

# **SARA: The Species at Risk Act and Aboriginal Involvement**

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## **Newsletter #3**

## **National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk**

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Since SARA came into full effect in June 2004, it has been considered essential that Aboriginal people are involved in the process. This involvement is necessary to maximize benefits and minimize adverse impacts that this Act may have on Aboriginal peoples. One way that Aboriginal peoples have become involved in SARA is through the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR). NACOSAR was inaugurated in September 2005, and has since been working to help ensure that the interests of Aboriginal peoples, including First Nations, are represented in the SARA process.

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) aims to prevent wildlife species (plants and animals) from becoming extinct, to help in their recovery, and to protect their critical habitat.

**Newsletter #1 provides more details about the SARA process.**

**Newsletter #2 provides more details about balancing potential benefits and adverse effects to Aboriginal peoples.**

### **Who is on the NACOSAR committee?**

NACOSAR is made up of six representatives of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada who are appointed by the Minister of the Environment based upon

recommendations by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Métis National Council (MNC) and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). Each member is granted a two-year term and may be re-appointed. NACOSAR meets as a group at least twice a year, and also meets once a year with the Minister of the Environment.

### **Current members of NACOSAR are:**

**Beverly Jacobs** – NACOSAR Chairperson (Recommended by the Native Women's Association of Canada-NWAC)

**Regional Chief Rick Simon** (Recommended by the Assembly of First Nations-AFN)

**Larry Carpenter** (Recommended by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami-ITK)

**Melody Nice-Paul** (Recommended by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples-CAP)

**Allan Morin** (Recommended by the Métis National Council-MNC)

**Bob Stevenson**  
Independent

### What is the role of NACOSAR?

The mandate of NACOSAR is to advise the Minister of the Environment and the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC) on the administration of SARA, taking into consideration the interests of Aboriginal peoples. Advice may relate to issues such as legal listing or de-listing of species at risk, inclusion of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) in species assessments, consultations with Aboriginal peoples, and Aboriginal involvement in stewardship activities to protect or recover species at risk. NACOSAR is also available to exchange information about SARA with Aboriginal governments, organizations, and individuals. As part of its communication strategy, NACOSAR is currently developing an interactive website where Aboriginal peoples can get more information about NACOSAR, its role, and activities.



### NACOSAR Accomplishments to Date

NACOSAR is making progress through several initiatives:

- Hosted two Species at Risk Workshops for Aboriginal peoples
  - Kelowna, March 2006 – Topic: Species at Risk and Aboriginal involvement in the SARA process
  - Winnipeg, November 2006 - Topic: Current and future involvement (and associated barriers) of Aboriginal peoples in protection and recovery of species at risk
- Provided funds to national Aboriginal organizations to build their capacity for involvement in species at risk issues (*ongoing*)
- Undertaking an ‘issues scan’ to examine how SARA supports Aboriginal involvement (*ongoing*)
- Examining the capacity of Aboriginal peoples to be involved in protection of species at risk (*ongoing*)
- Working to build relationships with the Federal Government to encourage greater involvement of all Aboriginal peoples in the SARA process (*ongoing*)

**If you wish to discuss your issues or concerns as they relate to the implementation of SARA and Aboriginal peoples, contact Paul Johanson, NACOSAR Secretariat.**

**Phone: (819) 953-0173  
Email: paul.johanson@ec.gc.ca**

### NACOSAR encourages greater involvement of Aboriginal Peoples

As Beverly Jacobs, chairperson of NACOSAR, shared at the National Species at Risk Workshop (Kelowna, March 2006), “We as Aboriginal people know the challenges in our communities as well as have the knowledge to deal

with these challenges – specifically knowing how to protect species and to ensure the continuation of certain species in our traditional territories. It must be up to us to rise up to the challenge posed by SARA and remember the words of our Elders, ‘look after the animals and they will look after you’.”

Stewardship is an important means for Aboriginal peoples to become actively involved in protection and recovery of species at risk.

**Newsletter #6 provides more details about species at risk stewardship opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.**



**Loggerhead Shrike**  
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### **Next Steps**

If you would like to find out more about SARA, potential benefits and adverse impacts on Aboriginal peoples and their rights, and how to get involved in the process through consultation and stewardship activities, read related newsletters from this six-part series.

You can access information in the ‘**Species at Risk Information Package**’ on the **CIER website ([www.cier.ca](http://www.cier.ca))**,

and on the following government of Canada websites:

- (1) **[www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)** (provides information on the SARA and related legal documents, including the List of Wildlife Species at Risk, permit applications, recovery strategies, action plans, regulations, orders and notices for public consultations);
- (2) **[www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca)** (provides information on the biology of species at risk in Canada, their distribution, habitat requirements and threats);
- (3) **[www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.gc.ca)** (provides information on aquatic species at risk in Canada, including fish, reptiles, marine mammals and molluscs); and
- (4) **[www.pc.gc.ca/nature/eep-sar/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/nature/eep-sar/index_e.asp)** (provides information on Parks Canada’s role in the recovery of species at risk.

### **Additional information can be obtained from:**

Environment Canada Inquiry Centre  
351 St. Joseph Boulevard  
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H3  
Tel: (819) 997-2800  
Tel: (800) 668-6767  
E-mail: [enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca](mailto:enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Communications Branch  
200 Kent Street  
13th Floor, Station 13228  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6  
Tel: (613) 993-0999  
E-mail: [info@dfo-mpo-gc.ca](mailto:info@dfo-mpo-gc.ca)

Parks Canada  
National Office  
25 Eddy Street  
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M5  
Tel: (888) 773-8888  
E-mail: [information@pc.gc.ca](mailto:information@pc.gc.ca)

Species at Risk Pathfinder  
Manitoba and Saskatchewan  
Region  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 245 McDermot Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0S6  
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