

**Committee On Status Of Species At Risk In
Ontario (COSSARO)**

**Comité de détermination du statut des
espèces en péril en Ontario**

ANNUAL REPORT

RAPPORT ANNUEL

2021

PREPARED FOR:

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Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

PREPARED BY:

The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. SUMMARY OF STATUS ASSESSMENTS	6
3. SUMMARY OF 2021 COSSARO MEETINGS & OPERATIONS	11
3.1 Meetings	11
3.2 Updates Regarding Other Operational Matters	12
4. 2022 PLAN	13
ATTACHMENTS	15
Attachment 1: COSSARO Membership (2021)	
Attachment 2: 2021 Species Summaries	

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- 8 Trees Inc.
- Algonquins of Ontario
- Auditor General of Ontario
- Dairy Farmers of Ontario
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Fleming College (professors and students)
- Frost Students Association, Fleming College
- Fur Harvesters Auctions Inc.
- Fur Institute of Canada
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- McMillan Vantage Policy Group
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH)
- Ontario Forest Industries Association
- Ontario Fur Managers Federation
- Ontario Ginseng Growers Association
- Ontario Nature
- Ontario Power Generation (OPG)
- Red Sky Métis Independent Nation
- SLR Consulting
- Species at Risk Program Advisory Committee (SARPAC)
- Temagami First Nation
- Walker Industries
- Wilderness Committee

We also wish to express our thanks to the following individuals and organizations, who chose through presentations and/or written submissions to contribute scientific information including Indigenous and community knowledge to COSSARO during 2021:

- Victoria MacPhail, PH D candidate, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Toronto
- Lisa Walter, Acting Sea Lamprey Program Deputy Director, Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- Dave Stanley, Senior Environmental Advisor, Ontario Power Generation (OPG)

- Robin Horwath, General Manager, Ontario Fur Managers Federation
- James Baker, Executive Director, Fur Institute of Canada
- Mark Ryckman, Manager of Policy, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH)
- Emma Horrigan, Conservation Projects and Education Manager, Ontario Nature

As members on COSSARO we are grateful to Hon. Jeff Yurek who served as the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) from June 20, 2019 to June 18, 2021. And we are grateful to Hon. David Piccini, as the Minister of MECP from June 18, 2021 onward, and his team at the MECP that serves as the Secretariat and support to COSSARO. We are grateful to the following MECP team members who worked hard to support COSSARO in 2021.

- Mary Balsdon
- Kirsten Corrigan
- Sarah Parna
- Natalie Boyd
- Susan Ecclestone
- Kathleen Pitt
- Brie-Anne Breton
- Megan McAndrew
- Rebecca Teare

We are also grateful to the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNR) Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) for providing important Ontario species data to COSSARO, that enabled our assessments. We also thank Colin Jones, the Provincial Zoologist, Invertebrates with the NHIC. He serves as a Province of Ontario member on the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). In that role he was able to support COSSARO's access to and understanding of COSEWIC considerations related to species assessments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) is an independent committee of experts which considers which plants and animals should be assessed as at risk in Ontario.

The *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA) gives the committee legal recognition and specific responsibilities:

- Maintaining criteria for assessing and classifying species
- Keeping a list of species that should be assessed and classified (or reclassified) in the future
- Assessing, reviewing and classifying species
- Submitting reports regarding the classification of species and providing advice to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

COSSARO can consist of up to 12 members with expertise in scientific disciplines or community knowledge or Indigenous Knowledge. A quorum of eight members is required for voting purposes.

In 2021, COVID-19 continued to affect COSSARO's activities, but the MECP secretariat team and COSSARO members continued to effectively and efficiently complete online meetings which continued to include observers in open sessions.

In 2021, COSSARO held four virtual meetings to complete the assessment of 36 species/designatable units. Of those 36 species, one was determined not to be eligible for assessment (Ringed Seal) and votes for two species were deferred until 2022 (Algonquin Wolf and American Ginseng). Voting on the remaining 33 species was completed at the four meetings held on:

- February 4 - 5, 2021
- April 8 - 9, 2021
- September 28 - 29, 2021
- November 18 - 19, 2021

On January 7, 2021, the MECP appointed one new member to COSSARO, Dr. Barbara Hard, Senior Biologist and Risk Assessment Specialist, Discipline Lead, Natural Sciences Canada, Arcadis Canada, PhD philosophy, Microbiology. That increased the membership on COSSARO to 11.

On April 15, 2021, Dan Kraus was reappointed for a two-year term as a member of COSSARO. His appointment extends until April 14, 2023. On December 12, 2021, the Chair (Tom Hilditch) was reappointed for a three-year term, extending until December 11, 2024.

Other members terms are expiring in 2022; we understand that renewals are being considered and addressed to ensure that COSSARO will continue to meet quorum in 2022.

2. SUMMARY OF STATUS ASSESSMENTS

The table below, summarizes the results of assessments and voting completed on 33 species in 2021. These species are grouped by types of fauna/flora for ease of review. The order is the same used in Attachment 2 to this report.

From the table below, the following observation are offered; 14 species retained the same level of assessment. Two species increased in the status level (e.g., moved upwards from Special concern to Threatened). Five species decreased in their status levels (e.g., moved downwards from Endangered to Threatened). Ten species not previously assessed have been assigned a level of assessment of Special Concern, Threatened or Endangered.

SPECIES English, French, Indigenous*, Latin names	CURRENT CLASSIFICATION (UNDER ESA)	NEW COSSARO EVALUATED STATUS (2021)
AMPHIBIANS		
Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander Salamandre sombre des montagnes <i>Desmognathus ochrophaeus</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Endangered</i>
Spring Salamander <i>Gyrinophilus porphyriticus</i>	<i>Extirpated</i>	<i>Data Deficient</i>
BIRDS		
Barn Swallow Hirondelle rustique <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>
Canada Warbler Paruline du Canada <i>Cardellina canadensis</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs Petit Chevalier <i>Tringa flavipes</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Threatened</i>

SPECIES English, French, Indigenous*, Latin names	CURRENT CLASSIFICATION (UNDER ESA)	NEW COSSARO EVALUATED STATUS (2021)
Red Knot (rufa Subspecies) – Tierra del Fuego / Patagonia wintering population Bécasseau maubéche de la sous- espèce rufa <i>Calidris canutus rufa</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Endangered</i>
Red Knot (rufa Subspecies) – Northeastern South America wintering population Bécasseau maubéche de la sous- espèce rufa <i>Calidris canutus rufa</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>
Red Knot (rufa Subspecies) – Southeastern USA / Gulf of Mexico / Caribbean wintering population Bécasseau maubéche de la sous- espèce rufa <i>Calidris canutus rufa</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Endangered</i>
Short-eared Owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> Hibou des marais	<i>Special Concern</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
FISHES		
Lake Chubsucker Sucet de Lac <i>Erimyzon sucetta</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Endangered</i>
Northern Brook Lamprey Lamproie du Nord <i>Ichthyomyzon fossor</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>
Silver Lamprey – Great Lakes Basin lamproie argentée <i>Ichthyomyzon unicuspis</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>
Silver Lamprey – Saskatchewan-Nelson Rivers population lamproie argentée <i>Ichthyomyzon unicuspis</i>	NOTE: New DU, was not on SARO List	<i>Data Deficient</i>

SPECIES English, French, Indigenous*, Latin names	CURRENT CLASSIFICATION (UNDER ESA)	NEW COSSARO EVALUATED STATUS (2021)
<u>INSECTS</u>		
American Bumble Bee Bourdon américain <i>Bombus pensylvanicus</i>	N/A	<i>Special Concern</i>
Aweme Borer Moth Perce-tige d'Aweme <i>Papaipema aweme</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Data Deficient</i>
Davis's Shieldback Sauterelle de Davis <i>Atlanticus davisii</i>	N/A	<i>Threatened</i>
Pygmy Snaketail Ophiogomphe de Howe <i>Ophiogomphus howei</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Endangered</i>
Rapids Clubtail Gomphe des rapides <i>Gomphus quadricolor</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
Reversed Haploa Moth Haploa inversé <i>Haploa reversa</i>	N/A	<i>Threatened</i>
Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee Bourdon de Suckley <i>Bombus suckleyi</i>	N/A	<i>Endangered</i>
<u>MAMMALS</u>		
Algonquin Wolf Loup algonquin <i>Canis sp.</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Vote deferred until 2022</i>
Beluga Whale - James Bay Population Béluga Qilalugaq* <i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>	N/A	<i>Not at Risk</i>
Beluga Whale - Western Hudson Bay Population	N/A	<i>Not at Risk</i>

SPECIES English, French, Indigenous*, Latin names	CURRENT CLASSIFICATION (UNDER ESA)	NEW COSSARO EVALUATED STATUS (2021)
Béluga Qilalugaq* <i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>		
Polar Bear Ours polaire Nanook* <i>Ursus maritimus</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
Ringed Seal que annelé / phoque marbré Netsik* (Inuit/Labrador) Nattiq* (Inuit/North and East Baffin) Natiinat* (Inuit) Natchiq, Natchiit and Natik* (Inuit/North Slope) Natsiq/Natsik* (Inuit/Nunavik and Nunavut) <i>Pusa hispida</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Not eligible for assessment</i>
<u>MOLLUSCS</u>		
Purple Wartyback Mulette verruqueuse <i>Cyclonaias tuberculata</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
Striped Whitelip Polyspire rayé <i>Webbhelix multilineata</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Endangered</i>
<u>PLANTS</u>		
American Ginseng Ginseng à cinq folioles <i>Panax quinquefolius</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Vote deferred until 2022</i>
Deerberry Airelle à longues étamines <i>Vaccinium stamineum</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
Kentucky Coffee-tree Chicot févier <i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Threatened in: Elgin, Essex, Lambton, Middlesex, Norfolk, and Oxford</i>

SPECIES English, French, Indigenous*, Latin names	CURRENT CLASSIFICATION (UNDER ESA)	NEW COSSARO EVALUATED STATUS (2021)
		<i>Counties and in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent</i>
Lakeside Daisy Hyménoxys herbacé <i>Tetraneuris herbacea</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>
American Water-willow Carmantine d'Amérique <i>Justicia americana</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
Western Silvery Aster Aster Soyeux <i>Symphyotrichum sericeum</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
<u>REPTILES</u>		
Eastern Hog-nosed Snake Couleuvre à groin de l'Est <i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Threatened</i>
Common Five-lined Skink - Carolinian Population Scinque pentaligne <i>Plestiodon fasciatus</i>	<i>Endangered</i>	<i>Endangered</i>
Common Five-lined Skink - Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Population Scinque pentaligne <i>Plestiodon fasciatus</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>	<i>Special Concern</i>

NOTES:

- N/A means the species has not been formerly assigned a status in Ontario
- All English, French and Indigenous names of species are included in Status reports, where known. Indigenous names are highlighted with an asterisk and these names are not intended to be inclusive of all cultures and languages. Indigenous names are not based upon western scientific methods.

Nomenclature/Taxonomic Changes

The following name change was discussed and voted on by COSSARO in 2021.

- Algonquin Wolf (*Canis sp.*) was changed to Eastern Wolf, *Canis sp. cf. lycaon*

3. SUMMARY OF 2021 COSSARO MEETINGS & OPERATIONS

3.1 Meetings

COSSARO, like most agencies and organizations, was affected by COVID-19 again in 2021. Meetings were held virtually rather than in person. The traditional two meetings per year were replaced with four virtual meetings. Each meeting included opportunities for observers to attend.

The following offers a brief summary of each of the 2021 meetings.

MEETING DATE	MEETING SUMMARY
Feb 4 – 5, 2021	<p>Dr. Barbara Hard was welcomed to her new role as a member of COSSARO. A presentation was made to COSSARO by Victoria MacPhail, PHD candidate, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Toronto, about American Bumble Bee.</p> <p>About 25 students from Fleming College and their instructors attended this meeting to better understand the role of COSSARO and the process/criteria for the assessment of species.</p>
Apr 8 - 9, 2021	<p>COSSARO initiated this meeting with a Land Acknowledgement. All subsequent meetings will be introduced with that formal recognition. Members agreed that COSSARO would continue to explore and implement measures that would ensure we are aware of and including Indigenous knowledge.</p> <p>A presentation was made to COSSARO by Lisa Walter, Acting Sea Lamprey Program Deputy Director, Great Lakes Fishery Commission about Northern Brook, and Silver Lamprey in the Great Lakes.</p> <p>In addition to ongoing operations discussions, members made a point that COSSARO should find a way that we can have access more readily and reliability to jurisdictions in the US as input to fully considering the BBRGR. Discussions continued regarding the utility of US state data when uncertainties exist around the currency and accuracy of data and the reality that state rankings of species may not adequately reflect or represent trends in species population numbers.</p> <p>During our species assessments in 2021, COSSARO continued to use an analytical tool referred to as the "Working Draft of the COSSARO interpretation of select June 2019 legislative amendments", provided in our 2020 COSSARO Annual Report and which is also available at: https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-2020-annual-report-committee-status-species-risk-ontario-cossaro#section-6</p>
Sept 28 - 29, 2021	<p>No public presentations were made at this meeting, although Observers continued to attend. Attendance varied from meeting to meeting but generally included about 10 – 15 Observers.</p> <p>COSSARO continues to emphasize the importance of ready access to</p>

MEETING DATE	MEETING SUMMARY
	<p>the RAMAS software to assist in species assessments. We understand that the province is working to facilitate that access.</p> <p>The ongoing SAR audit was briefly discussed, and it appeared that all COSSARO members had been engaged in discussions with the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.</p>
Nov 18 - 19, 2021	<p>The Fall, 2021 COSSARO meeting included a few species that attracted substantial interest from observers and presenters (i.e., Algonquin Wolf, American Ginseng, Eastern Hog-nosed Snake). Presentations were made by representatives of the Ontario Fur Managers Federation, the Fur Institute of Canada and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Written submissions were submitted by the Ontario Fur Managers Federation and by Ontario Nature</p>

3.2 Updates Regarding Other Matters

In 2021, some additional time was invested in more direct dialogue with holders of Indigenous knowledge and with holders of scientific information and community knowledge. COSSARO engaged in direct dialogue with groups and individuals regarding their information for species that were suggested for new assessments and/or reassessments.

The website for COSSARO (<http://cossaroagency.ca>) continued to be helpful in keeping Ontario citizens apprised of COSSARO activities. The MECP continues to update and operate that website on behalf of COSSARO, actions that are appreciated by COSSARO members.

COSSARO continues to work with the province to update the 2017 Terms of Reference for the committee. Those updates are a work in progress.

In March 2021, the Office of the Ontario Auditor General began to contact members of COSSARO for interviews as input to the Auditor General’s November 2021 Value-for-Money Audit: Protecting and Recovering Species at Risk. COSSARO members are reviewing that report to determine whether there are any recommendations that could affect/improve the way COSSARO conducts its business.

The Chair of COSSARO was invited to, and made presentations to the following organizations in 2021:

- Fleming College Feb 1, 2021
instructors Cori Carveth, Karen Bellamy
- SARPAC, May 4, 2021
Chair, Bette Jean Crews
- Muskoka Watershed Council, Nov 26, 2021
Chair, Geoff Ross

4. 2022 PLAN

COSSARO expects to conduct its spring meeting online in 2022, as the pandemic will likely continue to impede the safe execution of in-person meetings. The status of the pandemic will be monitored to determine whether the Fall meeting will be able to be completed in person.

In addition to assessments of species considered at the previous COSEWIC meeting, COSSARO is beginning to complete reassessments for species that have not been actively and currently considered by COSEWIC in their ongoing assessments. In 2022, these assessments will likely include: American White Pelican and Bald Eagle. Other species being considered include Black Tern, Upland Sandpiper, Purple Martin, and West Virginia White. The assessment of some of these species may depend upon the availability of funds to seek external expertise on status report consulting assignments.

Other species that could be addressed in 2022 are those which have been subject to the provision of additional and/or new data provided in the form of Indigenous and community knowledge. COSSARO is placing an emphasis on ensuring that assessments are based upon “the best available scientific information, including information obtained from community knowledge and aboriginal traditional knowledge.”

PRELIMINARY 2021 MEETING DATES	MEETING FOCUS
March 31 - April 1, 2022 (subject to confirmation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment focused on COSEWIC species assessed in November 2021 and Bald Eagle, American White Pelican
Sept 24 - 27, 2022 (subject to confirmation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment focused on COSEWIC species assessed in Spring 2022 and Black Tern, Golden Eagle

Species that will be assessed during 2022 are as follows:

MEETING DATE*	SPECIES SCHEDULED FOR ASSESSMENT
March 30 – April 1, 2022 (subject to confirmation)	Incurved Grizzled Moss
	Eastern Foxsnake (Carolinian population)
	Eastern Foxsnake (Great Lakes / St. Lawrence population)
	Greater Prairie–Chicken
	Eastern Wolf (currently known as Algonquin Wolf on the SARO List)
	American Ginseng
	American White Pelican
	Bald Eagle

MEETING DATE*	SPECIES SCHEDULED FOR ASSESSMENT
September 28 – 30, 2022 (subject to confirmation)	To be determined
To be determined and scheduled, 2022, 2023	Purple Martin
	Upland Sandpiper
	Golden Eagle
	Black Tern
	Cougar
	Wild Rice
	West Virginia White
	Schweinitz's Sedge
	Ram's-head Lady's-slipper
	Methuselah's Beard Lichen
	Auricled Twayblade
	Little White Tiger Beetle
	Duke's Skipper
	Slender Clearwing
Cupped Fringe Lichen	
Moose	

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: COSSARO Membership (2021)

Attachment 2: 2021 Species Summaries