



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

LISTING OF THREE WHALE SPECIES UNDER THE SPECIES AT RISK ACT (SARA)

Canadian Wildlife Service and Department of
Fisheries and Oceans



Environment and Climate Change Canada's 50th anniversary
50^e anniversaire d'Environnement et Changement climatique Canada

Meteorological Service of Canada's 150th anniversary
150^e anniversaire du Service météorologique du Canada



Canada 

SARA listing process

- COSEWIC provides its assessment of a species to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (ECCC).
 - The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans conducts separate consultations for the aquatic species to prepare the advice for the Minister of ECCC.
 - The Minister of ECCC recommends to the Governor in Council to add the species to Schedule 1, or to refer the species assessment back to COSEWIC for its further consideration.
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OVERVIEW OF SPECIES AND CONSULTATIONS

- COSEWIC status reports (all assessed as Special Concern)
 - Killer whale (Northwest Atlantic - Eastern Arctic) November 2008;
 - Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada-West Greenland) in April 2009;
 - Northern Bottlenose Whale (Davis Strait – Baffin Bay – Labrador Sea) in May 2011;
 - DFO Consulted Inuit communities
 - Killer whale: January – April 2015;
 - Bowhead Whale: January – April 2015;
 - Northern Bottlenose Whale: November 2013 – February 2014;
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Photo credit: J. Higdon, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

SUMMARY OF COSEWIC REASON FOR DESIGNATION



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|----------------------------------|--|
| Killer Whale | Threats: hunting in Greenland, acoustical and physical disturbance, contaminants Fewer than 1000 mature individuals and likely less than 250 |
| Bowhead Whale | The population was severely depleted by commercial whaling (1500s to 1910). In the absence of commercial whaling, the population is believed to have increased and to continue to increase. The population is not yet clearly secure because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - life history: long generation time, very low natural growth rate; - rapid changes in their habitat due to climate change and increasing human activities (e.g. shipping and oil exploration) |
| Northern Bottlenose Whale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numbers were likely reduced by whaling in the late 1960s and early 1970s when 818 whales were taken. - Survey sighting rates have been low. - Entanglement in fishing gear is the primary known threat but noise and contaminants are also of concern. |



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SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATIONS EFFORT FOR KILLER WHALE AND BOWHEAD WHALE IN NUNAVIK



Photo credit: J. Higdon, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Consultation effort:

- The NMRWB was notified in writing of the consultation; discussions took place at NMRWB meetings → The NMRWB confirmed in writing its interest
 - Public consultations on the SAR Public Registry (2015)
 - Consultation material sent to all (14) Inuit communities and LNUKs, RNUK, and Makivik
 - On-demand face-to-face meetings were offered → no requests
 - Telephone follow up with Indigenous stakeholders and organizations that did not respond
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SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATIONS OUTPUT FOR KILLER WHALE

Consultation output from NMRWB, LNUK(2), and communities(1)

- Killer Whale play an important role in the livelihoods of Inuit, indirectly as a competitor for traditional foods.
 - The Inuit “do not eat Killer Whale” and do not feel concerned by the SARA process.
 - The Killer Whale is considered to be a nuisance; it is one of the beluga's predators.
 - The number of Killer Whale sightings is increasing, giving the impression that their population is increasing as well.
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SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATIONS OUTPUT FOR BOWHEAD WHALE



Consultation output from NMRWB, LNUK(2), and communities(1)

- Bowhead Whales are a food source for the Inuit.
 - The Inuit see the listing as the start of a process to ban the hunt.
 - It was requested that the IFMP and SARA processes be integrated so that there are not two independent consultations.
 - According to the Inuit, the number of Bowhead Whales is increasing.
 - Questions whether it is appropriate to consider listing based on COSEWIC's 2009 assessment, recognizing that a new population estimate will soon be available.
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SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATIONS FOR NORTHERN BOTTLENOSE WHALE IN NUNAVIK

- Consultation effort:
 - Species considered to be exceptionally present, if not non-existent, in the region. Nevertheless, the NMRWB was notified in writing of the consultation.
 - Public consultations on the SAR Public Registry (2013-2014); no in-person consultations.
- Consultation output
 - No response



Based upon the COSEWIC Status reports and the consultations with Inuit communities and organizations, DFO advised ECCC Minister to recommend to the Governor in Council that 3 species be listed as special concern.

The Governor in Council must then decide within 9 months.

DFO has provided all the Best Available Information to ECCC in English and Inuktitut.
