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 and Indigenous communities 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 and agree to abide by COSSARO's rules of procedure and confidentiality (described on the next page).

Any person who wishes to attend a COSSARO meeting as an observer must apply by submitting this form at least two 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. Permission from the Chair is valid only 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 be invited to introduce themselves and/or address the Committee and respond to members' questions at the discretion of the Chair. Observers may be asked to leave the meeting room for aspects of the discussion that are closed to the public 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.

The application form on the following page can be completed digitally or printed and scanned.

Application to Attend COSSARO Meeting as an Observer

Meeting Date: **November 17-18, 2026** Location: **777 Bay St., Toronto**

Name: _____ Affiliation: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Which species assessment session(s) or specific time(s) would you like to attend?

Reason(s) for attending COSSARO meeting:

Would you prefer to attend virtually or in-person? ☐ Virtual ☐ In-person (if space permits)

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

Observer Declaration for the COSSARO Meeting

I hereby declare that I agree 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 species conservation;
3) I will respect the authority of the Chair of the meeting, including leaving the meeting during certain portions of the discussion if requested to do so;
4) I will not publicly reveal any sensitive data discussed, how members voted, 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.

Observer Name (Print): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Send completed applications to COSSAROSecretariat@ontario.ca by **November 3, 2026.**