

Observers at COSSARO Assessment Meetings

The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) values the free and candid discussion among members because it informs status assessments and has developed an environment of mutual trust and professionalism. The attendance of observers at all or part of a COSSARO meeting may assist the Committee in achieving its mandate and roles. It is also valuable because it gives members of the public the opportunity to observe the operations of the Committee. We welcome observers to meetings of members of COSSARO at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee. Those wishing to attend as observers must apply in advance by email and agree to abide by COSSARO's rules of procedure and confidentiality.

Any person who wishes to attend a COSSARO meeting as an observer must apply in writing (email will suffice) at least three weeks prior to the meeting they wish to attend. The Chair will review each application, discuss it with members as appropriate, and provide a decision regarding attendance and availability of materials prior to the meeting. The number of observers attending may be limited by space depending on the venue. Permission from the Chair is valid for one meeting at a time.

Observers do not participate in Committee decisions and, at the discretion of the Chair, may be restricted to specific deliberations. Observers may address the meeting, and respond to members' questions, at the discretion of the Chair. Observers may be asked to leave the meeting room for *in camera* discussion at the discretion of the Chair. Observers are required to sign a declaration form indicating they will abide by the principles of impartiality and confidentiality (see below).

To promote free discussion by COSSARO members when assessing the status of wildlife species, discussions are confidential and details of these proceedings must not be disclosed by observers. Furthermore, to maintain the confidentiality of voting outcomes, observers will be asked to leave the meeting room during the voting of species' statuses. While not wanting to limit general access to meetings, it is intended that observer privileges be extended only to the extent that they do not inhibit COSSARO members from freely contributing to discussions and decisions.

Application to Attend COSSARO Meeting as an Observer

Instructions: Please complete the top part of application and send to COSSAROSecretariat@ontario.ca at least three weeks prior to the meeting date.

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Which species being assessed interest you the most?: _____

Any special reasons for attending COSSARO meeting: _____

Do you have any accessibility needs that we can assist you with (e.g., visual and/or hearing assistance)? _____

Declaration by Observer at COSSARO Meeting (to be completed at meeting)

Meeting Date: _____

Meeting Location: _____

I hereby declare that I am in agreement with the following terms and conditions:

- 1) I am attending to observe, and I will not speak at the meeting, unless requested by the Chair of COSSARO;
- 2) Any contribution by me will be objective and impartial, grounded in the goal of wildlife conservation;
- 3) I will respect the authority of the Chair of the meeting, including leaving the room during certain portions of the discussion and voting if requested to do so;
- 4) I will not publicly reveal any sensitive data discussed, nor attribute comments to specific individuals; and,
- 5) I will maintain confidentiality about Committee discussions, assessments and classifications until these are publicly announced by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

DATED at _____ (place name) this ____ day of _____ (month, year).

SIGNED by: Observer _____

Name (Print): _____

Affiliation: _____

E-mail: _____

Witness: _____