

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF ENDANGERED WILDLIFE IN CANADA (COSEWIC)

The Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) Subcommittee (SC) is seeking expressions of interest from individuals who are First Nations, Inuit, or Métis and are interested in being a part of the subcommittee. Individuals will have the opportunity to work alongside other Indigenous members of the committee in supporting the respectful and appropriate engagement of Indigenous knowledge in the assessment of species at risk in Canada.

Expressions of interest may be submitted between October 30, 2024, and December 11, 2024.

Deadline: December 11, 2024, at 3:00 pm Eastern time. Late expressions of interest will not be accepted.

Why should you apply?

The Canada Species at Risk Act compels COSEWIC to consider “Aboriginal traditional knowledge” when assessing species in Canada – those very species with which many Indigenous peoples hold strong relationships. Members of the ATK SC have an opportunity to bring forth the knowledge, perspectives, and values of Indigenous members and communities in an effort to both improve the ultimate outcome of species in Canada as well the process by which they are assessed.

ATK SC members have a tremendous opportunity – and responsibility – to positively influence the relations we all hold with species living in Canada.

What are the requirements?

- In this call, we are seeking Indigenous people who have **familiarity** with **ATK** and/or similar concepts (e.g. Indigenous knowledge)

systems), and **wildlife** in Canada, whether that is through working with **Indigenous** communities as well as with **academic** ones.

- We recognize that this work is based on **relationships** with other species as well as with Indigenous communities, and we value individuals with **connections** to Indigenous cultures, communities and organizations and understand the importance of respecting Indigenous **rights** and **responsibilities**.
- All members are **required** to provide a **letter of support** from an Indigenous community or organization (e.g. band council, Métis local, hunters and trappers committee) in whatever form is most relevant for that community.
- While we respect and value knowledge related to all species and ecosystems, **we are especially interested in individuals with knowledge of the following regions and Indigenous communities, as well as the following specialties:**
 - terrestrial mammals, specifically ungulates and furbearers
 - vascular plants
 - salmonids
 - northwestern Canada, Quebec, and Ontario

What do ATK SC members do?

Using their best judgement and knowledge, ATK SC members:

- Participate in various meetings and contribute to a respectful and supportive environment.
- Work by consensus to facilitate the gathering of Indigenous knowledge (largely publicly available knowledge) on species of priority to Indigenous peoples.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with ATK holders and their communities.
- Act as spokesperson on behalf of the ATK SC when requested to present on behalf of the ATK SC.
- Review various reports for completeness, accuracy and reliability.
- Work to improve the way that Indigenous knowledge is considered in species assessment. COSEWIC is founded on a scientific process, and ATK SC members work collaboratively to improve how Indigenous knowledge systems (and their foundational communities) are perceived, valued and respected during the assessment process.

Meeting Travel

Travel expenses incurred by ATK SC members are covered by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Members also receive a small compensation for the time they commit to the work of the ATK SC.

What is the time commitment?

We recognize that members have many demands on their time, whether that may be their commitments to their work, their families, or their communities. We strive to remain flexible and accommodating to the responsibilities of committee members.

Each ATK SC member:

- typically serves for a four-year (renewable) term. All appointments are approved by the Minister.
- participates in 4 ATK SC meetings per year (1 virtual, 2 in-person, and 1 day teleconference as needed). Each meeting is 2-3 days in length.
- participates as a member of other COSEWIC species specialist subcommittees (e.g. marine mammals), who meet once per year.
- participates in other infrequent meetings and contributes to various reports and documents (e.g. review), often in the lead-up to meetings. This may average out to about 1 additional day per month.

Other things to consider:

- While ATK SC members have the opportunity to support the respectful engagement of Indigenous knowledge from communities all across Canada, members do not represent their specific organization, employer, Indigenous community or the geographic area from which they come. **We are there to speak on behalf of all Indigenous communities and wildlife in Canada.**
- The ATK SC is committed to having a holistic and diversified membership representative of the communities we serve, and recognizes many benefits of a safe, inclusive environment that respects diverse perspectives. **All qualified people are invited to apply.** We recognize the importance of the voices of women, persons with disabilities, and persons of diverse sexual orientations and genders, as well as youth and Elders. **All are welcome!**

How do I apply?

Thank you for your interest! We appreciate all people willing to participate on the ATK SC. We ask both new applicants and incumbent members to provide BOTH of the following:

1. a CV or resume.
2. a cover letter that describes how you meet the requirements (listed above), the strengths you bring to the ATK SC, and what you are hoping to achieve through your participation on the subcommittee.
3. a **letter of support** from an Indigenous community or organization (e.g. band council, Métis local, hunters and trappers committee) in whatever form is most relevant for that community.

E-mail your application with a subject line header indicating “Expression of Interest in ATK Subcommittee Membership” to the COSEWIC Secretariat at cosewic-cosepac@ec.gc.ca.

The Secretariat will endeavour to acknowledge each application via email to each individual within two business days. **If you do not receive an acknowledgement within this time, please contact the Secretariat by telephone at (819) 307-7600.**

Submissions will be reviewed by the ATK subcommittee, with decisions made by consensus.

Where can I find out more?

To learn more about COSEWIC and the ATK subcommittee, visit our website at: <https://www.cosewic.ca/index.php/en/>

If you would like to know and speak with an actual member of the subcommittee, please contact the co-chairs of the ATK subcommittee at: cosewic-cosepac@ec.gc.ca.

Appendix I: What is COSEWIC?

The principal functions of [COSEWIC](#) are:

- to assess the status of wildlife species considered potentially at risk in Canada, identifying existing and potential threats to the wildlife species
- to report the results of its assessments and the reasons for the designations to the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council, and the Canadian public

COSEWIC carries out its functions on the basis of the best available information, including scientific knowledge, community knowledge, and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. The assessment process is independent, transparent, and based solely on evidence. COSEWIC status reports, while forming the basis for recommendations to the government under the Species at Risk Act (SARA), are also widely cited by scientific and environmental organizations, resource users, government agencies and media. COSEWIC reports provide information about the state of wildlife species populations, which are of concern to all Canadians.

Species Specialist Subcommittees

Species Specialist Subcommittees (SSCs) are fundamental to the COSEWIC process. SSC members review and ensure the quality of the wildlife species status reports under the responsibility of their respective SSC. They also recommend species status designations to COSEWIC based on those reports. They have expertise in the biology and conservation of the relevant taxonomic group, work effectively in a consensus-based team, and satisfy the other requirements of SSC membership.