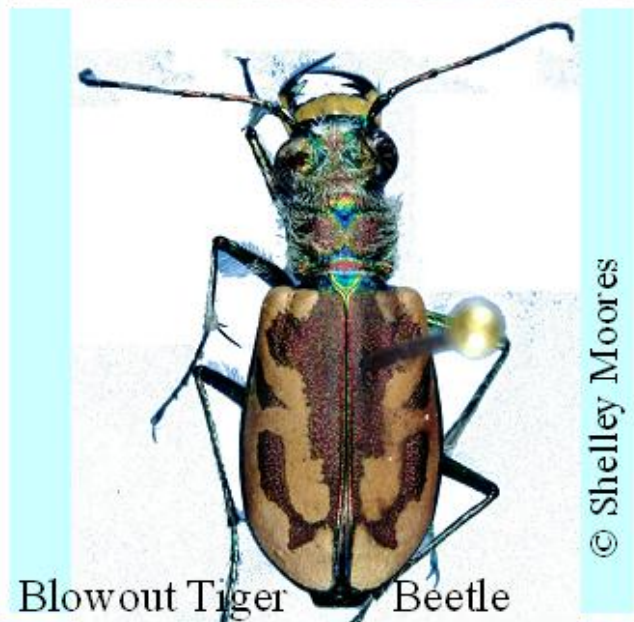
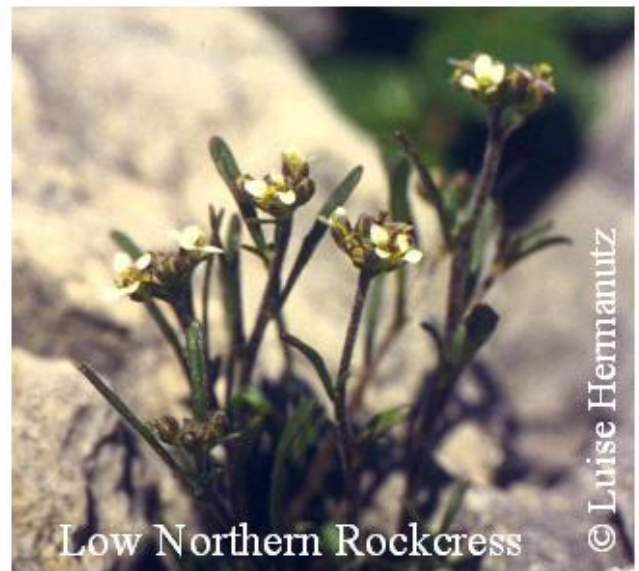


# SSAC

## Species Status Advisory Committee



Annual Report 2004-2005

# SPECIES STATUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2004-2005

## THE COMMITTEE

The Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC) was established under the Endangered Species Act which was passed on December 13, 2001. Its role is to review and recommend to the minister designations and re-designations of species based on the best scientific knowledge available and on traditional and local ecological knowledge about the species.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Act allows a committee of up to nine members. At present the committee consists of five members. Dr. Stephen Carr withdrew from the committee in 2004.

<b>Dr. Howard J. Clase</b> (Chair)	- General natural history, interest in vascular plants and birds
<b>Dr. Luise Hermanutz</b>	- Plant ecology, conservation biology
<b>Dr. William Montevecchi</b>	- Birds
<b>Ms. Christine Doucet</b>	- Terrestrial mammals
<b>Ms. Nathalie Djan-Chékar</b>	- Vascular and non-vascular plants

Additional members, with expertise in the areas of invertebrates, fresh water fishes and traditional knowledge are currently being sought. Recommendations will be submitted to the Minister early in the 2005/06 fiscal year.

The secretariat is provided by The Wildlife Division in the person of:

Mr. Joe Brazil, Senior Manager  
Biodiversity and Endangered Species Program, Wildlife Division  
Department of Environment and Conservation  
PO Box 2007, 117 Riverside Dr., Corner Brook, NL, A2H 7S1

Website: [http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildlife\\_at\\_risk.htm](http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/wildlife_at_risk.htm)

## THE MINISTERS

Since its formation, the committee has reported to three different ministers. The committee was established by the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Recreation, the Hon. Julie Bettney. Following the fall general election and change of government Minister Bettney was replaced by the Hon. Paul Shelley and when, in February 2004, responsibility for Wildlife was transferred to the Department of the Environment and Conservation, the responsible minister became the Hon. Tom Osborne. The committee met with Minister Osborne, the Deputy Minister Mr. Paul Dean, and the Assistant Deputy Minister Mr. Robert Warren on several occasions during the year. Issues discussed included listing of species, committee membership and financial challenges faced by the committee in pursuing its mandate.

## **MEETINGS**

The committee met twice during the 2004/05 fiscal year: October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2004 and February 14<sup>th</sup> 2005 (conference call). The face to face meeting was held in St John's, where the majority of the members reside, to minimize travel expenses. Most of the discussion and decisions related to the determination of priority species for which status reports should be prepared, commissioning of reports, and selection of new committee members.

## **PROCEDURES**

It was agreed that, while every effort would be made to convene meetings only when all members could be present, a quorum would be 50%+1 of the membership.

Voting on procedural matters would be on the basis of a simple majority of members present but, in the event of a status recommendation to the minister, failing a consensus, a two thirds majority of all members, whether present or not, would be required.

## **CRITERIA**

The criteria for decisions on the level of risk for a species (endangered, threatened, vulnerable) will follow those of the federal COSEWIC committee, which in turn are based on those of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) with minor adjustments for local circumstances and conditions. A copy of the COSEWIC criteria can be found in Appendix 1.

## **STATUS REPORTS AND PRIORITY LISTS**

Status reports were prepared for the Goose Bay Blowout Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela limbata labradorensis*) by Shelley Pardy Moores, the Redwine Caribou herd (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) by Christine Doucet, the Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) by Kate Dalley, Kristin Powell and Darroch Whitaker, the Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) by Tina Leonard and Darroch Whitaker, and the Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa*) by Michael Peckford and Darroch Whitaker. The reports will be presented to the Minister in the 2005/06 fiscal year.

Priority lists have been drawn up for other taxa, based on the general status of these groups prepared by Wildlife Division (Appendix 2). Based on the priority lists, additional species for which status reports will be commissioned were identified (Appendix 3).

A draft contract template for writing Status Reports has been developed (Appendix 4.)

## **ASSESSMENTS, EVALUATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The status report on the Low Northern Rockcress (*Neotorularia humilis*) was evaluated by the committee. Based on the information provided in the status report, and using the criteria adopted by the committee, the SSAC recommended that this plant be listed as 'endangered'. The Governor in Council accepted the recommendation and the species was listed as "endangered" on December 22, 2004. Copies of the SSAC Report are available from the SSAC secretariat.

## **THE FUTURE**

In most cases status reports for species on the priority lists will have to be contracted out to individuals with detailed knowledge about the species under consideration. The number of status reports we can commission and evaluate will depend primarily upon our budget. We expect to commission 5 to 10 reports per year over the next several years. Bringing the committee up to full membership to cover other taxonomic groups and knowledge bases is important to the advancement of our mandate.

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1. COSEWIC criteria
- Appendix 2. Priority lists
- Appendix 3. Species identified for status reports
- Appendix 4. Draft contract template for Status reports.

# Appendix 1.

## COSEWIC quantitative criteria and guidelines for the status assessment of species.

### A. Declining Total Population

Endangered

Threatened

Reduction in population size based on any of the following 4 options and specifying a-e as appropriate:

(1) population size reduction that is observed, estimated, inferred, or suspected in the past 10 years or 3 generations, whichever is longer, where the causes of the reduction are clearly reversible AND understood AND ceased, based on (and specifying) any combination of a-e below.

> 70 %

> 50 %

(2) population size reduction that is observed, estimated, inferred or suspected over the last 10 years or 3 generations, whichever is longer, where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any combination of a-e below.

> 50 %

> 30 %

(3) population size reduction that is projected or suspected to be met within in the next 10 years or 3 generations, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years), based on (and specifying) any combination of b-e below.

(4) population size reduction that is observed, estimated, inferred, projected or suspected over any 10 year or 3 generation period, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years), where the time period includes both the past and the future, AND where the reduction or its causes may not have ceased OR may not be understood OR may not be reversible, based on (and specifying) any of a-e below.

- a) direct observation
- b) an index of abundance appropriate for the taxon
- c) a decline in area of occupancy, extent of occurrence and/or quality of habitat
- d) actual or potential levels of exploitation
- e) the effects of introduced taxa, hybridisation, pathogens, pollutants, competitors or parasites

### B. Small Distribution, and Decline or Fluctuation

1. Extent of occurrence Or	< 5,000 km <sup>2</sup>	< 20,000 km <sup>2</sup>
2. Area of occupancy	< 500 km <sup>2</sup>	< 2,000 km <sup>2</sup>

For either of the above, specify at least two of a-c:

- |   |                        |                        |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| (a) either severely fragmented<br>or known to exist at # locations  | ≤ 5                    | ≤ 10                   |
| (b) continuing decline observed, inferred or projected in any of the following:<br>i) extent of occurrence<br>ii) area of occupancy<br>iii) area, extent and/or quality of habitat<br>iv) number of locations or populations<br>v) number of mature individuals |                        |                        |
| (c) extreme fluctuations in<br>any of the following:<br>i) extent of occurrence<br>ii) area of occupancy<br>iii) number of locations or populations<br>iv) number of mature individuals   | > 1 order of magnitude | > 1 order of magnitude |

### C. Small Total Population Size and Decline

Number of mature individuals	< 2,500	< 10,000
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and 1 of the following 2:

(1) an estimated continuing decline rate of at least	20% in 5 years or 2 generations (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future)	10% in 10 years or 3 generations (up to a maximum of 100 years in the future)
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(2) continuing decline, observed, projected, or inferred, in numbers of mature individuals and at least one of the following (a-b):

	<b>Endangered</b>	<b>Threatened</b>
(a) fragmentation-- population structure in the form of one of the following:	(i) no population estimated to contain >250 mature individuals  (ii) at least 95 % of mature individuals in one population	(i) no population estimated to contain >1,000 mature individuals  (ii) all mature individuals are in one population
(b) extreme fluctuations in the number of mature individuals		

#### D. Very Small Population or Restricted Distribution

(1) Number of mature individuals	< 250	< 1,000
(2) Applies only to threatened: Population with a very restricted area of occupancy or number of locations such that it is prone to the effects of human activities or stochastic events within a very short time period in an uncertain future, and thus is capable of becoming highly endangered or even extinct in a very short time period.	(not applicable)	area of occupancy typically < 20 km <sup>2</sup> or number of locations < 5

#### E. Quantitative Analysis

Indicating the probability of extinction in the wild to be at least:	20% in 20 years or 5 generations, whichever is longer (up to a maximum of 100 years)	10% in 100 years
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#### Special Concern:

those species that are particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events but are not endangered or threatened species.

Species may be classified as being of Special Concern if:

- a. the species has declined to a level of abundance at which its persistence is increasingly threatened by genetic, demographic or environmental stochasticity, but the decline is not sufficient to qualify the species as Threatened; or
- b. the species is likely to become Threatened if factors suspected of negatively influencing the persistence of the species are neither reversed nor managed with demonstrable effectiveness; or
- c. the species is near to qualifying, under any criterion, for Threatened status; or
- d. the species qualifies for Threatened status but there is clear indication of rescue effect from extra-limital populations.

#### Examples of reasons why a species may qualify for "Special Concern":

- A species that is particularly susceptible to a catastrophic event (e.g., a seabird population near an oil tanker route)
- A species with very restricted habitat or food requirements for which a potential threat to that habitat or food supply has been identified (e.g., a bird that forages primarily in old-growth forest, a plant that grows primarily on undisturbed sand dunes, a fish that spawns primarily in estuaries, a snake that feeds primarily on a crayfish whose habitat is threatened by siltation)
- A recovering species no longer considered to be Threatened or Endangered but not yet clearly secure

#### Examples of reasons why a species may not qualify for "Special Concern":

- A species existing at low density in the absence of recognized threat (e.g., a large predatory animal defending a large home range or territory)
- A species existing at low density that does not qualify for Threatened status for which there is a clear indication of rescue effect

Environment Canada | Canadian Wildlife Service | Species at Risk  
 Date Published: 2003-04-28  
 Last updated: 2003-07-17  
 URL of this page: [http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/eng/sct0/Assessment\\_process\\_tbl2\\_e.cfm](http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/eng/sct0/Assessment_process_tbl2_e.cfm)

## Appendix 2. Priority Lists.

For information on rankings see the SSAC 2003-2004 Annual Report.

### SSAC Vascular Plant Priority List

Species/ Population	SSAC Priority Rationale	S-rank (NF)	S-rank (Lab)	N-rank	G-rank
<i>Astragalus bodinii</i>	Only one known occurrence (near Cook's Harbour), northern Cordilleran disjunct, near area of human activity	S1		NNR	G4
<i>Symphotrichum boreale</i>	Only one known occurrence (Wild Cove Brook), near populated area and commercial activities	S1		N5	G5
<i>Prenanthes racemosa</i> var <i>racemosa</i>	Only one known occurrence (Wild Cove Brook), near populated area and commercial activities	S1	S?	N?	G5T?
<i>Erigeron compositus</i>	Only one known occurrence (near Corner Brook), calciphile; arctic-alpine disjunct	S1		N5	G5
<i>Carex petricosa</i> var <i>misandroides</i>	Only five occurrences, relocated at only a single location in NF, reported for Labrador	S1	S?	N1N2	G1G2Q
<i>Platanthera foetida</i>	Only one known occurrence, cordilleran disjunct, calciphile, small population	S1		N9	G5
<i>Potamogeton strictifolius</i>	Only one known location (Flower's Cove), grows in alkaline waters; type locality	S1		N?	G5
<i>Erysimum inconspicuum</i> var <i>coarctatum</i>	Only one known location (Gros Morne National Park); endemic to the Gulf of St. Lawrence	S1		N2	G5?T2
<i>Sagina saginoides</i>	Only one known location (White Hills); wide arctic-alpine circumpolar disjunct	S1	S?	N?	G5
<i>Hedysarum boreale</i> subsp. <i>mackenzii</i>	Only two known occurrences (Port au Port); one population threatened by human activity; boreal North American disjunct; mostly western and Hudson Bay	S1		N5?	G5T5?
<i>Taraxacum lyratum</i>	Only one known occurrence (Northern Peninsula); maybe second population at Big Brook; wide arctic disjunct	S1	S?	N?	G5
<i>Poa laxa</i> subsp. <i>fernaldiana</i>	Less than five known occurrences (Gros Morne National Park, Northern Peninsula and Southern Labrador) on quartzite	S1	S?	N2	G2G3
<i>Thelypteris quelpaertensis</i>	Only one known occurrence (Gros Morne National Park); wide cordilleran disjunct (amphiberingian)	S1		N3	G4

### SSAC Mammal Priority List

Species/ Population	SSAC Priority Rationale	S-rank (NF)	S-rank (Lab)	N-rank	G-rank
Arctic Hare (NF) <i>Lepus timidus</i>	Population status difficult to determine, small isolated populations	S3	S5	N5	G5
Northern Myotis (NF) <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Population status unknown, national status -sensitive	S2S3		N4	G5
Rock Vole (Lab) <i>Microtus chrotorrhinus</i>	Population status unknown		S1	N4	G5
Little Brown Bat (NF) <i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Population status unknown, winter hibernacula areas may be limiting or under threat	S4	S4	N5	G5
Gray Wolf (NF) <i>Canis lupus</i>	Population extirpated or extinct, genetic work to confirm species status	SX	S4	N4	G4



### Appendix 3.

#### Species identified for status assessment reports.

Species	Common Name	Group	Report Status	Author(s)
<i>Vallonia terranova</i>	Newfoundland Vallonia	Mollusc	Seeking author	
<i>Astragalus bodinii</i>	Bodin's Milkvetch	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Symphyotrichum boreale</i>	Northern Bog Aster	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Prenanthes racemosa</i>	Rattlesnakeroot	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Erigeron compositus</i>	Cutleaf Fleabane	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Hedysarum boreale</i> <i>ssp. mackenzii</i>	Mackenzie's Sweetvetch	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Catharus minimus</i>	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Bird	In preparation	K. Dalley, K. Powell and D. Whitaker
<i>Carex petricosa</i> <i>var. misandroides</i>	Rock-dwelling Sedge	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Erysimum inconspicuum</i> <i>var. coarctatum</i>	Gulf of St. Lawrence Wormseed Mustard	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Lepus arcticus</i>	Arctic Hare	Mammal	Seeking author	
<i>Pseudosuccinea columella</i>	Mimic Lymnaea	Mollusc	Seeking author	
<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Caspian Tern	Bird	In preparation	T. Leonard and D. Whitaker
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Northern Wheatear	Bird	In preparation	M. Peckford and D. Whitaker
<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	Blue-spotted Salamander	Amphibian	In preparation	J. Fenske
<i>Platanthera foetida</i>	Alaska Rein Orchid	Plant	Seeking author	
<i>Thelypteris quepaertensis</i>	Mountain Fern	Fern	Seeking author	
<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Northern Leopard Frog	Amphibian	Seeking author	
<i>Cicindela limbata</i> <i>ssp. labradorensis</i>	Goose Bay Blowout Tiger Beetle	Insect	In preparation	S. Pardy Moores
<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Red Wine Mountain Caribou	Mammal	In preparation	C. Doucet

## Appendix 4 .

### Draft Contract Template for Status Reports.

#### Contract SSAC-?-20??

#### Contractor

Contractor's Name

Address: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Telephone: XXXXXX

E-mail: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

#### Brief description

This contract is for professional services to prepare a status report for the Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC) on the **Species Common Name**.

The report will be used as the basis for a SSAC assessment of the status of this species.

#### Detailed description

The contractor will use the best available information on the **Species Common Name**, including scientific, community, and Aboriginal traditional knowledge (ATK) to write a comprehensive status report that will form the basis of an assessment on the status of the **Species Common Name** in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The content and format of the report will conform to the Draft Status Report Template shown in the SSAC Annual Report which is available on the web page: [http://www.gov.nf.ca/env/wildlife/wildlife\\_at\\_risk.htm](http://www.gov.nf.ca/env/wildlife/wildlife_at_risk.htm) or from the SSAC secretariat. The report template specifies headings, the content under each heading, range maps, other figures, and appendices. Aerial font type must be used in the report with a minimum font size of 10 points. Any illustrations or graphics used must be originals prepared by the contractor or, if not, appropriate authorization of their use must be obtained and clearly cited in the report. If possible, the author should supply a photograph of **Species Common Name**. A maximum length of 8 pages should, in the majority of cases, allow for adequate coverage of even the more complex status reports.

The contractor will be expected to actively seek out all relevant and important existing sources of scientific, community, and Aboriginal traditional knowledge. It will be the responsibility of contractors to include ATK that is relevant to the species status assessment. All holders of ATK contacted will be appropriately acknowledged. Upon commencing work on the status report, the contractor will contact the SSAC secretariat for the range jurisdiction(s) and relevant Wildlife Management Agencies responsible for the species and the appropriate Conservation Data Centres to obtain the most recent information on the species.

The report will be subjected to a review process. The Draft Report, after receiving approval by the SSAC, will be reviewed by the range jurisdiction(s), and any other external reviewers recommended by the SSAC. Comments and suggestions will be forwarded to the report writer with instructions from the SSAC for changes that must be incorporated to produce a Provisional Report. The contract will be concluded at this point. The report and all supporting documents including referenced material, reports, maps, and data must be copied to the SSAC secretariat for archiving. Over the course of subsequent review and the SSAC assessment, further modifications may be made to the report. A final SSAC Assessment and Status Report will be published on the Provincial Government web page ([http://www.gov.nf.ca/env/wildlife/wildlife\\_at\\_risk.htm](http://www.gov.nf.ca/env/wildlife/wildlife_at_risk.htm) ) following the SSAC assessment.

SSAC status reports will be "living documents". After the report is concluded, any subsequent update reports will be prepared simply by adding new information to the existing report and, where appropriate, updating factual information. SSAC will be cited as the author on the report's cover page (ownership and copyright will rest with the Crown). Contractors who produce the initial status report or, in the future, who add information to the "living document" to produce an update report, will be acknowledged as having prepared the status report. Over time, the Acknowledgements will contain the list of contributors (report writers) who have provided SSAC with their expertise.

**Duration of contract**

Contract date, to delivery date, for a total of xx weeks.

**Milestones**

**Name of Species**

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Payment</u>	<u>Due date</u>
1. Contract awarded	80%	Contract date
2. Provisional Status Report accepted by the SSAC, that incorporates all changes pursuant to the review of the Draft Report.	20%	Delivery date
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**Inspection**

Work to be performed to the satisfaction and subject to the acceptance of the scientific authority and departmental representative.

**Basis of payment**

This contract is not to exceed **amount to be negotiated, typically \$1000**. All work should be submitted in electronic format and figures as separate graphic files (ie, tif, gif, bmp, jpg files) or as photo-ready hard copies, and accompanied by an invoice with original signature. The contractor will be paid **80%** upon contract signing and **20%** upon submission and acceptance by the SSAC of the Provisional Status Report that incorporates all changes pursuant to the SSAC and jurisdictional review.

**Departmental representative and SSAC Secretariat**

Joe Brazil  
Senior Manager  
Biodiversity and Endangered Species Section  
Wildlife Division  
Department of Environment and Conservation  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
(709) 637-2356

**For the contractor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**For the Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_