2a(i,ii); D1

Reason for Designation

This bird of open and semi-open habitats is widespread across the eastern United States, but range and numbers have declined dramatically from historical levels in Canada. With fewer than 250 birds remaining, all on Walpole Island in southwestern Ontario, the Canadian population may be close to extirpation. There have been no Christmas Bird Count records since 2001, and no eBird reports since 2014. However, occasional recent sightings by Walpole Island Indigenous community members indicate that a very small population likely still persists. Declines are attributed to deterioration of habitat quality owing to intensification of agriculture, and the loss of early succession woodland and semi-open habitats.

Range ON

Status History

Designated Endangered in April 1994. Status re-examined and confirmed in November 2003, May 2013, and May 2023.

Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii

Endangered

Assessment Criteria A2ac+4ac; B2ab(i,iii,v); C2a(i,ii); D1

Reason for Designation

This globally-distributed colonial seabird breeds on small coastal islands from eastern Nova Scotia to Long Island, New York, and winters from Colombia to eastern Brazil. Regular breeding in Canada is now confined to 2-8 colonies in Nova Scotia, although individuals of this species, and its hybrids with other tern species, are occasionally present in other tern colonies. The Canadian breeding population is about 106-146 mature individuals. Both the number of adult birds breeding in Canada and the range in Canada have declined by about 64% over the past 3 generations (1995-2019). The main factors limiting population recovery are predation, low post-fledging survival rates, habitat degradation, and impacts of stochastic weather events such as hurricanes.

Range NB NS QC Atlantic Ocean

Status History

Designated Threatened in April 1986. Status re-examined and designated Endangered in April 1999. Status re-examined and confirmed in October 1999, April 2009, and May 2023.

White-headed Woodpecker

Dryobates albolarvatus

Endangered

Assessment Criteria C2a(i,ii); D1

Reason for Designation

This distinctive non-migratory woodpecker occurs from extreme southern British Columbia to southern California. In Canada, it is found only in mature Ponderosa Pine forest in the southern Okanagan Valley, on which it depends for both food and nest cavities. In recent years, fewer than five mature individuals have been recorded annually in Canada, and the species may no longer regularly breed here. The population is exposed to ongoing

threats to its remaining habitat, particularly from fire and fire suppression, harvesting of older pines, housing development, and effects of pine beetle infestation.

Range BC

Status History

Designated Threatened in April 1992. Status re-examined and designated Endangered in November 2000, November 2010, and May 2023.

Savannah Sparrow
princeps subspecies

Passerculus sandwichensis princeps

Special Concern

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

This Canadian endemic sparrow subspecies is largely restricted to breeding in sand dune systems in the Sable Island National Park Reserve, 175 km east of mainland Nova Scotia. The size of the breeding population of about 5100 mature individuals has remained relatively stable over the past two decades. The major wintering areas on the northeast coast of the United States are also in protected areas. This sparrow is exposed to threats associated with storms and shoreline development. Although well-adapted to extreme marine weather conditions, this sparrow's habitats are vulnerable to the long-term effects of sea-level rise, and the increasing frequency and intensity of Atlantic storms resulting from climate change.

Range NS

Status History

Designated Special Concern in April 1979. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2000, November 2009, and May 2023.

Reptiles

Northwestern Pond Turtle

Actinemys marmorata

Extirpated

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

This freshwater turtle has only been reported in Canada from extreme southwestern British Columbia, where it was first recorded in the 1930s. Although still present in small and declining numbers in adjacent Washington state, this species has not been confirmed in the wild in Canada since 1961.

Range BC

Status History

Designated Extirpated in May 2002. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2012 and May 2023.

Pacific Gophersnake

Pituophis catenifer catenifer

Extirpated

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

There are only two confirmed records of this large snake in Canada, from Huntingdon and Galiano Island, both in extreme southwestern British Columbia. Native individuals have not been confirmed in the wild in Canada since 1957.

Range BC

Status History

Designated Extirpated in May 2002. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2012 and May 2023.

Timber Rattlesnake

Crotalus horridus

Extirpated

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

This large snake once occupied much of the Niagara Escarpment and other regions of southern Ontario. Despite intensive searches and ease of recognition, there have been no confirmed sightings in Canada since 1941.

Range ON

Status History

Designated Extirpated in May 2001. Status re-examined and confirmed in November 2010 and May 2023.

Amphibians

Eastern Tiger Salamander

Ambystoma tigrinum

Extirpated

Carolinian population

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

The only confirmed record of this salamander in Canada was in 1915 at Point Pelee, in southern Ontario, although it occurs in nearby Michigan and Ohio. Despite numerous herpetological surveys by naturalists, it has not been seen since, and very little suitable habitat remains in this and surrounding areas in Canada.

Range ON

Status History

The Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) was originally assessed by COSEWIC in November 2001 as three separate populations: Great Lakes population (Extirpated), Prairie / Boreal population (Not at Risk), and Southern Mountain population (Endangered). In November 2012, Tiger Salamander was split into two separate species, Eastern Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) and Western Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma mavortium*), each with two different populations that received separate designations. The Carolinian population of the Eastern Tiger Salamander was assessed as Extirpated in November 2012. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2023.

Great Plains Toad

Anaxyrus cognatus

Special Concern

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

This long-lived burrowing toad is patchily distributed across the southern Canadian prairie provinces. Spending most of its life underground, it emerges sporadically to feed and relies on small ephemeral water bodies to breed. Loss and degradation of habitat, particularly from changes in water management and agricultural land use, continue to impact this species. It is also vulnerable to increasing frequency and extent of drought linked to climate change. This reduces availability of already-restricted breeding sites both directly by lack of precipitation and indirectly by altering water management regimes, leading to recruitment failure and more pronounced population fluctuations.

Range AB MB SK

Status History

Designated Special Concern in April 1999. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2002, April 2010, and May 2023.

Arthropods

Riverine Clubtail

Stylurus amnicola

Special Concern

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

This rare dragonfly is known in Canada from at least 17 subpopulations found on 22 rivers across Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. In the last decade, there have been records from several new rivers although the species is cryptic and occurs in low abundance, thus these records do not suggest a range expansion. The species appears to favour rivers with mostly sandy substrates with clear to slightly turbid water. It is vulnerable to the cumulative threats, primarily those that have the potential to impact water quality and riparian habitat, including pollution, loss of forest cover from agricultural, forestry, industrial and residential, development, and transportation.

Range MB ON QC

Status History

In May 2023, the Boreal, Prairie, and Great Lakes Plains populations were considered as a single unit across the Canadian range and was designated Special Concern.

Vascular Plants

California Sword Fern

Polystichum californicum

Endangered

Assessment Criteria D1

Reason for Designation

The Canadian population of this evergreen fern consists of only 48 mature individuals. In Canada, it occurs exclusively on limestone cliffs on Vancouver Island and adjacent Texada Island, in British Columbia. The limestone and associated mineral deposits have commercial value, making the known sites of this fern desirable for quarry operations. Recreational activities, most notably rock climbing, are another potential threat. With the very small number of individuals and the restricted distribution, this plant is at considerable risk of extirpation from Canada.

Range BC

Status History

Designated Endangered in May 2023.

Gulf of St. Lawrence Aster

Symphyotrichum laurentianum

Endangered

Assessment Criteria A2abce+4abce

Reason for Designation

This annual plant is endemic to Gulf of St. Lawrence coastal habitats. It grows mainly on brackish sands around coastal lagoons and ponds isolated from the sea by barrier beaches and in coastal marshes. The plant presently occurs in 12 subpopulations: four in the Magdalen Islands of Quebec, three in Prince Edward Island, and five in New Brunswick. An additional 13 subpopulations have not been seen in 15 years or more and are likely extirpated. The number of mature individuals at a site can fluctuate dramatically but long-term population averages that account for fluctuation have indicated population declines of more than 50 percent in the past 10 years. The change in status since the last assessment reflects these declines, which are considered to be primarily due to an increased frequency and severity of storms.

Range NB PE QC

Status History

Designated Special Concern in April 1989. Status re-examined and designated Threatened in May 2004. Status re-examined and designated Endangered in May 2023.

Provancher's Fleabane

Erigeron philadelphicus var. provancheri

Data Deficient

Assessment Criteria not applicable

Reason for Designation

This small perennial plant is known to occur in southern Quebec. The understanding of the taxonomic concept for this plant has changed since its last assessment in 1992. It is unclear whether similar individuals in Ontario are part of the same Wildlife Species. Only detailed genetic and ecophysiological studies would resolve taxonomic issues.

Range ON QC

Status History

Designated Special Concern in April 1992. Species considered in May 2023 and placed in the Data Deficient category.

* The report on Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), Western population and Magdalen Islands population, was withdrawn again to allow further consideration of the Designatable Unit structure.

05/05/2023