

## **COSEWIC MANDATE: Assessment of Species considered being at risk in Canada**

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The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) was called for by the 1976 Federal- Provincial Wildlife Conference. COSEWIC arose from the need for a single, scientifically sound, national list of species at risk in Canada. COSEWIC 's current mandate is provided by the 1998 Accord for the Protection of Species at risk in Canada and by the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*, proclaimed in June 2003, that recognize the Committee as a source of independent advice on the status of species at risk nationally.

COSEWIC determines the national status of wild species, subspecies, varieties and other designatable units, that are considered to be at risk of extinction or extirpation across their range in Canada. Since 1999, COSEWIC has been using quantitative criteria (adapted from the criteria used by the IUCN) to assess the species' risk of extinction. It reports its assessment results, including reasons and uncertainties, to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC) and to the Canadian public. To assess species, COSEWIC uses the best available information on the biological status of a species, including scientific knowledge, Aboriginal traditional knowledge and community knowledge. The assessment process is independent and transparent.