

Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut forestier du Canada  
“Voice of Forest Practitioners”

## *Information Paper*

# *Canadian Species at Risk*

---

### **Issue**

Canada does not have federal endangered species legislation that would prevent wildlife species from being extirpated or from becoming extinct. As well, legislation does not exist to ensure the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered or threatened as a result of human activity and do not have action plans for vulnerable species. Bill C-65, The Canadian Endangered Species Protection Act, was tabled in the House of Commons in 1997, but died on the order paper when the 1997 election was called. In the Fall of 1998, the Federal government, through Environment Canada, conducted a series of workshops to seek advice on the essential elements required for new federal legislation. A draft policy was released December 17, 1999. On April 11, 2000, the Species at Risk Act (SARA) legislation was introduced in the House of Commons.

### **Background**

The Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut forestier du Canada (CIF/IFC) believes the protection of species at risk is important to all managers of forest land and to society. All species of wild living things are critical components of healthy functioning ecosystems and provide a broad range of direct and indirect benefits to society and have inherent rights and intrinsic values.

The CIF/IFC believes an Act will be beneficial to protecting endangered species for several reasons. First, according to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), an independent scientific body, now recognized formally in the legislation, there are 340 species at risk in Canada, and the number of species listed as being at risk of extinction has increased dramatically in Canada during recent decades, primarily as a result of human activities. The loss of species is a global phenomenon estimated to be occurring at 1,000 times the 'natural' rate of extinction because of human activities. Second in 1992, the Canadian federal government signed and ratified the 1992 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, thereby committing Canada to



conservation of endangered species and ecosystems. Finally, many of Canada's threatened and endangered species cross jurisdictional boundaries, and the legislation supports the required cooperation among communities, provinces, federal government and other national and state governments outside of Canada.

Predating legal developments for endangered species is the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk signed in 1996 by most provincial and territorial ministers responsible for wildlife and by the federal government. This Accord commits governments to a national approach to protect and prevent species in Canada from becoming extinct as a result of human activities. The Accord serves as a blueprint for the coordination of government activities.

### **CIF/IFC Position**

1. The CIF/IFC supports the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, and urges the federal government to ensure the following issues are contained within the Canadian Endangered Species Protection Act:
  - Encourage partnership and strong support within all interest groups including local and indigenous communities, forestry and resource-based industries.
  - Establish the listing of species at risk by an independent scientific body.
  - Establish province by province, reliable and adequate inventories of habitats and species to set baselines. Such inventories need to complement provincial and national forest inventories and the national and local programs of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.
  - Develop and implement immediately short- and long-term conservation programs and recovery plans for species at risk.
  - Pursue non-regulatory approaches to species conservation through education, information dissemination and stewardship initiatives.
  - Develop incentive programs, in cooperation with landowners, for conservation of species at risk and their habitats, and define property responsibilities. Incentives may include tax reductions and subsidies.
  - Develop recognition programs (such as the Forest Stewardship Recognition Program) that stimulate awareness and appreciation for stewardship, sustainable practices and biodiversity conservation efforts in Canada's forests.
  - Establish effective inter- and intra-provincial and international mechanisms of cooperation for the protection and restoration of forest habitats for species at risk that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
  - Provide adequate funding to implement legislation and programs.
  - Liaise with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN).



2. CIF/IFC members and the forestry resources community in Canada can, on a daily basis, help protect species at risk and prevent them from becoming at risk, and can encourage stewardship ethics for all Canadians by:
  - Supporting the development and implementation of federal / provincial / territorial / municipal legislation and policy dealing with species at risk
  - Cooperating with federal/provincial/territorial/municipal agencies in developing inventories of species at risk on the forest landbase being managed
  - Protecting the habitat and populations of species at risk by implementing scientifically sound guidelines and best management practices (even when not required to do so by law)
  - Adopting proactive approaches to the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitat by implementing forest ecosystem management practices that maintain diversity of forest habitats at a variety of spatial and temporal scales within bounds of natural variability
  - Addressing cumulative impacts and changes.
  - Promoting the protection of species at risk and good forest land stewardship to private landowners, school groups, and other members of the public through publications, presentations, and field trips
  - Recognizing formally and informally outstanding examples of good land stewardship.
  - Supporting the development and establishment of a comprehensive system of protected areas.

### **The CIF/IFC**

The Canadian Institute of Forestry / Institut forestier du Canada (CIF/IFC) is a national voice of forest practitioners. The CIF/IFC, formed in 1908, represents members who are foresters, forest technologists and technicians, educators, scientists and others with a professional interest in forestry. The Institute's mission is *"to provide national leadership in forestry, promote competence among forestry professionals, and foster public awareness of Canadian and international forestry issues"*.

We are people with a professional interest in forestry, working in government, industry, academic and consulting fields. Our members use their education, training, and experience to help manage the forests of Canada and to make the Canadian public aware of forestry.

*April 2000*

*This CIF/IFC Information paper was prepared by CIF/IFC members through the CIF/IFC Standing Committee on Policy Development. The CIF/IFC gratefully acknowledges the support of the Forest and Science Technology Board and comments of external reviewers in preparing this paper.*