



COMMON MUSKRAT

Musk rats are rodents that live in wetlands and feed on aquatic plants. They are considered indicators of ecological and cultural health in freshwater ecosystems, as their numbers respond strongly to natural flooding and drying processes.

Musk rats have been used widely as a source of food, fur, and income by Indigenous harvesters in the NWT and continue to be valued for economic and cultural reasons.

In April 2026, the NWT Species at Risk Committee assessed common muskrat as a species of **Special Concern** in the NWT. Although muskrats remain widely distributed and numerous in the NWT, knowledge holders have observed declines in muskrat abundance, as well as adverse impacts to muskrat habitat which are linked to these declines.

The **NWT Species at Risk Committee (SARC)** is an independent group of experts who hold Indigenous and community knowledge, and/or scientific knowledge about species and habitat in the NWT. They assess species based on the best available information and objective biological criteria.

Read the assessment report and learn more about common muskrat in the NWT:

www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca

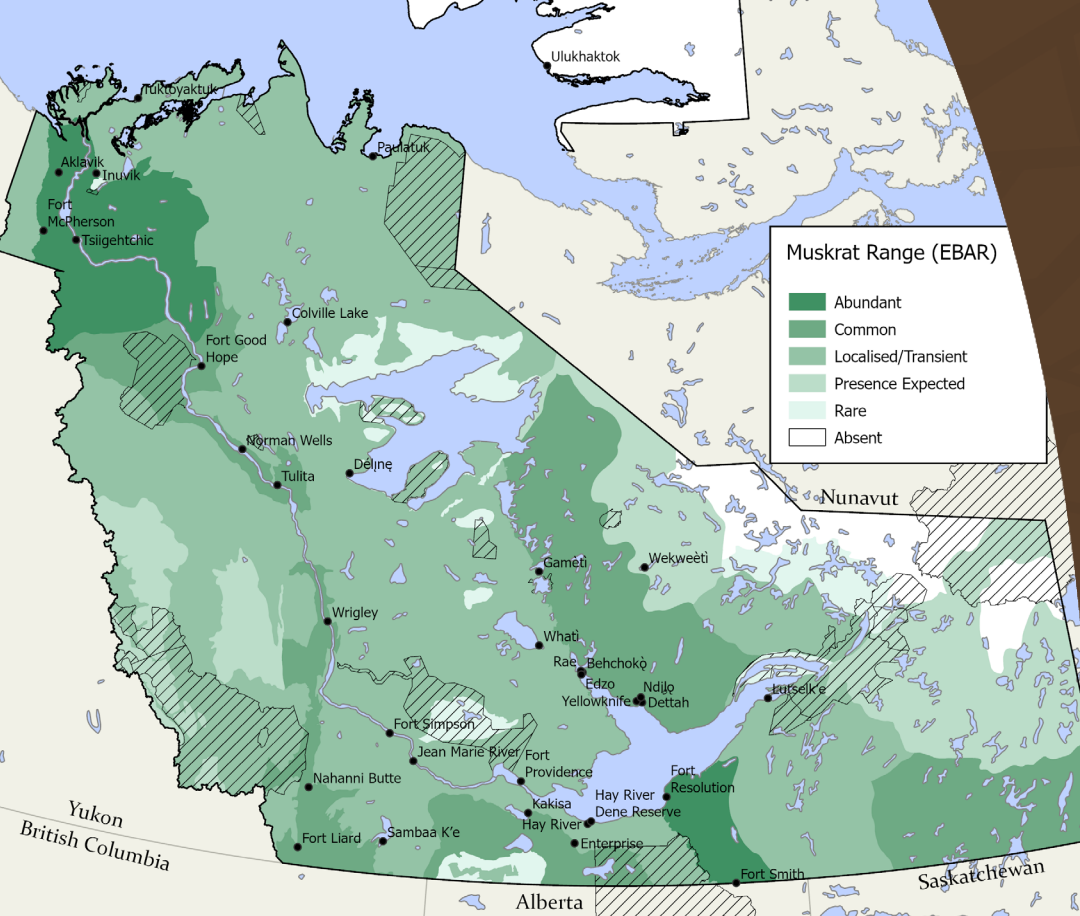
HAVE YOUR SAY!

COMMON MUSKRAT

Should common muskrat be listed as a species of **Special Concern** in the NWT?

Special Concern means common muskrat may become Threatened or Endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.





Top: Approximate distribution of common muskrat in the NWT. Darker green indicates higher abundance, with lighter green indicating rare and white indicating absence. Map courtesy of GNWT.

Bottom: Common muskrat, Vicki St. Germaine

COMMON MUSKRAT A SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN?

If common muskrat is legally listed as a species of **Special Concern** in the NWT, a management plan will be required for the species within two years. The management plan recommends objectives and approaches to manage common muskrat in the NWT and provides guidance to co-management partners.

WHY WAS COMMON MUSKRAT ASSESSED AS SPECIAL CONCERN?

Declines in muskrat abundance, outside of natural cycles, have been reported by Indigenous communities in the NWT. There is documented knowledge of ecosystem changes including altered water flow, precipitation, and water levels, as well as shifts in the seasonal timing of spring break-up and flooding. These changes affect the availability and quality of muskrat habitat.

HOW WOULD LISTING COMMON MUSKRAT AFFECT HARVESTING?

Adding a species to the NWT List of Species at Risk does not mean harvesting must stop—in fact, continuing to hunt and trap muskrat supports cultural connections to the species. Adding common muskrat to the NWT List of Species at Risk would not result in any changes to regulations already in place for harvest or land use.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

- Should common muskrat be added to the NWT List of Species at Risk as a species of **Special Concern**? Why or why not?
- Would listing this species have positive or negative impacts for you or your community? What would they be?
- Is there new or missing information that was not considered in the status report? If so, can you provide it to us or tell us where to find it?

Visit www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca or scan here:

