



## MEETING MINUTES

MAY 20-21, 2025

### INUVIK – NIHTAT GWICHIN CULTURE CENTRE ROOM

Attendees	Organization
Jody Pellissey	CMA Chairperson/Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB)
Amanda Weltman	Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB)
Larry Carpenter*	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) [WMAC(NWT)]
Kendra Tingmiak	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) [WMAC(NWT)]
Opeyemi Aluko	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) [WMAC(NWT)]
Robert Charlie-Tetlichi	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB)
Allissa Sallans	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB)
Catarina Owen	?ehdzo Got'Iné Gots'é Nákedí (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board)
Stephanie Behrens*	Tł'chǫ Government
Brett Elkin	Environment and Climate Change (ECC)
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Climate Change (ECC)
Bruce Laurich	Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Jessica Jumbo*	Dehcho First Nation
Orna Phelan	North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA)
Earl Evans*	Northwest Territory Métis Nation
Lorne Napier*	Northwest Territory Métis Nation
Michele Grabke	Species at Risk Secretariat
Joslyn Oosenbrug	Species at Risk Secretariat

\*Indicates virtual attendance

#### 1. Introductions – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Roundtable introductions*

#### CMA Roundtable Introductions

Notify Secretariat of necessary changes to contact/distribution list information.

**Action 20250521-01: Secretariat will send out the distribution list for updates.**

#### 2. Agenda – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Review of draft agenda*

Agenda approved with typographical corrections.

**Decision 20250521-02: Agenda approved with changes.**

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### 3. Minutes – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Review and approve draft minutes from February 2025*

Minutes approved.

[Decision 20250521-03: Minutes approved with some changes.](#)

### 4. Review of action and decision items – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

*Review of action items from previous meetings and earlier outstanding items*

An overview of action and decision items was provided in the meeting binder.

[Review of Actions/Decisions:](#)

**Action 20250219-01:** Secretariat to finalize the December 2024 minutes and post them on the website. *Action is complete.*

**Action 20250219-02:** Continue to bring the vacancy of alternate chairperson of the CMA forward. *This continues to be vacant.*

**Action 20250219-03:** At the May CMA meeting the Secretariat will provide a summary of 2025-26 projects funded by SCARF including projected deliverables. As well as a summary of deliverables for 2024-25 projects received. *This will be covered under item 11 of this meeting.*

**Action 20250219-04:** Consensus Agreement on listing hairy braya is drafted; start signatures April 10, 2025. *Action is complete.*

**Action 20250219-05:** A decision is still being considered for the listing of red-sided garter snake. *Action is complete.*

**Action 20250219-06:** Secretariat will send the draft news release via email. CMA to review news release for the implementation of Peary caribou, send comments/revisions back to Secretariat for March 14 and will determine who will be the interview spokesperson/s. *Action is complete.*

**Decision 20250219-07:** News release for the NWT Wood Bison Progress Report (2020-2024) was approved with changes. *Action is complete.*

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**Action 20250219-08:** Joslyn to send out revisions on the internal Q & A supplementary document for the Wood Bison Progress Report News Release. Management Authorities to determine who will be the spokesperson for the Wood Bison Progress Report via email. *Action is complete.*

**Action 20250219-09:** Secretariat will provide a draft workplan for barren-ground caribou and bats progress reports at the May CMA meeting, for approval. *Action is in progress; this will be discussed under Item 9 during this meeting.*

**Action 20250219-10:** ECCC will share the presentation slide deck on Species at Risk Funding Programs in the Northern Region along with the CIER Expression of Interest form. *Action is complete.*

**Decision 20250219-11:** Decision to approve the April-June 2025 social media content calendar. *Action is complete.*

**Action 20250219-12:** Secretariat will compile 2024 implementation summaries for the May meeting. *Action is complete; this will be discussed under Item 5.*

**Past action to bring forward:** Management/Recovery Actions Classification continues to be a bring forward item. *The research and monitoring component of this was presented at the February CMA meeting.*

## 5. General Updates – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*General updates from Management Authorities and participating organizations. Opportunity for input/discussion on implementation actions.*

Each Management Authority and participant of the CMA was given an opportunity to provide general updates regarding their organization, information related to species at risk and/or to provide input/discuss implementation actions.

**GNWT:** Regarding northern mountain caribou, there is work happening that is relevant, but being led by organizations outside of the CMA. How can we approach this to capture work being done outside of the CMA?

**Secretariat:** Reminder that CMA members should report any actions they are aware of for the species, even if they are not the lead (provide contact information, where possible). This is



helpful when compiling actions for the progress report. Secretariat can follow up on these actions.

### Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT):

- WMAC (NWT) now has a scholarship opportunity: Kilgavik / Kijgavik / Kîgavik Scholarship
- WMAC has a meeting in Tuktoyaktuk in two weeks at the beginning of June

### Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board:

- GRRB is doing some northern mountain caribou community knowledge gathering for information on the herd in the Mackenzie mountains.
- Will be going forward with some bat monitoring in the GSA with some SCARF funding.
- Moving ahead with harvest study happening next month, digitized with a new platform.
- Summer student to help with ongoing projects.

### Sahtú Renewable Resources Board:

- Ongoing series of Public Listening Sessions – the fourth is scheduled to be held in February in Tulita. Theme is 'Caribou in the Mixed Economy.'
- SRRB is planning a caribou monitoring meeting in the fall in Norman Wells. Will bring in people taking alternative measures, research, etc.
- Just wrapped up fieldwork on northern mountain caribou. Holding meetings with outfitters – seeing low calf numbers for the Redstone herd.
- Also have a scholarship available.

### Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board:

- Wood bison – participating in progress report. Attended Mackenzie bison working group meeting. Herd seems to be doing well and the working group is considering increasing Total Allowable Harvest – but more work is needed before a regulation change would take place.

- Bats – our office has a program where we put ARUs along the Tłı̨chǫ highway in collaboration with the guardians program out of Whatì. Combined project with the Tłı̨chǫ Government.
- Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou calving ground surveys coming up out of Kugluktuk. Amanda will take part.
- Bobby Migwi joined Amanda at the last SARC meeting.
- Scholarship deadline was March 31 and is being reviewed and awarded by the board next week.

### Government of the Northwest Territories:

- New Deputy Minister – Robert Jenkins.
- Heather Sayine-Crawford has been the Director of Wildlife for 5 years, has taken a transfer assignment so there is a competition underway for a new Director (1-year term position). Rob Gau is acting Director in the interim.
- Survey crews are working with co-management partners on upcoming barren-ground caribou calving ground surveys in June (Bluenose-East and Bathurst herds).
- U.S. government staff (USGS) have had very significant cuts to their polar bear budget. They reached out to GNWT for help preserving their data and samples. We've set up data sharing agreements.
- Research on red-sided garter snakes underway near Fort Smith, looking at impacts of wildfires on garter snakes (second year of Johanna Stewart's Master project on snakes post fire). Saw lots of snakes. Last year they got a later start so they may have missed the peak numbers. This year, crews caught the snakes right from the start and conducted recaptures. Found a new den and are getting information on body condition. Too soon to compare numbers, but some snakes have definitely survived.

### Environment and Climate Change Canada:

- Had a federal election; have a new Minister but are still in caretaker status and documents are in backlog.
- Bumblebee surveys around Yellowknife may be expanding (last week of July-first week of August). Looking for people in other regions who are willing to do surveys.

- Listing decisions are with the new Minister. But we will not likely hear anything until the fall.
- **GRRB (Robert):** We had a workshop and community members came in and there was concern about the lack of songbirds along the Mackenzie River. There is interest in songbird surveys. Robert will reach out to Samuel Hache.

## North Slave Métis Alliance:

- Working on data sharing agreements for all the data we've been collecting (eDNA, ARU, etc.). Sharing camera data with GNWT for species distribution.
- NSMA has a community camp at Old Fort Rae. Last year we put out bat ARUs and working with Joanna to look at some of the recordings to monitor little brown myotis. Wondering if this is a maternity roosting site.
- Collecting camera and ARU data along the Tibbitt-Contwoyto Winter Road. Working with a grad student on disturbance and Amelia Cox from CIMP to work on a harvest model. Looking at gut piles, describe them, how many harvested, whether there was wastage. Trying to quantify how many caribou are being taken each year.
- We've focused on vertebrates through the eDNA program but are trying to expand into invertebrates with help from ECC.
- **GRRB:** What are you looking for with your water monitoring program? Are there concerns about water? **NSMA:** not looking specifically at contaminants, but doing a project around Giant Mine, water quality, sediment and fish.

## Tł'chǫ Government

- Held a caribou gathering in Behchokǫ last month, open to all Tł'chǫ communities, Elders and youth. Focused on respectful harvest and proper butchering practices in response to a number of recent incidents. We wanted to take the initiative to teach the younger generations to show them how to handle caribou when hunting, how to harvest, what to pack. We had breakout sessions with hands on interaction working with caribou meat, making dry meat, drying hides. Gave updates on population estimates, joint management proposals, TG programs, etc. GNWT staff did presentations (biologists and officers).

- Provided updates on the winter program. Caribou monitoring along the Tibbitt to Contwoyto winter road, impacts of the road, impacts from hunting, impacts from wolves – recoded through Petter's program. Observed a lot of wastage, captured a lot of photos of wounded and wasted caribou. Key theme of our programs. There was so much harvesting that occurred along the Tibbitt to Contwoyto winter road. It was a challenging year for our winter programs – busy, chaotic, heartbreaking. With that amount of harvesting taking place, that drew in a lot of wolves. We continued our wolf-harvesting program on our own (joint GNWT program ended in 2024). Harvested 38 wolves, mainly in the McKay Lake area.
- Stephanie transitioned in the Manager role. We will be advertising the Bio position soon – which may change the membership for the CMA.

Northwest Territory Metis Nation:

- Nothing to report at this time.

### 6. Annual Reports – led by Jody Pelissey (Chairperson)

*Review draft CMA and SARC annual reports. Update on ECC annual report.*

Review draft 2024-25 CMA Annual Report

Under subsection 16(1) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Conference of Management Authorities (the Conference) must submit an annual report to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change by September 30 each year. This annual report covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

The Secretariat asked the CMA for a decision on whether to include the dates for Dolphin and Union caribou implementation agreement and/or progress report/review. CMA decided to leave it as is (Due 2028 / Due 2033).

There was also one wording change to the section on SCARF: “Awarded \$60,000 in funding among seven projects.”

The 2024-25 CMA Annual Report was approved with changes.

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Decision 20250521-04: The 2024-25 CMA Annual Report text was approved. The Secretariat will finalize this document for next steps (design and submission to the Minister of ECC).

#### Receive draft 2024-25 SARC Annual Report

Under subsection 23(1) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Species at Risk Committee must submit an annual report to the Conference of Management Authorities by July 1 each year. This annual report covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

The assessment schedule in the SARC annual report is subject to updates pending the CMA's approval of the schedule.

WRRB noted that Amanda should be listed rather than Aimee for last year. Secretariat will check on whether Bobby Migwi would prefer to be listed as Robert or Bobby in the report.

#### Receive ECC's 2024/25 *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* Annual Report

Under sections 79(8), 82(3), and 84(8) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) must provide an annual report to the CMA by July 1 each year respecting:

- Agreements and orders made under Section 79;
- Exemptions made under Section 82(1)(a) and the reasons provided to the Minister under Section 82(2)(a); and,
- Permits issued under Section 84(1), and of those refused, including the reasons for issuing or refusing to issue a permit.

There are no changes to regulations, permits issued, etc. this year.

Action 20250521-05: GNWT will send ECC's 2024-25 *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* annual report by July 1.

#### 7. Canadian Toad Assessment – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

*SARC presentation on Canadian toad status report and request for CMA direction on whether to assess this species.*

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The Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee (SARC) met on April 29-30, 2025, to assess the biological status of Canadian toad in the Northwest Territories. An NWT species status report was prepared for Canadian toad, western toad and northern leopard frog. This multispecies status report was prepared using the best available knowledge from Indigenous, community and scientific sources. As there is limited documented Indigenous and community knowledge on these species, the status report was based almost exclusively on scientific knowledge. Where ICK was available it was included.

Presentation – led by Alissa Sallans, Amanda Weltman and Michele Grabke on behalf of SARC

A summary of the status report on Canadian toad in the NWT was presented.

Investigation of the best available knowledge indicates that all known occurrences of Canadian toad are within Wood Buffalo National Park.

Canadian toad was initially scheduled for assessment in 2025 and included in the Species Status Report for Amphibians in the NWT because there was one observation recorded outside of the Wood Buffalo National Park. The specimen that suggested presence of Canadian toad outside the Wood Buffalo National Park was collected 21 June 1901 and the record notes Fort Smith. However, under further investigation it was identified that this likely refers to a general location rather than a precise collection site.

As a result, there are no verified occurrences outside of Wood Buffalo National Park. National Park lands are under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada based on the *Canada National Parks Act* and, therefore, responsibility of the Canadian toad does not fall to the Conference of Management Authorities (CMA).

SARC did not assess Canadian toad at its May 2025 assessment meeting and referred the question of whether or not to assess the Canadian toad to the CMA for direction. However, SARC did make recommendations on Canadian toad.

#### SARC's Recommendations:



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- Investigate Canadian toad occurrences (observations, breeding sites, and hibernacula sites) beyond the boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park, along Highway 5 towards Fort Smith.
- Prioritize the assessment of Canadian toad in the Northwest Territories if observations are made outside of Wood Buffalo National Park.
- Document Indigenous and community knowledge on Canadian toad, including their habitat, and threats.
- Encourage researchers to fill knowledge gaps on all aspects of Canadian toad biology (i.e., range, breeding sites, abundance, population trends), habitat and threats.
- Encourage continued implementation of best practices for studying/researching amphibians to avoid disease transmission and for working in areas important for Canadian toad.
- Encourage COSEWIC to assess Canadian toad. Currently, Canadian toad is included as a high priority candidate under Part 3: species specialist subcommittees' candidate list of [COSEWIC's candidate wildlife species](#).
- Encourage Parks Canada to continue the Canadian toad emergent hole surveys and to follow the recommendations outlined in the Parks Canada unpublished survey reports. These include: 1) putting in place habitat signage and/or marking areas for protection, and 2) developing and/or implementing a Canadian toad and/or Amphibian Monitoring Program.
- Continue to educate the public to raise awareness of Canadian toad (and all amphibians), their habitat, and threats.
- Encourage sharing Canadian toad observations on [iNaturalist.ca](#) and/or reporting observations to [WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca).

#### Questions/Comments/Discussion

The following questions or comments were discussed with regard to SARC's letter to the CMA requesting direction on the assessment of Canadian toad:

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- **WMAC (NWT):**
  - Agree with not doing the assessment of Canadian toad because it is only found in the park. If we find it outside of the Park – then SARC should assess it.
  - If Canadian toad is found outside the park, we can reconsider. Secretariat notes that if the species is found outside the park, it would likely trigger an assessment of the species that includes all Canadian toad in the NWT (including those toads in the park).
- **GRRB:**
  - Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.
- **SRRB:**
  - Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.
- **WRRB:**
  - Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.
- **GNWT:**
  - Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.
  - For the same reasons stated, I am glad that they are in the status report – there is a lot of value in capturing that information. From a legislation point of view it does not seem that much could happen after assessment that we are mandated to do.
- **ECCC:**
  - Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.
- **TG:**
  - Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.
- **NMSA:**
  - Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.
  - **Question:** What would be involved in a full assessment? Secretariat explained that SARC would go through the status report to apply the criteria to determine where the species falls in the at-risk categories (e.g. distribution, abundance, ICK criteria on level of concern and observations by knowledge holders).
- **NWTMN:**
  - Johanna Stewart working on toads in the Fort Smith area. One of the main concerns we had was the severity of the forest fires. The area snakes and amphibians migrate through has been burnt to the roots of the trees. A lot of these areas are



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burnt for many miles and these species don't have the protection they had to be able to move through the area.

- Agreed that it should not be assessed without any observations outside the Park.

#### Next Steps

CMA will need to respond to SARC's letter Re: Request for CMA Direction on the Assessment of Canadian Toad.

SARC will finalize the status report and make the final status report and assessment available to the public and the CMA. This release date will initiate the timeline for CMA's request for clarification.

**Action 20250521-06: Secretariat to draft CMA response to SARC on the request for direction on the assessment of Canadian toad. The agreed direction is to not assess the species.**

#### Timelines

- **May 27, 2025:** SARC will be providing the Species Status Report for Canadian Toad, Western Toad and Northern Leopard Frog in the NWT (2025) to the Management Authorities.
- **June 27, 2025:** Deadline for CMA to request clarification from SARC regarding the assessment.

#### 8. Western Toad Reassessment – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat)

*SARC presentation on the western toad assessment outcome. Conservation actions, requests for clarification.*

The Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee (SARC) met on April 29-30, 2025, to assess the biological status of western toad in the Northwest Territories. The assessment was based on this approved Species Status Report for Canadian Toad, Western Toad and Northern Leopard Frog.

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Presentation – led by Alissa Sallans, Amanda Weltman and Michele Grabke on behalf of SARC

A summary of the April 2025 assessment results for western toad in the NWT was presented.

The Species at Risk Committee (SARC) determined that there was not enough available documented Indigenous and community knowledge (ICK) to prepare two separate components of the status report. Therefore, there is a single status report and it is based almost exclusively on scientific knowledge (SK). Where ICK was available it was included. The assessment process and objective biological criteria used by the Species at Risk Committee are available at: [www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca).

#### Assessment: Threatened in the Northwest Territories

*Threatened – The species is likely to become Endangered in the NWT if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.*

**Reason for the assessment: Western toad fits criteria SK (D2) for Threatened.**

Status Category	Criterion	
Threatened	SK(D2)	<p>The species has a restricted number of locations in the NWT.</p> <p>There are fewer than 5 locations for this species, therefore western toad is prone to the effects of human activities or stochastic events within a very short time period (1-2 generations) in an uncertain future, and is thus capable of becoming Extinct, Extirpated or Critically Endangered in a very short period of time.</p>

#### Main factors:

- The population of western toad in the Northwest Territories is restricted to three locations based on known breeding sites; therefore, it is vulnerable to stochastic events within a very short period of time.

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- The number of locations depends on the most serious plausible threat to a species. The most serious plausible threat to western toad is disease and pathogens. Therefore, the number of locations is based on the number of breeding areas where amphibians gather and may spread pathogens. A breeding area may contain overlapping sites or breeding ponds within close proximity. In this context, there are three locations based on 11 known breeding sites.
- In the NWT, chytridiomycosis has been found in western toads and there is evidence of ranavirus within the range of western toad. A disease outbreak could decimate the western toad population within a breeding area, particularly if coupled with additional stressors (e.g., drought, wildfire) or threats that reduce immunity to diseases.
- Additional threats include habitat degradation, drought, wildfires, roadkill, and increased UV-B radiation. These threats can have complex interactions with each other and are challenging to manage.
- Life-history characteristics (e.g., long lifespan, delayed maturity of females, and females breeding only once a lifetime) make populations especially vulnerable to threats and declines.

Additional factors:

- Currently, there is not enough information or data on abundance to determine population trends for western toads in the Northwest Territories.
- Although there are healthy populations of western toads in British Columbia and the Yukon that could contribute to a rescue effect, these populations may be subject to similar threats that are faced by the population in the NWT, particularly if there is not enough good habitat for re-establishing the population.
- Western toads in the NWT appear to be at or near the northern limit of species distribution, where they may be particularly vulnerable to stochastic events like drought and wildfire.

Positive influences on western toad and their habitat:

- Progress has been made to achieve objectives for amphibian management including developing and implementing the *Western Toad Best Management Practices* for work on



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roadways in the Liard River valley, and publishing a *Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of the Northwest Territories*.

- Researchers in the NWT are required to follow decontamination protocols, as a condition of research permits, to help prevent human-caused spread of disease in wetlands and ponds.
- Western toad is listed as a species of Special Concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* and a national management plan was published in 2020.

#### Assessment History:

- The NWT Species at Risk Committee met in December 2014 and assessed western toad as Threatened in the NWT because of its limited range and vulnerability to threats.
- Western toad was listed as Threatened in the NWT in 2016 under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.
- A Management Plan for Amphibians in the NWT was completed in 2017 and a progress report was released in 2022.

#### Recommendations:

- Document Indigenous and community knowledge on western toads, including their habitat, and threats.
- Encourage researchers to fill knowledge gaps on all aspects of western toad biology (i.e., breeding sites, abundance, population trends), habitat and threats.
- Encourage continued monitoring of breeding sites.
- Encourage continued implementation of best practices for studying/researching amphibians to avoid disease transmission and for working in areas important for western toads.
- Encourage the implementation and enforcement of protection measures for known breeding sites.
- Continue participating in the regulatory process to provide advice regarding amphibian habitat as appropriate.
- Continue to educate the public to raise awareness of western toads (and all amphibians), their habitat, and threats.

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- Encourage sharing western toad observations on [iNaturalist.ca](https://inaturalist.ca) and/or reporting observations to [WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca).

## Questions/Comments/Discussion

The following questions or comments were discussed with respect to the reassessment of western toad:

- **Question:** (GNWT) What is meant by habitat degradation? What's happening there that we should be concerned about? (Secretariat) There is no evidence the overall quantity of habitat has changed. But the cumulative impacts of activities on the land has the potential to degrade overall habitat, including roads, trails and seismic lines. Western toads may also rely on human-made habitat for breeding. Clearcuts are also used by western toads depending on the seasonal risk of desiccation.
- **Comment:** (GRRB) With respect to the lack of Indigenous and community knowledge, a lot of the ICK is not documented. The knowledge is held by the Elders and is not documented.
- **Question:** (GRRB) How mandatory are the recommendations? (Secretariat) These recommendations are not mandatory, just guidance to Management Authorities on what can be done to help prevent these species from going extinct.
- **Question:** (WRRB) How much latitude is there for the person preparing the status report to collect undocumented knowledge? How does that work? (Secretariat) Contractor receives a list of minimally required contacts (e.g. researchers, Indigenous governments and organizations) to check on available knowledge to include in the status report. If knowledge is not recorded, the preparer may include personal communications in these status reports. SARC is not mandated to conduct original research or collect interviews. The Secretariat has come up with ideas on how to encourage groups to collect knowledge but SARC cannot do it on its own.

## Conservation Actions

The CMA may discuss whether **conservation actions** are required immediately (this is an option for the CMA (section 56) as soon as a species is assessed, even prior to listing, in situations where they feel that actions need to be taken immediately). These may include actions to conserve the species, habitat or area; the preparation of a management plan or



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recovery strategy; and any other matter that the CMA considers necessary or advisable to conserve the species, habitat or area.

Conservation action consensus agreements become an available tool as soon as a species has been assessed (these are considered pre-listed species) but can be used at any point in the process.

A Management Plan for Amphibians in the NWT is already in place. No conservation actions were suggested during the meeting that require action through a consensus agreement on conservation action.

#### Request Clarification

There is a 60-day period in which the CMA or individual Management Authorities (GNWT is the only Management Authority) can request clarification from SARC. If the CMA/Management Authorities would like to submit a request for clarification on this assessment, the request should be submitted to SARC 60 days after the CMA receives the final assessment and status report. SARC will respond within 30 days. This process is available to any management authority or the CMA in the first 60 days of receiving an assessment. The clarification can be on the reasons for the assessment decision, but not the process used for the assessment. The request must be in writing. The request and SARC's response will be published on the website.

#### Next Steps

The draft **actions needed to prepare** for a CMA consensus agreement on listing (actions to prepare) document was presented to the CMA. Management Authority revisions to this document are due by August 27, 2025. Recall that the management authority for western toad is the GNWT.

The consensus agreement adding another 10-year term to the listing of western toad as a Threatened species will be drafted by the Secretariat and will be distributed to the Management Authority (GNWT).

The **consultation/engagement period** for this listing decision will be from August to November 2025. The Management Authority (GNWT) confirmed that they would like a consultation/engagement package from the Secretariat including fact sheet, community

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posters, engagement letters, public survey, FB posts, and paid advertising (print/online and community radio).

Action 20250521-07: The Secretariat will distribute the draft actions to prepare document along with the draft Consensus Agreement for a listing decision on western toad.

Timelines (updated post-meeting based on the final status report and assessments being provided May 27, 2025)

- **May 27, 2025:** SARC provided the assessment of western toad to the Management Authorities.
- **July 27, 2025:** Deadline for the CMA to request clarification from SARC regarding the assessment.
- **August 27, 2025:** Management Authorities develop actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement on listing.
- **August-November 2025:** Consultation/engagement period.
- **December 2025:** CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- **January 23, 2026:** Consensus Agreement Annex B's (Actions the Management Authorities have undertaken or will undertake with respect to listing) are due in anticipation of the February 2026 CMA meeting.
- **April 27, 2026:** Start signatures for consensus agreement.
- **May 27, 2026:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on listing.
- **May 2025:** CMA meeting – Secretariat to draft news release for extending the listing of western toad as a Threatened species.
- **August 27, 2026:** Western toad legally relisted as a Threatened species. News release.

### 9. Northern Leopard Frog Reassessment – led by Michele Grabke (Secretariat) *SARC presentation on the northern leopard frog assessment outcome. Conservation actions, requests for clarification.*

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The Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee (SARC) met on April 29-30, 2025, to assess the biological status of northern leopard frog in the Northwest Territories. The assessment was based on this approved Species Status Report for Canadian Toad, Western Toad and Northern Leopard Frog.

Presentation – led by Alissa Sallans, Amanda Weltman and Michele Grabke on behalf of SARC

A summary of the April 2025 assessment results for northern leopard frog in the NWT was presented.

The Species at Risk Committee (SARC) determined that there was not enough available documented Indigenous and Community Knowledge (ICK) to prepare two separate components of the status report. Therefore, there is a single status report and it is based almost exclusively on Scientific Knowledge (SK). Where ICK is available it is included. The assessment process and objective biological criteria used by the Species at Risk Committee are available at: [www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca).

### Assessment: Endangered in the Northwest Territories

*Endangered – The species is facing imminent extirpation from the NWT or extinction.*

**Reason for the assessment: Northern leopard frog fits criteria SK (B2) and meets conditions (a) and (b) (iii, iv, v) for Endangered.**

Status Category	Criterion	
Endangered	SK(B2) The area of occupancy is <500 km <sup>2</sup>	The index area of occupancy is approximately 116 km <sup>2</sup> .
	(a) The number of locations is ≤5	The number of locations is three with disease/pathogens as the most plausible threat.
	(b) Continuing decline, observed, estimated, inferred, or projected, in any of: (iii) area, extent, or quality of habitat, (iv) number of locations or subpopulations, (v) number of mature individuals.	

Main factors:

- In the Northwest Territories (NWT), northern leopard frog is at the northern-most limit of its range in the world and is limited to the southern NWT where suitable overwintering sites exist.
- Using all observations in the NWT, the extent of occurrence is estimated to be 14,247 km<sup>2</sup> and the index of area of occupancy (IAO) is an estimated 116 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The number of locations depends on the most serious plausible threat to a species. The most serious plausible threat to northern leopard frogs is disease and pathogens. Therefore, the number of locations is based on the number of breeding areas where amphibians gather and may spread pathogens. In this context, there are three locations based on three known breeding sites.
- Knowledge holders have indicated that northern leopard frogs have been present in the area north of Trudel Lake towards Fort Resolution likely since the 1980s, possibly even the 1950s. They are currently present in the Fort Resolution area and the Slave River delta based on multiple reports and local knowledge. One observation of northern leopard frog in Fort Resolution was recorded in 2016. Northern leopard frogs have not been reported in the area between the Slave River Delta and 64.7 degrees north since before 2000. This knowledge suggests an inferred decline in the area, extent, and/or quality of habitat, number of locations or subpopulations, and in the number of mature individuals.
- Other threats to northern leopard frogs include drought, wildfire, and the proposed Talton Hydroelectric Expansion project. A decline in the quality of habitat, number of locations, and number of individuals is projected from the threats.
- The population of northern leopard frog that occurs in the NWT, northern Alberta and northern Saskatchewan is geographically disjunct from the main distribution of the species in North America. Northern leopard frogs in the NWT were found to be genetically distinct from other populations in western Canada; they also have low genetic diversity, and a high incidence of inbreeding. This increases their vulnerability to stochastic events.

- Populations of northern leopard frog in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan could contribute to a rescue effect. However, these populations are small and are subject to similar threats as northern leopard frogs in the NWT reducing the likelihood of rescue.

Positive influences on northern leopard frog and their habitat:

- Progress has been made to achieve objectives for amphibian management including publishing a *Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of the Northwest Territories*.
- Researchers in the NWT are required to follow decontamination protocols, as a condition of research permits, to help prevent human-caused spread of disease in wetlands and ponds.
- Northern leopard frog is listed as a species of Special Concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* and a national management plan was published in 2013.

Assessment History:

- The NWT Species at Risk Committee met in December 2013 and assessed northern leopard frog as Threatened in the NWT because of its small, shrinking range and declining population.
- In 2015, northern leopard frog was listed as Threatened in the NWT under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.
- A Management Plan for Amphibians in the NWT was completed in 2017 and a progress report was released in 2022.

Recommendations:

- Document Indigenous and community knowledge on northern leopard frog, including their habitat and threats.
- Encourage researchers to fill knowledge gaps on all aspects of northern leopard frog biology (i.e., range, breeding sites, abundance, population trends), habitat and threats.

- Encourage continued implementation of best practices for studying/researching amphibians to avoid disease transmission and for working in areas important for northern leopard frog.
- Encourage the implementation and enforcement of protection measures for known breeding sites.
- Encourage the collection of information on climate change impacts including monitoring the effects of drought and collecting data on changes to the hydrological regime (i.e., water levels, flow and precipitation).
- Continue participating in the regulatory process to provide advice regarding amphibian habitat as appropriate.
- Revisit the status of northern leopard frog in the Northwest Territories if the Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project moves forward.
- Continue to educate the public to raise awareness of northern leopard frog (and all amphibians), their habitat, and threats.
- Encourage sharing northern leopard frog observations on [iNaturalist.ca](https://inaturalist.ca) and/or reporting observations to [WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WildlifeObs@gov.nt.ca).

### Questions/Comments/Discussion

The following questions or comments were discussed with respect to the reassessment of northern leopard frog:

- **Question:** (GNWT) Could you give a clearer understanding of what's changed between 2013-14 and now that led to the Endangered assessment? (**Secretariat**) There haven't been recorded observations of northern leopard frogs in certain historic locations since before 2020. More recent information (genetic research) shows that the NWT population of northern leopard frogs is not just geographically separated from the rest of North American northern leopard frogs, but also that they are genetically distinct. So not a lot of recent observations, plus we don't know much about them in northern Alberta and

Saskatchewan. Their area of occupancy and number of locations are small, and there is an inferred decline based on ICK and a lack of recent observations in areas where northern leopard frogs were previously observed.

- **Question:** (GNWT) Is it fair to say that not a lot has changed on the map, but another 10 years has gone by without new observations, coupled with new genetic work. (SARC member) There were also some ICK that indicated fewer observations and inferred decline.
- **Comment:** (NWTM) How can you make an assessment on something so small? You can ask any hunter about frogs and they won't have much to say. We could walk all day and never see a frog. We have people coming in here, mostly in the Park, and they do assessments on many of the species. But whether there is enough of a decline to change the listing, to me that's a tough call to make. You might have a drought one year and all the frogs move over to another area. Around here I can guarantee you that there are no frog experts here. Not sure how you guys can figure this out. (**Secretariat**) It's true that there is not a lot of abundance information, which made the assessment much more difficult. Researchers will look at the ponds during breeding season to try and get a count. But without those population numbers SARC has to rely on other factors to come up with their assessment. They used the area we do know that they occupy (small area) and they look at inferred declines in that area which pointed to Endangered. In the status report, there is a table that shows the number of observation events for each species. This speaks to search effort for the species we are looking at (not abundance). Between 2016 and 2025 there has only been one observation event of northern leopard frog. Leading up to the assessment in 2015 there were 13 observation events. When SARC does not have enough information to make an assessment based on population numbers – they look at other things.

### Conservation Actions

The CMA may discuss whether **conservation actions** are required immediately (this is an option for the CMA (section 56) as soon as a species is assessed, even prior to listing, in situations where they feel that actions need to be taken immediately). These may include actions to conserve the species, habitat or area; the preparation of a management plan or



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recovery strategy; and any other matter that the CMA considers necessary or advisable to conserve the species, habitat or area.

Conservation action consensus agreements become an available tool as soon as a species has been assessed (these are considered pre-listed species) but can be used at any point in the process.

A Management Plan for Amphibians in the NWT is already in place. No conservation actions were suggested during the meeting that require action through a consensus agreement on conservation action.

#### Request Clarification

There is a 60-day period in which the CMA or individual Management Authorities (GNWT is the only Management Authority) can request clarification from SARC. If the CMA/Management Authorities would like to submit a request for clarification on this assessment, the request should be submitted to SARC within 60 days of receiving the final status report and assessment. SARC will respond within 30 days. This process is available to any management authority or the CMA in the first 60 days of receiving an assessment. The clarification can be on the reasons for the assessment decision, but not the process used for the assessment. The request must be in writing. The request and SARC's response will be published on the website.

#### Next Steps

The draft **actions needed to prepare** for a CMA consensus agreement on listing (actions to prepare) document was presented to the CMA. Management Authority revisions to this document are due by August 27, 2025. The management authority for northern leopard frog is the GNWT.

The consensus agreement to list northern leopard frog as an Endangered species will be drafted by the Secretariat and distributed to the Management Authority (GNWT).

The **consultation/engagement period** on this listing decision will be from August to November 2025. The Management Authority (GNWT) confirmed that they would like a consultation/engagement package from the Secretariat including fact sheet, community

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posters, engagement letters, public survey, FB posts, and paid advertising (print/online and community radio).

Action 20250521-08: The Secretariat will distribute the draft actions to prepare document along with the draft Consensus Agreement for a listing decision on northern leopard frog.

Timelines (updated post-meeting based on the final status report and assessments being provided May 27, 2025)

- **May 27, 2025:** SARC provided the assessment of northern leopard frog to the Management Authorities.
- **July 27, 2025:** Deadline for the CMA to request clarification from SARC regarding the assessment.
- **August 27, 2025:** Management Authorities develop actions needed to prepare for a CMA Consensus Agreement on listing.
- **August-November 2025:** Consultation/engagement period (earlier for GNWT).
- **December 2025:** CMA meeting to review the results of consultation/engagement.
- **January 23, 2026:** Consensus Agreement Annex B's (Actions the Management Authorities have undertaken or will undertake with respect to listing) are due in anticipation of the February 2026 CMA meeting.
- **April 27, 2026:** Start signatures for consensus agreement.
- **May 27, 2026:** Deadline for Consensus Agreement on listing.
- **May 2026:** CMA meeting – Secretariat to draft news release for listing northern leopard frog as an Endangered species.
- **August 27, 2026:** Northern leopard frog legally listed as an Endangered species. News release.

**10. Progress Reports and Reviews – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)**  
*Update on progress reports/reviews as per the Species at Risk (NWT) Act sections 73 & 74.*

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### Update on Progress Reports and Reviews

A progress report and review are required every 5 years under section 73 and 74 of the Species at Risk (NWT) Act after an implementation agreement is signed. The implementation agreements for the NWT Barren-ground Caribou Recovery Strategy and the NWT Bats Management Plan were signed on April 9, 2021. A progress report and review must be completed by April 9, 2026.

#### Barren-ground caribou Recovery Strategy Progress Report and Review

The workplan for the development of the NWT barren-ground caribou progress report and review was provided for approval. The first draft (with implementation actions from 2021-2024; not including text on 5-year review) is due to be circulated to the Conference of Management Authorities and other partners in June/July. Implementation actions for 2025 will have to be provided early so they can be incorporated into the progress report.

The 5-year review required under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* will be conducted by the CMA (including observers and participants) early in November 2025.

There are many partners in barren-ground caribou management that do not sit at the CMA table, including the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM), the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee (BCAC), the Government of Nunavut (GN), Parks Canada (PCA), etc. The CMA discussed possibilities for engaging these groups to ensure the progress report is as complete as possible.

- What are the additional partners that should be engaged in the development of the progress report?
- What level of involvement would the CMA like to see? Would partners contribute actions, review all drafts, review initial drafts. What about the 5-year review?
- How will these partners be engaged? By the Secretariat or through Management Authorities?

### Discussion

Following discussion, CMA reached consensus on the following:

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- GNWT will investigate implications of the *UNDRIP Implementation Act* for potential engagement on preparing and reviewing the progress report.
- Secretariat will develop a distribution list for unsettled land claim regions and adjacent partner jurisdictions (Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta) that were engaged for the recovery strategy. Porcupine caribou are not covered by the recovery strategy.
- GRRB, SRRB, WMAC (NWT), WRRB and TG will engage within their own regions through community tours, including community members, RRCs and HTCs.
- Other partners will be contacted by the Secretariat (CMA) via email to provide information about the progress report, request information about any actions taken to support the four objectives of the recovery strategy and request any comments on the 2020 recovery strategy as part of the 5-year review. Anyone who contributes to the report will be offered an opportunity to review the progress report.
- Note that the ACCWM meets in November and BCAC meets in December. Potentially provide a presentation in these forums with an update and a call for comments on the recovery strategy (for input into the review).

CMA also discussed who should be invited to take part in the review meeting in November. Three options were considered:

1. Signatories to the recovery strategy and implementation agreement
2. Management Authorities (includes ECCC)
3. CMA (Management Authorities, Participants, Observers)

#### Discussion

- **WMAC (NWT):** I like being inclusive for the progress report. Keep the review at the CMA level – stays in-house. (#3)
- **GRRB:** Full inclusion on progress report. Review – don't want it too big. Management Authorities should be included in the review only. (#2)
- **SRRB:** CMA for progress report and review. (#3) it is nice to ask everyone.
- **WRRB:** Review - #2
- **GNWT:** Review #3 – because the development of the RS was done by the broader CMA. Often the CMA works more broadly – being inclusive works well.

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- **ECCC:** If you go through the review, and there are no changes made – and there are changes suggested – does the recovery strategy change and go to engagement? Option 2 or 3 work.
- **NSMA:** It is hard to toe the line, advocate to get things done. Capacity to review is a consideration. Hard to do a proper review of everything. We would like the option to review. #3 is the preferred option.
- **NWTMN:** Similar to NSMA - #3.

Decision 20250521-09: CMA approved the workplan for the preparation of the barren-ground caribou recovery strategy progress report and review.

Decision 20250521-10: All CMA members (Management Authorities, observers and participants) will be invited to take part in the 5-year review of the barren-ground caribou recovery strategy in November.

## Bats Management Plan Progress Report and Review

The workplan for the development of the NWT bats progress report and review was provided for approval. The first draft (with implementation actions from 2021-2024; not including text on 5-year review) is due to be circulated to the Conference of Management Authorities and other partners in June.

The 5-year review required under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* will be conducted by the CMA (including observers and participants) in November 2025.

Decision 20250521-11: CMA approved the workplan for the preparation of the bats progress report and 5-year review.

## 11. Species at Risk Committee – led by Secretariat *Membership updates and Species Assessment Schedule*

### Membership

Updates to SARC membership include:



- **Suzanne Carriere** was renewed (by ECC-GNWT) for another five-year term effective April 1, 2025.
- **Nic Larter**, renewed (by ECC-GNWT) until May 2025. SARC celebrated Nic Larter's last SARC meeting after 15 years as a member.
- **Jan Adamczewski** appointed as a regular member by ECC-GNWT for a five-year term effective April 1, 2025.

There are no vacancies on SARC.

Upcoming term end dates include:

- Petter Jacobsen, December 19, 2025 appointed by ECC-GNWT
- Dang-Dang Gruben, May 31, 2025 appointed by WMAC (NWT)

### 2026-2030 Species Assessment Schedule (review/approve)

SARC submitted the proposed 2026-2030 Species Assessment Schedule on May 5, 2025, to the CMA.

In their letter SARC made the following recommendations regarding monitoring and management:

#### Rusty blackbird and short-eared owl

- Increase distribution and population trend monitoring
- Initiate further Indigenous and community knowledge studies
- Provide education regarding nest disturbance
- Implement the federal management plan for rusty blackbird

#### Collared pika

- Increase Indigenous, community and scientific knowledge research on all aspects of the species and habitat in the Northwest Territories

#### Dall's sheep

- Initiate further Indigenous and community knowledge studies



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- Continue harvest monitoring

#### **Globally rare plants and lichens (including Arctic orangebush lichen, Banks Island alkali grass, Raup's willow, and Drummond bluebell)**

- Revisit locations of historical sites
- Distribution and population trend monitoring
- Determine current threats

SARC also recommends gathering information on species that have already been assessed as data deficient or not at risk. Knowledge on these species and the threats they face will help inform future prioritization and assessment recommendations.

Species previously assessed by SARC as data deficient include long-legged myotis, long-eared myotis, big brown bat, gypsy cuckoo bumble bee and McKay's western bumble bee (formerly western bumble bee). Species previously assessed by SARC as Not at Risk include wolverine, peregrine falcon, and yellow-banded bumble bee.

The gypsy cuckoo bumble bee and McKay's western bumble bee (formerly western bumble bee) were assessed by SARC as data deficient in 2019. However, in the years since these assessments were completed more information has become available. In 2023, Environment and Climate Change Canada began conducting bee surveys with roadside collections in the NWT using the same sites as the breeding bird surveys. Data from these surveys provides new information on the distribution and abundance of bumble bees in the NWT. Based on this new information, SARC proposes a multi-species status report to reassess gypsy cuckoo bumble bee and McKay's western bumble bee, and to assess Suckley's bumble bee in 2029.

Little brown myotis and northern myotis are scheduled for reassessment in 2027. A multi-species status report and assessment of bats was completed in 2017. Long-legged myotis, long-eared myotis, and big brown bat were assessed as data deficient; little brown myotis and northern myotis were assessed as species of Special Concern. In response, the CMA developed a Management Plan for Bats in the NWT that identified conservation objectives for all eight species of bat that occur or are suspected to occur in the NWT (including three

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migratory bats: eastern red bat, hoary bat, and silver-haired bat). A progress report on actions taken under the Management Plan is due April 2026.

Based on this information, SARC proposes preparing a multi-species status report that includes little brown myotis and northern myotis. More information is needed to assess or reassess the other bat species.

Regarding all bats in the NWT, SARC recommends gathering the following information:

- Distribution and population trends
- Movement and/or migration routes
- Indigenous, community and scientific knowledge on all aspects of the species and habitat in the Northwest Territories
- Factors threatening bats in the Northwest Territories

The proposed 2026-30 Species Assessment Schedule follows.

**Spring 2026** Wood bison (reassessment)  
Common muskrat

**Spring 2027** Northern myotis (reassessment)  
Little brown myotis (reassessment)  
Barren-ground caribou and Porcupine caribou (reassessment)

**Spring 2028** Muskoxen  
Rock cranberry (lingonberry)

**Spring 2029** Dall's sheep  
Gypsy Cuckoo bumble bee (reassessment)  
McKay's Western bumble bee (reassessment)  
Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee

**Spring 2030** Northern mountain caribou (reassessment)

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## Questions/Comments/Discussion

The following questions or comments were discussed:

- **GRRB:** Can you clarify why Porcupine caribou does not appear online for reassessment (just showing barren-ground caribou)? **Response** (Chair): There was a request from the CMA to do a Porcupine caribou reassessment since the Porcupine caribou are being included in the status report.
- **NWTMN:** Why are Porcupine caribou separated from the rest of the barren-ground caribou herds for assessment? **Response** (Chair): Back in 2017, a decision was made that the Porcupine caribou herd was considered geographically distinct from the other herds and it was assessed on its own. That's why it's on the schedule for 2027. Back in 2017, Porcupine caribou were assessed as Not at Risk while the other eight herds were determined to be Threatened.
- **GRRB:** There are three distinct populations of muskox. Are they going to be assessed all together? **Response** (Secretariat): The CMA recommended assessing muskox as well as Dall's Sheep at the species level. The status reports will be developed for these species as a whole. During their assessment meeting and based on information in the status report, SARC will determine what groupings (species, subspecies, or distinct populations) should be assessed.
- **GNWT:** COSEWIC recently assessed snowy owl as Threatened in Canada. Can SARC add snowy owl to its prioritization schedule? **Response** (Secretariat): Snowy owl has not been prioritized before – the Secretariat will bring this to SARC's attentions.
- **GNWT:** The 2017 assessment included the yellow-banded bumblebee, which came back as not at risk. Will it be included in this new assessment? Yellow-banded bumblebees are one of the host species for gypsy cuckoo bumblebee so they'll have to be discussed to some extent in the status report. **Response** (Secretariat): This recommendation can be included in the CMA's response to SARC.

## Assessment Schedule Revisions

There are no revisions to the 2026-2030 assessment schedule. However, CMA will direct SARC to consider (through prioritization) whether yellow-banded bumble bee should be added to the assessment schedule for 2029, considering the role of yellow-banded bumblebees in



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gypsy cuckoo bee populations. The CMA will also direct SARC to consider prioritizing snowy owl for assessment.

**Decision 20250521-12:** CMA approved the 2026-2030 assessment schedule with a note for SARC to consider whether yellow-banded bumblebees should be added to the assessment schedule and for SARC to consider prioritizing Snowy owl for assessment.

Approved Assessment Schedule:

With these additions, the 2026-2030 assessment scheduled is as follows:

<b>Spring 2026</b>	Wood bison (reassessment) Common muskrat
<b>Spring 2027</b>	Northern myotis (reassessment) Little brown myotis (reassessment) Barren-ground caribou and Porcupine caribou (reassessment)
<b>Spring 2028</b>	Muskoxen Rock cranberry (lingonberry)
<b>Spring 2029</b>	Dall's sheep Gypsy Cuckoo bumble bee (reassessment) McKay's Western bumble bee (reassessment) Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee
<b>Spring 2030</b>	Northern mountain caribou (reassessment)

### Status Report Updates

There are currently three status reports in progress.

- **In progress with contractors:**
  - Muskrat – ICK/SK components (scheduled for assessment in 2026)
  - Wood Bison – ICK/SK components (scheduled for assessment in 2026)

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- Barren-ground caribou – ICK/SK components (scheduled for assessment in 2027)
- **Upcoming status reports (procurement process to begin in May/June):**
  - Bats – little brown myotis and northern myotis (scheduled for assessment in 2027)

### Plain Language

SARC recognizes that a complete and accurate species assessment depends on good information. SARC needs the best available information to effectively apply both sets of assessment criteria; however, documented Indigenous and community knowledge on certain species is limited. SARC is working on various strategies for increasing available ICK for species on the assessment schedule—in particular, information needed to apply the ICK criteria.

#### Short-term tactics include:

- Updated SARC instructions published on SAR website
- Targeted emails (SAR mailing list, distribution lists and contacts such as current researchers)
- Newsletter articles (e.g. South Slave Research Update, Xàgots'eèhk'ò Journal, NSMA membership newsletter)
- Webpage on SAR website specifically for researchers (re: assessments) – *or text could also be part of the SCARF webpage*
- Public service announcements (radio, community posters, Facebook advertising) seeking input from knowledge-holders on species status reports

Members of the CMA have an important role in contributing to this knowledge base. This could include research or information provided directly to the status report preparer. This could also include better representation at the SARC table.

### 12. Species Conservation and Recovery Fund – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat)

#### *Summary of projects funded and subcommittee membership*

The goal of the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund is to support efforts to conserve, recover, and protect species at risk in the Northwest Territories. In 2024, the project rating



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criteria for the fund was reviewed to determine how to more effectively and explicitly target priorities actions identified in management plans and recovery strategies—in particular, threat abatement/mitigation and important knowledge gaps.

The main revision involved adjusting application scoring to favour priority actions. Applicants must clearly explain how their project will address a priority action and/or identified knowledge gap for the species and how success will be measured. Points are assigned to projects more likely to have a measurable impact.

#### SCARF Applications/Projects update

Ten applications were received in 2025-26 for the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund (SCARF). **Seven applications were approved** for a total of \$60,000.00 in funding. Descriptions of approved projects are provided and will help support the conservation and recovery of bats, berry plants, barren-ground caribou, amphibians and reptiles, and expand monitoring of several other species.

- Merging Advanced Technologies with Traditional Knowledge for Species at Risk Protection in the North Slave Region (North Slave Métis Alliance)
- Investigating Bat Prevalence in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GRRB)
- Post-fire Status of Reptiles and Amphibians in the NWT (Karl Larsen, Thompson Rivers University)
- Investigating population structure and connectivity of little brown bats across the Northwest Territories (Jessica Reimer and Laura Kaupas)
- Indigenous Knowledge of Berries in the NWT (Saint Mary's University)
- Athabasca Denesuline Land Monitors in Nuhenené: Keeping our relationship with etthén (caribou) strong using Denesuline traditional protocols (Athabasca Denesuline Né Né Land Corporation)
- BQCMB Youth Engagement - Caribou Edu-kits (BQCMB)

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Most contribution agreements for 2025-26 have been signed and the Secretariat will once again check in with SCARF recipients in November and February to see if projects will be completed and funds used. If projects cannot be completed, then those funds could potentially be used for new projects that were not granted funding.

Reporting has been received for almost all 2024-25 projects. These reports are available to any CMA members that would like to learn more about the results. This includes, for example, 5-year eDNA results from NSMA's ongoing monitoring and the ADNLC's Caribou Relationship Plan, which is nearing completion. Project outcomes will be posted to the NWT Species at Risk website in the coming weeks.

- **Question (NWTMN):** Are the amounts of money equally disbursed? **Response (Secretariat):** The subcommittee (4 members) makes decisions on funding. Applicants are encouraged to apply for \$10k, however some request more or less. They are funded based on content of application and availability of funds.
- **Question (NWTMN):** Can you use this funding for ongoing projects with other funding? **Response (Secretariat):** Yes. Projects already underway or projects with other sources of funding can apply to SCARF. Encourage reaching out to the Secretariat for funding ideas.
- **Question (NSMA):** Will more funding be available in the future? Not at this time.

#### SCARF Subcommittee Member Update

As per the CMA rules of conduct, the regular membership of the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund subcommittee is composed of four representatives designated by the CMA, including one representative from the GNWT Department of Environment and Climate Change. A regular member may designate an alternate from their organization where the regular member is unable to take part in a meeting. The term shall be designated by the CMA to a maximum of two years and can be renewed.

Term expiries of current members are as follows:

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- Catarina Owen / Alternate Melanie Harding (SRRB): October 11, 2025
- Aimee Guile / Alternate Amanda Weltman (WRRB): May 22, 2026
- Brett Elkin (GNWT): May 22, 2026
- Kendra Tingmiak (WMAC-NWT): October 9, 2026

Decision 20250521-13: CMA confirmed the renewal of Catarina Owen with Melanie Harding as Alternate (SRRB) as members of the Species Conservation and Recovery Fund Subcommittee, effective May 21, 2025.

### 13. Species at Risk Communications – led by Joslyn Oosenbrug (Secretariat) *Update on online platforms for NWT Species at Risk*

#### Social Media Content Calendar

The Secretariat provides a quarterly calendar of social media content for approval by the CMA. The content is used to populate the NWT Species at Risk Facebook page and supplemented by shared posts from partner pages (e.g. WRRB, ECC, ECCC, TG, etc.). There are approximately 1-2 posts per week. The current content calendar for approval was provided in the meeting binder and covers July – September 2025. The next content calendar will be approved in September.

The Secretariat reviewed the social media content and the CMA revised text and photos as per comments during the meeting.

Decision 20250521-14: Decision to approve the July – September 2025 social media content calendar with changes.

#### Species at Risk Communications Calendar

Calendar highlighting upcoming dates for species at risk is also provided with the social media content calendar:

- **May 2025** – SARC news release on species assessments (northern leopard frog, western toad and Canadian toad) – *pending CMA direction*

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- **June/July 2025** – SARC releases draft status reports on wood bison and common muskrat for public review
- **August 2, 2025** – CMA news release(s) on listing decisions for red-sided garter snake and hairy braya
- **August-November 2025** – Proposed CMA engagement period for listing decisions (amphibians)
- **October 2025** – Annual reports for SARC and CMA are tabled in the NWT Legislative Assembly and released to the public via the NWT SAR website
- **January 15, 2026** – Call for applications opens for the 2026-27 Species Conservation and Recovery Fund
- **April 9, 2026** – News release and social media on barren-ground caribou and bats progress reports (2021-2025)
- **April 2026** – Funding decisions for 2026-27 SCARF projects made public.
- **April 30, 2026** – Reporting due on 2025-26 SCARF projects

### 14. Hairy Braya Listing – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Consensus agreement on re-listing. News release.*

#### [Consensus Agreement to re-list Hairy Braya as a Threatened Species](#)

The consensus agreement to extend the listing of hairy braya as a Threatened species under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* was submitted to the Minister on May 2, 2025. An additional 10 years will be added to the listing term for hairy braya on the NWT List of Species at Risk as of August 2, 2025.

### 15. Red sided garter snake Listing – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Consensus agreement on listing. News release.*

#### [Consensus Agreement to Not List Red-sided Garter Snake](#)

On May 2, 2024, SARC provided the assessment and status report for red-sided garter snake to the CMA and recommended that red-sided garter snake be added to the NWT List of Species at Risk as a species of Special Concern. The Consensus Agreement and decision not



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to add red-sided garter snake to the Northwest Territories List of Species at Risk was provided to the Minister on May 2, 2025.

The decision and Consensus Agreement were provided to SARC, and will be made available to the public, along with the reasons for inconsistency between this Consensus Agreement and SARC's assessment of the status of the species, as per section 40 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

#### [News Release](#)

A news release will accompany the legal re-listing of hairy braya and decision not to list red-sided garter snake, released on August 2, 2025. The Secretariat drafted a news release, which was reviewed by the CMA and approved pending revisions to be emailed following the meeting.

Secretariat will prepare a Q&A to support interviews on why red-listed garter snake was not added to the NWT List of Species at Risk. GNWT will provide a spokesperson, with Jody (Chair) as backup spokesperson.

[Decision 20250521-15: Decision to approve the news release on listing decisions for hairy braya and red-sided garter snake, pending revisions.](#)

#### 16. Dolphin and Union Caribou Recovery Strategy – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Update on the recovery strategy.*

Dolphin and Union caribou were listed as an Endangered species under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* on August 1, 2024, triggering the requirement for a Recovery Strategy within one year of listing. The CMA discussed the feasibility of this timeline and determined that an extension on the development of the recovery strategy for Dolphin and Union caribou was required. The Act has provisions allowing the completion date of a recovery strategy to exceed one year. The completion date was extended to August 1, 2027, and the reasons for exceeding the one-year completion date were made available to the public.

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### Dolphin and Union Caribou Recovery Strategy Update

WMAC (NWT) provided an update on the development of the Dolphin and Union caribou recovery strategy. The Council recommends adopting the management plan as the recovery strategy with updates provided to the Council as necessary. WMAC (NWT) recognizes there is uncertainty about federal timelines for listing and the council is open to continuing the conversations regarding how and at what capacity WMAC (NWT) can be involved in each step. Direction will also be dependent on community perspectives as well as the OHTC. At the community tour in Ulukhaktok in February 2025, this proposal was shared and there are no objections. No concerns were raised by the Inuvialuit Game Council.

WMAC (NWT), IGC and KRWB are planning to meet in July (virtually) and in October for an Inuit-Inuvialuit North Beaufort meeting (two days) and the user-to-user meeting (one day), (in Yellowknife in person). They are actively seeking funding. If GNWT-ECC or anyone else is interested in participating in one of those meetings (either Dolphin and Union caribou or polar bear) in October, please express interest to Jessica.

GNWT agrees with adopting the management plan with an addition as the recovery strategy. An engagement would take place next summer, with a Consensus Agreement signed May 1, 2027.

Action 20250521-16: Secretariat will prepare a workplan and initial draft of an addition to be accepted alongside the adoption of the Management Plan for Dolphin and Union Caribou in the NWT and Nunavut as a recovery strategy.

### Timelines

- **May 1, 2024:** Consensus Agreement on listing in another category provided to the Minister.
- **August 1, 2024:** Dolphin and Union caribou listed as an Endangered species. News release issued.
- **May 1, 2027:** Consensus Agreement on accepting recovery strategy.
- **August 1, 2027:** Recovery strategy completion date.

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## 17. Next Meeting – led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)

*Overview of upcoming meetings*

- September 11, 2025 (virtually *if needed*) – report on engagement of amphibians, update on 2026 progress reports and reviews (barren-ground caribou and bats)
- December 5, 2025 (virtually) – summary of engagement on decisions, progress reports
- February 25-26, 2026 (virtually) – implementation actions summary, finalizing barren-ground caribou progress report
- May 13-14, 2026 (face to face Yellowknife) – SARC assessments, etc.

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### Species at Risk Workplan – At a Glance

*The table below outlines the CMA/SARC workplan and includes type of activity and species*

Year	Activity	Species
<b>2025</b>	Listing Decision	Red-sided garter snake
		Hairy braya
<b>2026</b>	Assessment	Wood bison (reassessment)
		Common Muskrat
	Listing Decision	Northern leopard frog (reassessment)
		Western toad (reassessment)
	Management Plan/Recovery Strategy	Dolphin and Union caribou (recovery strategy)
	Progress Reporting and Review	Bats
		Barren-ground caribou and Porcupine
		Hairy braya
<b>2027</b>	Assessment	Northern myotis (reassessment)
		Little brown myotis (reassessment)
		Barren-ground caribou and Porcupine (reassessment)
	Implementation	Dolphin and Union caribou (recovery strategy)
<b>2028</b>	Progress Reporting and Review	Boreal caribou
		Amphibians
		Polar bear
<b>2029</b>	Assessment	Muskoxen
		Rock cranberry (lingonberry)
<b>2030</b>	Assessment	Dall's sheep
		Gypsy Cuckoo bumble bee (reassessment)
		McKay's bumble bee (reassessment)
		Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee
	Progress Reporting and Review	Northern mountain caribou
	Progress Reporting and Review	Northern mountain caribou (reassessment)
		Peary caribou
		Wood bison



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