

COSEWIC Wildlife Species Assessments (detailed version), May 2024

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

Narwhal

Scientific name: *Monodon monoceros*

Status: Not at Risk

Assessment criteria: Not applicable

Reason for designation: The overall population of this Arctic, ice-loving toothed whale is large (> 161,000 total, 93,500 mature individuals) and, although there is uncertainty about population structure, stock numbers, and trends, there is no evidence for a decreasing trend in abundance. Current levels of hunting are thought to be sustainable. Abundance may have declined in some areas coincident with increased shipping, but these likely reflect a redistribution of animals rather than a decline in abundance. Threats anticipated to increase in future include noise pollution from ship traffic and ice-breaking, and climate change. These could present challenges if narwhal are not closely monitored.

Range: NL, NU, QC, Arctic Ocean, Atlantic Ocean

Status history: Designated Not at Risk in April 1986 and in April 1987. Status re-examined and designated Special Concern in November 2004. Status re-examined and designated Not at Risk in May 2024.

Birds

Gray-headed Chickadee

Scientific name: *Poecile cinctus*

Status: Endangered

Assessment criteria: C2a(ii)

Reason for designation: This small passerine bird has a Holarctic distribution from northern Europe across Asia, and into extreme northwestern North America. Historical Canadian range included Northwest Territories but more recently it has only been seen in Yukon, where there have been only two observations in Canada since 2000 despite extensive surveys in 2019. Although little is known about this species in Canada, it is considered at risk due to its very small population, and an inferred and projected decline in numbers. Key threats are likely climate change and severe weather, and related changes in natural processes such as freeze-thaw cycles and wildfire. These in turn affect the quality of habitats used for nesting, roosting, foraging, and food storage.

Range: NT, YT

Status history: Designated Endangered in May 2024.

Kirtland's Warbler

Scientific name: *Setophaga kirtlandii*

Status: Endangered

Assessment criteria: D1

Reason for designation: The global breeding range of this colourful wood-warbler is restricted to large regenerating stands of even-aged Jack Pine and Red Pine in Michigan, and adjacent states and provinces. In Canada, it nests only in Simcoe and Renfrew Counties, Ontario, with additional breeding season observations in southwestern Ontario and Quebec's Pontiac region. It primarily overwinters in the Bahamas. The global population is estimated at fewer than 5,000 birds, with only about 40-50 mature individuals currently occurring in Canada. Birds are limited by the availability of suitable nesting habitat, and threats include wildfire suppression resulting in loss of early-successional habitats; conversion of nesting and wintering habitat for agriculture, forestry, and human development; and impacts of climate change and increasingly severe weather throughout the annual cycle. In the absence of management initiatives forest succession may lead to loss of suitable breeding habitat in Canada, as is the case in the United States.

Range: ON, QC

Status history: Designated Endangered in April 1979. Status re-examined and confirmed in April 1999, May 2000, April 2008, and May 2024.

Long-billed Curlew

Scientific name: *Numenius americanus*

Status: Threatened

Assessment criteria: A2bc+4bc

Reason for designation: This large, long-billed shorebird breeds in the grasslands and prairies of western Canada from central British Columbia to Saskatchewan, and winters in the southern US and Mexico. It formerly bred in Manitoba, but breeding has not been observed there since the mid-1980s. Although declines have been documented in Canada since the 1970s, trends have recently become more negative, with a decline of approximately 50% over the last 20 years (3 generations), a likely decrease in the area occupied by breeding birds since the last status report in 2011, and declining quality of habitat. Key threats include droughts and extreme events induced by climate change; related changes to water management on the wintering grounds; impacts of pesticides on insect prey; and conversion and fragmentation of grasslands and suitable agricultural habitat by energy development, urban sprawl, and rural development on breeding and wintering grounds. As a relatively long-lived species with low reproductive output, its population is limited to slow growth even under favourable conditions.

Range: AB, BC, SK

Status history: Designated Special Concern in April 1992. Status re-examined and confirmed in November 2002 and May 2011. Status re-examined and designated Threatened in May 2024.

Amphibians

Blanchard's Cricket Frog

Scientific name: *Acris blanchardi*

Status: Extirpated

Assessment criteria: Not applicable

Reason for designation: This small tree-frog is widespread in the eastern United States, along shorelines of lakes, ponds, and streams with dense aquatic vegetation. It was only known in Canada from two places in southern Ontario (Point Pelee and Pelee Island), and was last confirmed in 1977 on Pelee Island. The presence of this species can be readily confirmed by its distinctive, loud calls in suitable habitat during the breeding season. However, despite many intensive searches and citizen science programs in previously-occupied or apparently suitable habitat, there have been no reliable observations since the 1977 sighting. Thus, there is sufficient information to conclude that no individuals of this wildlife species remain in Canada.

Range: ON

Status history: Designated Endangered in April 1990. Status re-examined and confirmed in May 2001 and May 2011. Status re-examined and designated Extirpated in May 2024.

Fishes

Salish Sucker

Scientific name: *Catostomus* sp. cf. *catostomus*

Status: Endangered

Assessment criteria: A3bce+4bce

Reason for designation: This small fish has a restricted range in southwestern British Columbia. It is susceptible to continuing decline in amount and quality of habitat due to reduced stream flow, pollution, and decreasing oxygen content of the water as a result of increased stream temperature and high nutrient loading. These threats are expected to worsen due to climate change-induced extreme heat and drought events. Moreover, invasive species that prey upon this fish or modify its habitat are also contributing to population declines. Ongoing declines in several streams, in spite of habitat restoration efforts, and projected future declines resulted in the change in status. If these threats cannot be mitigated, they could lead to the extirpation of this species.

Range: BC

Status history: Designated Endangered in April 1986. Status re-examined and confirmed in November 2002. Status re-examined and designated Threatened in November 2012. Status re-examined and designated Endangered in May 2024.

Arthropods

Pacific Sandpirate

Scientific name: *Lasiopogon pacificus*

Status: Special Concern

Assessment criteria: Not applicable

Reason for designation: In Canada, this robber fly's distribution is limited to openings in early to mid-successional forest in British Columbia's Lower Mainland. The larval stage is found only in sandy or gravelly soils. There are nine subpopulations documented, three of which are known only from historical records. Additional subpopulations probably exist but the total number is likely fewer than 20. The species' habitat is at risk from development and degradation from multiple causes.

Range: BC

Status history: Designated Special Concern in May 2024.

Molluscs

Domed Disc

Scientific name: *Discus patulus*

Status: Endangered

Assessment criteria: B1ab(iii)+2ab(iii)

Reason for designation: This medium-sized land snail (shell diameter about 1 cm) is known to occur at a single 150 ha site within mature Carolinian forest in southern Ontario. It may still occur at a second site that has not been recently searched. The known extant site only contains approximately 20% suitable forested habitat; the snail's micro-distribution is further restricted because individuals tend to aggregate under fallen, rotting logs. The species has been extirpated from 11 historical occurrences in southern Ontario and continued searches have not found other subpopulations. The main threats are climate change (droughts, changes in frost regimes) and invasive species (e.g., earthworms and slugs). The species' highly restricted distribution, its limited dispersal, and history of extirpation at similar adjacent sites undergoing agricultural expansion are the reasons for the designation.

Range: ON

Status history: Designated Endangered in May 2024.

Vascular Plants

Pine Broomrape

Scientific name: *Aphyllon pinorum*

Status: Endangered

Assessment criteria: B1ab(iii)+2ab(iii); D1

Reason for designation: The Canadian population of this parasitic annual plant consists of fewer than 60 mature individuals where it remains in two forested areas on Vancouver Island at the northern extent of its North American range. In the past, plants have been lost due to logging, and currently it is threatened by recreational activities, especially trail building/maintenance, and increased ignition sources for forest fires. With a very small population and restricted distribution, this plant is at risk of extirpation from Canada.

Range: BC

Status history: Designated Endangered in May 2024.

Rough-leaved Aster

Scientific name: *Eurybia radulina*

Status: Threatened

Assessment criteria: D1

Reason for designation: This herbaceous perennial occurs on southeast Vancouver Island, British Columbia where it reaches its northern range limit in North America. In Canada, it reproduces primarily by underground rhizomes and often presents only as rosettes of leaves. The species is known from only five subpopulations within a small range of 260 km², with only 330 known flowering stems and 788 non-flowering stems in total. Declines are suspected based on changes in the area, extent, and quality of habitat. The wildlife species may be negatively impacted both by maintenance activities along transportation corridors and invasive species in its habitat; it may also be limited by the absence of mature flowering individuals in some subpopulations.

Range: BC

Status history: Designated Threatened in May 2024.

Prairie-dock

Scientific name: *Silphium terebinthinaceum*

Status: Special Concern

Assessment criteria: Not applicable

Reason for designation: This showy long-lived plant is associated with tallgrass prairie habitat and reaches the northern edge of its range in southwestern Ontario, where it occurs in nine subpopulations. Although the number of plants likely is greater than 10,000, only a small percentage are known to reproduce through seeds. Changes in its native habitat through competition with native and exotic plants, compounded by fire suppression, are believed to be the greatest threats, although housing, commercial, and road construction, as well as herbicides, also threaten the species. Its persistence will likely require ongoing monitoring and management activities.

Range: ON

Status history: Designated Special Concern in May 2024.

Willowleaf Aster

Scientific name: *Symphotrichum praealtum*

Status: Special Concern

Assessment criteria: Not applicable

Reason for designation: This herbaceous perennial plant reaches the northern limit of its range in Canada, and is geographically a highly restricted species that has undergone range contraction. Nine subpopulations occur in extreme southern Ontario. Recent surveys have found additional subpopulations, with over 200,000 known flowering shoots in Canada, mostly within transplanted subpopulations. The change in status reflects this higher estimate of abundance, changes to the way that criteria are applied, and new discovery of subpopulations. However, the species is still under threat from habitat loss and degradation due to mowing and maintenance of roads, trails, powerline corridors, fire suppression, encroachment of woody vegetation due to natural ecological succession, and residential development.

Range: ON

Status history: Designated Special Concern in April 1999. Status re-examined and designated Threatened in May 2003. Status re-examined and designated Special Concern in May 2024.

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